

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

(The remarks of Mrs. BRITT pertaining to the submission of S. 846 and S. 847 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mrs. BRITT. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:20 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RELATING TO "GROSS PROCEEDS REPORTING BY BROKERS THAT REGULARLY PROVIDE SERVICES EFFECTUATING DIGITAL ASSET SALES"—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 151

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor today because I am concerned about President Trump's actions to, I believe, start a trade war with our top two trading partners, Canada and Mexico.

All goods coming from Canada and Mexico, as of midnight last night—I guess midnight today—face a 25-percent tax; that is, all except Canadian energy, which is taxed at 10 percent. Trump's tariffs will make everything from gas to heating, to groceries, to lumber and more, more expensive for everyday Americans.

I think it bears repeating that tariffs are paid by consumers. They are paid by Americans, not by other countries. And what the President is doing amounts to a new tax for Americans. For example, heating oil and propane that keeps hundreds of thousands of Granite Staters warm in the winter is going to cost more. We are going to add about \$150 to \$250 to the cost of heating homes in New Hampshire.

And gas prices are going to go up. In New Hampshire, half of the fuel in our cars and trucks comes from Canada, and U.S. refineries across the Midwest use Canadian oil.

The United States imports 80 percent of its potash fertilizer from Canada, and this tariff makes farming and food more expensive.

It is unclear how the American auto industry is going to continue to operate. Ford's CEO said these tariffs will "blow a hole in the U.S. industry that we have never seen," with up to \$12,000 added to the cost of a car.

And this will make lumber and electrical equipment that we need to build housing—at a time when housing is al-

ready in short supply—it will make them more expensive and harder to find.

Those are just a few examples.

There are countless other imports that American businesses and families rely on that are going to be hit hard, and these tariffs do nothing to bring down those costs. They do just the opposite.

These tariffs could add \$1,200 to an average household's yearly cost, and we won't have to wait very long for the impact to be felt. It is already being felt on Wall Street and the stock market. Target's CEO said this morning that the consumer "will likely see price increases over the next couple of days." And for small businesses, these tariff taxes will be felt by small businesses in all of our States.

I was here, a month ago today, sharing stories from businessowners in New Hampshire who weren't sure how they were going to keep operating if specialized machinery that they can only get from Canada suddenly costs 25 percent more. Since that time, I have heard from even more people in New Hampshire, more small businesses.

Last week, I heard from a small company in Windham, NH, that makes allergen-free cookies, and they can only get certain ingredients for those cookies from Canada. The CEO built her business, which now employs 30 people, and now she can't be sure if they are even going to be able to keep going, let alone keep growing.

When I spoke with business representatives across New Hampshire last month, the theme they kept coming back to was "uncertainty." As a former small businessowner, I know that uncertainty is the most destabilizing aspect of running and growing a business. Yet that is what this administration keeps creating.

Yesterday, we learned that new orders from manufacturers dropped in February for the first time in 22 years. For the first time in 22 years, new orders from manufacturers dropped because companies can't work with this level of uncertainty.

Last Wednesday, the President was talking about Canadian tariffs going into effect April 2. The very next morning, he announced 25 percent tariffs would go into effect today. The whiplash is hard to imagine.

I spoke, last month, about a bus company, C&J Bus Lines, in New Hampshire that was worried about these tariffs and what it would mean for the bottom line. Well, the CEO moved up his delivery date to get three buses in late March before these taxes were set to go into effect, but his costs just went up more than \$450,000.

Businesses plan months, quarters, or years in advance. They need to place orders and plot out their growth in order to succeed. How can they plan when they can't even know whether their costs are going to go up 25 percent overnight? How can a developer know if they can start building the

housing that New Hampshire desperately needs if their lumber costs 25 percent more overnight? And how can a family already struggling with high costs continue to pay the rent or put food on the table if their household costs are going to go up \$1,200 this year?

I want families and businesses to know that the whims of this President are not going to cause them to break the bank on everyday items they need to get by. That is why I introduced the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes on Imported Goods Act. It is a simple change, really. It says that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA, can no longer be used to place taxes on imports.

If the President needs to block some dangerous product, he still can. But if there is a real threat, we would want to stop it, not just add a tariff tax. That is what my bill does. It would stop these tariffs on goods and energy coming from Canada and Mexico, and it would give businesses and families more certainty to plan for the future and to keep their hard-earned dollars in their pockets.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 151 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, reserving the right to object, IEEPA is a powerful tool that provides the President with a range of authorities to protect our national security. With all the challenges facing our Nation, now is not the time to be limiting Presidential power, and that is exactly what Senator SHAHEEN's bill would do.

Instead, we must use every tool available to combat these threats, and we are already seeing results. As an example, Colombia accepted migrant return flights. We have seen Mexico and Canada take initial credible steps to combat fentanyl and illegal immigration. Now is not the time to tie the hands of President Trump.

Thank you, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate through regular order to ensure that we take every step to protect our national security.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I know that my colleague from Oregon wants to speak to this issue, but I just want to respond in a couple of ways.

I know my colleague from South Carolina cares about the issues that I am going to address, but he mentioned fentanyl, and that is what the President has used to justify the tariffs. He

says this is a way to stop the flow of fentanyl into our country, but he has forgotten a few inconvenient facts.

First, it is that, in 2024, CBP, or Customs and Border Protection, seized about 43 pounds of fentanyl along our northern border—about 1 percent of the fentanyl coming into this country. Now, it has long been known that fentanyl is not coming from Canada, and that hard drugs and firearms flow north from the United States into Canada.

In fact, on February 25, the Canada Border Services Agency announced the seizure of 410 pounds of methamphetamine and 42 pounds of cocaine from two commercial trucks seeking entry into Canada at the Coutts port of entry. Seizures like this are not uncommon. Wouldn't it make more sense if we agreed to work together with our Canadian allies instead of putting a tariff on them?

The second fact that bears mentioning is that the vast majority of the fentanyl crossing the southwest border is transported by Americans, hidden in their cars and trucks. That is why I have supported—like most of my colleagues in this body have supported—more money for technology and personnel to better find these drugs before they enter the United States. That is why I supported the border bill last year that this President stopped because he wanted a political issue.

On China, we can debate another time whether this is actually the right long-term strategy with China. But more important than that, my bill does not prevent tariffs against countries like China that have unfair trade practices. Both President Trump, in his first term, and President Biden have already placed tariffs on numerous imports from China to respond to its unfair trade practices, exactly what section 301 of the Trade Act is for. That tool remains available.

My bill only addresses the ability of the President to tax imports on a whim. And I want to note that, thanks to this President, we now have higher taxes on imports from Canada than from China. I don't know how that makes sense—that we are taxing our allies more than we are taxing our adversaries.

So I would say: Is this really about China, or is a more important motivation here to raise costs on American families to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy?

As the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I take very seriously our ability to use sanctions or other tools in foreign policy. This bill does nothing to limit the use of sanctions under IEEPA, nor does it prevent an embargo or fully blocking dangerous imports.

But I don't think a tax is the right solution for those issues. In fact, this is breaking the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement that President Trump negotiated just 6 years ago. And if we are going to break the very deal we have

negotiated—I think, one of the most important achievements of the first Trump administration—why would people want to work with us in the future? Why would they want to work with a Trump administration? How does being an unreliable partner to our closest allies help our national security?

I think it is important to be clear on this: Donald Trump's trade war doesn't create any manufacturing jobs tomorrow in the United States. In fact, it is far more likely to cost us tens or hundreds of thousands of jobs. Half of the goods that America imports are intermediate components, that means parts that our companies manufacture into finished goods. Every one of those items coming from Canada or Mexico just got 25 percent more expensive.

And we have already heard from automakers. They are not sure how much this is going to add to the bottom line of cars. I think that is a lot of risk for tariffs that President Trump can't justify for any other reason, other than because he wants to get funding to support a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans.

Yet the President is talking about wanting to cut deals with Russia for economic development. I don't see the logic in going half way around the world to deal with a dictator—a murderous dictator, by the way—like Vladimir Putin. At the same time, we are damaging relationships and cutting off trade with our closest allies right here in North America.

I am happy to listen to somebody's explanation here, but I don't think it makes sense, and it seems entirely contrary to American values to me. So I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will see the folly in what the President is doing, will recognize the impact on the economy and American families because of these increased costs, and agree that these tariffs should be rolled back.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, my colleague from New Hampshire is being way too logical for some of what passes as trade debate here. And it is my hope that her excellent proposal will be back on this Senate floor sometime soon for unanimous consent to pass a very important bill protecting Americans from tax hikes on imported goods.

This is, as she has stated, a straightforward proposition. All it does is clarify that the President's emergency powers can't be used to put tariffs on the things Americans buy from other countries.

Now, Donald Trump calls himself a “tariff man”—his quote, not mine. It is the only answer he seems to have to any problem under the sun. Instead of taking time to think through actual solutions, he is willing to use any authority he can find to slap tariffs on our trading partners.

Just today, he announced he was slapping 25 percent tariffs on Canada

and Mexico, which are two of our three largest trading partners and closest allies.

That alone is going to raise costs for Americans on gas, on cars, on fruits and vegetables, and many other products. It is also going to cost America jobs because Canada and Mexico have announced plans to retaliate against our exports.

That is the opposite of what Donald Trump pledged to the American people.

It is disturbing that Donald Trump is going rogue and using emergency powers to pursue his tariffs. The American people voted for lower—not higher—prices. Donald Trump campaigned on the promise that he would lower costs on day one of his Presidency. But just a month in, all Trump has managed to do is gut the agencies in charge of protecting consumers and going after predatory corporations, and he's landed us in trade wars that are going to drive up the cost of goods people use every day.

Whether it is to punish a country that he doesn't like or to settle scores with foreign leaders, the only answer Donald Trump has ever had is tariffs. And as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, I have heard him play that card again and again, no matter how many times we have said: Look, tariffs should be one of the tools in the trade toolbox, but it shouldn't be the universal answer to everything.

Trump's approach is going to drive up prices and costs for American families, businesses, and farmers in the process.

He does it, in my view, because he and his billionaire friends aren't going to feel the impacts, and they don't care about the millions of Americans who will.

These higher costs essentially add up to a Trump Tax on everything from food to clothes and cars. And to those who voted for Donald Trump because they wanted lower prices and a fairer economy—it sure seems to me that these policies are a betrayal. The Shaheen bill that we are trying to pass today would rein in some of Donald Trump's worst impulses and clarify that the laws on the books were never meant to be a blank check for the President to abuse tariffs by using them as a punishment against any country that hurts his feelings.

A number of our Republican colleagues have supported the Shaheen proposal in the past because putting a check on the President's power to land us in trade wars should not be, as my colleague has said, partisan or controversial. It is Shaheen common sense. I want to thank her for an excellent bill, and for her leadership that I have watched from my vantage point on the Finance Committee.

And when we can get this bill back on the floor for unanimous consent, I hope it will be met with a resounding bipartisan showing of support, and I look forward to working with her until that day comes to be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Banks). The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 105

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, tragically and totally unnecessarily, what we are seeing in real time is an assault on the veterans of America. It is an assault that is part of a campaign by Elon Musk, who has been empowered by President Trump supposedly to eliminate waste in our Federal Government.

Instead of eliminating waste, Elon Musk is laying waste to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and it is unfolding in real time, with real-life impacts on our veterans. Not only is he firing veterans at the VA—many of the 2,400 already terminated are veterans, one-third of them—but across Agencies in the U.S. Government, where 30,000 members of the Federal workforce have been indiscriminately terminated. Thirty percent of them are veterans as well.

Almost 50 percent of everybody in the Department of Defense who has been fired are veterans, and they may be probationary employees who have been promoted to positions where they are in probationary status because they have done such a great job. They are being fired.

Younger members of the Federal workforce—there for up to 2 years, the future of our civil service—they are firing, and so many of them are veterans who have worn the uniform, served and sacrificed, and want to continue to benefit the country with the skills and dedication they have demonstrated as members of our U.S. Armed Forces.

Public service has long been a preferred path for military-affiliated populations. Whether it is in our local police force or as emergency medical personnel, joining the Federal workforce has enabled them to continue serving our country while it offers competitive wages, benefits, and much needed stability for them as veterans and tremendous benefits for taxpayers.

Now what Elon Musk is doing—relying on his tech bros and his algorithms and his AI formulas—is to cut across the board, leaving those veterans as disposable trash or roadkill in his campaign to eliminate waste.

Well, let me tell you, Elon Musk, if you were serious about eliminating waste, you wouldn't have fired the inspectors general of these Agencies, who are the watchdogs. They have records of eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse.

Exhibit A is Michael Missal, the inspector general of the VA, hired and appointed first by President Obama. He served under President Trump for 4 years and then under President Biden. He has ruffled feathers of Republican and Democrat administrations because he has uncovered waste and fraud in a very bipartisan way, and he regards his job as bipartisan. He would be the one to eliminate waste, not with a meat-ax but with a scalpel.

I wish my colleagues had been in the hearing today, the joint hearing of the

House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, to hear Commander Al Lipphardt of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW—a really heroic Vietnam veteran, injured there, with shrapnel in his arm. As he told us, the surgeon removed the shrapnel piece by piece; he didn't cut off his arm. That is the approach that we need, as he said, in eliminating waste—not cutting off arms or legs but removing the waste carefully, deliberately, cautiously.

Among the illegally terminated—and I should stress “illegally terminated”—are 2,400 VA employees, many of them veterans themselves, members of the Guard or Reserves now, caregivers, military spouses. In the DOD, many of them—45 percent—are former veterans. The overall impact will be disastrous on the 640,000 veterans who are public servants.

Musk and Trump have already upended the lives of so many thousands of veterans who were casually discarded, illegally fired without notice or justification—all for cheap headlines. The impacts in real life are undeniable. Stories from newspapers, from broadcast media, from all kinds of outlets, tell the story of those real-life impacts.

I know my colleagues are hearing from their constituents about the mental health services that are delayed, about the surgeries that can't be provided, and about the Veterans Crisis Line, serving veterans who may be taking their own lives—all reduced. These real-life impacts are undeniable. We are talking about the people who make sure that veterans have transportation to those appointments, who assist with benefits claims, who ensure that the VA hospitals are maintained and that they are safe, who clean operating rooms and sterilize instruments in between procedures. It may not be the surgeon who is fired, but the surgeon who is walking into the operating room needs a staff and a team to assist him. He needs the housekeeping staff to make sure that it is clean. These people have dedicated their careers to serving veterans and their Nation, and all have been indiscriminately and illegally terminated.

These short headlines tell a story, and so does this visual from Springfield, MA:

Due to abrupt and unplanned staff shortages, we are not able to greet you at this time. If you have a scheduled appointment, your counselor will be out to get you at the time of your appointment. If you are here for any other reason, please call and leave a message, and a staff member will return your call.

We apologize—

“We apologize”—

for any inconvenience and impact on your care.

Donald Trump and Elon Musk owe veterans an apology. Right now, Elon Musk is giving veterans the middle finger. Veterans won't stand for it.

So, Mr. President, I am introducing a resolution today and asking that we approve it to uphold the contract, to

uphold the promise, to uphold the commitment we made to our veterans when they raised their right hands and promised to serve and sacrifice even at the risk of dying.

I am joined by Senators HIRONO, SLOTKIN, LUJÁN, MURRAY, DURBIN, WHITEHOUSE, WARNOCK, KLOBUCHAR, SHAHEEN, KAINE, ROSEN, CORTEZ, MASTO, ALSOBROOKS, KELLY, WARREN, HASSAN, SCHIFF, BALDWIN, DUCKWORTH, GALLEG0, PETERS, VAN HOLLEN, SANDERS, BOOKER, WYDEN, MERKLEY, WARNER, SMITH, PADILLA, HEINRICH, SCHATZ, and HICKENLOOPER in this effort. I wish—I really wish—it were bipartisan because veterans' issues have been bipartisan. I have worked with veterans, including the chairman, whom I respect, Senator MORAN, on these issues.

This resolution acknowledges that veterans, who make up less than 7 percent of Americans but approximately 30 percent of public service, have been really disrespected and disserved in just these weeks, with such destructive and repugnant effects on them, on the veterans they serve, and on American values. Our Nation and they deserve better.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 105, which is at the desk; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, in my conversations with Kansans, I frequently point to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs as proof that we can still work together, that unity is attainable, and that we are able to set aside our partisan differences and frustrations to find a way to work together to put our Nation's veterans first because they did that for us when they put on the uniform and took a vow to defend and protect our country.

The Senate has to work together with the administration, with the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans service organizations, and the broad veteran community across the country. This resolution divides the Congress and the administration and makes it more difficult for us to find consensus. We should work together. We should work together to determine what is the right kind of workforce at the VA—a workforce that enables the Department to better care for veterans.

Approving this resolution drives a wedge between this body—this Senate, this Congress—and the executive branch, and I don't see how that helps veterans.

Additionally, this resolution was designed to lock in at the VA the status quo as of January 19. I don't know if any of my colleagues believe the VA

was doing everything just right prior to this administration.

I commit today to all my colleagues to work with them to make certain the VA retains an effective workforce that can deliver our promises to veterans, but we will only achieve that by working together and working with the Department of Veterans Affairs to find the desirable outcomes. We need more information, and we need to be working together to achieve that. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, first, let me say I am hopeful that we can work together—if the chairman of the VA Committee is willing to do it—to try to arrive at language that calls for the rehiring of these veterans, rescinding the layoffs.

I must say that we are joined today by a number of guests of my colleagues as well as myself, veterans who have been terminated. They are with us today. They are going to be with us tonight at the address offered by President Trump.

I am more than happy to work on this resolution if there is a way to make it bipartisan, but the basic principle that we owe our veterans that contract and commitment and that we need to bring them back so that these kinds of consequences can be avoided I think is fundamental to the effort today.

We know that more than 50 patient appointments were canceled at a VA facility just this past week because they can't hire staff needed to care for those veterans.

We know that in the first round of terminations, Secretary Collins terminated nine Veterans Crisis Line employees. Then he hired some back, and then he fired more.

We know that a pregnant spouse of a disabled veteran who was hired under the military spouse appointing authority was terminated.

We know that a 25-year Marine Corps veteran with a 100-percent service-connected disability rating and 15 years of service was terminated.

We know that a VA researcher working on treatments for substance use disorders among veterans was terminated.

We know that the cyber security lead for the VA website—the digital hub that connects veterans with their benefits and holds sensitive, personal data—was terminated.

These kinds of impacts—and I have mentioned just a tiny fraction of all of them—are ongoing. They are real. They are urgent.

I am more than happy to work on the language of this resolution, but the goal is indisputable and unavoidable.

I am going to turn now to some of my colleagues who have joined me today. I thank them for doing so.

First, Senator WHITEHOUSE, if I may yield to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, first, let me thank Senator BLUMENTHAL for this effort. It really matters. Even if it fails, it matters to our veterans to know that we tried, to know that we did not leave them out there at the mercy of Elon Musk and his little muskrats that have been running around through all of our government Agencies breaking Agencies, violating court orders, prowling through your data—Americans, prowling through your data—and, of course, firing veterans.

No President has fired more veterans than Donald Trump just in his first few weeks in office, and what it is doing to the VA and to services for veterans is deeply wrong and deeply unfortunate.

In Rhode Island, we have our Providence VA health center, which is a first-class operation. Our veterans love it. It is well run. It has all sorts of new services and facilities that Senator REED and I have worked to make sure got to the hospital. Also, it has nearly 2,500 employees. It is a big operation.

We also have the Providence VA benefits office, which is such a good benefits office that if a program is being rolled out and not working someplace, they call in the Providence benefits office to try to get it working. If they are about to roll out a new program and they want to beta test it, they go to the Providence benefits office because they are good at what they do. I can't think of anything that makes them more proud than the customers they serve. They love the folks they work for.

So to go through this group and slash and burn without the least logic or care from, like, these little tech bro muskrat types who have never served, have no idea what they are doing, but are just taking delight in moving fast and breaking things, to use the tech bro talk—well, that is fine if you are a tech bro and you are playing around with equipment, but when you are dealing with our veterans and you are dealing with people's lives, running around fast, not knowing what you are doing, and breaking stuff sounds more like Thing One and Thing Two from "The Cat in the Hat." This is not the responsible way veterans should be treated.

I will mention just two while I am here.

There is a Rhode Islander who works for our Veterans Crisis Line. It is the hotline that veterans can call in to when they are having an acute crisis of some kind, perhaps even feeling suicidal. This is not easy work. When that phone goes, you have to be on, and you have to be expert. You have to understand how to support the people who are calling in. You have to understand how to get them to the services they need. It is a life-and-death matter.

This individual was fired and then rehired a few days later—or at least told they were reinstated just a few days

later. But with all the scrambling going on at the VA, the VA has not reissued work credentials, and they still do not have a return-to-work date for the improper firing that never should have happened and then was rescinded but now doesn't have a proper end to the termination. It is administrative malpractice, it is stupid, and it is wrong.

We have another Rhode Islander who worked at the local vet center who was also abruptly and unjustifiably terminated.

As I said, it really means a lot to these people to be working for veterans. They really put their hearts into it, and they really want to do a very good job. They actually get rated on whether or not they are, in fact, doing a good job.

This individual received outstanding performance ratings. It wasn't just that they threw their heart and soul into their work, their peers reviewed them and their supervisors reviewed them and said that they were outstanding performers at their work.

So a letter comes to them saying that they were terminated due to poor performance. Among other things, that was a lie because they weren't poor performers. They were excellent performers.

When you lie to people who are working for veterans just so you can fire them, that is a pretty loathsome way to go about serving veterans, and it is certainly a loathsome way to treat the people who dedicate their lives to taking care of veterans.

If you want to go find the people who have poor performance and fire them, go find the people who have poor performance and fire them, but don't just randomly accuse high performers of poor performance, lie to them about their performance, and fire them. It is a really offensive state of affairs.

It means now that vet center calls are being routed out to Colorado in a different time zone. Rhode Island—a little bit like Connecticut—is a small State. Connecticut is a little bigger. We have our own character, we have our own nature, and we have our own, often, way of speaking. And it matters, when you pick up the phone to call the vet center, that you are not talking to somebody several time zones away in Colorado, particularly not because the phone isn't being answered because a high-performing worker was lied to about their performance and wrongly fired. There is really no excuse for that.

I want to say to the folks at the Providence benefits office: Thank you. God bless you. We admire and respect what you do. We recognize that the entire VA organization has treated you as particularly expert and able, and the work you do to make sure our vets get the benefits they are due is first class. Thank you for what you do. We are grateful. And I apologize that this President and this whatever he is and his little muskrats are doing this kind

of damage to the institution you so proudly serve.

To the folks at the Providence VA hospital: God bless you, and thank you. You do great work.

I deal with veterans all the time. Our veterans love our hospital. They are proud of our hospital. They think it is well run. They think they are well treated. The services are good. You can even get rides there. There is good parking. I mean, this hospital runs the way you would want a veterans hospital to run.

So keep those little muskrats out of Rhode Island. Don't damage the services to our veterans.

I hope that, as the chairman said, we can come together and fix this, but it is hard to hear about how we should come together when nobody came together from "Muskland," and those little muskrats didn't check in with anybody before they went in to break stuff at these Agencies. It is a little late for togetherness when there has been none in terms of defending the work that these wonderful people do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we are going to be joined by others of my colleagues, but I want to follow Senator WHITEHOUSE's very eloquent remarks by just making a couple of quick points.

You know, tonight, the President is going to speak to Members of both the House and the Senate, and he is going to make a lot of claims, many of them untethered in any way to the facts. But if he does nothing else, what I would like to see him do is show some respect for our veterans. He has called them suckers and losers. They have been called swamp creatures or deep-staters by members of this administration. Part of the mindset here that is responsible for these firings is that disrespect for our veterans.

Two of my sons are veterans—one, a Marine Corps first lieutenant who served in Afghanistan; another, a Navy SEAL. They value the VA.

Americans see in their real lives how the VA helps our veterans.

When the President speaks tonight, I want him to look at the guests whom we have brought—not only my guest, Michael Missal, the former inspector general of the VA, but also a U.S. Air Force veteran with more than 30 years of military service who retired from a lifetime of dedicated service to his country in November and immediately rededicated himself to serving his fellow veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs. He started work on January 13. He was illegally terminated barely 1 month later. He is the soul breadwinner of his family. And Tony Ruiz, a disabled Army veteran—until he was illegally terminated, he worked at the VA Benefits Administration to assist veterans with their benefits claim. He was cut just 10 days before his probationary period ended. He was serving in his dream job.

These veterans and other courageous former members of our Armed Forces are going to be with us tonight, and they will be speaking out. They will be sharing their stories. They are not faceless bureaucrats. They are not suckers. They are not losers. They are hard-working public servants who have willingly sacrificed everything for this country, have been willing to give even their lives, and now have rededicated themselves to continue their service now that their military time is complete.

I want to yield to my colleague from Michigan, Senator PETERS, who himself is a veteran and a great colleague and friend of ours.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in opposition to the mass termination of veterans that is taking place all across our Federal Government.

I was proud to serve more than a decade in the U.S. Navy Reserve, where I rose to the rank of lieutenant commander. During this time, I had the absolute privilege to work with some of the most patriotic, hard-working, and inspiring individuals that I have ever met. I know firsthand that veterans are a vital source of talent to our workforce.

So let's just think for a moment. Let's just think about the qualities that make a valuable employee: leadership, work ethic, problem-solving abilities, and of course, integrity. These are not just abstract qualities; they are tangible assets that veterans bring to our businesses, our communities, and to our government. They are qualities that drive innovation. They boost productivity and foster a culture of excellence. Employing our Nation's veterans when they transition to civilian life is not just a responsibility; it is a smart business decision. That is why the Federal Government has long taken advantage of this absolutely remarkable talent pool.

Veterans now make up roughly 30 percent of our Federal workforce—or more than 640,000 veterans in the civil service—and I rise today to express my absolute outrage over the indiscriminate firings of nearly 6,000 of these veterans—from the VA to the Defense Department to the Department of the Treasury.

At the VA, where veterans' input is particularly critical to shaping policies that support our Nation's robust veteran population, Elon Musk and DOGE have fired more than 600 veteran employees. They are part of more than 2,400 individuals fired all across the VA.

I have heard from numerous veterans and VA workers in Michigan who are absolutely devastated and confused by why this administration would turn their back on them like this. My staff met with a veteran who has worked for the VA in Michigan for nearly 30 years. Last year, they were moved to a new

role within the VA and promoted—promoted—to supervisor shortly thereafter. And no surprise because they had never received less than an excellent performance review over 30 years. But because they were relatively new to that specific role, they were swept up in the widespread firings, both within the VA and across government, of all probationary employees. They were one of many veterans fired abruptly, without cause, without reason.

In another case, a veteran with 8 years of Active Duty service in the Air Force was fired from the VA in Michigan after receiving an "outstanding" performance review. His probationary period was set to expire last week, just 12 days after he was let go.

These cuts are not based on fact. They are not based on logic. They are just cruel. And our country will not be better off. As a result of these mass layoffs, Americans can expect longer wait times to receive important documents like passports and Social Security benefits, fewer food safety inspections, and higher risks during air travel.

These are Americans who put their lives on the line to defend this country. They took up a job to continue to serve the people of this country. They represent the very best of our Nation, and we need them in our Federal workforce.

I am calling today on the administration to reinstate these veteran employees immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, we made a sacred promise to our veterans that after their service, they would get the care and support that they earned. That promise did not come with an expiration date. And as a combat veteran myself, I take this responsibility personally on behalf of Arizona's more than 500,000 veterans and veterans across the country. But with these mass firings of staff at the VA, President Trump and Elon Musk are breaking that promise.

In the last month, thousands of VA employees, people who care for our Nation's veterans, were fired with no warning, no phone call, no meeting—just an email telling them that they no longer had a job, that they were no longer wanted. These aren't just nameless, faceless bureaucrats; these are Americans who signed up to serve our country by taking care of veterans. They deserve to be treated with respect. These are the people on the frontlines of veterans' care and services, and they were fired without even a thought.

We can all agree that the VA can do a better job, but aimlessly firing thousands of people will do nothing to help speed up veterans' healthcare—nothing. It will just make accessing care more difficult.

Secretary Collins and the VA claim that these were "non-mission critical" jobs. Well, that is simply not true. In

Arizona, we have seen VA workers and the families who rely on the VA impacted in a real way—like Brandy and David, who shared their story with Arizona's Family News and are both veterans themselves who became loan specialists to help fellow veterans navigate financial hardships and avoid homelessness. Before they were fired, each of them was handling 1,500 cases. Each of those cases represents one veteran who needs help. How much longer will it take veterans in need to get answers?

Another Arizona family reached out to my office, afraid to speak out publicly because of fear of retaliation. The husband is a doctor at the Tucson VA. He treats patients with lung disease. But last week he got an email—not a meeting, no conversation—just an email telling him to resign. Is that who Secretary Collins calls “non-mission critical”? His wife now fears that her job could be next. They have two young kids, and now they are being forced to rethink everything because this administration—this administration—kicked them to the curb.

Donald Trump claims to care about veterans but then turns around and fires the very people whose job it is to ensure that veterans get the care that they need, the care that they earned from serving our Nation, for keeping us safe. These are real people. These terminations, they are not just numbers on a spreadsheet; they are real people who execute a mission serving veterans. And these layoffs—these layoffs are going to mean longer wait times for appointments, fewer options for mental health care, fewer options for pain management, more delays in processing benefits.

Is this really where Elon Musk and Donald Trump want to save a buck? Off the backs of veterans who have risked everything for us?

This is not how the United States should treat our veterans. That is why I stand here today as a veteran myself, with Senator BLUMENTHAL and our colleagues, to support this resolution.

Let's get the folks back to work serving our veterans. The work they do is mission critical. Veterans in Arizona and across the country are counting on them, and they are counting on us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am going to close this colloquy by, first of all, thanking my colleagues who have come today, especially veterans like Senator KELLY, who served for decades, and Senator PETERS and all the veterans who have joined in this resolution—Senators GALLEGO and others who have served this country—Senator SLOTKIN, Senator PETERS, who was here, and others.

But we don't have to be veterans to appreciate what members of our military do for our country. My own service in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve pales in comparison to many of theirs

and many who have appeared before the Veterans' Committee over these past 7, 10 days, many of them decrying these kinds of cuts. Again, these are real people, affected in real ways, unnecessarily harmed.

And these headlines speak volumes about how they have been hurt:

DOGE finds zero fraud, waste, or abuse, just new ways to harm veterans.

Veterans fired in federal layoffs say they were “stabbed in the back.”

These are just a scattering of the kinds of real-life stories that bring us to the floor today.

I plead with the President: Please make this resolution unnecessary. Do the right thing. But if you don't, I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Join us from that other side of the aisle; join us in decrying these cuts, the freezes, the firings, the terminations. They are illegal and immoral.

And we will move forward. We will continue to fight because American values are at stake.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 21

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, last November, the American people returned President Donald Trump to the Oval Office with a mandate to restore common sense in government, and in many ways, this common sense was most needed on the issue of protecting women and girls.

After 4 years where President Biden waged a war on women's sports, the message from voters was clear: no more biological men competing in women's athletics, no more stolen records and medals, and no more invasions of privacy, humiliation, and harm for our Nation's incredible female athletes.

To be certain, President Trump has delivered on the mandate. On Inauguration Day, the President issued an Executive order that affirms the Federal Government's position that there are only two sexes, male and female.

This is a position grounded in biological reality, not gender ideology. Last month, the President also signed an Executive order that bans biological males from competing in women's sports.

It was an honor to join President Trump at the signing ceremony along with the brave young women and girls who have spoken out for fairness, safety, equal opportunity, including one of those female athletes, Tennessee's Riley Gaines.

The terms of the order are simple: If you allow men to compete in women's athletics, you will lose your Federal funding.

To no one's surprise, the order is getting results. Right after President Trump signed it, the NCAA, which oversees more than 530,000 student athletes, announced that it would comply with the order.

For more than a decade, the Nation's largest athletic association allowed

men to compete in women's events. It will be a top priority of mine to ensure that this injustice never happens again and that the NCAA will fully adhere to the Executive order.

While the vast majority of States are complying, there are some States, blue States like California and Maine, that are vowing to fight President Trump over the order.

The message they are sending is clear: Democrats are willing to risk millions in Federal funding for schools to uphold their radical, far-left ideology that claims there are no differences between men and women.

The American people know better, and so do the more than 3 million female high school and college athletes who deserve every single opportunity to succeed. They work hard; they train hard; they set their goals; they compete; and they work to succeed.

To celebrate all of these incredible accomplishments from these 3 million high school and college athletes, I am asking for unanimous consent for my resolution to establish October 10—the 10th month, 10th day—recognized by the Roman numerals XX, like the female sex chromosome, as American Girls in Sports Day, setting aside a day to recognize the accomplishments of 3 million high school and college female athletes.

In addition to celebrating female athletes, this resolution calls on sports governing bodies across the country to protect women and girls in sports. There is absolutely zero reason for Senate Democrats to oppose this resolution, and here is the reason why: We have a New York Times Ipsos poll that tells the story on this. Seventy-nine percent of the American people, including 67 percent of Democrats, want to make certain that female sports are for girls and women. Those numbers—67 percent of Democrats, 79 percent of all Americans—say they are with us.

They want to protect women and girls in sports. They want to make certain that they have the right to compete, the right to train, the right to do team building, and the right to succeed and be recognized for it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 21; further, that the resolution be agreed to; the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, as I understand it, this bill—this resolution seeks to establish an American Girls in Sports Day.

Obviously, that sounds like a really good idea until you read the resolution, and you realize that this resolution actually has virtually nothing to do with the history and the current reality of girls playing sports.

Instead, it is just another attempt by Republicans to pretend that the biggest threat to this country is transgender kids or gay kids or drag shows. Republicans don't want to talk about rising costs, rising grocery prices, rising gas costs. They don't want to talk about the cratering reputation of America in the world. They don't want to talk about the fact the stock market is crashing because of the disastrous economic policies of this President.

No. As usual, it is transgender kids and drag shows that are causing all the problems in America. How do I know that this bill isn't an honest attempt to celebrate girls in sports? Well, first, if you really cared about girls in sports, you would know that we actually already have a national day. It is February 7. It is called National Women and Girls in Sports Day. It was signed into law 40 years ago by President Reagan.

The sponsors of this resolution were so eager to shame transgender kids that they didn't even check to see if there was already a day. Now, folks are going to say Democrats objected to an American Girls in Sports Day. That is like bringing a resolution before the floor to declare June 27 Christmas, and when Democrats object, Democrats are anti-Christmas.

Second, if this bill were really about girls in sports, it would celebrate girls in sports. But this resolution isn't about that. The resolution, if you read it, is just about this one issue; transgender athletes. Frankly, that is an insult to the thousands of girls who do play sports. Ninety-nine percent of them are never going to compete against a transgender athlete.

I am not saying this isn't an issue that is worth spending a little bit of time on, but let's be clear: A female high school athlete in this country is more likely to be killed by a falling object than to lose a competition to a biological male.

If this resolution were really about celebrating girls in sports instead of just trying to bully and shame transgender kids, then maybe somewhere in the resolution it might talk about Patsy Mink, who successfully championed the passage of title IX. Maybe it would mention iconic women athletes who broke barriers like Billie Jean King or Althea Gibson or Kathrine Switzer or Pat Summitt. Maybe they would talk about the iconic sports teams that put women in sports on the national stage, like Louisiana Tech or the U.S. Women's Soccer Team.

Maybe it would actually tell the story of how over the last 50 years, we have gone from 300,000 girls in high school sports to 3.4 million today, but it doesn't do any of that. The text of this resolution isn't about the history of girls and women entering high school and college sports. It is not a celebration of those iconic teams and athletes. Instead, this resolution is just

a tactic, another one, to scare and mislead the public and to bully vulnerable kids. That is the reason that I am on the floor, once again, to object. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I find my colleague's comments so very interesting, and I think it would have served him well to actually read the resolution. So I am going to read part of it so that my colleagues know what this does because it does talk about celebrating these athletes.

Here you go:

Whereas athletic participation has an important, positive impact on young girls, improving their physical health, self-confidence, and discipline;

Whereas women have been responsible for some of the greatest athletic feats in the sports history of the United States, from the Olympic games to professional competition;

He wanted to make certain that some of these greats like Pat Summitt and our Lady Vols are recognized. Absolutely. That is what we are doing:

Whereas female athletes have served as inspirations for generations of women and girls;

And then we talk about title IX. We talk about:

Whereas there are fundamental biological differences between men and women that put women at a competitive disadvantage in sports and jeopardize their safety during competition;

And 79 percent of the American people agree with this.

Then we go through:

Whereas, since 2003, biological men have displaced women and girls from 950 championship titles, medals, scholarships, and records they should have rightly won, including at least 28 women's sports titles in volleyball, swimming, mountain biking, track and field, weightlifting, and cycling.

We look at the policies that have been enacted to protect women and the imperative to make certain they are athletically protected and then setting up October 10 as the day that would be American Girls in Sports Day and continuing to recognize that year after year.

Now, my colleague from Connecticut probably knows that this issue of protecting women and girls in sports is very, very popular in Connecticut. One of Connecticut's biggest track stars is a Conrad High School senior there, a male-to-female athlete who holds the State's top 2023–2024 rankings in the girls outdoor high jump, long jump, and triple jump according to athletic.net.

Then you look at—there are two individuals, two boys who identify as female, they competed on a Connecticut high school track team from 2017 to 2020, and there were—and I want to be sure we look at what this does to girls who are trying to compete. This is why this issue is so popular.

Here are the stats. There were 93 times when a girl was denied an individual or relay championship because

of these two male athletes who were competing as females—93 times. A girl who had trained, who had worked out, who sought to win, to represent her team—they were denied because two boys were competing as females. Ninety-three times.

There were 52 times when a girl was denied the advancement to a championship meet. Now, think about that. We all have children. We know the heartbreak when someone has trained and trained and trained, not just for days or weeks or months but for years, and they are denied the ability to move forward because there is a boy competing in a female category.

There were 39 times when a girl was denied an opportunity to advance to finals, 17 times when a girl was denied an All-New England honor, 11 times when a girl lost a meet record, and 23 girls—23—were denied a Connecticut State Open team championship.

In other words, allowing these two boys to compete as females and compete against girls denied girls opportunities and awards 235 times. That is one State.

So I would remind my colleagues they are on the wrong side of this issue. Seventy-nine percent of the American people say it is wrong for men to compete in women's athletics. Sixty-seven percent of Democrats say it is wrong to have men compete in women's athletics.

It is lost opportunity. It is lost recognition. It is lost success for women.

What ever happened to people on the left that supported women's rights, women's safety, supported title IX? Obviously, they have thrown it to the wayside.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

FEDERAL DISASTER TAX RELIEF ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to talk for a few moments about income tax filing season. I realize the Presiding Officer would probably prefer to be condemned to hearing O.J. jokes for the rest of eternity than to hear me talk about Federal income tax filing, but it is important for Americans and my people back in Louisiana because we have a new deduction for people who have uninsured losses from natural disasters. It is really important in my State because many of my people have suffered damages, for which they did not receive insurance payments, from Hurricanes Laura, Delta, Ida, and Francine.

We passed this new deduction in December. It is called the Federal Disaster Tax Relief Act. What it does is the following: It changes the law. It now says that if you are a victim of a natural disaster like a hurricane and you have a loss that is not paid for by your insurance, you can now deduct off your income tax dollar for dollar any uninsured property damage in excess of \$500.

Why is that important? Well, under the old rules, you were limited in your

deduction. You could only deduct your uninsured property losses that were in excess of 10 percent of your adjusted gross income. I know that sounds complicated, and it is kind of complicated. But rather than belaboring the point, the bottom line is this: As a result of this bill that we all worked on and we passed, you can now deduct more, and this is the first time people will be able to do this.

Let me say it again. If you had an uninsured property loss, you can now deduct any of that loss above \$500. This also applies in addition to the standard deduction. So if you take the standard deduction, as most Americans do, you can take this additional deduction on top of it.

I would also like to point out to all Americans but especially my people back home in Louisiana that this tax deduction is retroactive. It goes all the way back to 2020. So that means that going back to 2020, if you had uninsured losses, you can now deduct them if they exceed \$500.

I know folks are thinking, well, I already filed my income taxes for 2021 and 2022 and 2023. You can file an amended return. It is very simple to do. You just file an amended return that says: There has been a change in the law, and I am entitled to have this higher deduction, and therefore the Federal Government owes me money, and therefore please send me my check.

So I wanted to make sure that Americans knew about this new tax provision we passed.

INFLATION

Mr. President, the second thing I want to talk about is a subject that some people want to avoid, but I don't, and the American people don't. It is on the minds of every American. That is high prices. I know there are other issues that are important that we are talking about: male athletes in women's sports—that is important; immigration—that is important; national security—we are talking about that, and that is important; the Middle East; Ukraine. I could go on. But the single most important issue that moms and dads worry about in America today when they lie down to sleep at night and can't is inflation, high prices.

I don't want to dwell on the past, but President Biden's administration was an inflation machine. We saw inflation get as high at one point as 10 percent. What does that mean? That means that prices were going up every day, every month, at the rate of 10 percent annualized. Bidenomics, in most people's minds, became paying more to live worse. I mean, inflation just was gutting the American people like a fish. It happened because of all this breathtaking amount of money President Biden's administration spent, trillions of dollars—the American Rescue Plan, the CHIPS Act, the Inflation Reduction Act. They injected trillions of dollars into the economy, frankly, as we are finding out now, most of it in wasteful spending that caused too

many dollars to chase too few goods. Unless you are master class dumb, you know that every single time, that leads to inflation.

Thanks to the efforts of the Federal Reserve, inflation came down. It went down from 10 percent to—today, it is between 2 and 3 percent, depending on whose numbers you believe. And that is good. I am happy it happened. That is called disinflation.

When inflation goes from 10 percent to 3 percent, that means prices are still rising, but they are just not rising as quickly as they were. And that is a good thing, but it doesn't lower prices. It doesn't mean that we have now lower prices. They just aren't as high as they would have been if we hadn't tried to control inflation. That is called disinflation. Deflation is when prices actually go down. Deflation is when prices actually go down.

What the American people are wondering every single day as they sell blood plasma to go to the grocery store is, when am I going to get some relief from these high prices? And we do need to provide them relief.

I want to talk about three ways that we are in the process of trying to reduce those prices that my Democratic colleagues caused. And I don't mean to pick on all my Democratic colleagues, but as I have said before, I like breakfast food and straight answers. No economist in America believes that this inflation happened as a result of happenstance. It happened because of the breathtaking amount of money that President Biden spent.

There are three things we are doing to try to get these prices down. No. 1, reduce spending. You see it every single day from President Trump. He said he was going to audit Federal spending, and that is exactly what he is doing.

Now, there are some people that are mad. There are people that are very mad at President Trump and Mr. Musk and others for discovering all of this waste. The people that are mad don't seem to be mad at the people who caused the waste; they are mad at the President and Mr. Musk for finding the waste. I find that a little bit ironic.

But the point is that we are trying to reduce spending, and you are going to see it in our reconciliation bill that we are going to pass, as the Presiding Officer knows. You are going to see it in our budget, if we ever pass one. We are trying to reduce spending because our debt is \$36 trillion, and it is going up at the rate of \$7 million a minute. I have been talking 5 minutes, maybe; it has grown \$35 million while I was talking.

So we are trying to reduce government spending to get this debt down but also to reduce high prices. Why does it matter? Because the less money that government spends, the less stimulative government is on the private sector. When government spends money—there is a finite amount of money—when government spends money, it is money that we are spending instead of the private sector to create jobs and to increase wages.

So the first thing we are doing—the new administration and the new Congress—is to try to reduce spending, and if we are successful, that will lower these prices.

No. 2, deregulation. The Federal Government wants to regulate every breath we take—every breath we take.

I wish you could see all of the Federal regulations. If you stacked them right here—if you stack every single Federal regulation right here, you could probably stand on this thing and paint the ceiling. It is just amazing.

Each one of these regulations has a cost. The cost of all of our regulations today is in excess of \$2 trillion—not billion, not million—\$2 trillion. What does that mean? That means when a business produces a product or it delivers a service and it has to comply with a meaningless, gnarly Federal regulation which costs money, that extra expense is added to the cost of the product of the service.

Duh.

I mean, businesses have to stay in business. They can't eat the cost. So they pass it on. That leads to higher prices.

So the second thing that we are doing—we are working on it every day. It hasn't been talked about a lot. We passed some bills here on the floor of the Senate, but the administration is doing even more. We are deregulating. We are getting rid of all of these excess regulations whose costs are greater than their benefit. I think the President said he has a new rule that if you are in the bureaucracy and you want to promulgate a new rule, you can do it if it is really necessary, but you have to get rid of 10 others. If we do that successfully, that will reduce prices.

So the first thing we are doing is cutting spending to get down these high prices. The second thing we are doing is implementing Federal deregulation. The third thing we are doing—we are working on it as we speak, as you know, Mr. President.

We have to grow this economy. I mentioned the high spending and the debt that has led to higher prices. Think about this. Since 2019, 5 years ago, the American population increased 2 percent. The Federal budget has increased 55 percent—2 percent population increase, Federal spending is up 55 percent. That is just a fact. The numbers are the numbers. I know we have had some inflation. We haven't had 55-percent worth of inflation. That is just a fact.

Every dollar that the Federal Government spends is a dollar that business people don't have to invest. Why is that important? Because they invest; they grow their business; they add more jobs; the business becomes more profitable; and wages rise.

The third way we are attacking these high prices is by trying to stimulate the economy to increase wages so that we actually can grow out of these high prices so that people will have more money to spend when they buy a car or

go to the grocery store. We are not going to do that with tepid GDP growth.

If you go back to 2010—what, 15 years now? America has experienced average gross domestic product growth—that means how much your economy is growing, as you know, Mr. President. Average GDP growth is a little over 2 percent. That is not going to get it. That is not going to get it. In fact, now when we have 2.5 percent GDP growth, we get so excited. We are so happy we want to have a toga party. Well, 2.5 percent is not going to get it. In order to grow out of these high prices and increase wages, we are going to have to increase GDP growth to at least 3 percent. And that used to be normal for America. That used to be very, very doable and very normal.

How are we going to do that? We are going to do that through the Tax Code. We have about \$4.5 trillion worth of tax cuts that we implemented back in 2017 that caused the economy to grow and wages to go up until COVID hit. Those tax cuts are expiring here very shortly, and we are going to extend them. If we don't, it will be, in effect, a tax increase by \$4.5 trillion. That will send our growth down, not up.

We are also going to change some other provisions of the Tax Code; and in doing so, we are not going to add to our deficit. We are going to match those tax decreases with spending savings so that we do not add to the national debt. That is what we are doing on inflation.

I didn't want this to be lost in translation because of all the other important things we are talking about.

We are well aware that high prices are gutting the American people like a fish. But by reducing spending, by deregulating the economy, and by designing a Tax Code that looks like somebody designed it on purpose, we are going to get those high prices down.

Point 3, I am speaking of saving money. I talked a little bit about public radio and public television in America—the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, NPR, PBS. These are public TV and radio stations. The American people spend about a half billion dollars a year and give it directly to public TV. They give it to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting picks its favorite local TV stations and radio stations, gives money to them, and local TV and radio stations buy programming from NPR and PBS, which is loosely affiliated with Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

There was a time when it was necessary because we only had three TV stations and few radio stations. And people in rural areas depended on the government for the media. Those days are long gone, as we know. We now have a breathtaking array of ways to get information, everything from podcasts to Facebook to Twitter to Google News to cable TV to streaming. We no longer need to spend half a bil-

lion dollars a year or half a trillion dollars a year—we spent \$14.5 billion since we started funding public radio and television. We no longer need to do it.

I mean, we don't fund CNN. We don't subsidize CNN, and if somebody proposed to, I would vote against it. We don't subsidize FOX News. If somebody introduced a bill to subsidize FOX News, I would vote against it. Why are we subsidizing these radio and television stations? They need to compete with everybody else.

The final point I want to make on this subject, the audience for public radio and public television is declining. Let me say that again. The audience for public radio and public television, which your tax dollars pay for, is declining. Why is that? There are a lot of reasons for it, but I will tell you one. People used to tune into PBS and NPR and Corporation for Public bias—Public Broadcasting—Freudian slip there—because those stations played it right straight down the middle. But they don't anymore. They are very, very biased in their reporting. We all know that. I mean, all you have to do is listen to them.

This is America. You are entitled—I despise opinion journalists, but it is constitutional. On the First Amendment, you can say what you want, within reason. I support that. You are not free if you can't say what you think, so I don't want you to misconstrue what I am saying. These local stations that are getting money from the taxpayers have every right to report what they want. But they don't have a right to do it and offer a jaundiced point of view using taxpayer dollars. That is my point.

I just wanted to, as I have done in the past, I wanted to read a few more headlines. This is the kind of reporting that is being done today with your tax money on NPR, National Public Radio, and PBS. I will start with NPR. Here is one of the headlines of NPR: "Arguments that trans athletes have an unfair advantage lack evidence to support."

That is opinion journalism. Here is another headline from NPR: "A Brief History of How Racism Shaped Interstate Highways."

I did not know our interstate highways were racists. I thought they were concrete. Not according to NPR.

Here is another NPR headline: "Trump 'Embodies Nearly Every Aspect of a Racist,' Author Says."

Another: "The Nation: Confronting Trump's Coded Racism."

And another: "Is Trump's Call For 'Law And Order' A Coded Racial Message?"

As I said, these are your tax dollars at work.

"Sexism Is Out In The Open In The 2016 Campaign. That May Have Been Inevitable." That is another headline.

"Is Trump Really That Racist?" Another headline.

And another headline: "FRONTLINE traces the 'ambition and revenge' driv-

ing SCOTUS Justice Clarence Thomas." NPR is reporting that Justice Thomas is motivated by revenge and ambition.

Another headline from NPR: "What can the White House do to confront the narrative around Biden's ability?"

It wasn't a narrative. I mean, I don't hate anybody, and I am sorry this was the case, but President Biden had neurodegenerative disease. It wasn't a narrative; it was just a fact. I am sorry, but it was just a fact.

Last headline from NPR: "Scientists Start to Tease Out the Subtler Ways Racism Hurts Health."

Your tax dollars at work. I don't want to just pick on NPR. Here are a couple which you saw on television, PBS, paid for with your tax dollars. First headline: "Talking to Young Children About Race and Racism."

Another headline: "How America's history of racism connects to divisions today." Another headline from PBS: "The hidden racism of young white Americans."

Your tax dollars. Another headline: "AP FACT CHECK: Trump seeds race animus with COVID falsehood."

Another headline: "Biden trumpets economic gains, but struggles to get credit."

Another headline from PBS: "'The Other Olympians': Transgender Athletes in the Nazi Era."

Come on, give me a break. Gag me with a spoon.

The final headline I will read: "Debunking common myths about gender-affirming care for youth."

Let me say it again, Mr. President, these television stations and radio stations that are getting money from the Federal Government—your tax dollars—they have every right under the First Amendment to say these things. They do and I support the First Amendment. But they don't have an inalienable right to report these things using opinion journalism that no fair-minded American can construe as anything but representing one point of view with your tax dollars. I am going to try to stop subsidizing media, not just PBS and not just NPR but any form of media that somehow is getting Federal taxpayer dollars. It is just not right. It is not fair. I have a bill to do that. We are also going to pursue it through reconciliation. I think President Trump and Mr. Musk are going to pursue it on their own, and I think that is a very good thing.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

S.J. RES. 3

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, today's vote to proceed on this Congressional

Review Act resolution should be renamed the “Elon Musk ‘Get Out of Jail Free’ Card.”

This resolution gives Elon Musk the ability to launch his xMoney site without worrying about breaking the law and getting caught. Of course, this is also a “get out of jail free” card for others like, Apple Pay and Google Pay and other online platforms that handle people’s money, and there is a good reason to oppose it.

This bill is another example of how Republicans in Congress, in conjunction with President Trump and Elon Musk in the White House, are sticking it to families and middle-class consumers all over America and declaring it open season for fraudsters. In fact, just a few hours ago, Trump and Elon dropped the Agency’s lawsuit against Zelle and the big banks that own Zelle for failing to protect consumers from being scammed out of nearly \$1 billion on their app. Now Republicans are trying to roll back the CFPB’s ability to protect Americans from getting scammed on payment apps like Venmo and Cash App, and they are making it easier for unelected billionaire Elon Musk to cheat American consumers and line his own pockets.

So here is the back story: Musk bought Twitter, lost buckets of money, then decided he could recover and make more money by setting up a new financial services arm called xMoney. Now, in ordinary times, he could do that, but the CFPB would be responsible for enforcing consumer financial laws for xMoney. It would also be authorized to examine the books and records to prevent illegal practices and make sure that consumers are getting a fair shake. But co-President Musk doesn’t want that, and Donald Trump and Senate Republicans are willing to do Elon’s bidding, and that is what brings us here today.

They want to roll back a rule called the larger participant rule that was put in place to protect consumers from abuses on these apps and to ensure that these apps are being monitored for following the law, just like banks get monitored for doing the same kinds of things.

The rules protect consumers’ privacy when they use digital wallets like Apple Pay or Google Pay. The rules also help companies get their money back when they get defrauded on PayPal or Cash App or Venmo.

Frankly, the rule is great for consumers. It cracks down on tens of millions of dollars of fraud—fraud that has surged in recent years. It protects consumers’ privacy, ensuring that apps are not taking your private spending data and selling it to anybody who comes along. It helps prevent debanking, a problem that my colleagues on the opposite side of the aisle have spent a lot of time talking about.

The CFPB rule protects consumers’ peer-to-peer accounts from being closed or frozen without notice or justification. It prevents these apps from

unfairly depriving consumers of funds that they need to be able to buy stuff. Three-quarters of all Americans have used these peer-to-peer apps, and millions of Americans have had the sad experience of getting ripped off on peer-to-peer payments apps like Venmo and Cash App and PayPal.

Now, if you think that you are dealing with a legitimate person on the other side and then the next thing you know your money is gone and you are left without any recourse, that is wrong, and it is even worse if it happens because a payment app isn’t meeting its basic responsibilities of preventing fraud on its own platform. The CFPB rule helps to protect those millions of Americans who use payment apps, making sure that both their personal data and their money are safe.

This is a rule that is good for consumers, but it is not good for billionaires, who have figured out how to make money by defrauding those consumers. It is a very familiar story now. President Trump and the Republicans are on the side of the billionaires. They are acting to help out their pals Elon and Jeff and Mark. Hard-working people who just want their payment apps to work and who don’t want to get cheated as part of the deal are the ones who will lose.

Never mind that this is the Agency that works so hard for the little guy. Never mind that the CFPB has returned more than \$21 billion directly to American consumers who were cheated. Never mind that Elon Musk and Donald Trump are trying to kill this rule, and they are trying to kill the entire Agency.

Musk and Republicans in Congress are moving quickly to take the financial cop off the beat. They are hoping that people across this country won’t notice or that people are so distracted and overwhelmed by everything else that is going on that they won’t try to stop them.

But your eyes are not fooling you. It is happening in plain sight.

Ahead of Donald Trump’s speech tonight at the Capitol, Republicans are voting to hurt millions of American consumers. Why? Just to protect Elon Musk’s business ventures from a financial cop on the beat who would make sure that he follows the law.

I hope the American public is paying attention tonight. I hope my Republican colleagues are paying attention here in the Senate as well. It is not too late for them to reconsider this vote.

Make no mistake, Elon Musk locked the CFPB’s staff out of the building to protect his own payment app boondoggle, and now he wants Congress to block this rule to legalize his boondoggle.

And, next week, Republicans intend to mark up legislation that would clear the decks for Elon to issue xMoney as his own stablecoin without guardrails to protect consumers, to protect national security, or to protect the financial stability of our entire country.

The line between right and wrong is clear. On one side, Senate Democrats are standing up for Americans who just don’t want to get cheated when they use a financial app, and on the other side, we have got con men, rip-off artists, Elon Musk, and Big Tech billionaires. Which side will our Senate Republicans choose?

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, following their election loss, the Biden-Harris administration rushed an eleventh-hour rule through the Federal Government to allow the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to start regulating nonbank entities, specifically, around digital consumer payment systems.

These payment systems are applications—think about it—like PayPal or Zelle. Consumers have widely had positive experiences with these payment systems. According to the CFPB’s own database, only about 1 percent of the 1.3 million complaints last year involved these payment systems. These payment system companies, actually, are already being regulated at the State or Federal level. In other words, this eleventh-hour regulation the Biden administration rushed through is pointless. The Biden-Harris rule is a regulation in search of a problem. It is a rule without a reason. Furthermore, the cost-benefit analysis that the CFPB did—an audit by the CFPB—said that it would only cost \$25,000. Now, having come from the business sector myself, that probably is the first day of outside attorneys’ fees at \$25,000. It is widely off the mark.

This one-size-fits-all solution in search of a problem expands the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s authority unnecessarily. In fact, I would argue that this is in a way that was unintended by Congress. The CFPB is supposed to be looking over the financial services sector with regard to banking, not over these nonbank payment systems.

The CFPB even failed to define the market they are seeking to supervise, much like how the Biden EPA and Obama before that tried to expand the EPA’s authority under the waters of the United States rule. This is an expansion of the CFPB’s authority that is beyond what we want to allow.

I am proud to be able to lead the pushback with the Congressional Review Act to stop this unnecessary rule. I am also honored to work with my fellow Nebraskan, Congressman MIKE FLOOD, who is leading the same effort over in the House. This is an opportunity for us to ease the regulatory

burden the previous administration put upon the American people.

Thank you to Leader THUNE for bringing this resolution to the floor for a vote.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to vote yes to overturn and stop this unnecessary rule that is expanding the authority of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau unnecessarily and despite the intent of Congress. The CFPB's overregulation of nonbank digital consumer payment applications should stop. We can do it here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, the decentralized finance industry is in its infancy. It is a new technology in the digital asset space which enables two individuals to exchange cryptocurrencies without a third party sitting in between them. Although that sounds straightforward, the technology holds potential for technological and financial innovation that we are just beginning to explore. In that sense, DeFi is a microcosm of the crypto revolution, which is unleashing innovation and economic growth and, indeed, personal liberty.

I think of my home State of Texas when it comes to cryptocurrencies. Texas is becoming an oasis for Bitcoin and for cryptocurrency worldwide. In Texas, we have abundant, low-cost energy, and as the energy capital of the world, Texas has both the expertise and the ethos of Texas.

The Lone Star State was founded by a bunch of wildcatters who were guys with fourth grade educations who began drilling holes in the ground. One after the other, they became the richest men on Earth. That is Texas, the spirit of Texas, and that is the spirit of crypto as well.

So what is the rule that Congress is in the process of repealing? At its core, DeFi was designed to allow individuals to freely buy, sell, and exchange digital assets without reliance on third-party intermediaries. It is ironic, therefore, that in the final hours of the Biden administration, the IRS finalized a new rule attacking America's cryptocurrency industry and more specifically DeFi.

Under the gross proceeds reporting by brokers that regularly provide services effectuating digital asset sales—that is a mouthful—the Biden administration expanded the definition of “broker” to include the software developers who create DeFi software, protocols, technology, and so on. They define “coders”—computer programmers—as “brokers.”

The IRS rule is untenable on its face. These software developers—they never touch any of the cryptocurrency being exchanged. DeFi interfaces are neutral technological tools, not financial intermediaries. They do not facilitate transactions. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act could not have been intended for software developers to be

classified as financial intermediaries for the simple reason that their software never holds or controls user funds.

In fact, the rule is not just ironic, but it is incoherent. The software these developers are creating is designed to facilitate crypto exchanges between two individuals without a third party in between. What we have here are software developers—not brokers—developing software to facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges without brokers. That is the entire point.

If left in place, this rule would undermine innovation by turning developers into brokers and through reporting requirements that are incredibly onerous for crypto startups to meet. Those developers would inevitably go overseas instead.

If we were to allow this rule to stand, we would be handing China the opportunity to tighten its grip on the digital asset industry, stifling innovation, economic freedom, and financial sovereignty.

In that sense, this issue isn't just about crypto; it is about stopping unchecked Federal overreach. The Federal Government can do a lot of damage to crypto if the government screws it up.

The requirements, in turn, would risk the privacy of millions of Americans because software developers would be required to collect personal information and pass it on to the IRS.

Just for emphasis, this rule would compel DeFi developers—people who are creating cutting-edge technology to enhance the privacy of Americans—to collect, to store, and to report the personal identifying information of tens of millions of Americans and then hand it over to the IRS—an Agency with a long and well-documented history of mishandling sensitive taxpayer information.

These are serious privacy and surveillance risks. The IRS has already proven to the American people that it cannot be trusted, and it has already demonstrated its reckless disregard for privacy. Just last year, a former IRS contractor was sentenced to 5 years in prison for disclosing thousands of tax returns and return information for high-ranking government officials and related entities and individuals. These private taxpayer files were stolen and subsequently leaked to the press.

Indeed, DeFi is a powerful technology precisely because it undermines bureaucrat control over American citizens. The foundation of financial freedom is the right to engage in financial transactions without unnecessary government interference. The American people should be free to spend their money the way they see fit.

Far too often, we are increasingly seeing and hearing the opposite: threats to individual freedom, enforced through financial control. Banks are denying services to Americans because of their political beliefs or their line of work. We saw it first under Obama

with Operation Choke Point, and we saw it again, tragically, under the Biden administration.

These actions aren't just abuses of power; they strike at the very foundation of a free society.

DeFi isn't controlled by Washington bureaucrats. Indeed, by design, it can't be. That is one of the many things I love about it. DeFi's noncustodial technology lets citizens hold and spend their own money, securely, without needing permission from some government-backed institution.

It is no wonder the Chinese Communist Party hates crypto in general and DeFi in particular. China has already banned cryptocurrency within its borders because it operates beyond government control, and central governments hate that. And, of course, the Chinese Government is one of the most dystopian, authoritarian regimes in the world, and so they have made cryptocurrency transactions illegal because they view those transactions—they rightly view those transactions—as threats to their authoritarian power.

So, yes, every time we create a new ecosystem using something like DeFi, that is an ecosystem insulated from China, and it is an ecosystem that China views as a threat. That is exactly why we must ensure that Americans have access to this technology. We should make sure it thrives right here in the United States.

There has been a lot of talk on both sides of the aisle about supporting cryptocurrency. We now have an opportunity to deliver results for the American people. Earlier this afternoon, we cast the initial vote on moving to proceed to the CRA to repeal this rule. I have to say, I was incredibly heartened that 70 Senators voted together in support of my legislation, and 18 Democratic Senators crossed the aisle and voted in support of repealing this ridiculous and abusive rule.

That is a powerful statement. It is a powerful statement to bitcoin and crypto that Congress is not going to let Washington crush the innovation that is driving so much prosperity. I thank the 18 Democratic Senators who crossed over, and on this final vote I urge even more: Come join us.

I will say—it is an interesting note—if you look at the list of the Democratic Senators who voted with us, it is almost every single Democratic Senator under the age of 60. There is a clear delineating line, and I think there is a reason for that.

Let's stand on the side of innovation. Let's stand on the side of jobs. Let's stand on the side of prosperity. Let's stand on the side of freedom. Let's foster innovation, cut government overreach, and unleash the full potential of the American economy. Let's rescind this rule, and let's unleash the future.

Mr. President, I yield back all time on Calendar No. 11, S.J. Res. 3.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The clerk will read the title of the joint resolution for the third time.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

VOTE ON S.J. RES. 3

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. CRUZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 70, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 102 Leg.]

YEAS—70

Alsobrooks	Graham	Ossoff
Banks	Grassley	Padilla
Barrasso	Hagerty	Paul
Blackburn	Hawley	Ricketts
Booker	Heinrich	Risch
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Husted	Schatz
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schiff
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Schumer
Cornyn	Kim	Scott
Cortez Masto	King	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lee	Sheehy
Crapo	Lujan	Sullivan
Cruz	Marshall	Thune
Curtis	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	McCormick	Tuberville
Ernst	Moody	Warner
Fetterman	Moran	Warnock
Fischer	Moreno	Wicker
Gallo	Mullin	Young
Gillibrand	Murkowski	

NAYS—27

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Shaheen
Blunt Rochester	Klobuchar	Smith
Cantwell	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Welch
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Justice	Lummis	Slotkin
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The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 3) was passed as follows:

S.J. RES. 3

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to "Gross Proceeds Reporting by Brokers That Regularly Provide Services Effectuating Digital Asset Sales" (89 Fed. Reg. 106928 (December 30, 2024)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 25.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Troy Edgar, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 25, Troy Edgar, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Katie Britt, Pete Ricketts, Tom Cotton, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Rick Scott of Florida, Jon Husted, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Roger F. Wicker, Bernie Moreno.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 29.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lori Chavez-DeRemer, of Oregon, to be Secretary of Labor.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 29, Lori Chavez-DeRemer, of Oregon, to be Secretary of Labor.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Barrasso, Mike Lee, Katie Britt, Mike Crapo, Bill Hagerty, Steve Daines, Jim Banks, Eric Schmitt, Tommy Tuberville, Chuck Grassley, Ashley B. Moody, Roger Marshall, John R. Curtis, Bernie Moreno.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

HALT ALL LETHAL TRAFFICKING OF FENTANYL ACT—Motion To Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 18, S. 331.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to proceed.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 18, S. 331, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 18, S. 331, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Katie Britt, Tom Cotton, Pete Ricketts, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Rick Scott of Florida, Jon Husted, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Roger F. Wicker, Bernie Moreno.

DISAPPROVING THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION RELATING TO "DEFINING LARGER PARTICIPANTS OF A MARKET FOR GENERAL-USE DIGITAL CONSUMER PAYMENT APPLICATIONS"—Motion To Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 20, S.J. Res. 28.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.