I yield the floor.

GUIDING AND ESTABLISHING NATIONAL INNOVATION FOR U.S. STABLECOINS ACT—Motion to Proceed

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). The Senator from Georgia.

EVYATAR DAVID

Mr. OSSOFF. Madam President, Evyatar David has always loved music, singing, and playing instruments with his brother Ilay and his sister Yaela at Shabbat dinners. Evyatar dreams of becoming a music producer one day, and that love of music led Evyatar to the Negev Desert for the Nova Music Festival on October 7, 2023. For months, he had been looking forward to a weekend of music and friends. But instead, Evyatar, is now, as I speak these words on the Senate floor, living his 591st day of captivity in a Hamas dungeon under Gaza.

His brother Ilay told me recently that another hostage, recently freed, brought him a message from Evyatar that Evyatar misses most of all playing music with his family. Instead, Evyatar has been starved and kept in chains with a bag over his head. He and his best friend Guy Gilboa-Dalal have been held together and tortured together.

Evyatar and Guy both have younger sisters, older brothers, parents, friends whose lives are shattered by their absence.

This is Evyatar before, but recent photos show a man abused and malnourished. And he was recently taken to witness the release of other hostages and then returned to captivity simply to torment him.

I first met Evyatar's brother Ilay when he visited Atlanta and then hosted Ilay in my office here in the Senate, and I was inspired by the tenacity of his hope and his relentless effort to ensure his brother is not forgotten. And today I rise to demand Evyatar's freedom and to demand yet again the release of all hostages held in Gaza.

Many of us in Atlanta's Jewish community, including Ohr HaTorah, Beth Jacob, B'nai Torah, and now all of the synagogues of the Atlanta Rabbinical Assembly have decided to adopt Evyatar's case, to call relentlessly for his immediate release and to ensure he is not forgotten or left for dead.

This 24-year-old man has now spent two birthdays in brutal captivity, where he remains right now at this moment, but he belongs at home with his family.

Evyatar, you are not forgotten.

Free Evyatar David. Free him now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 217

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 217 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; 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 objection?

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. CRAPO. I would like to make some remarks. If my colleague is going to make some remarks, I would yield to her first.

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CRAPO. I am reserving the right to object. I will object, and we can make our remarks after.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary of Health and Human Services, is presenting a clear and present danger to the health and well-being of the American people. He oversees 13 Agencies that are critical to U.S. health policy and the health of our Nation. One such Agency, the National Institutes of Health, is the world's leading Agency for public health research, and I am proud to represent many of the scientists who work there as the Senator from Maryland. This is the place that the Nation looks to for discoveries in public health. This is where the world looks to to fight global health crises. This is the beacon of American exceptionalism.

Over the last 40 years, NIH has helped reduce deaths from heart disease by 75 percent, deaths from stroke are down 75 percent, and NIH funding has led the fight to save countless lives with groundbreaking discoveries. NIH is the greatest credit to sustaining medical research in history.

But now, we are dealing with an administration that is a direct threat to our health. Since Donald Trump has taken office, NIH has fired 1,300 employees and has canceled more than $2 billion in Federal research grants. He wants to cut the NIH budget by 40 percent, and these cuts would be carried out by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., one of the most unqualified individuals that we have seen to hold that position.

Secretary Kennedy took an oath to faithfully discharge the duties of the office in which he was about to enter, and to this point, he has utterly failed and is making Americans sicker.

Look at what he has done in just 4 months. We are currently watching the largest single measles outbreak in our Nation in 25 years—25 years. There are 1,000 cases, and one-third of them are children younger than 5 years old. Three people have died, including two young children.

For years, Secretary Kennedy, without an ounce of medical training, has spread lies and conspiracy theories about safe and effective vaccines—vaccines that literally prevent measles. A qualified HHS Secretary would highlight the effectiveness of vaccines and urge people to continue getting vaccinated. A capable Secretary would have some sense of compassion for suffering children. The Secretary we have, instead, chose to downplay the deaths and encourage untested treatments. This is dangerous. Americans will get sicker, and, in fact, they already have.

Our Nation has made incredible gains in IVF and infertility treatment, raising the birth rate through IVF dramatically over the last 30 years, but just last month, Secretary Kennedy fired the entire team at CDC who works on IVF and infertility research. Secretary Kennedy fired most of the employees at the CDC's Division of Reproductive Health, which helps to promote healthy pregnancies. Secretary Kennedy fired staff at the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, which oversees important programs that support children and pregnant women.

Countless women across the country have become mothers thanks to the incredible advancements in IVF, and a good number of this President's women supporters supported him because he vowed to make the treatment more accessible. How dare this man take that away from them.

Our Nation has made great progress in the fight to eliminate HIV and AIDS, building on an understanding of how to treat the virus and getting closer to finding a cure—until now. Secretary Kennedy has now cut funding for dozens of HIV-related research grants.

Did you know that there is a National Firefighter Registry that was set up to study the link between the hazards of the job and firefighters developing cancers? Well, that registry has now been taken down at Secretary Kennedy's bidding.

This is part of a heartless trend. They are destroying what decades of research has built. The billions in funding cuts and thousands of staff cuts threaten the race to find cures for Alzheimer's, ALS, cancer, and other devastating illnesses. The impact will be felt far beyond our borders, and it will be generational.

For decades, we have taken the lead on the global stage in research and development. We have taken the lead in fighting global health challenges. Many of the world's brightest researchers come here to join the fight. The top research agencies around the world partner with us. Public health is a responsibility that we must lead. R.F.K. is singlehandedly destroying that reputation, setting us back potentially decades.

The eyes of the world are on us. Most look to us to lead; some look for us to stumble. But they are watching to see what we do. Having Secretary Kennedy as the face of our Nation's health and research operation sends a terrible

message to the rest of the world and a terrifying one to the American people. He is in over his head, he cannot do the job, and he needs to step down for the health of our Nation.

To my colleagues, we took an oath as well. We have a duty—a duty—to do what is right, and we know that R.F.K., Jr., is not right for America.

I want to thank my colleague and partner here in Maryland, Senator VAN HOLLEN, as well as Senators WYDEN and WARREN, for joining me in this effort.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I want to explain the reason for my objection.

This is another of many attempts that have been made to stop the efforts of President Trump and his Cabinet and the rest of the administration in downsizing our bloated bureaucracy and trying to bring a little bit of control to the amazing growth of our Federal Government without causing the damage that is always alleged that is being done.

From groundbreaking biomedical advancements through the NIH to critical healthcare coverage for America's most vulnerable patients, the Department of Health and Human Services oversees many of the Federal Government's most essential functions. But far too often, these programs fall short of their well-intended purpose.

Bureaucratic overreach has resulted in the loss of trust from many Americans. Waste, fraud, and abuse have contributed to excessive spending without meaningful improvements in outcomes, and that is driving our national debt now to $37 or $38 trillion.

Secretary Kennedy has committed to addressing these failures. He has made himself and his staff available to Congress and the American people to restore faith in our institutions. When issues have arisen, Secretary Kennedy has worked quickly to remedy the problem. In fact, in recent days, Secretary Kennedy has appeared before two Senate committees to have an open, transparent conversation about the Department's efforts.

Last week, the Senate Finance Committee moved to advance more nominees who will assist in the Department's management and communication with Congress.

Secretary Kennedy and his team deserve time to deliver on the promise of putting patients first, promoting transparency, and following the science.

For these reasons, I objected to the request.

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

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each: myself, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and Democratic Leader SCHUMER.

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

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleagues to make very, very clear—not just to our Republican colleagues but to history—exactly what is at stake. Let there be no doubt. Senate Republicans are threatening to go nuclear on Senate procedure to gut California's Clean Air Act waivers.

But this isn't just about California's climate policies, and this isn't just about the scope of the Congressional Review Act. This isn't even just about eliminating the legislative filibuster. No. What Republicans are proposing to do would go far beyond just eliminating the filibuster. If they insist on plowing forward, Federal Agencies will now have unilateral power to trigger privilege on the Senate floor with no institutional check from the legislative branch.

Just as EPA has submitted California's waivers with full knowledge that they are not actually rules, other Agencies will now be free to submit any type of action, going back to 1996. Think licenses, permits, leases, loan agreements, drug approvals. There would be no limit.

Now, we have been safe from this kind of abuse until now because the Senate has a process in place for the Government Accountability Office to help the Senate Parliamentarian determine privilege for the purposes of the CRA. But Republicans are now threatening to throw that process out. And the consequences of throwing the rule book out the window will be very, very serious, but it is not too late to turn back.

Republicans must understand exactly what they are doing. So, today, I think it is important to establish some facts about the process that protects the Senate from Agencies that try to game the system.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. President, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state his inquiry.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, is it correct that the then-Senate Parliamentarian, in 2008, in coordination with bipartisan Senate leadership and committee staff, developed a Senate procedure for determining what qualifies for expedited consideration under the Congressional Review Act when an Agency fails to submit an action to Congress and that a precedent under that procedure was first established in 2012?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Based on information that is publicly available, yes, that is correct.

Mr. PADILLA. And is it correct that that procedure, which uses a GAO determination as to the nature of the Agency action, whether or not it is a rule, has been implemented numerous times by Senators on both sides of the aisle, including one occasion where a GAO letter gave rise to a joint resolution of disapproval which became law?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Based on information that is publicly available, yes, that is correct.

Mr. PADILLA. I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I join the ranking member of the Rules Committee with a parliamentary inquiry of my own.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state his inquiry.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, is it true that unless a piece of legislation is privileged under a rule or a statutory provision or is the subject of a unanimous consent agreement, motions to proceed to that legislation are generally fully debatable?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. That is correct. And for those of you following this at home, ''fully debatable'' means 60 votes are required to end debate, which Republicans do not have.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. President, I have a further parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state his inquiry.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Is it commonplace for Senate offices and for whichever Senator is presiding over the Senate to consult with the Parliamentarian to determine whether and in what manner expedited procedures apply under a host of statutes, including the War Powers Act, the National Emergencies Act, the Congressional Budget Act, and the Congressional Review Act?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Again, for those of you following this at home, that means that this is the commonplace way in which the Senate operates and when it becomes the Parliamentarian's call on a matter and not anyone else's call.

So in the Congressional Review Act matter before us, here is what happened: Both sides drafted written memoranda to the Parliamentarian. Both sides presented oral arguments to the Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian asked questions of both sides, and the Parliamentarian, our neutral referee, reached a decision.

That all took place here in the Senate—actually, over there in the L.B.J. Room. The GAO was not even in the room when the arguments were made. And that decision, the decision of the Parliamentarian, is what is now at hand in what is about to happen here in the Senate.

And with that, let me note the presence on the floor of the Democratic leader and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, is it true that the Parliamentarian advised leadership offices that the joint resolutions of disapproval regarding the California waivers at issue does not qualify

for expedited consideration under the Congressional Review Act?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. While the chair has no personal knowledge of those circumstances, the Parliamentarian has advised me that such advice was given.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

Before I yield, I want everyone to understand what the essence of my question was. This week, the Republicans want to use a legislative tool known as the CRA in an unprecedented way: to repeal emissions waivers that the fossil fuel industry has long detested.

The CRA has never been used to go after emission waivers like the ones in question today. The waiver is so important to the health of our country, and particularly to our children, to go nuclear on something as significant as this and to do the bidding of the fossil fuel industry is outrageous.

And we just heard in response to my inquiry just now that the Parliamentarian affirmed this, that these California waivers are not—not—eligible for the expedited procedures that the CRA affords.

That means that legislation to repeal these waivers should be subject to a 60-vote threshold in the Senate. To use the CRA in the way that Republicans propose is going nuclear—no ands, ifs, or buts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

CLEAN AIR ACT

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I wonder if any other Member of this Chamber grew up like I did where on a pretty regular basis, we would be sent home from grade school because of the intensity and dangers of smog that settled over the San Fernando Valley, the city of Los Angeles.

How many of you grew up to more reports of unhealthy air quality in the air quality index or hazardous air quality forecast for that particular day than it was just clean air?

But that is the case for far too many Californians, still to this day. But it is the reason why decades ago Congress recognized both California's unique air quality challenges and its technical ingenuity and granted California special authority to do something about it.

And thanks to the bipartisan Clean Air Act of over 50 years ago, California has had that legal authority to set its own emission standards, to petition and be granted waivers to be able to show leadership—for over 50 years—because Congress recognized, rightfully so, that air quality in West Virginia or Wyoming is different than it is in Southern California, that there are fewer cars on the road in Salt Lake City than there are in Los Angeles, and because California was, and still is, the center of innovation in the United States.

Yet in 2025, it appears that Republicans want to overturn half a century of precedence in order to undermine California's ability to protect the health of our residents.

By using the Congressional Review Act to revoke California's waivers that allow us to set our own vehicle emissions standards, Republicans seem to be putting the wealth of the Big Oil industry over the health of our constituents.

What happened? You know, nearly 60 years ago, it was Republican Governor Ronald Reagan who established the State Air Resources Board in California. And 3 years later, it was Republican President Richard Nixon who signed amendments to the Clean Air Act, fulfilling promises he made in that year's State of the Union, that clean air should ''be the birthright of every American.''

I wonder if Governor, future-President Reagan and President Nixon would recognize their own party today.

I also want to take a moment to speak to parents of young children, not just in California but across the country, because parents are rightfully concerned about the safety of what our children eat, what medications they take.

You know, as parents, we have some level of control over certain things like the food we give our kids or the medications that we provide, but some things that we can't control as parents include the quality of the air they breathe outside. We can't individually control the toxic nitrogen oxides, the carbon monoxide, the sulfur dioxide, the benzene, and particulate matter that flood into our air and into our children's lungs.

Now, unless industry were to somehow decide to suddenly just do the right thing, it is incumbent upon government to act. And that is what California has done. But, of course, this discussion debate is more than just about public health. California's emissions standards also represent ambitious but achievable steps to cut carbon emissions and fight the climate crisis.

We have taken a stand because we know transportation is the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and California has been proud to set the example for other States who may choose to follow suit.

Now, I use the word ''choose,'' and I will use it repeatedly, because over and over again in this debate, I have heard some arguments coming from Republicans that I think are misleading the American public. I hear arguments like, well, California ''isn't simply setting a stricter standard for itself; it's setting a new national standard.''

Or California's ''emission standards would become de facto national ones.''

So I want to be clear. California has not and cannot force our emission standards on any other State in the Nation. As much as I may love that authority, that does not exist.

But, yes, over a dozen other States have voluntarily followed in California's footsteps, not because they were forced to, but because they chose to in order to protect their constituents, their residents, and protect our planet.

And the truth is, they do have a tremendous blueprint to follow. California is now the fourth largest economy in the world and the largest contributor to the Federal Treasury. California didn't get there by sticking our head in the sand as the clean energy transition blossomed elsewhere. We leaned in, and we proved that what is good for the air is good for business. What is good for the planet and public health is good for the economy.

But, meanwhile, the cost of inaction continues to hit Americans where it hurts the most: in our wallets. In 2021, the Natural Resources Defense Council estimated that air pollution from fossil fuels cost Americans an average of $2,500 a year in medical bills—or over $820 billion in total.

So, no, this isn't just about Republicans defending against some California power grab or fighting on behalf of the little guy, which brings me to my final point—because it is not just why Republicans are trying to undermine California's climate leadership; it is how they are trying to do it.

Now, I have been very clear on where I stand on the filibuster that has been applied counterargument in several conversations here amongst colleagues. Yes, I do support lowering the threshold to move to pass a bill from a supermajority to a simple majority—but only after there has been an opportunity for amendments and debate—in an effort to stop the endless partisan gridlock that prevents so much more progress that the American people deserve.

I have voted to make that rule change and codify it in the Senate rules; but in 2022, when we did so, Republicans opposed it, and they defended the filibuster and the 60-vote threshold as sacred.

Today, as the ranking member of the Senate Rules Committee, I want to make sure everyone understands exactly what Republicans are trying to do here, now.

The Clean Air Act passed this body under regular order by a vote of 88–12 in 1967. The Landmark Clean Air Act amendments passed the Senate 89–11 in 1990 by overwhelming bipartisan support.

But now Republicans are trying to pass these bills that strike at the heart of the Clean Air Act's provision for California on a simple majority 50-vote threshold, bypassing the filibuster.

Republicans certainly must know that they don't have the votes to amend the Clean Air Act under regular order. If they did, they would choose that path. They also know that Congress doesn't have the authority to amend the Clean Air Act through the Congressional Review Act.

Don't just take my word for it; they heard it from the independent, nonpartisan Government Accountability Office—not just once but twice. And

they heard it from the Senate Parliamentarian who told them they could not move forward.

So what Republicans are now trying to do is truly unprecedented, and it is about far more than simply California's clean energy policies. Republicans are threatening to vote on whether or not to overrule the Senate Parliamentarian.

Republicans are effectively saying that whenever the Parliamentarian rules against them, they can simply disregard her to bypass the filibuster and pass legislation on a simple majority vote. So, no, this isn't some one-off change to the rules; this is throwing out the rule book entirely. Because if they can ignore the Parliamentarian here, then why not on an upcoming tax bill or on their efforts to gut healthcare for many Americans or whatever the latest overreach is called for by President Trump?

This goes way beyond the filibuster. The Trump administration could send an endless stream of nonrule actions to Congress, going back to 1996, including vaccine approvals, broadcast licenses, merger approvals, and any number of government decisions that apply to President Trump's long list of enemies.

All it would take is a minority of 30 Senators to introduce related bills, and the Senate would be bogged down voting on Agency grocery lists all day long. Is that how we want to spend our days here at the Senate, voting on every vaccine approval because Secretary Kennedy decides to send them to Congress?

So to my Republican colleagues, I should also say this: The old adage says ''what goes around comes around,'' and it won't be long before Democrats are once again in the driver's seat here, in the majority once again. And when that happens, all bets would be off because of the precedent you could be setting here at this moment.

Think mining permits. Think fossil fuel project approvals. Think LNG export licenses or offshore leases, IRS tax policies, foreign policy, every Project 2025 or DOGE disruption. Every Agency action that Democrats don't like—whether it is a rule or not and no matter how much time has passed—would be fair game if Republicans set this new precedent.

So I suggest that we all think long and hard and very carefully about this. And I would urge my colleagues—all my colleagues—to join me, not just in defending California's rights to protect the health of our residents, not just in combatting the existential threat of climate change, but in maintaining order in this Chamber.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, let me start with just a quick overview of the Congressional Review Act which brings us here to the floor today.

Under the American legal system, administrative Agencies can make rules, and there is a very robust process for doing so. The Agency often gives a notice of proposed rulemaking so the world will know what they are considering doing and then solicit comment from affected stakeholders, the public, a wide variety of people.

So you start with an Agency that seeks to make a rule. They have to follow the processes of the Administrative Procedures Act, which is a very careful statute, well-policed by the courts, with a very robust precedent around that. And at the end of the day, the Agency creates a rule, and they adopt the rule.

Now, you could always appeal that rule to a court, but what Congress decided many years ago was that in that situation where an Agency had gone through the APA process and had promulgated a rule, that there would also be a congressional review of that rule, not just a court.

And the filing of the rule here in Congress triggers a period of review in which Senators or Members of the House can call up the Congressional Review Act and seek to disapprove the rule.

So this whole thing was originally designed and—for all the decades since the Congressional Review Act was first passed—has always been to address Agency rulemaking under the Administrative Procedures Act.

Well, the fossil fuel industry pretty much runs the Republican Party here in Washington. And for a long time, it has objected to California having clean air standards that many States, including my State, voluntarily follow because it is good for the health of our people to have clean air; it is good to have less smokestack emissions, less exhaust emissions.

But it means less gas sales for the fossil fuel industry. Efficient cars may mean lower costs for consumers, but those lower costs for consumers are lower sales for the fossil fuel industry.

So the majority here has decided to jump outside that tradition that it takes a rule developed by an Agency to kick off the Congressional Review Act.

In this case, again, for decades, pursuant to a statute, California has had the right to set emissions standards, and it was never done by rule; it was always done by an Executive action—in this case, called a waiver. And what is now being done is a real violence to that distinct and clear process.

This breaks the Congressional Review Act in at least three ways: First, it breaks the time limits of the Congressional Review Act. Again, in the ordinary course, a rulemaking goes through its ordinary process under the APA; and when it is done, it then comes here to the Senate, and we have got a short period of time in which to make a determination whether to try to disapprove it or not.

Under the proposal that is threatened here, you will be able to take any Executive decision in decades and simply by dropping it into the Federal Register, making that submission, and sending it to Congress, let the majority party say: OK, we are going to overrule that. Not a rulemaking, nothing done under the Administrative Procedures Act, just an Executive decision. So the window back in time outside of the ordinary 60 days is the first thing that they broke.

The second thing that they break is that it has to be a rule. Like I said, pretty much any Executive action could be plowed through the process that is being created here. And so however settled the reliance on a particular permit or a particular license or a particular Executive decision from years ago, it is all up for grabs under this.

And the third, of course—other than breaking open the time horizon of the Congressional Review Act and breaking open the subject matter horizon of the Congressional Review Act—is to clear out the police of the Congressional Review Act, and that is the Parliamentarian, who made what, in my view, was not a difficult decision, to say: This is not a rule, never was a rule. Year after year, administration after administration, Congress after Congress, California has used this waiver, and it was never a rule. And now, the Parliamentarian's plain, clear, obvious decision that this was not and is not and never was a rule is what they are planning to overturn.

So you are breaking open the time horizon; you are breaking open the subject matter boundary; and you are knocking out the neutral police officer who is supposed to keep us living by the rules. This does not end well.

By the way, I have heard it said that the argument from the other side is going to be they are not overruling the Parliamentarian; they are overruling the Government Accountability Office. Well, if that is what they wanted to do, there are ways to do that. If the Government Accountability Office says that the law says a certain thing and we disagree, we can go back and change that law. We can amend it so that it is clear what it is that we want the law to say and correct the GAO decision that way. We can pass a joint resolution that does the same thing. We could even pass a simple Senate resolution.

But guess what. All of those things are fully debatable. And as I said earlier, ''fully debatable'' means what? It means 60 votes to end debate, meaning that the minority party gets a vote, gets consideration.

They don't want that. They want to ram this thing through for their fossil fuel donors. Period. End of story. They don't care what they break. But, please, don't pretend that you are overruling GAO.

My team, along with Senator PADILLA's team, was in the L.B.J. Room making those arguments to the Parliamentarian. There was robust debate. We filed briefs. Questions were asked. The whole thing was a very vigorous contest, and she ruled—and she ruled.

And GAO was not even in the room. That stage was long since passed.

The reason we are here is to overrule the Parliamentarian. The reason for overruling the Parliamentarian is to get a simple majority to get around this.

There are other ways this could have been done too. EPA didn't have to do it this way. EPA could have gone through the Administrative Procedures Act and done a proper rulemaking. We could have amended the Clean Air Act and had a proper debate about this on the Senate floor. EPA would have followed regular Administrative Procedures Act order. The debate about the Clean Air Act would have followed regular Senate order. But no.

Or the fossil fuel industry could have gone to California and said: Hey, things have changed a little bit. We would like to figure out a way to work with you. You change your rule. They are the real principal party here; Rhode Island follows the California standard. They could have gone and negotiated with the sovereign State of California instead of coming here to just roll the State using a sneaky parliamentary maneuver and choosing to go nuclear to do that.

So this is not a great day in the history of the Senate. We are opening up a Pandora's box of multiple abuses, and let me just point out that there actually are a lot of legitimate CRA, Congressional Review Act, targets out there—many dozens of decisions that have been made in this Congress that lend themselves to a proper use of the Congressional Review Act.

And, guess what, it takes 30 signatures to bring one of those up. The minority can do that.

So if the majority wants to start playing CRA games, well, even under existing CRAs, where we don't need a 51-vote majority, we can start bringing up CRAs of our own, expedite them to the floor, have vote after vote after vote after vote after vote.

There are ways in which we can respond. I intend to work with my leadership to make sure what the best way is but don't think that this nuclear option gets deployed here, gets deployed for the fossil fuel industry, gets deployed against a sovereign State, and gets deployed to make air dirtier and water dirtier, and we just walk away as if nothing happened. That is not what will follow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, here we are, the moment that we have been warning about, the moment the majority and its Members used to say, under their leadership, would never come. And yet here we are, the week our colleagues may push to go nuclear and override the Parliamentarian, killing the filibuster, and going against their word to unwind 60 years of precedent and policy.

And no matter what anyone says, that is what is happening. Our colleagues will be overturning the Parliamentarian to end California's right to cleaner air. The majority promised:

We can't go there.

I am old enough to remember just when it was they said it because it was their majority leader just 19 weeks ago—19 weeks ago.

But not to worry, the majority says, this is not what this is about, they claim. Instead, we have heard the majority try to dress this up as an attack on the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office, saying that their unprecedented action was preceded, almost warranted, by the GAO's actions.

Yes, my colleagues Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator PADILLA, and myself went to the GAO to ask for their guidance on whether this expedited measure, called the CRA, could be used to target California's waiver, California's right to establish stronger clean air standards.

And, yes, the GAO responded, affirming that this expedited process, this CRA, does not apply, that these are not rules; that if they want to strike down California's clean air rules, they can do so but not in this summary fashion, not without 60 votes.

That is the ruling that the Parliamentarian has reaffirmed and which the majority now wants to strike down.

But let's be clear. Going to the GAO was nothing out of the ordinary. In fact, it was exactly what both parties have done when adjudicating this issue for decades. There are Senators serving in this Chamber, Republicans and Democrats, who have made use of the exact same process by going to the GAO. There have been more than 20 different opinions delivered by the GAO at the request of Republican Senators and Members of Congress in the last three decades, more than 20 times.

And in the cases where the GAO found that the CRA may not apply, this expedited process may not apply, that decision has stood. They did not move forward and respected the rulings of the GAO and the Parliamentarian until now.

So what does all of this mean? What it means is, California has established clean air standards. It was given a waiver under the Clean Air Act to do so. It has done so for decades. Those standards have been adopted voluntarily by other States and, as a result, in California and many other States, we have cleaner air to breathe—until now—until now when the majority has decided to abolish the filibuster so that they could eradicate California's clean air standards so that they could use a summary process that doesn't apply here to get over the hurdle that they require 60 votes in order to do this.

And I urge my colleagues and the American people not to be distracted by suggestions that nothing is going on here, nothing new is going on here, no precedent is being set here because it is; and that is to eliminate the filibuster in the service of the oil industry—in the service of the oil industry.

Whether it is an attack on the GAO or the Parliamentarian, the new ground we find ourselves in today is dangerous, both in the effects it will have on California and on this body—in California, in particular, because it means that this Congress is abolishing the filibuster so that Californians will have to breathe dirtier air. That is what this is about. They want to abolish the filibuster so that polluters can pollute more and Californians have to breathe dirtier air because they know they don't have the votes for it otherwise.

And taken together, my colleagues are embarking on a path that will forever change the Senate. It will not just mean dirtier air for California and dirtier air for all the other States that have adopted California's higher standard; it will also mean that the filibuster is gone for a whole range of things.

Now, I represent a State that makes up 1 out of every 10 Americans. It is the fourth largest economy in the world. So 1 out of every 10 Americans is going to be deeply impacted, and, of course, if you add all of the other States that have adopted this higher standard for their citizens, it may be more like 1 out of every 5.

But it is more than that as well because what we have at stake is also a State's ability, its right to make its own laws and to protect its own citizens without having this body overturn that right.

This week's vote is shortsighted because it is going to have devastating impacts for our Nation's health, but it is more than that. And it should send a chill down the spine of legislators in every State and communities across the country, regardless of their political affiliation, because the Senate is now setting a new standard and one that will haunt us in the future, and it will haunt those States whose Senators vote to go down this path.

Make no mistake, today it is California and our ability to set our own air quality standards, but tomorrow it can be your own State's priorities made into a target by this vote to open the Pandora's box of the Congressional Review Act.

That oil drilling lease that one of your States got approved? That can be on the chopping block with the simple majority now if the filibuster is eliminated. That license for a new energy hub? Gone with a simple vote of this body. That new community grant? Gone with a simple vote of this body. That is fair game now if the majority adopts this tact. This vote to expand the power of this expedited process called the Congressional Review Act will be used to target Democratic and Republican priorities alike.

I moved to Los Angeles in 1985. I remember what it was like to breathe the air in Los Angeles in the 1980s. I have seen images of what the air was like in Los Angeles in the 1970s and the 1960s and the 1950s. We are a basin. And with

all of that automobile traffic and all of that congestion and our geography and topography, it means that exhaust gets trapped, that smog gets trapped. There are times when you can't see the hills in front of you. There are times when you can't see down the street—at least there used to be.

There is a reason why California got this waiver decades ago because there were unique challenges facing places like Los Angeles, and so California acted to protect its own citizens.

But if your State acts to protect your citizens—whether it is from dirty air that can give you lung cancer or whether it is pollutants in the water that can give you all other kinds of cancer—do we really want this body, on a simple majority vote, to be able to eviscerate what the States are doing to protect their own citizens?

I urge my colleagues again not to abandon States' rights in the Senate this week because this may be a policy that you agree with today, but the thing is about a slippery slope, you can be the one who starts down the slope, but you don't get to be the one who decides where it stops.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

REMEMBERING DOMINICK J. RUGGERIO

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Rhode Island's Senate President Dominick Ruggerio of North Providence, RI, who passed away on April 21, 2025, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. As the longest serving member of the Rhode Island State Senate, Donny was affectionately known as the ''Dean'' of the senate.

I first met Donny as a young man when we both attended La Salle Academy in Providence, RI. We played high school football together, and indeed he was a remarkable gentleman then, both on and off the field. One of the things we discovered is that—Donny was about 6 feet 2 inches. He was a wide receiver. He would be running down the field, looking at the goal line with nothing in front of him, catch the ball, and then he would trip over me. I was a defensive halfback. So we got to know each other pretty well.

He was one of the nicest gentlemen you could ever meet. He was especially kind and reached out to the younger players on the team, you know, encouraging us and also acting as sort of a custodian in making sure we got a chance and we weren't mistreated. Throughout his entire life, Donny carried that spirit to raise others up and provide opportunities for all.

Then I later had the privilege of serving with him in the Rhode Island State Senate from 1985 to 1990. Once again, he paved the way for me with his advice and assistance. Indeed, his quiet commitment to the people of Rhode Island had always been an inspiration to me and, frankly, to anyone who ever met him.

Donny was a strong advocate for organized labor and joined the Laborers' International Union of North America as a field representative and organizer, eventually becoming administrator of the New England Laborers' Labor-Management Cooperation Trust.

Donny started his public service long before we linked up again in the State senate. He began working for the late Lieutenant Governor Thomas DiLuglio and then the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority. His career continued in public service in the 1980s, when he was elected as representative of House District 5 in Providence, RI. Four years later, he succeeded his father-in-law, Majority Leader Rocco Quattrocchi, to Rhode Island Senate District No. 4, beginning his 40-year tenure in the Rhode Island State Senate.

In that role in the senate, Donny served as vice chairman of the senate labor committee, senate majority whip, deputy majority leader, and majority leader. In 2017, he was honored by his colleagues with his election to the Office of Senate President. The hallmark of Donny's leadership style was to have an open-door policy which encouraged colleagues and constituents and elected officials to become engaged. He devoted his life to improving our community, to strengthening public health and public safety, and to creating new opportunities for all Rhode Islanders to thrive. He made significant strides toward improving the lives of working Rhode Islanders, and he is credited with spearheading efforts to preserve pensions and raise the minimum wage.

In the face of recent, incredible, and ultimately insurmountable health challenges, Donny valiantly sought reelection last November in his beloved community and was returned by his senate colleagues to his post of senate president after he won reelection. He led the senate with tenacity and unwavering dedication.

Throughout his decades of public service to his constituents in North Providence and Providence and to the entire State of Rhode Island, he was strongly committed to fulfilling his responsibilities, obligations, and tasks with a sense of accountability, decency, and honor. He led his life with purpose and served the people of Rhode Island extremely well.

Donny leaves behind a devoted family, and I express my heartfelt condolences to the Ruggerio family: his children Charles Ruggerio and his wife Jillian and Amanda Fallon and her husband William; his grandchildren Ava Ruggerio, Mia Ruggerio, Natalie Fallon, and Jameson Fallon; his sister Lisa Aceto and brother-in-law James Aceto; and his nieces and nephews.

I will miss Donny's friendship, his unwavering advocacy for our State and the people who make it a special place. Rhode Island is much better today because of senate President Ruggerio's leadership and dedication. He inspired us all and will continue to do so.

I yield the floor to my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator WHITEHOUSE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I join my senior Senator today to honor our friend Dominick Ruggerio, who was both president and the dean of the Rhode Island Senate.

President Ruggerio, who passed away last month, was affectionately known as ''Donny.'' He leaves behind his children Amanda and Charles and four beloved grandchildren.

Donny was a graduate of two great Rhode Island institutions—La Salle Academy and Providence College. At La Salle, Senator REED was his schoolmate and teammate on the football team.

After finishing college, Donny served as a policy aide for former Lieutenant Governor Tom DiLuglio, who was a Rhode Island classic in his own right. Donny went on to spend many years with Laborers' Local Union 271, serving in multiple leadership roles.

Donny's career in public service continued when he was elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives, in 1981, where he stayed for a few years until making the jump to the Rhode Island Senate, in 1984, where then-State Senator JACK REED was again his teammate in the State senate.

The senate was Donny's home. For over four decades, he was the champion for the residents of District 4, which includes parts of North Providence and Providence. After holding several leadership positions in the senate, he was elected by his peers to serve as Rhode Island's senate president in 2017. His legacy at the statehouse will be defined by his decades of forceful advocacy for working people and his practical, highly effective style of legislating.

He never forgot his background as a laborer and never stopped working to create opportunities for working men and women. To that end, he fought for a higher minimum wage and for specific projects that would create union, family-supporting jobs. He also led the charge to eliminate lead pipes, making our tap water safer to drink for Rhode Islanders.

Among his many accomplishments was his work to address the State's opioid crisis. He created a fund to support statewide opioid treatment, recovery, prevention, and education programs and shaped a law to ensure that filling a prescription for lifesaving anti-overdose medication would not create a barrier for Rhode Islanders getting life insurance.

I am grateful, in particular, for Donny's leadership on climate. He sponsored legislation that put Rhode Island on a path to 100 percent renewable energy by 2033. When that legislation was signed into law, it was the most aggressive statewide energy standard anywhere in the country.

Donny was beloved by his lifelong North Providence community, and he was always a pleasure to work with. In a profession that is not always gentlemanly, he was always a gentleman. He

took pride in the senate being a place where people had, as he would say, always been able to disagree without being disagreeable.

So I thank Senate President Ruggerio for his dedicated and successful service to our State. I offer my condolences to his family. We will miss him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

GENIUS ACT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, on a different topic, I note that the Senate this week has started debate on the GENIUS Act. This bill establishes a regulatory framework for so-called stablecoins, which are representations of dollars recorded on a blockchain.

The GENIUS Act could be the most significant banking bill that Congress has considered since the Wall Street reform legislation that passed after the 2008 financial crisis. There are a number of, I believe, fundamental problems with the GENIUS Act in terms of national security, consumer protection, and systemic risk.

I am so pleased that the majority leader has said that we will have an open amendment process, and I look forward to filing a series of amendments to address the problems in the bill. I hope that, together, we can come up with a much better version.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). The Senator from North Carolina.

SAVE OUR SEAS 2.0 AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 40, S. 216.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 216) to amend the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Foundation, to amend the Marine Debris Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. BUDD. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

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

Mr. BUDD. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate on the bill, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 216) was passed as follows:

S. 216

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Save Our Seas 2.0 Amendments Act''.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATIONS TO THE MARINE DEBRIS PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449) is amended—

(1) by inserting before section 3 the following:

''Subtitle A—NOAA And Coast Guard Programs''; and

(2) by redesignating sections 3 through 6 as sections 101 through 104, respectively.

(b) GRANTS, COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, CONTRACTS, AND OTHER AGREEMENTS.—Section 101(d) of the Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. 1952(d)), as redesignated by this Act, is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading by striking ''AND CONTRACTS'' and inserting ''CONTRACTS, AND OTHER AGREEMENTS'';

(2) in paragraph (1) by striking ''and contracts'' and inserting '', contracts, and other agreements'';

(3) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) by striking ''part of the'' and inserting ''part of a''; and

(ii) by inserting ''or (C)'' after ''subparagraph (A)''; and

(B) in subparagraph (C) in the matter preceding clause (i) by inserting ''and except as provided in subparagraph (B)'' after ''subparagraph (A)''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—With respect to any project carried out pursuant to a contract or other agreement entered into under paragraph (1) that is not a cooperative agreement or an agreement to provide financial assistance in the form of a grant, the Under Secretary may contribute on an in-kind basis the portion of the costs of the project that the Under Secretary determines represents the amount of benefit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration derives from the project.''.

SEC. 3. MODIFICATIONS TO THE MARINE DEBRIS FOUNDATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of title I of the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act (Public Law 116–224) is transferred to appear after section 104 of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as redesignated by this Act.

(b) STATUS OF FOUNDATION.—Section 111(a) of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as transferred by this Act, is amended, in the second sentence, by striking ''organization'' and inserting ''corporation''.

(c) PURPOSES.—Section 111(b) of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as transferred and redesignated by this Act, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3) by inserting ''Indian Tribes,'' after ''Tribal governments,''; and

(2) in paragraph (4) by striking ''title II'' and inserting ''subtitle C''.

(d) BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—

(1) APPOINTMENT, VACANCIES, AND REMOVAL.—Section 112(b) of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as transferred by this Act, is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (5) as paragraphs (2) through (6) respectively;

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2), as redesignated, the following:

''(1) RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARD REGARDING APPOINTMENTS.—For appointments made under paragraph (2), the Board shall submit to the Under Secretary recommendations on candidates for appointment.'';

(C) in paragraph (2), as redesignated, in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''and considering'' and inserting ''considering''; and

(ii) by inserting ''and with the approval of the Secretary of Commerce,'' after ''by the Board,'';

(D) by amending paragraph (3), as redesignated, to read as follows:

''(3) TERMS.—Any Director appointed under paragraph (2) shall be appointed for a term of 6 years.'';

(E) in paragraph (4)(A), as redesignated, by inserting ''with the approval of the Secretary of Commerce'' after ''the Board''; and

(F) in paragraph (6), as redesignated—

(i) by inserting ''the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development,'' after ''Service,''; and

(ii) by inserting ''and with the approval of the Secretary of Commerce'' after ''EPA Administrator''.

(2) GENERAL POWERS.—Section 112(g) of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as transferred by this Act, is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A) by striking ''officers and employees'' and inserting ''the initial officers and employees''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B)(i) by striking ''its chief operating officer'' and inserting ''the chief executive officer of the Foundation''.

(3) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—Section 112 of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as transferred by this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—

''(1) APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL; REVIEW.—The Board shall appoint and review the performance of, and may remove, the chief executive officer of the Foundation.

''(2) POWERS.—The chief executive officer of the Foundation may appoint, remove, and review the performance of any officer or employee of the Foundation.''.

(e) POWERS OF FOUNDATION.—Section 113(c)(1) of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as transferred by this Act, is amended in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(1) by inserting ''nonprofit'' before ''corporation''; and

(2) by striking ''acting as a trustee'' and inserting ''formed''.

(f) PRINCIPAL OFFICE.—Section 113 of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as transferred by this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) PRINCIPAL OFFICE.—The Board shall locate the principal office of the Foundation in the National Capital Region, as such term is defined in section 2674(f)(2) of title 10, United States Code, or a coastal shoreline community.''.

(g) BEST PRACTICES; RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Section 113 of the Marine Debris Act (Public Law 109–449), as transferred by this Act and amended by subsection (e), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) BEST PRACTICES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Foundation shall develop and implement best practices for conducting outreach to Indian Tribes and Tribal Governments.

''(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The best practices developed under paragraph (1) shall—

''(A) include a process to support technical assistance and capacity building to improve outcomes; and

''(B) promote an awareness of programs and grants available under this Act.

''(i) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act may be construed—

''(1) to satisfy any requirement for government-to-government consultation with Tribal Governments; or