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No. 28

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STRONG).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 11, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DALE W. STRONG to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2025, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

FOREIGN AID AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Subcommittee on Military and Foreign Affairs, I rise in strong opposition to executive actions taken by the Trump administration to shut down U.S. foreign assistance and undermine America's national security.

Over the past two decades, I have led multiple bipartisan congressional dele-

gations to Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Syria, Ukraine, Somalia, and Gaza, as well as other conflict zones. These oversight missions have examined the implementation of U.S. foreign assistance firsthand, precisely because the security and humanitarian aid that we provide to our international partners is critical to advancing U.S. national security and foreign policy priorities around the world.

Recent executive actions taken by the Trump administration demonstrate a blatant disregard for the important role that foreign aid serves in keeping America, including American servicemembers who are deployed in these conflict zones, safe.

In the first major foreign policy action of his new term, President Trump issued an indiscriminate stop order, suspending U.S. foreign assistance for at least 3 months. That includes the suspension of security and military aid to Ukraine which is entering the fourth year of its fight for independence against the brutal and unlawful invasion ordered by Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2022. Our continued support for Ukraine is vital to the ability of the U.S. and our NATO allies to deter escalating Russian aggression across Europe.

The order also freezes aid to Taiwan which remains the target of Chinese military incursions that threaten peace and stability in a region where nearly 400,000 U.S. military and civil personnel are deployed in support of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. To make matters worse, the Trump administration has halted all mine removal programs led by the State Department in more than 125 countries.

During oversight visits to Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other areas where former battlefields are littered with antipersonnel explosive devices, I have directly observed the partnership between U.S. agencies and nongovernmental organizations such as The

HALO Trust and the Lebanese Mine Action Center who work together to remove landmines, cluster munitions, and other ordnance for the safety of local populations and American diplomatic and military personnel.

This week, I will be introducing the Global Demining Protection Act, endorsed by The HALO Trust, to exempt demining programs from the ongoing ban on foreign aid.

Most recently, the Trump administration launched a full-scale attack on USAID, an independent agency duly established and annually funded by Congress. The fundamental mission of this agency and its global workforce of more than 10,000 dedicated employees is to promote stable democracies abroad in the interest of U.S. national security.

First, top USAID security officers were removed for rightfully refusing to grant billionaire Elon Musk and his so-called DOGE team access to sensitive personnel files and classified systems.

Next, President Trump attempted to place all directly hired USAID employees on administrative leave, including those who are deployed overseas.

Thankfully, a Federal district judge has issued a temporary restraining order, preventing the administration from placing employees on leave or evacuating them from overseas assignments. In Mr. Musk's words: "USAID is a criminal organization. Time for it to die."

The agency that he is desperate to kill without congressional approval is one whose development mission in more than a hundred conflict countries is designed to prevent the root causes of global violence and extremism, including famine, civil war, and human rights abuses. That is why the non-partisan American Foreign Service Association reports that development is the most important tool in our national security toolbox.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to oppose these

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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reckless actions in the interest of the safety and security of every American.

HONORING RANDALL E. WATSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor our February Veteran of the Month, Randall E. Watson. Randall is a retired Army Chief Warrant Officer 4, or CW4, and human resources officer with more than 24 years of service. Randall got his bachelor's degree from the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg and his master's from the American Military University in West Virginia.

In April of 1990, Randall deployed to Panama with the 135th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital as a patient administration specialist to provide medical and dental service to the indigenous persons of Kuna on the San Blas Islands.

Randall Watson retired from the Army National Guard in 2014 and from the State of Missouri as the director of its veterans service programs in 2020.

In 2016, Randall received the Meritorious Service Medal from the Governor of Missouri for outstanding meritorious military service to Missouri and the United States of America.

We thank Randall for his truly admirable dedication to Missouri, America, and to veterans. Randall has left the Missouri National Guard and the Missouri veterans service programs poised for continued greatness.

We congratulate Randall on being Missouri's Fourth Congressional District's Veteran of the Month.

HONORING THAI HOUSE

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our February Small Business of the Month, Thai House, in Lebanon, Missouri.

In 2009, Chutiwan Kingnak Tracy met her husband, Michael Tracy, and left her home in Thailand to begin her journey to live out the American Dream. The Tracys worked hard to open a small business, working in different restaurants until opening up their own.

Saving her pennies, Chuti saved just enough to buy a food truck and trailer in Oklahoma. She filed for an LLC in July of 2024, and then they opened the Thai House for the first time at Lebanon Farmers Market.

Through ups and downs and after a decade of hard work, they were finally able to become American small business owners. Thai House continues to grow, despite the recent economic turmoil caused by the previous administration. They look forward to being open this spring after being closed during the winter.

Missouri's Fourth Congressional District is excited for their Thai food. I can't wait to taste it myself. We congratulate Thai House. We love to see their hard work come to fruition, and we look forward to their future success.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO CAROLYN SUE ADAMS ALFORD

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say happy birthday to my mother, Carolyn Sue Adams Alford. It is her 86th birthday today.

My mother was a schoolbus driver, an executive assistant at Exxon USA, a mother of four boys, and a Sweet Adeline with always a song in her heart and great advice for her four boys. I love my mother very much. Happy birthday to my mother.

PROTECTING NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. HERNÁNDEZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, the administration recently announced sharp cuts to Federal grant funding for universities, medical centers, and other research institutions. These cuts will devastate our students, our professors, and our seniors.

What concerns me the most is these cuts will devastate Puerto Rico. Why?

The NIH, the target of these cuts, funds critical medical research. During the past year, the NIH has supported 73 projects and provided up to \$53 million for Puerto Rico's universities, hospitals, and research centers like Centro Medico in San Juan.

These cuts threaten local programs studying diseases that disproportionately affect Puerto Ricans, like diabetes, Alzheimer's, cancer, and other rare diseases. These cuts will hinder scientific research and progress. These cuts will hinder people's access to healthcare. These cuts will set us back vis-a-vis China and our geopolitical rivals.

The government cannot treat people like numbers on a spreadsheet. We can't cut corners on healthcare and education. We can't fall behind our global rivals. We must protect the NIH.

Now, for the benefit of my constituents, I will repeat my remarks in Spanish.

(Spanish translation of the statement made in English is as follows:)

Señor presidente:

La Administración anunció recientemente recortes drásticos en la financiación de subvenciones federales para universidades, centros médicos y otras instituciones de investigación.

Estos recortes devastarán a nuestros estudiantes, nuestros profesores y nuestros adultos mayores.

Lo que más me preocupa: estos recortes devastarán a Puerto Rico.

¿Por qué?

Los NIH, el objetivo de estos recortes, financian investigaciones médicas cruciales.

Durante el último año, los NIH han apoyado 73 proyectos y proporcionado hasta \$53 millones a universidades, hospitales y centros de investigación en Puerto Rico como el Centro Médico en San Juan.

Estos recortes amenazan programas locales que estudian enfermedades que afectan

desproporcionadamente a los puertorriqueños, como el cáncer, la diabetes, el Alzheimer y otras enfermedades raras.

Estos recortes nos harán retroceder la investigación y el progreso científico.

Estos recortes dificultarán el acceso del pueblo a la atención médica.

Estos recortes nos harán retroceder frente a China y nuestros rivales geopolíticos.

El gobierno no puede tratar a las personas como cifras en una hoja de cálculo.

No podemos recortar en salud y educación. No podemos quedarnos atrás frente a nuestros rivales globales.

Debemos proteger a los NIH.

HONORING STATEN ISLAND'S BLACK ANGELS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation celebrates Black History Month, I rise to honor Staten Island's own Black Angels.

Seventy years ago, tuberculosis plagued our Nation, killing over 1 billion worldwide and accounting for nearly 18 percent of all deaths in New York City alone. Fear of this unknown, highly contagious, and deadly disease led many nurses who were treating tuberculosis patients to quit.

In search of staff, New York City turned to African-American nurses from the Jim Crow south who could not find jobs due to segregation, and 300 women bravely accepted New York City's request to help to serve sick patients, taking advantage of the opportunity for employment in a career field often withheld from them. They became known as the Black Angels.

These nurses selflessly cared for 2,000 patients in my district at Staten Island's Sea View Hospital. They played a significant role in the first ever human trials and the first drug to cure tuberculosis.

Since its discovery in 1952, tens of millions of lives have been saved, and these women all did it at a time when they didn't even have equal rights in our country.

□ 1015

I am proud to represent the last remaining Black Angel who worked during the trial. Staten Island's Virginia Allen began as a 16-year-old pediatric nurse's aide and worked in the ward for 10 years.

She was there during the clinical trials and is one of the two Black Angels who are still alive today. She continues to selflessly serve our community as president of the North Shore, Staten Island Section of the National Council of Negro Women.

Last year, I honored Virginia, along with Curlene Jennings Bennett, who had later on come to serve at Seaview in 1957 in the adult pavilion.

They, along with their fellow Black Angels, were recognized for their heroic achievements in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in an article that I submitted so they will be applauded and recognized for years to come.

I also hosted them and their families and descendants in my Staten Island office to properly acknowledge the contributions they made to our community.

Also, I am very happy to have worked with our local city councilman, David Carr, to get legislation passed through the council to rename a street outside of Seaview Hospital in their honor. That will soon happen. I thank Councilman David Carr for getting this done so we can unveil it this spring.

Their riveting story is beautifully laid out in the book "The Black Angels: The Untold Story of the Nurses Who Helped Cure Tuberculosis" by Maria Smilios, which I had the opportunity to read last month. I encourage everyone to read this powerful book to learn about this inspiring piece of our Nation's history.

The Black Angels heard the call to arms and boldly, proudly stepped into the hallowed halls of Seaview Hospital with their mission to care for the infirm, knowing they were putting their lives at great risk.

Their story is finally being shared with the world, and it is fitting that we bestow upon them all the accolades that they were deserving then during this Black History Month and each and every day moving forward.

I thank them for their service to Staten Island, to our city, to our Nation, and to the world.

HARMS OF FREEZING FOOD AID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the administration's decision to pause or end—or as the unelected billionaire Elon Musk said: "Feed into the wood chipper"—government payments for food aid.

The thoughtless plan to shut down or pause the work of the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, is wrong for many reasons. It is especially harmful to people around the globe who can starve without this food aid, and it is harmful to the U.S. businesses and American farmers who sell their agricultural products to the U.S. Government.

In 2020, the U.S. Government bought more than \$2 billion in food aid from American farmers, but right now, because of this wrong decision by the administration, there is about 500,000 tons of food, including rice, wheat, and soybeans, at risk of spoiling. Much of it is stockpiled in ports across the country, including about 31,000 tons of food at the port in Houston, Texas, alone. What a truly senseless waste and shameful considering how many people around the globe are food insecure.

My home State of Oregon has a robust agricultural sector. We produce wheat, potatoes, and amazing specialty crops. We export more than 80 percent of our wheat production from Oregon.

The administration's egregious decision has been really harmful, and it is also harmful to national security. This is a national security issue.

The bags of food and the vials of medicine that USAID distributes are labeled "from the American people." That improves our standing in the world, and it keeps us safer because it is common sense to understand that people are much less likely to turn against the United States if we are saving their lives and their families' lives in their country.

This decision also goes beyond USAID because the Trump administration has also paused funding for several programs at the Department of Agriculture that support farmers, food producers, food banks, and people struggling to afford food.

At a time when food prices remain high, something I know our constituents care about, stopping these programs is inhumane and shortsighted.

On behalf of our Oregonian and American farmers, on behalf of those in America who want to retain what is left of our global leadership, I urge the administration to reverse this heartless and harmful decision.

STOPPING BUREAUCRATIC OVERREACH AND RESTORING LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, what we are dealing with once again is a power grab tracing back to the last administration.

President Biden's administration, before leaving office, put through a whole wave of last-minute regulations knowing they wouldn't have to deal with the consequences themselves.

The EPA led the charge, rolling out extreme rules targeting the production of fuel and electricity, driving up our energy costs even more, hitting American industry and families hard.

The White House also used NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, to slow down critical infrastructure and energy projects with excessive red tape, putting politics over progress.

NEPA was also weaponized to stop important timber harvests, which would help prevent wildfire and would help prevent fires like we saw in southern California, if more brush and such was removed and power lines could be moved and upgraded. They ran into one problem after another with NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, et cetera, especially last-minute ones. All through the West, there were last-minute additions to national monuments or wilderness areas. This means pretty much hands off by people going in and being

able to use those areas, whether it is for recreation, for hunting, or for important things like timber management so that we don't have such horrific fires zones that come from Federal lands like that.

Also, there are other important objectives, like being able to find more energy in our vast national reserves and the ability to continue with agriculture—new opportunities to store water for agriculture, as we see pictured here.

With Shasta Dam, in my district in northern California, we have an opportunity to add to that dam and bring another 600,000 acre-feet, which is desperately needed. We keep running into more and more environmental problems brought up by that with the weaponization of NEPA and, again, these last-minute rules done basically at the midnight hour at the last of the Biden administration.

The courts indeed are finding that these are overstepping. A judge recently ruled that the White House Council on Environmental Quality overstepped its authority with its NEPA regulations proving what we already knew. Biden bureaucrats had no problem rewriting the rules to fit their agenda.

Congress, we, the people,—and this is the people's House—need to fight back. We have the ability to do that with one tool known as the Congressional Review Act, which would slow down the efforts of bureaucracies that seem to be more and more unaccountable, by Congress being able to push back and say: No, these rules that you made are out of line.

My colleague ANDY BIGGS from Arizona has brought forth the Midnight Rules Relief Act legislation to the floor so Congress can block multiple last-minute regulations instead of having to do them one at a time. When an outgoing administration uses a scattergun approach with all sorts of bad rules and things that are harmful to the economy and harmful to our water supply, then we need to be able to have that ability to move more quickly in Congress, as well. That is why the Midnight Rules Relief Act is going to be important.

For example, what does this mean for individuals? We have one example here that my colleague HARRIET HAGEMAN from Wyoming is helping DUSTY JOHNSON in South Dakota with. There is a 75-year-old fence dispute there on rangeland that the Forest Service is adjacent to.

Instead of just resolving it, the Forest Service and the Department of Justice are coming in and threatening giant, 10-year sentences in prison and \$250,000 fines, when the solution would be just getting a land survey done and solving the dispute on where the fence line is supposed to be. They are trying to intimidate people into giving up their rights on their property.

We see time and again people with stock ponds and watering holes that

people built many years ago for agriculture, watering their cattle and such. Someone comes along and decides you didn't get the right permit for that many years ago or somehow it is affecting a watershed, and they want to take it away and fine the heck out of them for that.

With water-taking, like what is happening in my district in northern California, we have an emergency drought declaration, even though we have plenty of rainfall and snowpack these days. The drought declaration is still in place, harming people in Siskiyou County.

People on the coast, in Marin County, have been bullied off their land by NEPA and the environmental groups are suing them time after time so they don't get their grazing permits they need long-term. They can't afford to do any upgrades if they want to do the right thing.

Our water supply is in peril and our agriculture is in peril when you look at how important these crops are to the Nation, what is grown just in my home State of California. These things would not happen if this was not allowed to keep going with the weaponization of NEPA and the weaponization of the Endangered Species Act.

Time and time again, people finally give up. We have seen that with the Point Reyes Seashore Park, where people have been bullied off their land using NEPA and environmental organizations suing them to death.

HONORING SHERMANN THOMAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Black History Month by uplifting Chicago's own urban historian, the one, the only Shermann "Dilla" Thomas. Dilla reminds us that our past can teach us something important about our present.

I agree with Dilla that everything dope about America comes from Chicago. Dilla's Chicago pride is matched maybe by only my own. A lifelong Chicagoan, husband, and father of seven, Dilla gained prominence following the COVID-19 pandemic as he used social media platforms to share the forgotten stories of Chicago's local neighborhoods in just 60 seconds.

Since then, he has expanded his unique talent for making history accessible and storytelling captivating through guided tours, history lessons, speaking engagements, and lectures to countless organizations, institutions, and businesses in the Chicago area.

My personal favorites are Dilla's videos sharing the stories from Illinois' Third Congressional District in our own neighborhoods, including Humboldt Park, Belmont Cragin, and Logan Square.

By connecting the stories of Chicago's great migration that brought

millions of Black southerners to Chicago to the wave of global migration from Ukraine, Central America, and Venezuela we see today, Dilla connects us through storytelling, honoring our shared experiences and our shared humanity.

At a time when we seem to be forgetting history, Dilla's powerful voice could not be more pertinent to this moment.

It is my honor, on behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, to commend Shermann "Dilla" Thomas for reminding millions of us of our interconnectedness, which extends beyond race and culture. I wish him the best of luck as he embarks on a new role at the DuSable Black History Museum.

May he keep telling our stories and reminding us of our history. I congratulate him.

HONORING GLENNETTE TILLEY TURNER

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to uplift Black History Month by celebrating my constituent, a lifelong teacher and a local historian in DuPage County, Ms. Glennette Tilley Turner.

□ 1030

For decades, Ms. Turner has dedicated herself to preserving the stories of the Black resistance and of the multiracial coalitions that struggle against injustice.

Moving to Wheaton in 1968, Turner researched and studied DuPage County's history and participation in the Underground Railroad, an organized network led by formerly enslaved African Americans resisting American chattel slavery.

In 1978, Ms. Turner published her first book, "The Underground Railroad in DuPage County, Illinois." In it, she reminds us that, in the past, our country has faced moments that tested our courage and integrity and that, in those moments, we need brave leaders to step up and resist injustice.

May we remember that historians like Ms. Turner will one day document how we stood up in this precise moment. So, on behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend Glennette Tilley Turner for her remarkable service as an educator, a powerful historian, and a cultural steward.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. Turner. Her contributions have been entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

HONORING KIM NESBITT GOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dedicated member of our community, Ms. Kim Nesbitt Good.

Together with her husband, Ted, Kim owns the Nesbitt Funeral Home in Elizabeth, New Jersey. In this role, she builds on the legacy of her parents, who started the business nearly 100 years ago.

Kim's advocacy and accomplishments run much deeper than just her business acumen. When it comes to uplifting Black voices and making real progress in the fight for equality and justice in the city of Elizabeth and beyond, Kim Nesbitt Good's legacy is unparalleled.

As the founder of Friends, an organization of Black women dedicated to the success and prosperity of their community, Kim has been a leading voice for creating change for women, families, and our community as a whole. As the founder of the Friends of New Jersey Legacy Foundation, she is working tirelessly to recognize Black history and honor the trailblazers who paved the way toward progress for generations of people in Elizabeth and Union County.

As we celebrate Black History Month, it is important that we uplift the stories of those who continue to make a difference in our communities. Kim Nesbitt Good is an excellent neighbor, a friend to so many, and a tireless advocate for the causes she is so deeply passionate about.

It is a privilege to represent her here in Congress, and on behalf of the entire Eighth Congressional District of New Jersey, I thank her for her commitment to serving others.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF GARY GREENBERG

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible life and legacy of Gary Greenberg, who passed away last week.

Gary embodied the meaning of public service, community, and care for others. He devoted his life and career to serving our youth as executive director and CEO of the Hudson County Boys and Girls Club since 1996 and in various roles within the organization prior to that.

Gary was a force in Hudson County. Even if you didn't have the privilege of knowing him personally, it is all but guaranteed that you benefited from his impact on our community as a whole.

Gary was selfless, devoted, and cared deeply about children and young adults who needed a helping hand. He went above and beyond in this role, working with teenagers in the club's Keystone Leadership Group to advocate for better mental health services in our State.

Our community is stronger, more vibrant, and more inclusive because of Gary Greenberg, and he will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with his family and all those who loved him and were impacted by his extraordinary life.

APPROPRIATIONS AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MOSKOWITZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I am deeply concerned that we are headed toward a government shutdown on March 14. It is not

about whether Democrats or Republicans would win politically. It is because we know the American people would lose.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you why I am deeply concerned that we are headed for a government shutdown on March 14. I am worried because the Speaker has not brought the 12 individual spending bills, which is the way we should fund the government. In fact, it is the promise that was made by my Republican colleagues on how we would fund the government.

Republicans have made the argument that the last election was about the status quo disappearing, that it can't exist and that people are fed up.

They created DOGE, which is going through the Federal Government and finding fraud, waste, and abuse, so they say and so they claim. If that is true, Mr. Speaker, if Elon Musk and DOGE have found all that fraud, waste, and abuse, the hundreds of billions of dollars as they claim, then, Mr. Speaker, we can't fund the government by CR anymore because the CR would refund all of that waste, fraud, and abuse that DOGE has found. That means the only way to fund the government is to fund it by individual spending bills, but we are running out of time, Mr. Speaker.

We have a month before the government shuts down. We have to get back to the process of individual spending bills. If we don't, then the Speaker will be the one who will have closed the government for the American people.

I am concerned, and I am here to work with the Speaker on the 12 individual spending bills. Democrats are at the table to do that, but we have to be honest. We can't tell the American people we are for reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, that we are for government efficiency and to look at all these things we have found, and then say that we are going to refund them all with a clean CR.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to say: I am here. I am willing to stay weekends. I am willing to work for the next month so that we can fund the government appropriately with the 12 individual spending bills, a promise that my Republican colleagues made.

The Speaker has to start getting that train moving. Otherwise, he will close the government.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Wise God, what wondrous words You offer us: Your words of counsel, Your words of guidance, Your words of wisdom. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. Who are we that You are mindful of us? Yet You made us a little lower than the angels, have crowned us with glory and honor, and placed everything at our feet.

Then how important it is for us to pay attention to the words You speak and to hear the insight you reveal to us. Your thoughts are not our thoughts, and so it behooves us to listen closely to Your voice, lest we become inured to it. Your ways are not our ways, and so we must discipline our steps to walk in the path You lay before us, lest we drift from it.

Hold us accountable to our stewardship of the knowledge and wisdom You provide, that nothing we say or do would cause us to stray from Your intent.

In faith we approach You with arms wide open to receive the abundance of spiritual truths You measure out for us this day.

In Your merciful name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SUBRAMANYAM) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RIGGED ELECTION IN GEORGIA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in October, the Putinist Georgian Dream regime in the country of Georgia rigged an election. This regime seeks to steal the future of the Georgian people and sell it to war criminal Putin, the Iranian regime, and the Chinese Communist Party.

The brave Georgian people are still on the streets for 76 days of consecutive protests. Eighty percent of Georgians want to be close friends with America and part of the EU and NATO, but the regime is responding with violence and arbitrary arrests.

The regime has given the Black Sea port to the Chinese Communist Party and has visited the regime in Teheran as Iran sends its assassins to murder President Donald Trump.

Legitimate Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili, who attended the Trump inauguration, is courageously standing for free and fair elections.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent as warned by the FBI. Mr. Trump is reinstating existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

END HUNGER NOW

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the party who proclaims to be America First is screwing over our farmers and making it harder for people in rural communities to survive.

This unified Republican government hasn't done one damn thing to support regular people or help them put food on the table.

The House Agriculture Committee is holding a hearing this morning about the economic crisis in farm country. News flash: It is declining by the minute because Donald Trump and Elon Musk work for the billionaires, not for regular people.

This self-proclaimed America First crowd is threatening tariffs against our closest trading partners and upending food aid that is shipped by the American farmers. The last trade war started by this President cost American farmers \$27 billion in exports.

Here is the sick part: Republicans are cheering him on because they want to use the money they steal from the American people, from farmers, and from SNAP recipients to give billionaires a tax break.

That is not America first. That is not supporting our rural economy. It is a sham deal for working people.

CONGRATULATING HIGHLAND COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

(Mr. CLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Highland County Public Library as it celebrates 50 years of service.

In 1975, James H. Bowen petitioned the board of supervisors to establish a local library. Initially, it operated as a

branch of the Botetourt-Rockbridge Regional Library in the Highland Masonic Building. By 1981, rising costs and a desire for independence led the library to become an independent institution. Community members were determined to give the library a permanent home.

In 1982, the Mountain View Extension Homemakers Club contributed \$500, sparking a successful fundraising campaign that raised \$65,000 by 1986. In 1987, the community's dream became a reality with the opening of a new library building. For decades, the library has been a cornerstone of the community.

Much of the library's success is thanks to former member and volunteer Margaret "Peggy" Bird, who has been a guiding force for nearly its entire history and remains a supporter to this day. The library has been led by just three directors: Mary Richardson, Pat Shield, and current director, Tomi Herold, who has led the library for the past 25 years.

I congratulate the Highland County Public Library for its 50 years of service and wish them many more.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

(Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this is perhaps the happiest speech I have ever given on the House floor. It is to honor this year's Super Bowl champions, the Philadelphia Eagles.

As a long-suffering and scarred Philadelphia sports fan and one born and raised in Philadelphia, I think I speak for many of my neighbors and fellow fans when I say some of us thought we might never see the day we see an Eagles Super Bowl. Now, we have actually seen two in the last 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce H. Res. 123, along with my colleagues DON NORCROSS of New Jersey, as well as Representatives EVANS, SCANLON, DEAN, FITZPATRICK, and HOULAHAN of Pennsylvania. I am proud to say it is bipartisan.

Fly, Eagles, fly. Go Birds. I congratulate the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles.

PUTTING AMERICAN LIVES IN JEOPARDY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, this week, we have a chance to send a clear message: Break the law, put Americans in danger, and there will be consequences.

Congressman CISCOMANI's Agent Raul Gonzalez Officer Safety Act holds traf-

fickers and illegal immigrants accountable for reckless actions, especially those who flee from Border Patrol agents and create deadly high-speed chase incidents.

This bill makes evading law enforcement within 100 miles of the southern border a serious crime, with heavy jail time and a lifetime ban on ever gaining legal status in the U.S.

If you put American lives at risk, you will face the full force of the law.

It is time to pass this bill and show that putting Americans lives in jeopardy will not be tolerated, and you will be held fully accountable.

This is the type of leadership that we have had under President Trump and we need to continue to have here in this House to keep our borders secure and not unnecessarily subject our citizens to this needless risk of deadly tragedies.

REUNITING KOREAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES

(Mr. SUBRAMANYAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, family separation is devastating and traumatic for any community, but that is especially true for the 70,000 Korean Americans in Virginia and the millions across the country.

The Korean war led to the displacement and separation of countless families, and many remained separated for decades.

These second- and third-generation Korean Americans were raised on the heartbreaking stories of family members cruelly divided. Now, in the twilight of their lives, they seek to reconnect.

That is why I have introduced the bipartisan Korean American Divided Families National Registry Act with my colleague Congresswoman YOUNG KIM. This bill creates a registry to help accelerate the progress for Korean Americans who wish to reunite with lost loved ones.

Since 1985, there have been 21 family reunions for citizens of South and North Korea organized by their governments, bringing together 4,000 families.

The Korean families here in the U.S. deserve to have that opportunity. Congress must work across the aisle to bring families together, not tear them apart. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF JOEY HANDLON

(Mr. SHREVE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHREVE. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the memory of a fellow Hoosier, Joey Handlon of Greenwood. He lost his life to fentanyl in 2022.

Joey was deeply loved by his parents, Kathy and Jamison Carrier. They have

turned their grief into action, sharing Joey's story to help prevent other families from experiencing similar heartbreak.

Last week, on this House floor, I voted for the HALT Fentanyl Act. It represents a crucial step to providing law enforcement with the necessary tools to keep these deadly drugs off of our streets and to save countless lives.

We must come together to confront this crisis by securing our borders, by holding traffickers accountable, and supporting those impacted. Together, we can save lives, and, in doing so, honor the legacy of Joey Handlon.

ASSAULT ON REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

(Ms. GILLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GILLEN. Mr. Speaker, in the 2 years since the Dobbs decision, we have seen nothing short of an all-out assault on our reproductive rights and our reproductive freedoms, including a steady march to pass a national abortion ban coupled with efforts to roll back access to contraception and IVF.

It is truly shocking that in 2025, we have to defend Americans' access to birth control and ability to decide when they start a family, but the attacks on reproductive freedom keep coming. Four out of five people in this country oppose these attempts to restrict our autonomy and our freedom, and we must fight back. That means making sure that the right to access to contraception is codified into law.

I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 999, the Right to Contraception Act. I will continue to fight to defend women's and families' freedom to make their own personal healthcare decisions. This should not be partisan. Preserving our freedom is American.

IMPACT OF FENTANYL ON NORTH CAROLINA

(Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, after meeting with sheriffs, prosecutors, and families from across eastern North Carolina, one thing is clear: Fentanyl is devastating our communities. The deadly drug is causing kids to overdose, destroying families, and overwhelming law enforcement.

Congress must take action to address this crisis, which is why I introduced the MAP Act and supported the HALT Fentanyl Act. We must secure our border, hold the cartels accountable, and stop this poison from entering communities across America.

Mr. Speaker, the opioid crisis is not just a border State problem. It is all of ours. Congress must protect our families by properly equipping our law enforcement community and working to decrease the demand for illicit drugs.

□ 1215

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 77, MIDNIGHT RULES RELIEF ACT

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 122 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 122

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 77) to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for “midnight rules”, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Alabama). The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, we are here today to debate the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 77.

The rule provides for H.R. 77 to be considered under a closed rule with 1 hour of debate, equally divided and controlled by the chair and the ranking minority member of the Judiciary Committee or their designees. The rule provides for a motion to recommit for the bill.

The Midnight Rules Relief Act addresses an inefficiency in the government and allows Congress to retain its current authority, overseeing administrative rulemaking without bogging down the legislative branch when we have so much work to get done.

In 1996, Congress enacted the Congressional Review Act, which requires agencies to submit rules to Congress and the Government Accountability Office before they can go into effect. This gives Congress an important legislative veto option over the agencies.

However, this legislation requires Congress to introduce separate joint

resolutions for each agency rule it wants to disapprove. Members at the time had no idea how out of control the administrative state would become. Since the Congressional Review Act passed, agencies have issued around 2½ times more regulations during the last year of each President’s term. Moreover, under the Biden-Harris administration, Federal agencies expanded their power at an alarming rate, undermining the legislative authority granted to Congress by the Constitution.

The Midnight Rules Relief Act empowers Congress to review and potentially disapprove several regulations that Federal agencies may attempt to implement in the last days of an administration by allowing Congress to disapprove multiple rules through one joint resolution if those rules were issued during the last 60 legislative days, the midnight hours, of a President’s term. This would allow Congress to quickly regain control and oversee agency rulemaking during a time when there is consistently a huge increase in executive overreach.

I sincerely hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will support this bill. Just last week, we brought a bill to the floor that combats this country’s fentanyl epidemic, something I know all of us care deeply about. Rather than debate the merits of the bill, my Democratic colleagues spent most of their time talking about what they believed has been executive overreach by President Trump. Comments were made that my colleagues are concerned that President Trump will try to do through executive order what he can’t do through the legislative process.

Today, we present a bill that will help return authority to Congress and curb executive overreach. If my colleagues are truly concerned about executive overreach, then they should vote for this bill and start with the overreach that occurred in the final days of the last administration.

I thank Congressman BIGGS for introducing this legislation, and I look forward to supporting this bill on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Minnesota for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As the gentlewoman pointed out, this rule would bring H.R. 77, the Midnight Rules Relief Act, to the floor for debate and consideration.

The underlying bill is a bad bill. It was a bad bill back when we considered it in December, and it is still a bad bill now. This is a bad bill that is all about Republicans gutting protections that ensure the safety, health, and well-being of each and every American. It is a blatant power grab that was ripped right out of the pages of Project 2025.

Why would Republicans want the ability to roll back protections en

masse with very little debate and in a way that could threaten the lives and livelihoods of regular people? Why would they want to do that? I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker. The answer is simple. It is so they can deliver big for their billionaire donors and special-interest friends, and it is so they can make it easier for greedy corporations and Wall Street CEOs to make a few extra bucks while they screw the rest of us.

Billionaires don’t want workplace protections. They don’t want rules that keep them from dumping toxic chemicals into our food, water, or air. They don’t want restrictions on their corporate greed. Why would they? That digs into their bottom lines, and Republicans are happy to give the billionaires exactly what they want.

We have seen it in every policy coming out of the Trump White House. We have seen it in almost every bill that this majority brings to the floor.

They don’t want to talk about that here on the floor, but, Mr. Speaker, Democrats are going to talk about it. We are going to expose it. We are going to highlight all the ways they are trying to steal from the American people so they can give more handouts to those at the top.

The American people deserve to know the truth about what is really happening here, and I am going to use my time on the floor today to continue to expose it all on behalf of House Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, all I can say is wow. There is a lot going on on the other side talking about this being a bad bill. This is a bill that will attempt to recover the Congress’ ability and authority to overrule rules that are written in the last few days of a President’s term. We should have that ability.

One of the things that we hear about when we are talking to our constituents is overregulation. Congress, the elected Representatives, needs to be able to deal with the overregulation and the rules, particularly in those last 60 days during an administration while they are on their way out the door and see it as a last-ditch effort. I see this as making sure we are responding to our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I want to inform the gentlewoman of the fact, which I hope that she knows, that the CRAs are already the law. We already have this authority to go after regulations that this body doesn’t like. Multiple CRAs have been introduced by Republicans in this Congress, and to the best of my knowledge, not a single committee has held a hearing or a markup on any of them, not one. Not a single one has been brought to the floor for a vote or debate. What Democrats object to is Republicans bringing

en masse all these different things that they don't like, limiting debate so that we can't talk about them individually, and just shoving them down the throats of the American people. What-ever happened to single-issue bills that you all said you wanted?

This doesn't even require you bringing CRAs to the floor that are under the jurisdiction of one committee. It could be multiple committees.

You say you needed some emergency authority. You have the authority. What you don't want to do is you don't want to go through the debate. You don't want the American people to know what you are doing. You don't want them to know that you are going after things that ensure their safety and their well-being. I think that is shameful.

Mr. Speaker, I will say one thing here: I get why Republicans are so anxious to get more tax breaks for billionaires. I now get it, and I will urge the American people to follow the money. Follow the money, and you will understand why politicians are beholden to billionaires, why they want to do things like what we are talking about here today on the floor.

To anyone watching this debate who actually thinks that Elon Musk cares about them, all I can say is that it takes an extraordinary amount of self-delusion to believe that billionaires like Elon Musk are fighting for working-class people. I don't even blame Elon. He is just doing what greedy billionaires do. I do blame the Republicans here in the Congress who are letting him add to his billions by stealing from the American people.

Just this week, Trump and Elon started to dismantle the CFPB. Do you know what CFPB stands for, Mr. Speaker? The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

They messed up now because they are now showing their hand. It was never about waste, fraud, or abuse. It is about enriching themselves.

This is not just some random government agency that has no purpose. This is an agency designed to protect American consumers from unfair, deceptive, and abusive corporate practices.

Why would they want to do that? Why would Elon want to gut the CFPB? I did my homework and found out that Musk recently announced a partnership with Visa to enable payments on his social media platform, X. That means it would be subject to, you guessed it, CFPB oversight. Once Elon realized that, he wasted no time in declaring, in his own words, that the CFPB would soon "RIP," rest in peace.

As if on cue, Trump listened to his boss, and he froze the CFPB's critical work. Nearly 2,000 employees were ordered to stay home and sit on their hands.

Mr. Speaker, the CFPB has been on the front lines of unrigging our economy, handling over 5 million consumer complaints, refunding \$20 billion to the American people, and imposing over \$4

billion in penalties on Wall Street for breaking the law.

This is not about waste or fraud or abuse. Every dollar spent on the CFPB returns twice as much to the American people. So then what is it about, Mr. Speaker? What is it about? It is about greed. It is about billionaire greed. They are shutting down the agency that stops billionaires from ripping off people. It is that simple. It is that simple.

Beyond that, Republicans will use this bill, the so-called midnight rules bill, to make it easier for banks to charge predatory fees that will adversely impact the people we represent.

Democrats support the CFPB, which protects people from these predatory big bank fees. Republicans, the big banks write their damn checks.

CFPB passed rules that stopped banks from charging predatory overdraft fees, passed rules that reduced expensive credit card fees, and passed rules to limit medical debt from credit card reports. Plain and simple, Mr. Speaker, the CFPB stands up to corporate greed, and that is exactly why Republicans, who are beholden to billionaires like Elon Musk, want to freeze it, want to gut it, and want to ultimately destroy it.

No one wants to talk about that on the other side of the aisle, but I must remind my colleagues the people of this country elected us to represent them, not to give billionaires and corporate profiteers free rein to rob working families blind.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD an article from Reuters titled: "Fed's Powell: No agency other than CFPB tasked with consumer protection enforcement."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

[FROM REUTERS, Feb. 11, 2025]

FED'S POWELL: NO AGENCY OTHER THAN CFPB TASKED WITH CONSUMER PROTECTION ENFORCEMENT

(By Reuters)

Feb 11 (Reuters)—No U.S. regulator other than the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is tasked with ensuring that banks abide by rules guarding against deceptive practices regarding consumers, the head of the Federal Reserve said on Tuesday as he was pressed by a senior Democratic senator to ensure the CFPB remains funded.

The Trump administration has told the agency's staff to stay home and cease enforcement activities as part of Elon Musk's government efficiency drive.

"If the CFPB is not there, examining these giant banks to make sure they are following laws on not deceiving consumers, who is doing that job?" Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts asked Powell during his appearance before the Senate Banking Committee.

"I can say no other federal regulator," Powell said.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1230

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I truly understand that the Democrats are very upset about losing the election, but the American people voted to change the direction of government.

They voted to end overregulation, voted to end growing government agencies and growing government in general, and they voted to end the growing deficit. They are done, and we need to move forward. We need to answer to the American people about what we are doing to make sure that we get these things under control.

I will also quickly address that it is incredible that my Democratic colleagues are trying to claim some moral high ground about single-subject bills. House Republicans have worked hard to bring single-subject appropriations bills to the floor and pass them individually.

When was the last time my Democratic colleagues did this?

Instead, my colleagues have passed massive omnibus spending bills when Democrats were in the majority, along with omnibus packages like the American Rescue Plan and the inflation expansion act. If Democrats would please spare us the false outrage at the idea of omnibus bills.

The truth is that this bill prevents the House from bundling CRAs with similar topics into smaller, single-subject packages.

There is also nothing that prevents the House from continuing to consider CRAs on a case-by-case basis, but we have to have the option. When an outgoing administration dumps rules in the last 60 days, we have to have that option to make sure that we are addressing issues.

I think our efforts toward single-subject bills demonstrate why Republicans can be trusted to use this tool responsibly, and I look forward to my Democratic colleagues abiding by their newfound commitment to single-subject bills the next time Democratic Members are in the majority.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS).

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I do find it really interesting that, if Members follow the logic of those who oppose this bill, what Democrats are suggesting is that, for the 1,406 rules that the Biden administration passed since August, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want us to do one bill for every one of them.

Let's do one bill for every one of them. We could. We could do that. I am happy to work. If that is what Democrats want to do, let's do it. We can come back next week. I am happy to

work every Saturday and Sunday. That is our job.

The minority doesn't really mean it. Mr. Speaker, Democrats don't really mean it because the reality is that, if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle meant it, then my Democratic colleagues wouldn't stack 50 bills into one at a time when the minority does their omnibus spending packages the way House Democrats always do.

That is really interesting. The value to our economy and the budget of the rules that were implemented by the Biden administration, those 1,400, this isn't ANDY BIGGS talking. This isn't some outside group. Democrats claim it is Project 2025. This isn't those guys.

It is not any of those folks that said that the cost to the economy and the budget is \$1.34 trillion. No. That was the Biden administration's own admission. That is what the imposition of their rules would cost, and we would love to get at that.

Democrats want us to do 1,400 separate bills. That way, none of their suspension bills where they are naming the post offices after their friends are going to get named. That is just what will happen. There won't be enough time.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is this: Democrats don't want us to consider the rules of the outgoing administration because we are going to see some absurdities when we do.

How about the heat rule? How about the heat rule? Up in the New England States, they might get 10 days a year where the high temperature is over 86 degrees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, let's consider Arizona, where I am from. Do Members know how many days are above 86 degrees when people are working outside? It is about 300 days a year.

Democrats want the rule, set up by some person in a little cubicle—if they even came into work, they might be working from home—to put a nationwide rule in place so that Phoenix, Arizona, basically is knocked out of being able to actually work and make it meaningful because we have 300 days a year above 86 degrees.

That is their heat standard. That is the rule.

Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues look into some of their antipollution stuff, guess what? Guess what the number one particulate is for just under 6 million people in Phoenix, Arizona, which is in Maricopa County. It is desert dust.

The EPA says to us: Hey, what you need to do is use water. You need to water that stuff down.

Guess what? The EPA also says that Maricopa County has a water problem.

Those are the kind of rules that my Democratic colleagues don't want

talked about because what the minority wants to do is, if that rule is in place and you throw in the the 86-degree heat rule, Maricopa County, a big red county that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't like, effectively would be shut down economically from economic growth and expansion and population-wise. That is why the rules need to be reviewed.

Democrats say: Let's review them one at a time. My Democratic colleagues don't want to review them one at a time because this bill does not prevent reviewing them one at a time. It doesn't prevent that.

It can still be done, but it makes it more efficient because guess what? We have about 1,400 rules, and maybe 6 of them were worth a tinker's damn, and it means the rest of them have to be reviewed. The only way they can be reviewed and debated is to aggregate them into different subsets.

That is what this rule allows. That is why it is important, and it is important for the American people to understand that that administration imposed about \$1.35 trillion worth of rules on them in the last year alone.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, the gentleman has it all wrong. The gentleman said that we don't want to come down here and debate all of these one at a time.

Yes, we do. Yes, we do.

What we don't want Republicans to do is to pack 1,400 regulations into one bill where there is no debate and nobody knows what the hell they are voting on and the American people don't know the harm that my colleagues are about to do to them.

Mr. Speaker, with all the urgency that I hear expressed on the other side about all these regulations, a number of CRAs have been introduced, and not a single committee has held a hearing on any of them. There hasn't been a single markup, nothing.

Republicans have had a month. What the hell are my Republican colleagues doing? This is not a busy week. We haven't had any busy weeks. This is a very light legislative schedule. It is incredible how light it is. It is not like we don't have the time.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman doesn't want to talk about the fact that Trump and Elon, as we are speaking, are literally shutting the government down agency by agency and department by department.

I get that Republicans don't want to talk about that, but that is what is happening right now. The agencies and departments that are set up to work for the American people are being shut down. People are being told to stay home. It is illegal, and courts are now stepping up to the plate.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. FISCHBACH)—oh, my goodness, I don't even know where to

begin—says that the American people voted for this.

No. The American people didn't vote for higher bank fees. They didn't vote to have banks rip them off. Maybe they did in Minnesota, but nowhere else in the country do I think the American people voted for that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican friends to do their job. We haven't even finished last year's appropriations bills. We are running up to a deadline in March on a continuing resolution to keep the government open for this year because my friends who were in charge can't seem to kind of get their act together.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 1101, the Taxpayer Data Protection Act.

In a matter of days after Donald Trump became President, Elon Musk and his DOGE minions gained full access to our government's central payment system at the Treasury Department.

For those watching at home, that is their data. It is their tax refunds, their Social Security benefits, veterans' benefits, and their bank account numbers. It is disturbing and alarming to hear House Republicans talk about unelected bureaucrats and the power that they wield.

That is Elon Musk. The people's data is in the hands of an unelected billionaire whose only actions thus far have served to help make him and his billionaire friends richer.

I don't even know what clearances these people have. Thank goodness a Federal judge, just days ago, blocked Musk's access to this data. Yet, Republicans and Musk are not stopping. This stuff can't be made up. Just this morning, Republican Representative ELI CRANE from Arizona says that he is going to impeach the judge who blocked Musk. Really?

That is why we must consider the Taxpayer Data Protection Act and ensure that our Nation's payment systems and the people's data are protected.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD along with any extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS), the sponsor of this legislation, to discuss our proposal.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my profound and wise colleague, the ranking member of the Rules Committee and former chairman, JIM MCGOVERN, for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is absolutely right that H.R. 1101, the Taxpayer Data Protection Act, which I was so pleased to author and introduce last

week alongside my colleague, SEAN CASTEN, and alongside our Democratic leadership is where we need to move.

We need to ensure that we have some guardrails in our Treasury Department. I was a former Treasury Department official myself in the very beginning days of a new administration, the administration of Barack Obama, when actually a bipartisan group of us came together to respond to the economic and fiscal crisis of the time.

I was put on the auto rescue team, the team responsible for saving General Motors and Chrysler from liquidation. Again, it was a bipartisan effort, and it saved 200,000 Michigan jobs and millions of jobs across the country.

Nowhere in that process, when we were working with the troubled asset relief program dollars, did anyone dare to think about going into the Bureau of Fiscal Service and tapping the wires and the accounts of the American public and jolting and shaking the very foundation of trust.

This bill is a very simple measure saying: Let's make sure that we have true public servants, people who have passed protocols, people who have top security clearances, people who don't have conflicts of interest. The American people deserve that modicum of trust.

Mr. Speaker, what is even more outrageous, as we are talking about the rulemaking and the rolling back and the ways in which we choose to legislate here, is we are not talking about the costs that are impacting everyday Americans.

I got sworn in on January 3 into the 119th Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I am waiting for the bill to lower egg costs. I am seeing headlines that eggs are being stolen. I am hearing from constituents who are nervous about Elon Musk having access to their records and their payment system, and they are wondering why they can't go to the grocery store and find eggs. They are wondering about the high cost of everything. They are wondering why prescription drugs are about to go up because of an executive order.

Where are we working on that?

Mr. Speaker, let's pass the amendment, let's do H.R. 1101, and let's get back to business for the people of this country.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, again, I understand that the Democrats are very upset about losing the election, and I am glad that my Democratic colleagues are showing the American people where their priorities are.

For 4 years, President Biden issued executive orders without the consent of Congress that increased inflation—we

all saw that—created additional burdens for our small businesses—we heard about that—and limited consumer choices.

My Democratic colleagues said nothing, but when President Trump tries to stop our government from spending \$20 million of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars to create a "Sesame Street" show in Iraq, or \$2 million on transgender surgeries in Guatemala, then my Democratic colleagues howl and jump up and down about executive overreach.

The American people are sick and tired of being told that executive orders that put our Federal Government in the way of our businesses and our family budgets are responsible, but attempts like this bill to roll back these burdensome regulations are reckless.

The Democrats don't want government spending examined and don't want to address unnecessary programs. What my Democratic colleagues want to do is continue out-of-control spending, growing our deficit, and spending those taxpayer dollars—spending taxpayer dollars. These aren't our dollars.

We need to be responsible, and that is why they elected President Trump and Republicans. They want a change in the direction of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1245

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I really understand why my Republican colleagues don't want to talk about what is going on in this country. I really do get it.

They want to change the subject. If I were them, I wouldn't want to talk about their lousy and unpopular agenda either. Nor would I want to talk about the fact that they are robbing these incredibly effective programs that help the American people to basically pay for a tax cut that is going to end up resulting in a multitrillion-dollar debt. I get that they don't want to talk about that.

They want to eliminate programs to help working families in this country. They are defying court orders to choke off money for, get this, cancer research. They are trying to choke off money for consumer protection. I just came from an Agriculture Committee hearing. They are trying to choke off money for our farmers, for rural America. They go on and on about waste, fraud, and abuse, but they don't want to talk about how their MAGA buddy, Pete Hegseth, Trump's Secretary of Defense, wants to dip into taxpayer money like it is his own personal slush fund.

They don't want to go there, do they? Again, you can't make this up, but this guy wants to spend \$50,000 on an emergency paint job for his government housing. Mr. Speaker, \$50,000. This is an emergency.

I wouldn't want to talk about that either if I were them. I wouldn't want to

talk about that either if I were them, Mr. Speaker, but I have two words for Pete Hegseth: Home Depot. I can narrow it down to one word: Lowe's. You get paint at a much cheaper rate than \$50,000 to repaint your government housing. It is ridiculous, and that is perfectly fine with my Republican friends. It is perfectly fine.

I can only assume that it is luxury paint for that price tag. Maybe my colleagues can correct me. Meanwhile, they have the gall to come down here and lecture us about government efficiency and waste? It takes my breath away.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to insert into the RECORD an article from military.com titled: "Hegseth Wants \$50,000 for 'Emergency' Paint Job to Move into Military Family Housing, Lawmakers Say."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

[From Military.com, Feb. 7, 2025]

HEGSETH WANTS \$50,000 FOR 'EMERGENCY' PAINT JOB TO MOVE INTO MILITARY FAMILY HOUSING, LAWMAKERS SAY

(By Rebecca Kheel)

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth is looking to live in military family housing and requested to use \$137,000 in taxpayer funding for repairs—including nearly \$50,000 for an "emergency" paint job—a pair of top Democratic lawmakers said in a letter Friday demanding more details.

While it is not unprecedented for a defense secretary to live in military housing, it is far more common for them to find private housing. And the reported price tag to fix up Hegseth's military house comes as rank-and-file service members continue to struggle with crumbling, unsafe living conditions and as the Trump administration has been looking to slash government spending elsewhere.

"We know that many service members and their families currently live in unacceptable housing conditions including houses with mold, lead paint, and other hazards," Democratic Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida and Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut said in their letter to Hegseth about his housing. "What commitment will you make to provide service members with a similarly high quality of housing for themselves and their families?"

DeLauro is the ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, and Wasserman Schultz is the ranking member of the panel's subcommittee in charge of military construction funding.

Under the law, Congress must be notified if maintenance and repairs for housing meant for general and flag officers is going to cost more than \$35,000.

In that context, lawmakers were notified late last month that the Army was looking to spend \$137,297 on maintenance on an unoccupied family housing unit, according to Wasserman Schultz and DeLauro's letter. The total cost included \$49,900 for an "emergency" paint job, the letter added.

On Wednesday, almost a week after the initial notification, the lawmakers found out Hegseth will be moving into the house that's being repaired, the letter said.

The Pentagon did not respond to Military.com's requests for comment Friday on the claims in the letter.

The apparent urgency to fix up Hegseth's housing comes as service members have

struggled for years with subpar housing and an inability to get timely repairs.

A series of 2018 Reuters articles exposed systemic issues with privatized military housing for families such as mold, rodent infestations and shoddy repairs, and military families have continued to report similar issues in the years since.

Young enlisted troops in the barracks, too, have faced unsafe living conditions. A 2023 Government Accountability Office report found rampant problems with overflowing sewage, mold, bed bug infestations and squatters.

At least one defense secretary has lived in military housing before. Bob Gates lived in a home on a Navy compound in Washington, D.C., when he was defense secretary. Stars and Stripes reported in 2008. Gates was the first defense secretary to live in military housing, according to the news outlet.

Most defense secretaries find their own homes. For example, Hegseth's immediate predecessor, Lloyd Austin, lived in a nearly \$3 million, 8,700-square-foot house in Great Falls, Virginia, according to Task and Purpose.

When Gates lived in military housing, he paid more than \$6,500 in monthly rent. At the time, defense officials expressed concern that he was required to pay more than three times as much as an officer would to live in the same house, because officers only had to pay the amount of their basic allowance for housing, according to Stars and Stripes.

The Pentagon did not answer Military.com's question about whether Hegseth will pay rent and how much.

In response to the concerns in 2008, Congress passed a law in that year's annual defense policy bill saying rent for a defense secretary living in military housing must be 105% of the monthly BAH rate for a four-star general living with dependents in the same area.

"The Department of Defense requested this provision in the belief that housing the secretary of defense in established quarters on a secure military installation is far more cost-effective than installing, maintaining and protecting sensitive Department of Defense equipment, along with secure information facilities and security and detection systems, in private residences," a Senate report about that year's bill said.

The report also said DoD believed that it would reduce disruptions to the public and costs for security protection.

Under the law, the rent is supposed to cover "maintenance, protection, alteration, repair, improvement or restoration."

In their letter to Hegseth, Wasserman Schultz and DeLauro also asked about what rent he will pay and whether any other defense secretaries lived in military housing that needed funding to be repaired first.

The pair also asked why exactly there needs to be an emergency paint job, as well as for a list of available officers' housing that doesn't require as costly maintenance as the house Hegseth is choosing.

They requested a response by Feb. 21.

The first Trump administration had several scandals involving Cabinet officials and their housing or furnishings.

Scott Pruitt, who served as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency at the beginning of the first Trump administration, was forced to resign amid several scandals, including allegations that he got a sweetheart deal to rent a D.C. condo from an energy lobbyist.

Mike Pompeo reportedly lived in Army housing when he was secretary of state. According to Politico, he first tried to live in Navy housing, but lawyers for that service called the idea "problematic" and raised "factual, legal, fiscal and ethical" concerns.

And Ben Carson, who served as housing and urban development secretary, faced allegations that he misused funds for fancy office furniture, though he was cleared of wrongdoing.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of corruption and waste and fraud that people deserve to know about, the kind that Republicans want to keep hidden from the American people during our debate today.

Well, guess what? I want to expose it.

Democrats are demanding answers because we think everyone deserves to know why this administration wants to spend 50 grand on paint for their fancy new houses while many of our troops live in housing with black mold and lead paint and can't pay the bills or make ends meet. That ought to be the priority, not a \$50,000 paint job for the new Secretary of Defense. It is the same scam every single time. They do not care about efficiency or cost; they care about themselves.

This is about tax breaks for billionaires, giveaways for their friends, and making sure the rich and powerful never have to sacrifice a damn thing. These people don't buy their own groceries or pump their own gas. These are FOX News nepo babies that are fine with government waste as long as they are the ones doing it.

I am just so tired of this, Mr. Speaker. They are stealing from the American people. They do not care. They want to spend taxpayer money on luxury paint jobs for their fancy new houses while they screw over the rest of us, and Democrats are not going to put up with this BS.

This administration is corrupt, and we will call it out over and over and over and over again.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I am not prepared to close yet.

Mr. Speaker, again, we are here during a rule debate talking about this majority's agenda for Congress, and it is funny because Republicans have a razor-thin majority. They have no mandate.

A mandate is like you won by 20 or 30 or 40 seats. Republicans lost seats in the last election. Republicans have the smallest majority in nearly 100 years, and so Republicans need every single vote to pass crummy partisan bills like this one. They can't afford to have any of their Members miss a vote.

Mr. Speaker, when Democrats were in charge, when I was the chairman of the Rules Committee, we actually put in place proxy voting in response to a worldwide pandemic. Anyone could cast their vote remotely if they had an excused absence. Mr. Speaker, because it is 2025 and not 1725, and we actually can use technology to vote remotely.

The backlash we got from Republicans on this was insane. They went

out to the press and said that proxy voting was illegal. It is unconstitutional. It is this. It is that. Then, guess what? They did it themselves.

Speaker JOHNSON voted remotely 39 times. Let me repeat that: Speaker JOHNSON voted remotely 39 times. He voted remotely so he could go home early. He voted remotely so he could visit school kids. He voted remotely for an entire week once. He just didn't show up.

Then, despite him voting remotely dozens of times previously, when JOHNSON became Speaker, he ended remote voting because he said it was "unconstitutional." Yet, he voted remotely 39 times.

Imagine my surprise, Mr. Speaker—it totally blew my mind this week—when I see that Representative BYRON DONALDS somehow voted, and he wasn't even here in this building.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts will state his inquiry.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, are Members allowed under House rules to vote by proxy?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 2 of rule III, a Member may not authorize another person to cast their vote, and Members are also prohibited from casting a vote on behalf of another Member.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Further parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts will state his inquiry.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, are Members allowed to vote by proxy if they have a TV appearance in California that they really want to go to?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 2 of rule III, a Member may not authorize another person to cast their vote, and Members are also prohibited from casting a vote on behalf of another Member.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this is really interesting now because last week Congressman BYRON DONALDS was at HBO studios in California, not on the House floor, but somehow news reports say he also voted here on the House floor at the same time.

This is so interesting, Mr. Speaker, because I have a tweet here from 2 years ago when Representative DONALDS says: "Today, House Republicans will vote to END proxy voting once and for all. The House of Representatives isn't a tech company. Its Members should work IN PERSON in the people's House."

Yet, he voted by proxy after he voted to end proxy voting, and this is the kind of hypocrisy that appears to be a specialty with my Republican colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts will state his inquiry.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, let's say a Member of Congress has a baby or they are undergoing treatment for chemotherapy or a close family member dies, is there a provision in the rules for them to vote remotely?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will not provide advisory opinions or respond to hypothetical questions.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this is not hypothetical, and I kind of get what is going on here, but we have a colleague, Representative PETTERSEN, who is currently home because she just gave birth. She can't vote because this majority has refused to put in place a bipartisan tool to allow it.

Meanwhile, Republicans are out here breaking the rules while they jet off to Hollywood.

Clearly, the rules apply and are held so sacrosanct by the majority that they can't be changed for new moms, but somehow they can be changed for interviews in Los Angeles.

Let it apply to thee and not me.

Mr. Speaker, further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts will state his inquiry.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, were Representative DONALDS' votes recorded as if he cast them properly or has his absence been recorded?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will direct the gentleman to clause 2 of rule III.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, if I understand that correctly, they were recorded, even though he wasn't here in person?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts is free to consult the Records of the House.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I have, and his vote was recorded, even though he wasn't here.

Let's just call this what it is: It is voter fraud under the rules that the Republicans have put into place.

Let's not even get started about who used DONALDS' card to vote for him. They are fraudulently casting votes on the House floor to make sure they win every time whether or not they have enough Members here, but apparently voter fraud is okay if they do it. This is unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

Mr. Speaker, we have covered an awful lot today. We discussed how Trump, Elon, and their DOGE minions are trying to take down the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, an agency that has delivered more than \$20 billion, that is \$20 billion with a b back to consumers because Elon doesn't want his business to be regulated.

We talked about how former FOX News personality turned Defense Sec-

retary Pete Hegseth wants to spend \$50,000 in taxpayer money on a high-end house paint job all while Republicans cry about government waste.

We exposed how some Republicans are committing the equivalent of voter fraud in the United States Congress, and, yet, they still refuse to let new parents be able to vote remotely.

I have a name for all of it, Mr. Speaker: Corruption. Rule for thee, but not for me. It is hypocrisy.

Mr. Speaker, is there a single thing any of them, Trump, Elon, or any of the people on the other side have done or are doing to help regular people? Can they name a single thing?

They promised they would lower grocery prices. Egg prices are through the roof.

They promised \$1 a gallon gas. Gas prices are going up since Trump took office.

Don't forget, they promised to end wars. Trump is now talking about sending U.S. troops to Gaza so that Jared Kushner can build a Middle East Mar-a-Lago.

Did people really vote to send their sons and daughters to be deployed in the tunnels of Gaza?

They promised America first, and they want to put tariffs on Canada and Mexico that Americans would have to pay for. They backed down when the markets started failing, and they got nothing to show for it.

Not a single thing has been done for the American people, just broken promises after broken promises after broken promises.

Republicans have a three-vote majority. They do not have a mandate. They need to work with Democrats to get anything done, anything of consequence that is, but, instead, they are too busy handing out favors to billionaires and putting themselves first, all at the expense of the very people who sent them here.

They want a government that only serves the ultrarich. We want a government that puts people first. I came to Congress to help people, not to hurt people.

You are not helping people when you are dismantling important agencies and bureaus that actually are there to protect the health and well-being of the American people. You are not helping the American people when you try to cut money from NIH to do cancer research. You are not helping people when you try to gut consumer protection organizations that are all about making sure that big corporations don't trample over regular people and take away their rights or overcharge them.

For the life of me, I don't understand the silence on the other side of the aisle. We have been in a new Congress now for over a month, and, again, nothing has been brought to the floor to help improve the quality of life for regular people. Not a thing has been done.

I don't know how my friends go home and face their constituents and answer

the question: What did you do this week? We did nothing; nothing for you.

We did a lot of body blocking to help people like Elon Musk and other very well-off and well-placed people enrich themselves, but we did nothing for you, the American people. That is not what we should be focused on.

The underlying bill that this rule is about here today is just another in a string of pieces of legislation that are being brought to the floor that are about trying to pull a fast one here, to basically repeal all these consumer protections, all these things that are designed to help the American people, all at once so that nobody knows what is in them.

They can bring a bill that repeals a thousand regulations all at once, and we have no debate. That is not the way this place is supposed to work.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this rule and vote "no" on the underlying legislation. I urge my colleagues on the Republican side to start putting the people of this country first.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1300

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

I am just so glad that my colleague across the aisle pointed out that we have covered everything today but the bill under consideration in front of us. I should stand here kind of surprised that my colleagues on the left don't support this legislation, but of course I am not. Their lack of support proves what we already know: They don't actually care about executive overreach the way that they claim to.

Unlike the Democrats, Republicans are not changing the subject. We are focused on making sure we do the job the American people elected President Trump and the Republicans to do. It is the Democrats who are talking about paint and not talking about the bill in front of us. They are not talking about what we are doing.

I very often find myself trying to refocus the Democrats on the bill we have in front of us, which happens in many committees, but the Democrats insist on sticking to their talking points, their pro-regulation, pro-government spending agenda.

A great example today is the rant about proxy voting. This has nothing to do with the bill in front of us. It is a bill that deals with rule writing and the ability of Congress to undo rules and overregulation.

They stood silently while Joe Biden used the power of the pen to dismantle our southern border and tell Americans what kind of cars, dishwashers, and water heaters they had to have. All of this was done without a single vote by Congress, yet my Democratic colleagues never cried out about executive overreach then.

My Republican colleagues and I are committed to streamlining Federal operations and holding the government

accountable. This bill accomplishes both of those objectives, and this is the bill that we are here to talk about today. The 1996 CRA requires Congress to pass a separate joint resolution for each agency rule to seek its disapproval, slowing Congress' ability to hold the administrative state accountable and block burdensome regulations.

This legislation restores congressional control and allows us to review agency rules swiftly if they are implemented in the midnight hours of an outgoing administration. This is a simple, effective solution to improve and expedite the work of Congress and takes a step forward to curb out-of-control overregulation.

One could argue that none of the orders that the Biden-Harris White House implemented in the final days in office should go into effect, given the signal he received loud and clear in November that the American people do not want what the Democrats are selling. Perhaps that is a debate for another time. Today, we are here to streamline congressional practices at a time when we are consistently bogged down.

Mr. Speaker, I support the rule and the underlying legislation.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 122 OFFERED BY MR. MCGOVERN OF MASSACHUSETTS

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 2. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the bill (H.R. 1101) to prohibit unlawful access to the payment system of the Bureau of the Fiscal Service within the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 3. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 1101.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida). The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1330

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST) at 1 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 122; and

Adoption of House Resolution 122, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 77, MIDNIGHT RULES RELIEF ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 122) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 77) to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for "midnight rules", and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 210, nays 184, not voting 39, as follows:

[Roll No. 38]

YEAS—210

Aderholt	Burchett	Edwards
Alford	Burlison	Ellzey
Allen	Calvert	Emmer
Amodei (NV)	Cammack	Estes
Arrington	Carey	Evans (CO)
Babin	Carter (GA)	Ezell
Bacon	Carter (TX)	Fallon
Baird	Ciscomani	Fedorchak
Balderson	Cline	Feenstra
Barr	Cloud	Finstad
Barrett	Clyde	Fischbach
Baumgartner	Cole	Fitzgerald
Bean (FL)	Collins	Fitzpatrick
Begich	Comer	Fleischmann
Bentz	Crane	Flood
Bergman	Crank	Fong
Bice	Crawford	Foxx
Biggs (AZ)	Crenshaw	Franklin, Scott
Biggs (SC)	Davidson	Fry
Bilirakis	De La Cruz	Fulcher
Boebert	DesJarlais	Garbarino
Bost	Diaz-Balart	Gill (TX)
Brecheen	Donalds	Gimenez
Bresnahan	Downing	Goldman (TX)
Buchanan	Dunn (FL)	Gonzales, Tony

Gooden	Lee (FL)	Rogers (KY)
Gosar	Letlow	Rose
Graves	Loudermilk	Rouzer
Green (TN)	Lucas	Roy
Greene (GA)	Luna	Rulli
Griffith	Luttrell	Rutherford
Grothman	Mace	Salazar
Guest	Mackenzie	Scalise
Guthrie	Malliotakis	Schmidt
Hageman	Maloy	Schweikert
Hamadeh (AZ)	Mann	Self
Haridopolos	Massie	Sessions
Harrigan	Mast	Shreve
Harris (MD)	McCaul	Simpson
Harris (NC)	McClain	Smith (MO)
Harsbarger	McClintock	Smith (NE)
Hern (OK)	McCormick	Smith (NJ)
Higgins (LA)	McDowall	Smucker
Hill (AR)	McGuire	Spartz
Hinson	Messmer	Stefanik
Houchin	Meuser	Steil
Hudson	Miller (IL)	Steube
Hurd (CO)	Miller (OH)	Strong
Issa	Miller (WV)	Stutzman
Jack	Miller-Meeks	Taylor
Jackson (TX)	Mills	Tenney
James	Moolenaar	Thompson (PA)
Johnson (LA)	Moore (AL)	Tiffany
Johnson (SD)	Moore (NC)	Timmons
Jordan	Moore (UT)	Turner (OH)
Joyce (PA)	Moore (WV)	Valadao
Kean	Moran	Van Drew
Kelly (MS)	Murphy	Van Duyne
Kennedy (UT)	Nehls	Van Orden
Kiggans (VA)	Newhouse	Wagner
Kiley (CA)	Nunn (IA)	Walberg
Kim	Obenolte	Weber (TX)
Knott	Ogles	Webster (FL)
Kustoff	Onder	Westerman
LaHood	Owens	Wied
LaLota	Palmer	Williams (TX)
LaMalfa	Perry	Wilson (SC)
Langworthy	Pfluger	Womack
Latta	Reschenthaler	Yakym
Lawler	Rogers (AL)	Zinke

NAYS—184

Adams	Evans (PA)	Matsui
Aguilar	Fields	McBath
Amo	Figures	McBride
Ansari	Fletcher	McClain Delaney
Balint	Foster	McClellan
Barragan	Foushee	McCollum
Beatty	Friedman	McDonald Rivet
Bell	Frost	McGarvey
Bera	Garamendi	McGovern
Beyer	Garcia (CA)	McIver
Bonamici	Garcia (IL)	Menendez
Boyle (PA)	Garcia (TX)	Meng
Brown	Gillen	Mfume
Brownley	Golden (ME)	Min
Budzinski	Goldman (NY)	Moore (WI)
Bynum	Gonzalez, V.	Morelle
Carbajal	Goodlander	Morrison
Carson	Gottheimer	Moskowitz
Carter (LA)	Gray	Moulton
Casar	Green, Al (TX)	Mrvan
Case	Harder (CA)	Nadler
Casten	Hayes	Neal
Castor (FL)	Himes	Neguse
Castro (TX)	Horsford	Norcross
Chu	Houlihan	Ocasio-Cortez
Cisneros	Hoyle (OR)	Olszewski
Clark (MA)	Huffman	Omar
Cleaver	Ivey	Pallone
Clyburn	Jackson (IL)	Panetta
Cohen	Jacobs	Pappas
Conaway	Jayapal	Perez
Connolly	Jeffries	Peters
Correa	Johnson (GA)	Pingree
Courtney	Johnson (TX)	Pocan
Craig	Kamlager-Dove	Pou
Crockett	Kaptur	Pressley
Crow	Kelly (IL)	Quigley
Cuellar	Kennedy (NY)	Ramirez
Davids (KS)	Khanna	Randall
Davis (IL)	Krishnamoorthi	Riley (NY)
Davis (NC)	Landsman	Ross
Dean (PA)	Larsen (WA)	Ruiz
DeGette	Latimer	Salinas
DelBene	Lee (NV)	Sánchez
Deluzio	Lee (PA)	Schakowsky
DeSaulnier	Levin	Schneider
Dexter	Liccardo	Scholten
Dingell	Lieu	Schrier
Doggett	Lofgren	Scott, David
Elfreth	Lynch	Sherrill
Escobar	Magaziner	Simon
Espallat	Mannion	Smith (WA)

Sorensen	Thanedar	Vargas	Buchanan	Harris (NC)	Moore (WV)	Khanna	Neal	Sherrill
Soto	Thompson (CA)	Vasquez	Burchett	Harshbarger	Moran	Krishnamoorthi	Neguse	Simon
Stansbury	Titus	Veasey	Burlison	Hern (OK)	Murphy	Landsman	Norcross	Smith (WA)
Stanton	Tlaib	Velázquez	Calvert	Higgins (LA)	Nehls	Larsen (WA)	Ocasio-Cortez	Sorensen
Stevens	Tokuda	Wasserman	Hill (AR)	Hill (AR)	Newhouse	Latimer	Olshewski	Soto
Strickland	Torres (CA)	Schultz	Hinson	Hinson	Norman	Lee (NV)	Omar	Stansbury
Subramanyam	Trahan	Watson Coleman	Carter (GA)	Houchin	Nunn (IA)	Lee (PA)	Pallone	Stanton
Suoizzi	Tran	Whitesides	Carter (TX)	Hudson	Obernalte	Levin	Panetta	Stevens
Sykes	Turner (TX)	Williams (GA)	Ciscomani	Huizenga	Ogles	Liccardo	Pappas	Strickland
Takano	Underwood		Cline	Hunt	Onder	Lieu	Pelosi	Subramanyam

NOT VOTING—39

Auchincloss	Keating	Scott, Austin	Cole	Jack		Magaziner	Pingree	Takano
Bishop	Kelly (PA)	Sewell	Collins	Jackson (TX)		Mannion	Pocan	Thanedar
Cherfilus-McCormick	Larson (CT)	Sherman	Comer	James	Reschenthaler	Matsui	Pou	Thompson (CA)
Clarke (NY)	Leger Fernandez	Stauber	Crane	Johnson (LA)	Rogers (AL)	McBath	Pressley	Titus
Costa	Meeks	Swalwell	Crane	Johnson (SD)	Rogers (KY)	McBride	Quigley	Tlaib
DeLauro	Mullin	Thompson (MS)	Crawford	Jordan	Rose	McClain Delaney	Ramirez	Tokuda
Frankel, Lois	Norman	Tonko	Creshaw	Joyce (OH)	Rouzer	McClellan	Randall	Tonko
Gomez	Pelosi	Torres (NY)	Davidson	Joyce (PA)	Roy	McCollum	Raskin	Torres (CA)
Grijalva	Pettersen	Vindman	De La Cruz	Kean	Rulli	McDonald Rivet	Riley (NY)	Torres (NY)
Hoyer	Raskin	Waters	DesJarlais	Kelly (MS)	Rutherford	McGarvey	Rivas	Trahan
Huizenga	Rivas	Wilson (FL)	Diaz-Balart	Kennedy (UT)	Salazar	McGovern	Ross	Tran
Hunt	Ryan	Wittman	Donalds	Kiggans (VA)	Scalise	McIver	Ruiz	Turner (TX)
Joyce (OH)	Scanlon		Downing	Kiley (CA)	Schmidt	Meeks	Ryan	Underwood
	Scott (VA)		Dunn (FL)	Kim	Schweikert	Menendez	Salinas	Vargas

□ 1351

Mses. MCCOLLUM, SIMON, Messrs. MOSKOWITZ, DOGGETT, Mses. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, BROWNLEY, KAPTUR, and Mr. PAPPAS changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Mrs. SPARTZ changed her vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 38.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 38.

Stated against:

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Speaker, I missed the vote on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 122. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 38.

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 38.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 38.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 38.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 216, noes 205, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 39]

AYES—216

Aderholt	Balderson	Bice
Alford	Barr	Biggs (AZ)
Allen	Barrett	Biggs (SC)
Amodi (NV)	Baumgartner	Bilirakis
Arrington	Bean (FL)	Boebert
Babin	Begich	Bost
Bacon	Bentz	Brecheen
Baird	Bergman	Bresnahan

Adams	Cohen	Frost
Aguilar	Conaway	Garamendi
Amo	Connolly	Garcia (CA)
Ansari	Correa	Garcia (IL)
Auchincloss	Costa	Garcia (TX)
Balint	Courtney	Gillen
Barragán	Craig	Golden (ME)
Beatty	Crockett	Goldman (NY)
Bell	Crow	Gonzalez, V.
Bera	Cuellar	Goodlander
Beyer	Davids (KS)	Gottheimer
Bishop	Davis (IL)	Gray
Bonamici	Davis (NC)	Green, Al (TX)
Boyle (PA)	Dean (PA)	Harder (CA)
Brown	DeGette	Hayes
Brownley	DeLauro	Himes
Budzinski	DelBene	Horsford
Bynum	Deluzio	Houlahan
Carbajal	DeSaulnier	Hoyer
Carson	Dexter	Hoyle (OR)
Carter (LA)	Dingell	Huffman
Casar	Doggett	Ivey
Case	Elfreth	Jackson (IL)
Casten	Escobar	Jacobs
Castro (FL)	Espaillet	Jayapal
Castro (TX)	Evans (PA)	Jeffries
Cherfilus-McCormick	Fields	Johnson (GA)
Chu	Figures	Johnson (TX)
Cisneros	Fletcher	Kamlaeger-Dove
Clark (MA)	Foster	Kaptur
Cleaver	Foushee	Keating
Clyburn	Frankel, Lois	Kelly (IL)
	Friedman	Kennedy (NY)

NOES—205

NOT VOTING—12

Clarke (NY)	Kelly (PA)	Pettersen
Gomez	Larson (CT)	Swalwell
Gosar	Leger Fernandez	Thompson (MS)
Grijalva	Mullin	Wilson (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1358

Mr. LANDSMAN changed his vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, I was not recorded on roll call votes nos. 38 and 39. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on roll call votes nos. 38 and 39.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I recently gave birth and am unable to travel to DC to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 38 and NAY on Roll Call No. 39.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 452

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) as a cosponsor of H.R. 452.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged concurrent resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution as follows:

H. CON. RES. 11

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELECTING A MEMBER TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 125

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mr. DeSaulnier.

Mr. AGUILAR. (During the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 23

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I hereby remove my name as cosponsor of H. Res. 23.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's request is granted.

REMEMBERING MARK SPAIN

(Mr. McGUIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McGUIRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the award-winning TV anchor, Mark Spain. On December 18, central Virginia lost a friend in WSET ABC 13 News anchor Mark Spain after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Mark Spain was known for his sense of humor, his smile, and his positive nicknames for his friends in the office. Mark was a consistent voice in the community and will be remembered as a pillar in the Lynchburg, Virginia, area.

On January 4, a day after being sworn into Congress, I attended Mark Spain's celebration of life at the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, today from the House floor I want to take a moment to remember Mark Spain and say that Tracy and I join our community in praying for Mark, his wife Lynita, their three children, and the WSET ABC 13 News family during this difficult time.

USAID FUNDING

(Mrs. TORRES of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. TORRES of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern over the cancelation of an appropriations subcommittee hearing by my Republican colleagues and the decision to replace it with a private briefing to silence Democrats.

I am alarmed by the illegal impoundment of Federal funding and the attempted destruction of USAID. Americans deserve to know why this decision was made.

The administration's decision to close USAID is a direct violation of our Constitution and the law. USAID is essential in stopping the flow of drugs, gangs, human trafficking, and migrants across our borders.

Why are Elon Musk and the Trump administration working to dismantle the very agency that addresses the root causes of migration, violence, and drugs that are devastating our communities?

USAID's work is critical to combating criminal organizations and strengthening international partnerships with the FBI, DEA, and the Department of Justice. Earlier this year, USAID's support was acknowledged as critical when top MS-13 leaders were arrested on terrorist charges.

Mr. Speaker, I demand answers. If our Republican colleagues are too scared to push back, then Democrats will do our job.

HONORING MATT ROSENDALE FOR HIS YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

(Mr. DOWNING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOWNING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my predecessor, Matt Rosendale, for his years of public service to this House of Representatives and to the people of Montana.

Like me, Congressman Rosendale served as Montana State auditor and commissioner of securities and insurance before making his journey to the Nation's Capital.

Congressman Rosendale was one of Washington's fiercest advocates for fiscal conservatism, border security, and the rights of the unborn. He never shied away from doing what he thought was right nor speaking up for what he believed in.

I wish Congressman Rosendale and his wife, Jean, all the best in their years ahead, and I thank him for his service.

RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF QUINYON MITCHELL

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the achievements of Quinyon Mitchell, a proud University of Toledo Rocket and now a Super Bowl champion with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Mr. Speaker, last year I stood before you and said that Quinyon Mitchell would make northwest Ohio proud on the national stage, and he has done exactly that, helping lead the Eagles to victory in Super Bowl LIX.

His dedication, discipline, and talent have set him apart, earning him respect across the league as a key player of one of the NFL's top defenses.

Mr. Mitchell is not the only Rocket making waves on football's biggest stage. I want to extend special recognition to fellow Eagle, Dallas Gant. He also won the Super Bowl alongside Quinyon.

Their journeys from Toledo to the grandest stage in football are a living testament to the strength of our athletic programs and the hardworking spirit of the people of northwest Ohio's communities.

Congratulations to the Philadelphia Eagles on their championship. To Quinyon and Dallas: You make us proud and all of northwest Ohio proud. Go Rockets.

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM SMITH

(Mr. PALMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my Chief of Staff, William Smith, who is leaving our office. He has faithfully served the American people for over 20 years and has served alongside me since my first day in office in 2015.

Before agreeing to lead my staff, he worked for Senator Jeff Sessions on the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Budget Committee.

Within 5 minutes of talking to William, Mr. Speaker, you will know he loves the Lord; he loves his wife, Diamond; he loves his family; and he loves his country. When people ask how I have such a great staff, I always point them to William. He leads by example and embodies the idea of servant leadership.

If you know William, Mr. Speaker, you also know he is a true conservative who proudly stands for his beliefs, even if he is the only one standing. He demonstrates his joy and his convictions, and it truly makes him the consummate happy warrior.

His departure is not only a loss for our office, but Capitol Hill as a whole. I thank him for all of his years of service to our country, and I look forward

to seeing what he will accomplish in this next chapter of service.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

(Mr. DESAULNIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the continued suffering and amazing destruction caused by wildfires in southern California and the critical need for this body and for the President to aid those Americans affected by this natural disaster.

Over 16,000 homes and structures were destroyed in the L.A. fires, and at one point, 200,000 residents were under evacuation orders. Severe drought and powerful winds made firefighters' jobs even more difficult.

While we should be discussing how we, as Americans, help other Americans, as we have always done in other disasters, somehow we have gotten distracted with political theater and trying to score political points.

Successful recovery from any disaster wherever it is takes cooperation across all levels of government. We have done it before, and we can do it again. We can't afford to waste time with political games or unnecessary conditions on aid.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides to do the right thing and deliver aid to their fellow Americans who have had their lives upended by tragedy.

□ 1415

ADDRESSING THE HACK OF U.S. TREASURY PAYMENT SYSTEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BAUMGARTNER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CASTEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, HALEY STEVENS and I introduced the Taxpayer Data Protection Act last week. This is a very simple but, tragically, an urgently necessary bill to address the hack of the U.S. Treasury payment system by Elon Musk and his band of IT goons last week.

This bill would limit the Secretary of the Treasury's ability to give access to the payment system only to people who: A, have a top secret security clearance; B, have no conflicts of interest; C, are not special government employees; and, D, have been Federal employees for at least a year.

Why is this necessary?

What happened last week comprised one of the most significant breaches of privacy and threats to our national security, perhaps ever. I am not exaggerating.

This was done with the consent of Treasury Secretary Bessent. This point

is important because some of my colleagues across the aisle have suggested that somehow what they are doing is just normal diligence.

This is decidedly abnormal. It is so abnormal, in fact, that, when David Lebryk, the Fiscal Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and former Acting Secretary of the Treasury, refused to grant access to Elon Musk, Secretary Bessent fired Mr. Lebryk so that Musk could force his way in.

Let's understand the scope of what happened. The Treasury Department manages a \$5 trillion-a-year Federal payment system. This is the way that every branch of government pays their bills. Like any accounting system, it is critical that all of the bills it pays are approved, legal, and accurately recorded in our ledger.

This is how we make payments on savings bonds and other debt borrowed by the United States. It is how we pay employees. It is how we pay contractors. It is how we provide foreign aid. It is how we pay tax refunds, veterans' benefits, and Social Security reimbursements. It is how we distribute money to our intelligence agents and to intelligence assets who are embedded in hostile foreign governments. Take control of this system, and one can, quite literally, destroy the United States. To put it mildly, it is a target for our adversaries.

Yet, last week, unvetted, unelected, and unconfirmed individuals hacked into that system using insecure software and hardware.

Did they tamper with the code?

Did they manipulate payment systems to prioritize payments to companies controlled by Mr. Musk?

Did they inadvertently use hardware that had been infiltrated by our allies?

Did they take classified information with them on the way out that could make them a security liability?

As we sit here right now, we don't know the answers to any of those questions. All we have is denials from the hackers.

Mr. Speaker, on what basis should we trust them?

After all, they forced their way into the system with the full consent of someone who lied to his wife and was convicted of 34 counts of fraud for lying to financial and election regulators. As the saying goes: Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me every single time, shame on me.

I would suggest that we should instead trust what this individual said when he was on the campaign trail, when he promised to enact revenge on his political enemies.

Trump and Musk now have information that they could use to identify individual taxpayers who, I don't know, contributed to a charity that they oppose for selective retribution.

If they got control of the stop payment controls, they could now block congressionally mandated payments for healthcare, roads, and bridges; or to Governors or attorneys general who

are currently suing to block their unconstitutional actions in the courts.

With the personal information that they have hacked into, they could go after judges who have forced them to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in penalties after being convicted in jury trials of fraud and defamation, and they could go after companies who compete with one of their many private entities.

As long as those risks remain, we have to assume that this is going to make every single American less likely to trust that they can provide their personal information to the United States Government.

To put it bluntly, what they did last week compromised the full faith and credit of the United States. If the President and Elon Musk were acting under the direction of a hostile foreign government, this is exactly what they would do.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that they are. I don't know. What I am saying is that, if their actions serve only to weaken the United States, that is at the benefit of Russia, China, Iran, and all of the other countries that my colleagues across the aisle claim to love less than the United States.

A functioning Congress would provide oversight. A functioning Congress would be subpoenaing witnesses and demanding public testimony. A functioning Congress would be treating this like the five-alarm fire that every American understands that it is.

Yet, here we find ourselves knowing only that the Republican leadership is completely unwilling to fulfill their oath to defend our country against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and unwilling to protect the prerogatives of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that I am wrong, but my fear is they are a lost cause, which brings us to my bill with Congresswoman STEVENS.

I know that there are Republicans in this body who love our country. There are Republicans in this body who I truly love and enjoy their company, and I know that they have told me privately that they are offended and ashamed by what Donald Trump is doing to it. Some of the Republicans have even called it out.

All it takes now is for three of my colleagues across the aisle to stand up to ensure that these last 22 days are an anomaly in our history rather than the beginning of its end.

For any Republicans watching who are, shall we say, democracy curious in this moment, who privately acknowledge that this has gone too far but worry about the political and, worse, personal threats that will surely come if Republicans stand up to Donald Trump, I leave my colleagues with the empathy and the wisdom of Thomas Paine:

These are the times that try men's souls. Many will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country, but he that stands by it now deserves the love and thanks of

men and women. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered. Yet, we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly. It is dearness only that gives everything its value.

To my Republican colleagues: The times have found us, and America needs them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the Congresswoman from Michigan, **HALEY STEVENS**, my esteemed colleague and author of this bill.

Ms. **STEVENS**. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. **CASTEN**), for his remarks, his dedication to this Chamber, to this process, and to the lawmaking. We are both in our fourth term.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you in obliging us with this Special Order on the grand discourse of our democracy.

It has always been a delight to work with Mr. **CASTEN**, a longtime member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, a dedicated member of the Financial Services Committee, and a thinker, to say the least.

When we came together last week to introduce H.R. 1101, the Taxpayer Data Protection Act, I actually don't think that that piece of legislation was on our minds until we witnessed the very troubling, concerning, and unquestionably legal actions of an unelected bureaucrat, billionaire, appointee going into the Bureau of Fiscal Service to get access to the wires and the information of our taxpayers to do God knows what with.

All of a sudden, the phones of Members of Congress were ringing off the hook: What is going on?

I couldn't take two steps in my beloved Oakland County in southeast Michigan, the district which I am so proud to represent, without somebody asking me, in deep concern, what was going on.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Mr. **CASTEN**'s background, which was also tied to business and certainly tied to the workings of our Congress, but I happen to be a former Treasury official. I went into the Treasury Department as a political appointee right after an oath of office was taken in the early, early days of President Barack Obama's administration because I was a part of the auto rescue team.

What we were looking at was actually a real crisis in this Nation. For the kids watching back home, I don't know how old they are and how much they would remember, but we had a great recession going on. We had double-digit unemployment. We had a rocked financial services sector. We had an insurance market that was practically crumbling. We had housing with subprime mortgages up the wazoo. There weren't for-sale signs in front of people's homes.

Then there was the question about what was going to happen to General Motors and Chrysler because they were staring liquidation in the face.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress, in a different session and a different time, al-

most in that lameduck period before President Obama took office, passed something known as the Troubled Asset Relief Program to stabilize, ameliorate, and address our economy to make sure it didn't roll off of a cliff.

The Main Street effort of the Troubled Asset Relief Program was this effort to save General Motors and Chrysler from liquidation along with millions of jobs across this country, including 200,000 in Michigan.

They all came into the Treasury Department, from the smallest of suppliers, to the mayors, to the auto dealers, small businesses in their own right, even the foreign original equipment manufacturers, saying: Do not let them liquidate.

We used \$80 billion of taxpayer money, which, by the way, was repaid—which, by the way, worked and which, by the way, rebounded the U.S. auto industry.

Did you hear that point? The Federal Government made money off of the \$80 billion to save General Motors and Chrysler. Now we have a strong manufacturing economy with true innovation happening, and we are producing and making cars at a rate that was unfathomable at that time, over 15 years ago.

Never once, by the way, did we ever question or seek to knock on the door of the Bureau of Fiscal Service, which is off campus, by the way. It is not in the main Treasury building. We had bipartisan emergency workers. We had people from the Bush administration stay on. We had people from the Obama administration coming in. We were trying to save this country from falling off of a cliff. We were trying to save us from a true great depression, and no one was meddling in the wires.

Mr. **CASTEN** and I had to write this bill, the Taxpayer Data Protection Act, to put up and remind ourselves of guardrails. The painful point of this is that we are waiting and eager and just wondering when our colleagues, who don't even seem to be in this Chamber right now, are going to give us the bill to lower the price of goods? We are waiting.

I had a meeting in my district on housing. I brought all of the stakeholders together. We have beautiful homes in Oakland County, Michigan, but we don't have enough of them. We have homes that need to be rehabbed. There is building that needs to happen. So I brought together, as Members of Congress do, all of the stakeholders. I brought them together, and we invited HUD.

We invited HUD, but you know what, per a new executive order, HUD can't go to meetings. So we can't even have a conversation about how the heck we are going to lower the price of housing and get more housing built.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing my constituents are talking to me about on overdrive are the eggs. There are no eggs. We don't have eggs.

Mr. Speaker, there are eggs, but there are shortages on the eggs. People

are going to the store, and they can't find eggs.

There was a headline last week in Pennsylvania that \$40,000 worth of eggs were stolen. Just yesterday, in Washington State, more eggs were stolen.

I see this Commander in Chief doing all of these press conferences about every revenge tactic and different type of endeavor for the Federal Government.

What are we doing about the costs? What are we doing about the costs of everyday goods?

An executive order came out about the cost of prescription drugs, which are about to skyrocket again, and it is rolling back what we did to lower the cost of prescription drugs and put Medicare at the negotiating table.

□ 1430

This is unbelievable. This is a simple bill and a simple measure to protect the American taxpayer, to reestablish trust, yes, as duly elected Members of Congress, the stewards of the public trust as quoted and delivered by the great Henry Clay, otherwise known as the great compromiser of the 1800s.

We are the holders of the trust, so this bill is a matter that should just be done tomorrow. We should get this done. We are waiting for the leadership of this very body, those who move the bills to the floor, to give us something that will actually help the pocketbooks of the American people.

Mr. **CASTEN**. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. **STANSBURY**).

Ms. **STANSBURY**. Mr. Speaker, it is Tuesday afternoon. I am here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives and my question is, where are my Republican colleagues?

There is not a single one of my Republican colleagues here on the House floor. In fact, I am standing on the Republican side of the aisle and there is not a single one in the Chamber right now. While Donald Trump and Elon Musk and their group of teenage hackers are dismantling the Federal Government, not a single one is to be found here on the House floor this afternoon.

Let me say to the American people: This is not normal. What is happening right now in this country is not normal, and Democrats are fighting back.

We are fighting to defend the Constitution, the rule of law, the separation of powers, vital funding for our communities, the health and safety of our people, and saving our democracy because what is happening in this country right now is not normal.

Over the last 3 weeks since Donald Trump took office, Federal agencies have been dismantled. Thousands of Federal workers have been fired and put on leave and are left in limbo. Millions in Federal funds have been frozen for our communities and your private data has been hacked by a group of teenage software hackers at the Department of the Treasury.

Elon Musk and Donald Trump are breaking the law daily inside of these

agencies. In fact, not only are they breaking the law, they are violating the Constitution, appropriations law, and statutory law. There are 55 court cases pending right now in front of Federal courts. Federal stays filed by Federal judges to stop Trump and Musk from these illegal activities, and Democrats are here on the House floor fighting.

We are fighting in the Halls of Congress. We are working with our allies on the outside to fight in the courts, and, yes, we are fighting in the streets alongside the American people.

Where are the Republicans? Have you so abdicated your constitutional responsibility that you can't hold your own party accountable?

Just last week in the Oversight Committee, we asked for Elon Musk to come testify, and when we tried to subpoena him, Republicans went out of their way to stop him from appearing in front of the United States House of Representatives' Oversight Committee.

If Republicans are so proud of what Donald Trump and Elon Musk are doing inside of these agencies, then why are they trying so hard to shield them from public scrutiny and appearing in the people's House?

What the hell is going on? That is what the American people want to know.

Why are they trampling on their fundamental rights as millions of Americans are terrified right now across this country, and we know that thousands of their constituents are calling their offices as we speak.

Seniors and elders from our communities are afraid that their Social Security checks aren't going to come. Housing and homeless organizations are afraid they are going to have to shut down and not be able to give out vouchers so that people have housing. Food banks are concerned they are not going to have enough funding to get to the end of the month to make sure that families can eat.

Hospitals and clinics are wondering if they are going to have to shut down whole parts of their treatment to the public, universities whose funds have been frozen, and State, local, and Tribal Governments who are continuing to get notifications from the administration that their funding is not coming, even though a court has already ordered Donald Trump more than once that they are violating the law.

Where are our Republican colleagues? Why are they pretending like there is nothing to see here? Maybe it is because while we are standing here, they are literally meeting behind closed doors putting together a tax package that has yet to see the light of day, that will literally make permanent the largest tax breaks for billionaires in the history of this country.

That is right. That is what they are up to. That is what they are doing. Do you know who those tax breaks are going to go to? They are going to go to people like Elon Musk, Donald Trump,

and all the billionaires and millionaires who are serving in the Cabinet right now and giving unfettered access to Elon Musk and his software engineers to hack your private data.

How are they going to pay for it? They already told us how they are going to pay for it. They are going to steal your Medicaid and your Medicare. They are going to do it by illegally shutting down grants and funding for these agencies and for all of the countless services and programs that we know they are hacking this data to do.

We know what they are up to and the Republicans are acting like there is nothing to see here because they are in on it. That is why they are not here on the floor. That is why they are missing. That is why they are letting Elon Musk and his Silicon Valley buddies raid the Federal Treasury.

We want you to know, the American people, what is actually going on here. Tomorrow, in the very first hearing of the Oversight Committee's new DOGE Subcommittee, Democrats are ready to fight. We are ready to show the American people what is actually happening and how we are fighting back to defend and to serve our people and to reveal what is actually going on not only in this Chamber but across this town as they try to dismantle our agencies and funding.

I say to the American people: Not only are we fighting for you but continue to join us in the fight. We need your voices. We need them loud. We need them clear. Keep calling your Republican Representatives, keep calling us, and let them know not only is this not normal but this is not okay. We are going to continue to fight for our democracy.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I took the following oath my 20th year in Congress. I will read it and remind you, Mr. Speaker, of this oath of office: I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office of which I am about to enter, so help me God.

This is an oath, Mr. Speaker, that you and I took.

Mr. Speaker, this was not an oath that they gave to the Democrats, this was not an oath that they gave just to the Republicans, this is an oath that we all took, and the insurrection continues.

The insurrection really started, I think, December 14, 2020, when all of the electors in various States had put together their scheme and the plot to overturn the government. January 6, 2021, we saw the beginning of the insurrection.

Four years later, we re-elected Donald Trump and the insurrection continues. It started with just pardoning violent criminals, people who caused the death by suicide and other means of police officers, who speared them and caused injuries to police officers and the insurrection continues.

We now have unelected billionaires who have broken into the Treasury Department and this is not a political grab for power; it is a crime what they did. It is criminal, and courts have backed this understanding up.

They have said to the Treasury Department: We want you to stop getting people's personal information. Stop getting their Social Security numbers. Stop putting your thumb drives in and taking it off to some laptop because we don't know what you are doing with this information.

Mr. Speaker, guess what?

Elon Musk and our Vice President, this is from the day's paper, have said that they should just ignore those court orders. These court orders should not matter, that they should continue to violate the law.

Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of a colloquy, I will ask the gentleman from Illinois a question.

I marched into our Speaker of the House's office to try to meet with the Treasury Secretary to ask them why they were committing crimes. Why there was unchecked authority over the Treasury data, to stop doing it? Why they needed to do this? Why they needed to surveil, penalize, or control this financial access?

The Speaker told me he had no idea what they were doing. The Speaker of the House does not know what they are doing. These are the same people who have taken the same oath of office that all of us have taken, to have these 19-year-old kids with microwave processed security clearances, if they even have that, putting thumb drives in our mainframe.

I am asking you, Mr. CASTEN, what does your Taxpayer Data Protection Act do to stop that?

Mr. CASTEN. The first thing we do is make sure that unless you have a security clearance, a top-secret security clearance, you cannot access those records.

The second thing it does is, if you have not been a Federal Government employee for at least a year, you cannot access those records. You cannot access those records if you are a special government employee because, let's remember, we have to have oversight over the people who are doing this.

People need to disclose what their conflicts of interests are, which brings us to the fourth piece. You cannot access those records if you have a conflict of interest.

Let's just say, hypothetically, you were running a satellite company that had large contracts with the United States and were also doing business in China and you might have reason to gain that system, that would be a conflict of interest.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Let me get this clear: Have any of those conditions been met?

Mr. CASTEN. No.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Has anybody gotten the appropriate security clearances? Have they told us what they are going to do with it? What of Article I?

We are Article I of the Constitution. Americans elected us to represent them, 300 million Americans, and the President of the United States says that he does not have to—Mr. Speaker, I realize that I am not supposed to mention his name. I didn't mention his name, but Mr. Speaker, I associate myself with the words of the gentlewoman from New Mexico, this is not normal. We are not having a normal session.

Mr. Speaker, the House is on fire. The House is on fire. There is nothing legal or constitutional that is going on. We have unelected billionaires running the country. We have a President who is pardoning violent criminals. I suppose if they ignore the court orders, he will just have his daily list of people that he will pardon, so they can continue.

□ 1445

Mr. Speaker, the House is on fire. The insurrection is continuing, and it is affecting you whether you are a Head Start child out there who needs it, a senior in a nursing home who will get inadequate care—you are going to be lying in your feces for 10 hours because they are cutting Medicaid—or a farmer who has not gotten your USDA funding.

The House is on fire. If you are a Social Security recipient, they have gone in and created a back door to your data. They know your bank account number.

The House is on fire, you-all. We need to stop acting like things are normal. It is not normal.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) for her remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER).

Mr. TURNER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend was Super Bowl weekend, and of course, I was in my district in Houston, Texas. I went back to get prepared to go to several events in reference to the Super Bowl. I thought the number one question that I was going to be asked was who I favor since the Houston Texans were defeated by Kansas City on their way to the Super Bowl.

However, all this week, Mr. Speaker, the question that kept coming back to me was: Congressman TURNER, what is happening in D.C., and what is this about our personal information being in the hands of someone else?

From one event to the next, I was stopped and got these questions over and over again.

At the Super Bowl party, I guess you could say, again I thought people would be focused on Kansas City or

Philadelphia, but when I arrived, people would come up to me and say: What is this that I am hearing about my personal information possibly being in the hands of someone else?

That is what I had to deal with this entire weekend. It is an issue that we simply cannot ignore, that someone—let's say, in this case, Elon Musk and his team of engineers—would go to the United States Treasury Department and literally take it over and have access to people's Social Security information, Medicare information, Medicaid information, taxpayer information, and the list goes on and on. This is a payment system that literally processes about \$6 trillion on an annual basis.

When I came to this Congress as a new Member, that was not one of the issues that I thought I would be facing in the first month of being here in this 119th Congress, but it is an issue that I have had to deal with now over and over again.

Then, the next question that came to me, Mr. Speaker, was: All right, Congressman TURNER, you are there, so what are you all doing to protect our information? What is the next step? What is Congress intending to do?

That was a difficult question to answer. What I did say to people is that many of us are not in agreement with what has taken place over the last few weeks. We did not approve someone coming in, taking over the U.S. Treasury Department, and obtaining your private, confidential information without your consent, so we are standing up and speaking against it.

Let me point out, which I think this is important, the questions that came to me did not just come from Democrats. The questions were also coming to me from Republicans, moms and dads, people who care about their information when they have heard so much about cybersecurity threats and information being stolen. That is what came to me.

For 8 years, Mr. Speaker, I was the mayor of the city of Houston, a non-partisan position. As the mayor of a city, potholes are neither Democratic nor Republican. When it rains, it doesn't just fall on Democratic neighborhoods; it will fall on Republican neighborhoods. I have had a reputation of trying to call it as I see it, call a ball a ball and a strike a strike.

In this case, when I was at home, I heard from people from all walks of life and both sides of the aisle concerned about where their information was going, who had it, and whether or not the people who now have it were sufficiently vetted.

I could not say to them that the persons who have their information, who are going through their information, and who are using it for whatever purpose, that they have been sufficiently vetted. I can't respond to that. Literally, I can't respond to it because it was an issue that has not been debated on the House floor, but it is an issue

that is important to moms and dads; people who are on Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid; and for taxpayers who don't like sharing their information with just anyone.

I have been a lawyer for 40-plus years. During that time, there are certain things that are just very important for the average person, and their information is that important. My mom did not graduate from high school, and I don't say that in a negative sense because she and my dad raised nine kids and, I think, did an outstanding job. My mom, after my dad died, guarded her information very carefully, and a lot of things she would not even share with her kids. I was a lawyer in the family, but she was always concerned about who had access to her banking accounts, Social Security number, and things of that nature.

Right now in America, whether you come from Houston, Texas, California, Massachusetts, or Georgia, people are concerned about who has their personal information. If this issue is so important, then this is an issue that should be debated in the people's House by those of us who are closest to the people who we represent.

That is why I am a strong supporter of the Taxpayer Data Protection Act. Mr. Speaker, when I came here during orientation and in the days since, I was reminded that this Chamber is the people's House. We represent the folks who are closest to the ones who we speak for and should represent.

Now, I am not one who wants to stand up and demonize Elon Musk. I am not that person. However, when Elon Musk steps into this role with his team that very few of us have ever met, then he steps into the arena where we are the ones with the responsibility of safeguarding the American people's interests. Elon Musk and his team should not carry any more weight than those of us who have been duly elected and represent the people in our districts, in this country.

This is an issue, Mr. Speaker, that should be fully debated in this Chamber in the people's House. It is simply that important. That is why we must immediately debate and pass the Taxpayer Data Protection Act, which will protect our Nation's payment system and give hardworking Americans some sense of security.

I close by saying this: This is not a partisan issue. It is the people's interest. Throughout all of last year, we talked about what the people wanted, the real issues that affected real people. Nothing hits closer to them than their medical bills, their Social Security information, and their taxpayer information. People should have a right to know who holds that information, what they are doing with it, and how it is being used.

Congress has a responsibility here, Mr. Speaker. We cannot abdicate our role. If we are not allowed to debate it and decide what is in the people's interest, then we may as well go home

and allow Elon Musk and his team to sit in these chairs and make the decisions on what happens in our future.

That is something that I find unacceptable, so I am asking for Congress to debate this particular bill, the Taxpayer Data Protection Act, and allow the people's House to decide who should hold their information, who should have access to it, and how that information should be used. If we fail to do that as Congress, then we have abdicated our role to speak and represent the people.

Regardless of what district, regardless of what city or State, I hope we will not abdicate our role, be we Democrat or Republican. The people need to know that we stand up and represent their interests.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, Joseph Stalin said that one death is a tragedy and a million deaths is a statistic. When we talk about constitutional crises and hacks into \$5 trillion systems, that risks sounding like a statistic.

I want to share just a couple of stories from my district—I represent, like all of us, $\frac{1}{435}$ th of the population—to understand the real-life consequences that are happening now, first because of what Elon Musk and Donald Trump have done and second because of the failure of this body to fulfill its oversight role.

When these announcements came through, one of the first calls I got was from a local homeless shelter. They had been almost immediately locked out of their HUD portal. They were unable to receive any more payments. That means that 200 people in my community who thought they had housing for a cold night in the middle of January were at risk of being put back out on the street.

I got a call from a county health department that was wondering if they would be able to fulfill their WIC obligations. These are the payments to women, single women often, who have new children and are trying to make sure that they can get food. They didn't know what to tell these women, who relied on them for food and nutrition, about whether they would have the resources to keep their children alive.

The department of health and human services that called my office said that any pause of this legal, congressionally mandated funding could force them to shut down their employment and residential services offered to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

What you do to the least of these, you do unto Me, right?

Four hundred people in my district and their families would have been shut out of that critical program.

I have heard from almost every single town in my district. Republican

mayors, Democratic mayors, Federalists, Whigs, you name it, they are all calling and asking me whether the Federal Government will fulfill the obligations that they have underway for bridge repair, road repair, rail grade separations. They are wondering if they should continue those projects and potentially shift the risk onto their constituents.

What do they do if they don't have the borrowing capacity? If they have to shut down the project, can they finish it because it will probably raise the costs? This is all being done by a White House that claims to be pursuing financial efficiency.

At a local organization that provides victims of domestic and sexual violence with legal counseling, they have about 2,000 survivors they serve each year. They said that they are going to have to immediately scale back services and potentially close down entirely.

□ 1500

We are getting calls from people saying if a billionaire is so intent on cutting their access to Social Security, what happens to their health payments? I had a woman, who was a decent, kind, hardworking person, asking me if she should even bother paying her taxes this year because it is clear that Elon and Donald are dodging theirs and that they are defunding the enforcement agencies that would run an audit, and asking why she should even trust a Trump-led Treasury Department with that information.

These people are not limited to my district. They are not limited to people who voted for Kamala Harris. This hack affects every single one of us. Three patriotic Americans, Republicans, are all we need.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN).

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Taxpayer Data Protection Act, but before then, I will hold this piece of paper up for just a little while because it is my anticipation that before I finish speaking, the internet will have transcribed this piece of paper and the data that is in it.

Mr. Speaker, what if I told you that, somewhere in the multiverse, there was a person, dare I say a villain, who was intent on accessing all the data of the world's most powerful nation and of all of her people. Imagine him sitting in his lair. Perhaps he is stroking a cat. In his mind's eye, he envisions the files of data that he and his minions will soon have access to. Perhaps he will have access to your Social Security number or perhaps your health information. Perhaps he will know about your financial status or what you buy. Perhaps he will unilaterally refuse payments to the defense programs, take a cut of his own from payments, or even will authorize contracts to only his very favorite people and his very favorite organizations.

He will also know deeper secrets that our government works so hard to make sure remain so, so that our citizens can be protected, and so will our adversaries have those same secrets, either intentionally or unintentionally.

You would probably really enjoy this scenario if it were the plot of the new 007 movie, but imagine if it wasn't just a plot and that it was, instead, a reality. This is, in fact, what president Elon Musk and his unelected, unvetted, and untrained minions are attempting to accomplish.

Elon Musk is not rooting around in our Treasury data so he can find fraud and waste. He does not care about curbing spending or getting the budget balanced. He is not trying to optimize our Nation's wealth or to help us all make smarter choices. He never cared about any of this, and he never will.

Yet, knowing this, Trump has, in fact, set him loose on the hunt for data. Make no mistake about it, he is attempting, if he has not already, to access this cache of information, both the personal and the national interest information of our entire people and our entire Nation that will forever be his and his minions' and at their disposal forever, should they be successful.

My guess is that by now, the internet has already translated this piece of paper into data because that is the way the internet works. That is not a read-only piece of data. You may have been able to read it, but in that space of time, my guarantee is that someone on the internet has not only translated it but is also now spinning it into different directions and thoughts.

This all should strike fear in the hearts of all Americans for all kinds of different reasons. It is a blatant and overt theft of information that is not theirs to have. Think of the power that that information will wield. It is a violation of our Constitution and of the checks and balances that we all grew up honoring, regardless of what party we associate ourselves with.

What is a person to do? A person has to think hard about how they feel about the means and ends. You may be one of those people who believes that this government needs to be held in check. I understand that you may have voted for this, but is this, in fact, the way that you want this to be accomplished?

You should be concerned that the law is being broken in your name. You may be one of the people in the middle who fears that your information will be used against you and just now is waking up and realizing that this may not be exactly what you want. You should also be outraged and concerned.

If you are one of those people who never signed up for this to begin with, I am truly sorry. We are in a situation right now where the House, Senate, and White House are all under Republican control. We need all of you, all three different kinds of you, to tell us to do our jobs.

What does doing our job look like? It looks like supporting this bill that is on the floor, the Taxpayer Data Protection Act. What it looks like is passing this bill on the floor with a resounding majority and making sure—a la “Schoolhouse Rock!”—that it goes to the Senate as well and that it gets to the President’s desk with a veto-proof majority.

What it looks like is stopping the executive orders and actions of the executive, Trump, so that this kind of thing cannot continue to happen. The legislative branch, us, but really specifically the Republican majority today are the only ones who can put a stop to this dangerous lawlessness, but they are not going to do that even though they will privately acknowledge how wrong it is, even though they privately hope that Musk and Trump will wear themselves out, even though they privately hope the courts will work, and even though they privately say it is readily access and is not that much data.

Mr. Speaker, it is dangerous, unconstitutional, and illegal. I ask my friends to step up and speak up. Please continue to call your Congressmen, particularly your Republican ones.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Taxpayer Data Protection Act. I thank Congresswoman STEVENS and Congressman CASTEN for introducing this important legislation.

The American people deserve a government that protects their most sensitive personal information instead of one that allows an unelected billionaire to rifle through it.

The Treasury Secretary shirked his duty and granted Elon Musk and his so-called Department of Government Efficiency access to Treasury payment systems. This isn’t efficiency. It is an outright betrayal of the public’s trust.

Under this guise of efficiency, however, this administration has handed over Social Security and Medicare beneficiaries’ private data to a billionaire with no oversight and endless ways to profit.

Make no mistake, this is not about improving government operations. It is about consolidating power in the hands of the few at the expense of hardworking families, at the expense of the 167,000 western New Yorkers in my district who rely on Social Security benefits and the 335,000 taxpayers in my district who file tax returns every year.

Fortunately, attorneys general from New York and 18 other States sued, and a judge has blocked Elon Musk’s access.

The Taxpayer Data Protection Act would protect any unelected billionaire from having unlawful access to private and sensitive data. This bill would restore proper safeguards for the Treasury and ensure that no administration can hand over control of taxpayer data to an unelected, unvetted, and unqualified billionaire.

Mr. Speaker, we will not stand by as our institutions are auctioned off for the rich to profit at the expense of hardworking families. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in defending the well-being and security of the people we were all elected to represent.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE), the assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, first, I thank my colleagues, Representative CASTEN and Representative STEVENS, for their leadership and courage of conviction in taking on this important legislative effort.

Over the past 3 weeks, America has watched with alarm as President Trump and his administration continued to throw the Federal Government into chaos, slashing funding for a variety of different programs, unlawfully attempting to freeze Federal programs, and ultimately, in my view, taking steps that are unconstitutional and inconsistent with the values of the American public.

My office has been inundated in particular with calls from constituents who are deeply troubled and concerned, Mr. Speaker, about what is happening at the Treasury Department.

The Trump administration has placed an unelected billionaire and his associates in extreme areas of power, giving them access to Americans’ most sensitive information. Americans are outraged. They are right to be outraged.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a legislative response that would ameliorate this particular challenge, and that is the bill that Representative CASTEN and Representative STEVENS have introduced, the Taxpayer Data Protection Act.

It is a simple bill, a straightforward proposition that your data, Mr. Speaker, your Social Security number and identifying information, just as every American’s, should be protected.

One would think that that would be something that every Member of this body could agree upon, yet we have been unable to convince a Republican colleague, a colleague from the other side of the aisle, to join this effort.

We only need three, Mr. Speaker, three Republicans who decide to do the right thing, to stand up for the American taxpayer, to protect their data. If three join Mr. CASTEN and Ms. STEVENS, we can get this bill across the finish line.

House Democrats will certainly continue to do everything in our power to achieve that outcome. I thank the Representative from Illinois for his leadership and for continuing to make the clarion call to the American people about this particular issue.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, some people have said that this bill is unnecessary because what is being done by the White House is simply going after waste, fraud, and abuse. I want to ex-

plain why that is actually the opposite of what they are doing.

First, we have to clarify that all of us in this body are the fiscal custodians of our Nation’s wealth. To allow corruption or waste to persist is to squander the taxpayers’ hard-earned money. We are all aligned on that issue.

Second, I would note that while we certainly have had our share of financial scandals and corruption over our history, they have almost always involved the illegal transfer of wealth from the government to the private sector—from patronage jobs to no-bid contracts to inflated hotel rates for Secret Service agents at the Trump hotel.

There is a pattern there. The easy proof of that is that while our Nation seems to have a lot of billionaires lately, you won’t find them among our country’s TSA workers, air traffic controllers, food inspectors, IRS agents, soldiers, intelligence officers, or the numerous other people who have dedicated their lives to public service, which makes sense.

Those of us in public service have chosen to live lives of elevated public scrutiny. A free press keeps tabs on us. Inspectors general and whistleblowers exist to ensure that grift and fraud are caught quickly.

If the Trump administration were genuinely concerned about waste, fraud, and abuse, what would they do that would be consistent with existing law? That is pretty easy. They would submit budget requests to Congress to increase funding to inspectors general and whistleblower protections. They would notify Congress of specific areas where they believe this abuse is happening, ask us to pass laws to close loopholes, and increase funding for enforcement. They would use their bully pulpit to strengthen the rule of law, remind everybody that there is a higher ethical standard to live to, and demonstrate by their behavior that they live by that standard and demand it of others.

That is the exact opposite of everything they have done. They have failed to submit budgets. They have ignored Congress’ congressional power of the purse, putting spending decisions in the hands of economically connected oligarchs. They have fired or are threatening to fire inspectors general and whistleblower advocates, making it harder for ethical Federal employees to call out fraud when they see it.

They are firing FBI and other law enforcement officers who could prosecute those crimes, including ones who have active cases ongoing. They seem to have a specific bias, I would note, against FBI officers who are pursuing prosecuting waste, fraud, and abuse against the Trump family.

They are pardoning people who assaulted police officers and sending a message to the American people that ethics don’t even matter. If you ignore the law, you can ignore the orders of

the court, according to JD VANCE, because we are now living in a post-congressional era, according to OMB Director Russell Vought.

They are doing that while giving access to the Federal payment system to people who are not cleared and are massively conflicted. What they are doing is a case study in how to expand, perpetuate, and get away with waste, fraud, and abuse. A Congress that fulfilled its obligation to act as a check and balance on the executive branch would put a stop to that immediately.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois has 1 minute.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, if you were approached on the street by a stranger and asked for your Social Security number, your home address, or your bank account information, you would say no. When the government asks for this information in order to process Social Security checks or a refund, Americans say yes because there is an expectation of privacy and trust.

□ 1515

Mr. Speaker, they trust that their information won't fall into the hands of bad actors. They trust that their information will be secure with people who are qualified, vetted, and who have been proven worthy of having access to our sensitive data.

This administration has allowed this trust to be broken. I was quick to co-sponsor the Taxpayer Data Protection Act to protect the Nation's payment system from reckless and unlawful interference.

It would require anyone who is accessing this system to have a reliable track record of professional service, the necessary security clearance, made an ethics commitment, and has no conflicts of interest.

I will note that The New York Times reports that Elon Musk will make no public disclosure of any conflicts of interest in his financial disclosure.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President and to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

IT'S THE MATH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MOORE).

FEMA CORRUPTION

Mr. MOORE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my constituents in western North Carolina who are angered and disgusted by what we have uncovered in Washington, and they have every right to be.

Just yesterday, Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency uncovered that FEMA bureaucrats, holdovers from the last administration—and against the Trump administration's wishes—tried to send payments of \$59 million to luxury hotels for illegal immigrants in New York City. They had the gall to try to sneak this under our noses, but I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, not anymore. That is just the tip of the iceberg, though.

Since late 2022, FEMA has spent over 1.4 billion of our hard-earned tax dollars on illegal immigrant housing, transportation, and services. That is \$1.4 billion that could have been sent to disaster victims for rebuilding communities, for helping Americans in crisis, and it was squandered on Biden's failed border policies.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Helene devastated my district and tore through communities throughout western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and other southern States. It took over 100 lives, wiped entire towns off the map, Mr. Speaker, and left thousands of American families homeless. They needed FEMA to step up and do their jobs. They needed help.

Mr. Speaker, but for the volunteers, but for the nonprofits, but for the churches, we would be looking at more loss of life, more loss of property, and more devastation.

Shortly after I was sworn in, we had a winter storm. Tell me why, during that winter storm, were illegal immigrants given luxury hotel rooms while my constituents, American citizens, were calling my office, asking and pleading for help from FEMA to extend their hotel vouchers during a winter storm. They had nowhere to go home to, and no heat. Washington bureaucrats turned their backs on them. Thank God for President Trump, for Secretary Kristi Noem, and for DOGE because this is getting turned around fast.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to show you something with this new poster that was just put up beside me. This is a photo in western North Carolina. This is a photo that I took, and this is what Biden's FEMA has ignored. I took this picture, as I say, two weekends ago in Chimney Rock. It is a very small town, but it gives us a glimpse of things. These people need help to rebuild their homes, their businesses, as well as major bridges and roads. This is just a snapshot of some of the damage we had. We are still in the thick of it.

Who showed up for us? Who showed back up? President Trump did. He made it his very first trip of his second term and one of his administration's biggest priorities. We were also honored when Secretary Noem came here,

literally with a shovel and a wheelbarrow, to help and to see what was happening.

Just yesterday, Secretary Duffy visited us in western North Carolina to see the damage along I-40 and pledged his support to ensure that I-40 gets rebuilt. Even before the elections, Tulsi Gabbard came after the storm with her nonprofit to bring everything from chain saws to food. My friends, this is real leadership in action.

When it comes to the Federal Government, President Trump is working very hard to root out corruption. He is making sure that the bureaucrats who betrayed the American people are held accountable. There are no more backdoor deals, no more slush funds for illegal immigrants, and no more Washington elites ignoring the very people they are supposed to serve.

It took President Trump to step in and fix this mess, and let me say he is fixing it fast. We are already seeing money flowing back to the disaster relief where it belongs. We are cutting through the miles of bureaucratic red tape that delayed rebuilding efforts in North Carolina and Tennessee. We are making sure that no American is left behind ever again.

Mr. Speaker, this is just the beginning. Every single Federal employee needs to hear this loud and clear. If they think they can keep wasting taxpayer dollars, if they think they can keep sneaking through payments for illegal immigrants, and if they think they can ignore the suffering of the American people, their time is up.

To the many bureaucrats who refuse to go to work, they need to get out of their pajamas, show up to the office, start doing their jobs, or get DOGE'd.

Mr. Speaker, President Trump is leading. We are rebuilding, and we are making sure the American people—not illegal immigrants, not political insiders, not corrupt bureaucrats—the American people are put first. This fight is not over by a long shot. I promise we will win it.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I have a handful of things we need to do. A little while ago, we had an Oversight Subcommittee hearing—I chair the Oversight Subcommittee on Ways and Means. Some of the things that get said around here, we just shake our heads. Think about some of the things we hear from the press, from the Democrats, they are just panic-stricken.

I need to actually walk the American people and our own staff through a little bit of the facts and a little bit of the truth.

We have done multiple presentations here, saying if we want to find waste and fraud, if we want to find programs that are mis-designed, and other things that are going on, don't hire a bunch of lawyers. Don't actually hire a bunch of investigators. Hire data scientists. It turns out the truth is in the math. The math can tell us.

What is amusing is listening to some of the Democrats talk about how we

don't want people seeing our data. Maybe they should actually pay attention to the current law.

When we hear certain leftist groups—and most of these are actually fairly left—saying we did an analysis of U.S. taxpayer data and blank, blank, blank is getting this, actually understand—the IRS is one of the things I oversee. For decades, apparently, they have data-sharing models for researchers. Not to give out the names but Harvard, University of Sydney, so they are not even domestic; some are out of the country. Yes, there are some rules.

The fact of the matter is, with this sort of hyperventilation going on around here, has anyone wondered if it is because the ability to mine data is how we find bad acts?

Look what The Wall Street Journal did over the last year in looking at Medicare. It wasn't about people's benefits. It was about people being defrauded on durable medical equipment. Other groups out there also did data-sharing, modeling, and research agreements with CMS and they found bad acts.

A simple question is: Why has the left become terrified of data?

Aren't they the ones who preached to us in the previous years about science? Why don't we believe in science?

Guess what? Now science is being used to protect the U.S. taxpayers and Americans' future. Instead of being used to research things to write papers to support a leftist cause, maybe it is actually now being used to actually find out how the American people are being cheated.

When we hear them hyperventilating and reading the talking points from the Public Employees Union, maybe take a step backward. Let's deal with the fact that much of what is being put out is clickbait, and understand these research agreements have been going on for years and years. What is going on now is these folks are designated as special Federal employees with an even higher level of standard fiduciary responsibility.

This is just part of the things around here that when we get something we don't like or when we start to expose decades worth of bad acts, fight like hell because the Public Employees Union functionally supports one side here. We are trying to find out what is going on.

One of the things I want to also accomplish in today's floor speech is—and I am sorry. I know I am a broken record, but I am trying to break through. Let's actually deal with a couple of things here.

Before I go to the boards, I made the mistake of looking at some of the comments from last week's speech.

Notice there are almost no people here. That is how it is supposed to be. If this room is full of people listening to an idiot like me give another speech, they are not working. They belong in their committees, in their working groups, in their offices, meeting with

either constituents or their staff or other people.

This is where we come to actually have our final debate and vote. The vast majority of work done in Congress isn't done in this room. It is done in the dozens of committee rooms and offices all over this campus. When we see the room, stop falling for the clickbait.

Why is the room empty? It is supposed to be.

One of the reasons we get behind this microphone is we are probably on a thousand televisions around this campus and here in D.C. and around the country. This is our chance to talk to those staffers and help them understand how dire the math is and how intense the battle ahead of us is.

How do we communicate with Members who are maybe new to Congress and get them to realize much of what they are being told may not be mathematically honest or true?

Let's actually, once again, set the baseline. This one is about a year or so old. The numbers are actually slightly uglier. The blue is nondefense and defense. That is all a Member of Congress gets to vote on. A Member of Congress doesn't actually vote on the interest payments, the Social Security, the Medicare, Medicaid, or other mandatory because those are formulas now. Every dime a Member of Congress votes on is borrowed money.

Last year, every dime we voted on was borrowed money and maybe \$300 billion or \$400 billion of what we didn't vote on was borrowed money because we actually borrowed more than every dime on what we call discretionary. Defense is discretionary.

Remember that in today's world Social Security is the number one spend. It is about 1.4, 1.5. Interest is number two. Medicare is number three. Defense is actually number four. The next time we have some brain trust saying, if we just cut defense—I am sure there are efficiencies that we may find in defense.

I have been pushing for—this my third Congress in a row, trying to get an AI audit because the Pentagon has failed their audits for 8 years. It is un-auditable is the report we get back. So use AI at least to go through and stack the asset list because we can't audit it if we don't know where the trucks are and other things. In the security areas, do human auditing of those.

Help us because it has finally actually risen to the surface of people saying maybe technology can help us save our science and our future and our economy.

When we take a look at what really goes on here in Congress, we have to understand: Our government is functionally an insurance company with an army. Almost 100 percent of the next 10 years of borrowing is interest and Medicare. Yet, we are terrified to tell the public the truth. It is math. The math will win, but we have to stop being fearful.

I am going to show you some of these. Stop saying crazy stuff. If your mission in life is to fill out comments or put out things on X and this and that and say things because your life's mission is to be clickbait, don't you care enough about this Republic to tell the truth of the scale?

It is debt, deficit, and demographics. We have a country that in 8 years, less than 8 years now, will have more deaths than births.

□ 1530

We have a shortage of young people, and it really screws up the long-run math and ability to be productive, the ability to actually raise wages, all those things. There are ways to make this work. We just have to do hard things. You see how difficult it is just to have an honest conversation about the math around here.

Look, I showed this last week. I am only going to do it for a second. This is for those people that run around this campus saying: Let's just use current policy because that way I don't have to deal with actually telling someone no.

Baseline, by the end of this fiscal year, CBO says we will be at \$37.2 trillion in borrowed money. Then CBO tells us over the next 9 budget years, 10 calendar years, we are going to borrow another \$22 trillion. That is \$37 trillion, another \$22 trillion, and then if we were actually going to do the expiring tax provisions, without finding a way to pay for them, that is \$5 trillion to \$5.5 trillion. Then there is another \$1.3 trillion of interest on top of that. Then many of the President's priorities are another \$8 trillion when you add in the interest. You are functionally at \$74 trillion of borrowing in the next 9 budget years. You basically have doubled U.S. debt.

Is that really what is going on here? It took 240 years to get where we are at. Once again, for the people who are listening, those are the gross numbers because we borrow from the trust funds. The other problem you actually have, if you really want to geek out, is by the end of this budget window, so the next 8 years, 9 years, the trust funds are almost empty.

One of our models basically says in mid-2033, the Social Security trust fund is empty. It is not because someone stole your money. It was demographics. We haven't had enough young workers, and Social Security was always designed as a pay-as-you-go system.

The money that comes out of the Social Security trust fund and is loaned to Treasury. Treasury pays in interest. In the past, it has actually been a little above even some of the market interest you would have gotten. The problem is, every single month, Treasury gets a little note from Social Security saying: We got our FICA tax collections. It is not enough for all the checks going out the door. Treasury, we want some cash; so they cash in what we call special T bills.

Since the brain trust in this place decided in lame duck that we were going to extend some additional Social Security benefits without paying for them, we actually shortened the life of the Social Security trust fund. Some of the math, in 2033, looks like the trust fund will be gone. If we don't fix it, we double senior poverty in America.

This is the morality of this place. The Democrats right now are writing an ad to attack an idiot like me for telling the truth because they care so much more about winning the next election than doubling senior poverty in America. They are going to try to scare the hell out of you instead of stepping up and saying: Here is how you do it.

Understand, in 2034 or 2035, when you have a full year and the trust fund and Social Security are gone, we calculate that it is like \$600 billion a year.

Think about what we are fighting over here, it may be \$400 billion a year to extend the tax policy so people's taxes don't go up, but by the end of this window, you have got another \$600 billion a year to deal with.

It gets worse every single year, and that is not even dealing with the fact that a couple years outside the budget window, the Medicare part A trust fund is also empty.

Is this place capable of dealing with difficulties?

For everyone out there, when your reaction is: Well, just raise taxes. I have done it a half a dozen times on the floor. The staff is telling me the six people that watch this are bored with it.

Go on the Manhattan Institute's website. I think it's Riedl has a great article from a year ago who took all of the tax-hiking policies that have been offered by the Democrats and scored them and said: Here is the economic effects. Here is what you get if you tax the rich, everyone over \$400,000. At the end, the calculation came out to you get about 1½ percent of GDP. Yea.

We are going to borrow close to 7 percent of the entire economy this year. Does anyone see a math problem? When your default is: We are going to tax rich people more. It doesn't get you close to where you have to be.

That chart I just showed you a moment ago, if we were to do these things without offsets, in 9 budget years we are no longer borrowing about 7 percent of the entire economy; we are borrowing close to 9.2 percent of the entire economy.

It is not popular because the folks out there want their feelings satiated and don't own calculators. I am sorry. I know I am being a bit of a jerk. I am just tired of dealing with lunacy. The primary driver of debt is demographics.

What happens if we can clean up ourselves? What happens if we are able to squeeze waste and fraud and find more modern ways that are more compassionate, more efficient to actually deliver the benefits to our brothers and sisters?

This is just a thought experiment. We have been working on list after list after list after list of things you could modernize, reduce spending, and never cut someone's benefits, never cut their services.

We have one project we are doing in our office. In Medicare and Medicaid, Indian Health Services, DOD, and VA, how many duplicate scans are there? How many people go get an MRI, an x-ray, an ultrasound? What if you take that and then immediately attach it to someone's phone so that the scan is mobile with them? We are seeing numbers where it is billions and billions and billions of dollars being spent in duplicative scans.

Is that cutting someone's services? Of course it isn't. The lobbyists get upset because they make money on how many times—or at least their clients do. I need you to think about how you modernize to do it better, faster, cheaper, and more compassionately.

We have done entire presentations here on the floor over the years trying to demonstrate that maybe the most moral thing we can do as a government is actually help people to be healthier. If we are seeing data that says 5 percent of the population with multiple chronic conditions are over half of all healthcare spent, what would happen if we focused on them being cured?

If diabetes is 33 percent of all U.S. healthcare spending, should we actually think about that? If it is over \$600 billion, 16 percent of U.S. healthcare by people crashing, having a stroke because they didn't take their calcium inhibitors, things of that nature, are there things we can do to help our brothers and sisters be healthier?

It turns out a year ago, the Joint Economic economists actually did a study that obesity in America may be an additional \$9.1 trillion in healthcare over the next 10 years. Turns out that becomes the number one spend in the U.S. Government.

How do we make our brothers and sisters healthier so they can participate in the economy? Maybe they can actually have families. There is suddenly this awakening in America. It is not Republican or Democrat. I would argue it is just moral. We want our brothers and sisters to not only live longer but more vibrantly. Are we willing to do very difficult things in farm policy, in nutrition policy, in how we deliver health services? It is worth thinking about.

Being in this stupid town, instantly, the partisan rage is: Oh, how is that going to get me elected? How am I going to use it as a wedge to beat the crap out of other side?

Maybe the morality is helping our brothers and sisters and not having this country be crushed in debt when the bond market is the most influential group in America today, not Members of Congress.

Let's actually take a quick look. I am trying to find the nicest way to say this. If we were just to do this TCJA

extension—which we believe we need to do. We are not going to raise taxes on working people, but we need to find a way to pay for it. It is not only the \$5.5 trillion that CBO is now scoring if you did it to 2035. It is the \$1.3 trillion financing cost of doing that. That is the interest.

How about no tax on overtime pay? It is a passion of the President. We need to come up with \$3 trillion to cover that cost over 10 years. If we don't do that, it adds another \$700 billion of interest cost.

If we do no tax on Social Security, that functionally comes out to almost \$1.8 trillion. Almost all of that money goes to Social Security and Medicare. We have got to find a way to cover that if we are not going to have tax on Social Security.

How about SALT for the folks in California and New York who are saying they will not vote to extend the tax policy unless they get something for their areas. That could actually be another \$1.2 trillion over 10 years and another \$300 billion in interest if we don't pay for that.

No tax on tips, actually turns out that one is fairly easy. It may be \$600 billion over 10 years. Our math is a little higher, but that is the number we have been given.

You have to understand, everyone has these wish lists. The President, Members of Congress, our constituents, everyone wants something. We need to look at the fact of how does it help the society grow economically. Prosperity is moral. How do we pay for it in a way—because if we keep pushing up the U.S. debt—I showed a couple weeks ago that if we were to make the bond and the debt markets nervous, a single point of interest over the next 10 years costs the average American family \$30,000. You would have a higher car loan, higher home loan, higher credit cards, higher student loans, everything else around you.

You have got to think about it. There is no free option here. You need to do the data to find out where there are bad acts and things we can make more efficient. Then we are going to have to make hard decisions saying: That policy is 20 to 30 years out of date. We need to end that program or we need to modernize it.

If you don't, if we just do the expiring tax provisions and don't pay for them, understand that in 9 budget years, interest alone is over \$2 trillion a year, and that is on today's interest rates.

Mr. Speaker, if you are one of the people like me who believe if we make the debt markets nervous and they start raising our interest rates, you are walking right into that thing they call a debt spiral.

This is current policy if we just do it without paying for it. That is assuming interest rates don't go up on us.

I have shown in the past a chart that basically says if U.S. interest rates—I said this last week, and I need to drill

it in so maybe someone hears it. If U.S. interest rates went up to a 6 handle, which we have been close to before, in 9 budget years, 45 percent of all U.S. tax collections go just to interest.

This isn't a game. This isn't a wish list of: I don't want to do difficult things. Do difficult things today, because if you blow this up in the near future, it gets almost impossible to deal with. The dystopian crap you would have to do to the American people will make today's tough decisions look like a walk in the park.

I am going to breeze through this, just because I find some of this fun.

Did you know a penny actually costs like 3 cents to make? Okay. Great. Get rid of them. I don't care.

A nickel actually costs almost 9 cents.

You'll be happy to know that we make money on dimes and quarters and half-dollars.

These are tiny. I am going to make an argument, as I walk through these boards. There are dozens and dozens and dozens of little things that really don't add up to much, and you should absolutely do them. However, if you are the politician, if you are the press, if you are the staff, if you are the talking head on cable television, you are saying: Well, if we just got rid of pennies, we are going to balance the U.S. budget.

Stop saying insanity. One of the problems is people like us, we go home and we talk to our voters, and they have heard these things, they are saying: If you just got rid of the Department of Education, we would be fine. Then you show them the math and they look at you like: Well, I heard it on television. Please, I beg of you, take this seriously. There is a way to make this work. We just have to do really hard things.

□ 1545

Let's take a look at this one. This is one of my favorites. This is as of last Friday. I think there were 45,000 folks, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, who said they would take the early retirement. The reality of it, with the technology we have today, you could have a revolution in the Federal workforce. You could dramatically change the number of people.

How many law firms today actually have a fraction of the people they had 20 years ago, even 10 years ago, because of the use of technology? Why wouldn't you accept the same thing for your Federal Government? Remember, you are paying for this.

You have got to understand the real math. If 40,000 Federal workers—and I am not actually talking about the buyouts, it's just the base salary, the average salary is \$106,000. Then we added in wages and benefits; multiply it times 40,000, that is one day of borrowing. On average right now, we are burning about \$6 billion a day. If 40,000 Federal employees are gone, we covered one day of borrowing.

You absolutely are going to need to do things like that, but don't act like you just solved the U.S. debt problem. It is dozens and dozens of these things you have to stack up.

I am trying to tone down the sarcasm, because we have got to do these things.

Let's get rid of foreign aid. You just covered one week of borrowing.

Can't tell you how many times I am at home and people say: If we just didn't have foreign aid, we could balance the budget. It is a week of borrowing.

The U.S. will waste billions of dollars on the United Nations. We get rid of the United Nations. That is 2 days of borrowing.

Let's take a look here. The U.S. spends too much on the Smithsonian and national parks. If we are borrowing \$6 billion a day and the Smithsonian cost \$1 billion a year, you have basically covered what, 4 hours?

Maybe you don't want the museums. Maybe you want to create entrance fees or you want to do something else. Don't act like you just balanced the budget by doing something like that.

Let's do another one. Cutting congressional salaries would solve the deficit. Look, we are probably overpaid for the quality of our work, but if you are borrowing \$6 billion a day and you do that, if you got rid of congressional salaries, I think it is 20 minutes for an entire year. Take an entire year of borrowing, you just covered 20 minutes. Stop saying crazy stuff.

These are serious problems. Maybe we need serious people to start actually thinking about these things.

Let's take a look at another one. The government spends billions on unused Federal office buildings. Absolutely, we need to clean this up, and it would be about, oh, let's see, 6 hours, maybe 7 hours of borrowing.

Close them up. Get rid of all the unused office space, which we should do. We absolutely need to do that, but it is like 6 or 7 hours' worth of borrowing because we are burning over \$6 billion every single day.

Am I making the point? Are you starting to understand the scale of what Members of Congress have to take on?

These trite little sound bites don't get us anywhere. Cutting funding to NPR, PBS, and the National Endowment for the Arts would save billions of dollars. It would cover 4 hours of borrowing. Maybe we should. Maybe we should actually turn those into public trusts and let the public pay rather than taxpayers and have a fundraiser. That is fine, but don't act like we just solved the national debt problem. It is 4 hours of borrowing.

Let's do one or two more to get this off my chest.

Presidential travel, one of the Democrats was going after President Trump. All the Presidential travel is like \$350 billion, so you have 1.4 hours—yes, about 1.4 hours. That is less than 2

hours for an entire year's worth of borrowing.

Let's have one or two more for fun just because I have them done. Department of Education salaries, let's just get rid of the Department of Education salaries. Yay, but we covered 9 hours of borrowing.

Emergency services for undocumented—these are people here illegally. They walk into hospitals and get a Federal subsidy. Let's make it so it just becomes uncompensated care of a hospital. Fine. That covers 9 hours of borrowing for an entire year.

The reality of it is that it is not these crazy, little trite things. Yes, they are problems, and there may be hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars out there that we need to crush and get rid of. We are going to borrow about \$2.3 trillion this year, and in 10 years, that number is up dramatically.

It is demographics. If you look at the 30-year data, everything that is in the Federal budget, except Medicare and Social Security, actually is designed to grow slower than tax receipts. We modeled that, in 30 years, we will have about a \$9 trillion surplus, as we have counted. It grows slower than tax receipts. Medicare and Social Security, my math is actually much more dour, but this board is about 1½ or 2 years old. It is probably about \$116 trillion in spend and interest.

We can make this work. We can do this without cutting our brothers' and sisters' benefits, but we have to be willing to think disruptively. We have to be willing to think creatively. We have to be willing to think morally. We have to be willing to think how we modernize the world around us.

What would happen if we could change the cost of delivering services to our brothers and sisters by getting rid of the archaic designs of many of these programs?

My 2-year-old is somewhere in the back. Yes, I have a 2-year-old. My wife is exactly my age. We adopted a little girl years ago, and the same birth mom, the phone rang—so I have a little person.

I have said this repeatedly, and I am trying to have it break through: Is there anyone out there who thinks morally?

When my 2-year-old is basically 22, 23 years old, every U.S. tax has to be doubled just to maintain baseline services. The math is very clear. It is left math, and it is right math.

Mr. Speaker, every economist who is honest basically says that my kids, your kids, and your grandkids are going to be part of the first generation to actually be poorer than their parents and grandparents.

That is not America. This was the country of aspiration. We were the ones who always knew we were leaving the next generation an opportunity to be more prosperous. It can be that way, but it can only be that way if this place stops acting like intellectual

children, the bedwetting—I am sorry; I take that back, Mr. Speaker—the fear, just the fear of going home and explaining to our constituents the truth.

Mr. Speaker, you see how the Democrats are acting right now just by data scientists digging through and looking for perversities in the datasets. You would think there would have been joy because those aren't cutting services. Those are finding people who are exploiting us and taking advantage of our country, but because it is being done by President Trump, it must be opposed.

How do we fix things? How do we save Social Security? How do we save Medicare? How do we save the future when it is not a loyal opposition anymore? It is basically anything to burn the place down to take power.

For anyone who really doesn't have a life and is watching this presentation, I beg of you, get good at the math and stop making crap up because if you get good at the math, then it provides us the opportunity to have the building blocks to actually produce a solution.

There is hope. There are ways that work.

We also have some economic data that basically says if we don't do it within about the next 4 years and interest rates start to move against us, then we are in for a long, slow rest of the century. That is worth thinking about because the debt starts piling and piling.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, in the previous year, I think we had 3 months when we had to borrow money to pay for our borrowing. For every dime we will take in in tax collections this year, we are going to spend I think it is \$1.36, which is an improvement. Last year, it was \$1.39.

It doesn't have to be this way. We just have to start telling the truth about the math, telling the truth to each other, and toughening up.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 56 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-401. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Leonardo S.p.a. Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2025-0017; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00706-R; Amendment 39-22951; AD 2025-03-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7,

2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-402. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1303; Project Identifier AD-2023-01252-T; Amendment 39-22933; AD 2025-01-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-403. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2136; Project Identifier AD-2023-00296-T; Amendment 39-22930; AD 2025-01-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-404. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Yaborá Indústria Aeronáutica S.A.; Embraer S.A.; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronáutica S.A. (EMBRAER)) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2133; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00243-T; Amendment 39-22922; AD 2024-26-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-405. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; DAHER AEROSPACE (Type Certificate Previously Held by SOCATÁ) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2321; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00126-A; Amendment 39-22928; AD 2025-01-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2026, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-406. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; CFM International, S.A. Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2325; Project Identifier AD-2024-00412-E; Amendment 39-22927; AD 2025-01-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-407. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Britten-Norman Aerospace Ltd. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1299; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-00237-A; Amendment 39-22925; AD 2025-01-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-408. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1483; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01094-T; Amendment 39-22924; AD 2024-26-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7,

2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-409. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1294; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00042-T; Amendment 39-22921; AD 2024-26-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-410. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2141; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00421-T; Amendment 39-22931; AD 2025-01-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-411. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0471; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01213-T; Amendment 39-22920; AD 2024-26-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-412. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2327; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00233-T; Amendment 39-22926; AD 2025-01-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-413. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2025-0018; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00749-R; Amendment 39-22952; AD 2025-03-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-414. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2332; Project Identifier MCAI-2022-01479-R; Amendment 39-22950; AD 2025-03-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-415. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2664; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00518-E; Amendment 39-22912; AD 2024-25-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-416. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of

Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0770; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00039-T; Amendment 39-22913; AD 2024-25-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-417. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2715; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00621-T; Amendment 39-22919; AD 2024-26-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-418. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2314; Project Identifier MCAI-2024-00312-T; Amendment 39-22914; AD 2024-25-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-419. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of VOR Federal Airways V-9, V-78, V-341, and V-430, and Canadian RNAV Route T-765, and Establishment of United States RNAV Route T-490; Northcentral United States [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2458; Airspace Docket No. 23-AGL-27] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-420. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Kinston, NC [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1979; Airspace Docket No. 24-ASO-20] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received February 7, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. CLYDE (for himself, Mr. SELF, Mr. BIGGS of Arizona, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. DONALDS, Ms. BOEBERT, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. BURLISON, Mr. BURCHETT, Mr. ROY, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. CRANE, Mr. HUNT, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina, Mr. TIFFANY, Ms. GREENE of Georgia, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. HARRIS of Maryland, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. GILL of Texas, Mr. AMODEI of Nevada, Mr. CLINE, Mr. MILLS, and Mrs. SPARTZ):

H.R. 1180. A bill to repeal the Impoundment Control Act of 1974; to the Committee on the Budget, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MOORE of West Virginia (for himself, Mr. BARR, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. BEAN of Florida, Mr. CLINE, Mr. PERRY, Ms. VAN DUYN, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. COLLINS, Mr. FINSTAD, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. GUEST, Mr. RULLI, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. BOST, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. SCHMIDT, Mr. MOORE of North Carolina, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. COMER, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. ROSE, Mr. YAKYM, Mr. GILL of Texas, and Mr. RUTHERFORD):

H.R. 1181. A bill to prohibit payment card networks and covered entities from requiring the use of or assigning merchant category codes that distinguish a firearms retailer from general-merchandise retailer or sporting-goods retailer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BALDERSON (for himself, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, and Mr. TAYLOR):

H.R. 1182. A bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to promulgate regulations relating to the approval of foreign manufacturers of cylinders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. VELAZQUEZ, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. NORTON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. WATERS, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. SALINAS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. RANDALL, Mrs. SYKES, Mr. CARSON, Ms. SHERRILL, Ms. TLAIB, and Ms. TOKUDA):

H.R. 1183. A bill to prohibit certain discrimination against athletes on the basis of sex by State athletic associations, intercollegiate athletic associations, and covered institutions of higher education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mrs. BICE (for herself, Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. ELLZEY, Ms. VAN DUYN, Mr. FLOOD, Mrs. CAMMACK, and Mr. DONALDS):

H.R. 1184. A bill to require that a State be ineligible to receive funds under certain Federal programs unless the State has in effect a State law restricting the purchase of agricultural land by certain foreign persons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources, Energy and Commerce, and Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BUCHANAN (for himself and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ):

H.R. 1185. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the implementation of curricula for training students, teachers, and school personnel to understand, recognize, prevent, and respond to signs of human trafficking and exploitation in children and youth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BUCHANAN (for himself and Mr. MOSKOWITZ):

H.R. 1186. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the importation or transportation of child sex dolls, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BURCHETT:

H.R. 1187. A bill to require the release to the public of all documents, reports, and other records relating to unidentified anomalous phenomena, and for other purposes; to

the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 1188. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize a grant program to assist State and local law enforcement agencies in purchasing body-worn cameras and securely storing and maintaining recorded data for law enforcement officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COSTA (for himself and Mr. MURPHY):

H.R. 1189. A bill to establish a national plan to coordinate research on epilepsy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DOWNING (for himself, Ms. BYNUM, Mr. NUNN of Iowa, and Mr. PAPPAS):

H.R. 1190. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to expand access to capital for rural-area small businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. FLOOD (for himself and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska):

H.R. 1191. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive certain distance requirements for certain hospitals electing to be designated as critical access hospitals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida (for himself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. DONALDS, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mrs. LUNA, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mr. MAST, Mrs. CAMMACK, Ms. LEE of Florida, and Mr. RUTHERFORD):

H.R. 1192. A bill to ensure that Big Cypress National Preserve may not be designated as wilderness or as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GOLDEN of Maine (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. PINGREE, and Mr. FULCHER):

H.R. 1193. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to exempt certain 16- and 17-year-old individuals employed in timber harvesting entities or mechanized timber harvesting entities from child labor laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana (for himself and Ms. HAGEMAN):

H.R. 1194. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and the Mineral Leasing Act to require reports on rejected bids, to clarify timelines for the issuance of leases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HUDSON (for himself and Mr. CRENSHAW):

H.R. 1195. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to prohibit Federal Medicaid funding for the administrative costs of providing health benefits to individuals who are unauthorized immigrants; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. JACOBS (for herself, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Ms. TITUS, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. McBRIDE, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. BERA, Mr. AMO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Mr. STANTON, Ms. ELFRETH, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Ms. JAYAPAL):

H.R. 1196. A bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds to eliminate the United States

Agency for International Development; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois (for herself, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Ms. BROWN, and Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia):

H.R. 1197. A bill to reauthorize the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. KENNEDY of Utah (for himself and Mr. BRECHEEN):

H.R. 1198. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to modify work requirements under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KUSTOFF:

H.R. 1199. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the exclusion for gain from qualified small business stock; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LAHOOD (for himself, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. HUDSON, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. VAN DUYN, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. BOST, Mr. HERN of Oklahoma, Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, Mr. VAN ORDEN, Mr. CAREY, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. BICE, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BACON, Mr. CISCOMANI, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. HUNT, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. ELLZEY, Ms. TITUS, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. MORAN, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. CRAWFORD, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. MANN, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. FONG, Mr. CUELLAR, and Mr. PFLUGER):

H.R. 1200. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit to encourage the replacement or modernization of inefficient, outdated freight railcars, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LAWLER (for himself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. MOYLAN, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. CISCOMANI, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. RILEY of New York, and Mrs. HINSON):

H.R. 1201. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase the number of physicians who may be provided Conrad 30 waivers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LUTTRELL (for himself, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. DONALDS, and Mrs. LUNA):

H.R. 1202. A bill to establish vetting standards for the placement of unaccompanied alien children with sponsors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MACE (for herself and Mrs. LUNA):

H.R. 1203. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to expand the scope of the prohibition against video voyeurism; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 1204. A bill to authorize a civil right of action for individuals affected by video voyeurism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MACE (for herself, Ms. BOEBERT, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. VAN DREW, and Mrs. LUNA):

H.R. 1205. A bill to prohibit certain sex offenders from entering or using the services of

certain emergency shelters, to authorize the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to designate emergency shelters for such sex offenders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. MALOY (for herself, Mr. FULCHER, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. OWENS, Mr. BENTZ, and Mr. ZINKE):

H.R. 1206. A bill to require the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to withdraw a rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to conservation and landscape health; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MANN (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Mr. ROUZER):

H.R. 1207. A bill to transfer the functions, duties, responsibilities, assets, liabilities, orders, determinations, rules, regulations, permits, grants, loans, contracts, agreements, certificates, licenses, and privileges of the United States Agency for International Development relating to implementing and administering the Food for Peace Act to the Department of Agriculture; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MAST:

H.R. 1208. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny the trade or business expense deduction for the reimbursement of employee costs of child gender transition procedure or travel to obtain an abortion; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. OGLES:

H.R. 1209. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit to the Congress completed proposals for the termination of the conservatorships of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. PERRY:

H.R. 1210. A bill to amend chapter 71 of title 5, United States Code, to charge labor organizations for the agency resources and employee time used by such labor organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. PERRY (for himself and Mr. OGLES):

H.R. 1211. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to prohibit Federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Appropriations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PFLUGER (for himself, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. EVANS of Colorado):

H.R. 1212. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct annual assessments on terrorism threats to the United States posed by terrorist organizations utilizing foreign cloud-based mobile or desktop messaging applications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Ms. SCHRIER (for herself and Mr. MOORE of Alabama):

H.R. 1213. A bill to amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research

Act of 1978 to modify the forest inventory and analysis program; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. SELF:

H.R. 1214. A bill to require the name of military installation under jurisdiction of Secretary of the Army located in Fayetteville, North Carolina, to be known and designated as Fort Bragg, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. STANTON (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota):

H.R. 1215. A bill to support efforts of the governments of Western Hemisphere countries to increase the diversity of their upstream supply chains and downstream supply chains; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 1216. A bill to prohibit Federal funding for the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio and to provide for the transfer of certain Federal funds that would have been made available to those organizations to reduce the public debt, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. DELUZIO):

H.R. 1217. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to address measuring methane emissions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. VAN DREW (for himself, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Ms. MACE, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. MORAN, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. KILEY of California, Ms. PLASKETT, Mrs. MCBATH, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, and Ms. SCANLON):

H.R. 1218. A bill to provide that it is unlawful to knowingly distribute private intimate visual depictions with reckless disregard for the individual's lack of consent to the distribution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VAN DREW (for himself, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, and Mr. PANETTA):

H.R. 1219. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include over-the-counter oral healthcare products as qualified medical expenses which can be purchased with HSA and FSA funds; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. WAGNER (for herself and Mr. GILL of Texas):

H.R. 1220. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to direct the Secretary of State to increase the fee imposed on aliens filing an application abroad for a visa authorizing admission to the United States as a nonimmigrant described in section 101(a)(15)(B) who are nationals of certain countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 1221. A bill to amend titles II and XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a Social Security Surplus Protection Account in the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund to hold the Social Security surplus and a Medicare Surplus Protection Account in the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund to hold the Medicare surplus, to provide for suspension of investment of amounts held in such Accounts until enactment of legislation providing for investment of the Trust Funds in investment vehicles other than obligations of the United States, and to establish a Social Security and Medicare Part A Investment Commission to make recommendations for alternative forms of investment of the Social Security and Medicare surpluses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas (for himself, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. SELF, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BABIN, Mr.

ELLZEY, Mr. GILL of Texas, and Mr. LUTTRELL):

H.R. 1222. A bill to reimburse the State of Texas for expenses incurred for activities conducted relating to securing the southern international border of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FITZGERALD (for himself, Mr. GOODEN, and Mr. CLINE):

H.J. Res. 39. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Trade Commission relating to "Premerger Notification; Reporting and Waiting Period Requirements"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. STAUBER:

H. Con. Res. 11. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. AGUILAR:

H. Res. 125. A resolution electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.R. 1180.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution states the Congress shall have the power "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States or in any Department of Officer thereof."

By Mr. MOORE of West Virginia:

H.R. 1181.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. BALDERSON:

H.R. 1182.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Ms. ADAMS:

H.R. 1183

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the authority to enact this legislation pursuant to the Fourteenth Amendment, which ensures equal protection under the law.

By Mrs. BICE:

H.R. 1184.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. BUCHANAN:

H.R. 1185.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. BUCHANAN:

H.R. 1186.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. BURCHETT:

H.R. 1187.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 1188.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. COSTA:

H.R. 1189.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. DOWNING:

H.R. 1190.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. FLOOD:

H.R. 1191.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida:

H.R. 1192.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress is granted the authority to introduce and enact this legislation pursuant to Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GOLDEN of Maine:

H.R. 1193.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana:

H.R. 1194.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power "to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or any Department or Officer thereof"

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 1195.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Ms. JACOBS:

H.R. 1196.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 1197.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. KENNEDY of Utah:

H.R. 1198.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. KUSTOFF:

H.R. 1199.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8, the Necessary and Proper Clause. Congress shall have power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execu-

tion the foregoing powers and all Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department of Officer thereof.

By Mr. LAHOOD:

H.R. 1200.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

United States Constitution Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: "The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes . . ."

By Mr. LAWLER:

H.R. 1201.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. LUTTRELL:

H.R. 1202.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8. To make laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 1203.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 1204.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 1205.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Ms. MALOY:

H.R. 1206.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

By Mr. MANN:

H.R. 1207.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. MAST:

H.R. 1208.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. OGLES:

H.R. 1209.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII of the United States Constitution

By Mr. PERRY:

H.R. 1210.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PERRY:

H.R. 1211.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PFLUGER:

H.R. 1212.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

By Ms. SCHRIER:

H.R. 1213.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the United States Constitution

By Mr. SELF:

H.R. 1214.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution
By Mr. STANTON:

H.R. 1215.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8
By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 1216.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1
By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania:
H.R. 1217.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution in that the legislation exercises legislative powers granted to Congress by that clause "to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States or any Department or Office thereof."

By Mr. VAN DREW:

H.R. 1218.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8
By Mr. VAN DREW:

H.R. 1219.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Sec. 8
By Mrs. WAGNER:

H.R. 1220.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8
By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 1221.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas:

H.R. 1222.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. FITZGERALD:

H.J. Res. 39.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 34: Mr. STUTZMAN.
H.R. 35: Mr. SCHMIDT.

H.R. 45: Mr. MOORE of North Carolina.
H.R. 77: Mr. MOYLAN.

H.R. 175: Mr. EVANS of Colorado and Mr. DONALDS.

H.R. 211: Mr. NADLER and Mr. DELUZZIO.
H.R. 220: Mr. NADLER and Mr. CASE.

H.R. 250: Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida and Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 262: Mr. WESTERMAN.
H.R. 274: Mr. CLINE.

H.R. 302: Mr. KENNEDY of Utah.
H.R. 404: Mr. ALFORD, Mr. ONDER, and Mr. STRONG.

H.R. 424: Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.
H.R. 425: Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.

H.R. 433: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 452: Mr. MOORE of North Carolina.

H.R. 481: Ms. HOYLE of Oregon.
H.R. 484: Mrs. BEATTY and Mr. CONNOLLY.

H.R. 503: Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.
H.R. 523: Mr. FITZGERALD.

H.R. 576: Ms. WATERS, Mr. OLSZEWSKI, and Mr. GARCIA of California.

H.R. 649: Mr. CARTER of Texas and Ms. SALINAS.

H.R. 654: Mr. LAWLER.
H.R. 669: Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 685: Mr. FITZGERALD and Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina.

H.R. 687: Mr. CRANE.
H.R. 703: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 715: Mr. AMODEI of Nevada.
H.R. 756: Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.

H.R. 778: Mr. DONALDS.
H.R. 813: Mr. BURCHETT and Mr. DAVIDSON.

H.R. 821: Mr. GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 842: Mr. HERN of Oklahoma, Ms. WIL-

Liams of Georgia, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. FEENSTRA, Ms. BROWN,

Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. SYKES, Mr. DUNN of Florida, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. LANGWORTHY, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Ms. McCLELLAN, Mr. FRY, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. BACON, and Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE.

H.R. 867: Mr. CLINE.
H.R. 873: Mr. CRANE.

H.R. 874: Mr. CRANE.
H.R. 879: Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. KENNEDY of Utah,

Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Ms. VAN DUYNÉ, and Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 880: Mr. VAN ORDEN.
H.R. 882: Mr. DONALDS.

H.R. 894: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 909: Mr. FEENSTRA, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. LAHOOD, and Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 922: Mr. COHEN and Ms. ELFRETH.
H.R. 932: Ms. HOYLE of Oregon.

H.R. 943: Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.
H.R. 944: Ms. BALINT.

H.R. 953: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 959: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 973: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. MULLIN, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 976: Mr. MANN.

H.R. 978: Mr. COLLINS.

H.R. 987: Mr. AMODEI of Nevada, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, and Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 989: Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 991: Mr. MOORE of North Carolina and Mr. CLINE.

H.R. 994: Ms. TLAIB, Mrs. McIVER, and Mr. MCGARVEY.

H.R. 1001: Ms. MALOY.

H.R. 1004: Ms. CRAIG and Mr. CARSON.

H.R. 1005: Mr. BARR.

H.R. 1039: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 1046: Ms. PEREZ, Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. STAUBER.

H.R. 1048: Mr. BARR.

H.R. 1049: Mr. BARR.

H.R. 1065: Mr. NORCROSS.

H.R. 1076: Mr. MURPHY.

H.R. 1078: Ms. DE LA CRUZ.

H.R. 1089: Mr. DONALDS.

H.R. 1099: Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CISNEROS, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Ms. OMAR.

H.R. 1101: Mr. GREEN of Texas, Ms. SIMON, Mr. HOYER, Mr. RUIZ, and Ms. BYNUM.

H.R. 1102: Mr. RYAN.

H.R. 1111: Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ.

H.R. 1119: Mr. GROTHMAN and Mr. CLINE.

H.R. 1131: Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas and Ms. FEDORCHAK.

H.R. 1145: Ms. TLAIB and Ms. SCHOLTEN.

H.R. 1151: Mr. MRVAN, Mr. McCORMICK, and Mr. MCGUIRE.

H.R. 1159: Mr. MANNION, Ms. MENG, and Ms. STEVENS.

H.R. 1160: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 1163: Mr. FLOOD.

H.R. 1168: Mr. TIFFANY.

H.R. 1172: Mr. FRY.

H.R. 1177: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.J. Res. 31: Mr. DONALDS.

H. Con. Res. 3: Mr. ROUZER.

H. Res. 23: Ms. RANDALL, Ms. BARRAGÁN, and Ms. LEE of Nevada.

H. Res. 70: Mr. POCAN, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H. Res. 116: Mr. COURTNEY.

H. Res. 120: Mr. KEATING.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 452: Mr. COLLINS.

H. Res. 23: Mr. MOYLAN.



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No. 28

Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Iowa.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, sometime today, we are voting on the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard. She is going to be Director of National Intelligence after she is confirmed.

Until she was nominated, I only knew her from seeing her in media sound bites and what other people wrote about her. She came to my office, and we had a very good, very substantive conversation. I determined that she is very smart and obviously an articulate person.

In our discussion, we covered many of her past statements on various policy matters, and she was able to clarify what the media got right and what the media got wrong.

Obviously, since she served in the Congress of the United States as a Democrat, I and she may not agree on every policy. However, Representative Gabbard made clear that she does not see her position as Director of National Intelligence as a policymaking position. She understands that President Trump is the one who was elected. As Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard's job will be simply to make sure that the intelligence community is able to provide the best unbiased information to help President Trump make the proper decisions.

She and I also spoke about some of my past oversight work regarding the intelligence community. I have had

mixed results in getting legitimate information that I have sought, depending upon who was in that particular position. For instance, when Rick Grenell became the Acting Director of National Intelligence, I suddenly and surprisingly got material that I had asked for after being totally stonewalled by previous Directors of National Intelligence.

Based on my conversation, I expect Tulsi Gabbard, along with CIA Director Ratcliffe, will ensure that the intelligence community will be forthcoming and fully responsible to Congress as we in Congress exercise our constitutional responsibility not only to pass laws and appropriate money but to be a check on the executive branch of government to see that a President—whether that President is Republican or Democrat—faithfully executes the laws as required by the Congress of the United States.

On another matter, yesterday, I took a minute or two to address the Senate to remind my other 99 Senators—which I do not have to remind the members of the Senate Agriculture Committee—that our nominee for Secretary of Agriculture, Mrs. Rollins, was voted out of committee unanimously. You would think, then, that if both Republicans and Democrats think that Mrs. Rollins is the proper person to be Secretary of Agriculture, she would be quickly approved for that position unanimously here in the U.S. Senate and maybe even be lucky enough to do it on a voice vote.

Now, I don't know what is going to happen, but I do know that we are going to be sitting around the U.S. Senate today for several hours to see whether we are going to vote on Ms. Gabbard to be Director of National Intelligence or we are going to have that disposed of very quickly and get down to work.

But the people in this country send us to the U.S. Senate to actually do work. And when you are sitting around

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, who reveals Yourself gloriously in the rising and setting of the Sun, make us good stewards of your blessings. Lord, give us opportunities to help solve the problems in our world by using our minds to produce creative solutions. Inspire our Senators. As they abide in Your presence, make them receptive to Your guidance. Fill their minds with insights and wisdom, and give them resiliency and courage. Today, provide them with the grace to think not of what they can get but of what they can give. Empower them to practice conciliation without compromise. Lord, place your arms of protection around them and their families.

We pray in Your all-powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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just waiting for a decision from the minority of when they are going to allow us to vote on this particular nomination or how we are going to handle Mrs. Rollins for Secretary of Agriculture, nothing is getting done, and we are wasting a lot of the taxpayers' time with a lot of important decisions that have to be made, even after we approve all the members of the Cabinet.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this week, the Senate will consider the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. President Trump has tapped Mr. Kennedy to lead the charge in making America healthy again—something that has been a concern of Mr. Kennedy's throughout his career.

Mr. Kennedy promises to make HHS a collaborative, transparent, and science-driven Agency under his leadership. I will say that is good to hear. Many Americans' trust in health authorities has eroded in recent years, with the pandemic being a factor. A lot of Americans feel frustrated with confusing and sometimes contradictory guidance from government Agencies. And measures like requiring toddlers as young as 2 years old to wear masks indefinitely not only defy common sense, there was no scientific research to back it up.

Our public health Agencies do critical work. I am a supporter of the research, and I am proud of the contributions they make to American leadership in medicine and innovation. But if we are going to make America healthy again, the Agencies doing this important work have to rebuild some trust with Americans.

I was pleased to hear Mr. Kennedy pledge to increase transparency and accountability, including an unprecedented level of collaboration with Congress that allows for regular and robust oversight of his Agency's activities.

I was also pleased that Mr. Kennedy acknowledged the importance of vaccines and the concerning reality that vaccine uptake in this country is decreasing. Mr. Kennedy has pledged that he will maintain the best vaccine standards, and he has committed to work within existing vaccine approval and monitoring systems and maintain the FDA's review standards.

I look forward to Mr. Kennedy being a partner with Congress on some very important issues. He has brought attention to America's chronic disease epidemic. I am pleased that he wants

to put a focus on chronic diseases that affect too many Americans and cost far too much in lives lost and dollars spent.

I am also encouraged that he is committed to implementing President Trump's pro-life policies at HHS. President Trump has been one of the most pro-life Presidents we have ever had. Mr. Kennedy's Agency will be critical in protecting life and supporting mothers and babies.

Mr. Kennedy is also committed to working with farmers and ranchers on policies that affect our food supply. America's farmers and ranchers are a valuable resource, and I look forward to working with him to ensure that the voice of South Dakota's agriculture producers is heard.

I believe that Mr. Kennedy's collaborative approach to this job will help restore some of the trust in our public health Agencies that has been lost in recent years. I look forward to working with him on a number of issues as we restore that trust and work to make America healthy again.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, before I close, I want to highlight the nominations processes we are having here in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. Kennedy's confirmation will be the 15th since President Trump's inauguration. Democrats are obviously trying to slow down the process, but we have been moving right along. We will continue to maintain an aggressive pace until President Trump has his entire team in place.

Mr. President, it is interesting that Democrats have saved some of their fiercest opposition to two of our nominees this week—Mr. Kennedy and Tulsi Gabbard, who, interestingly enough, are both former Democrats. I wonder if Democrats are unhappy to see the elevation of two individuals who became disillusioned with the Democratic Party.

I think most Americans are pleased to see President Trump have a diversity of backgrounds in his Cabinet. In fact, it is not uncommon. President Bush's first Cabinet included a Democrat. President Obama's had two Republicans. President Trump elevated an Obama appointee to his first Cabinet. But this trend stopped with President Biden.

I am sure the American people are glad to see President Trump living up to his promises to be a President for all of America. It is up to Democrats whether they want to participate or just obstruct for the next few years. But Republicans will be working to deliver results that benefit all Americans.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in his first 3 weeks in office, Donald Trump has waged a scorched-earth campaign against the rule of law.

We all know that Donald Trump, of course, won the election last November, and as we all know, he campaigned on a platform to cut back large parts of the government. But nothing—nothing—in the Constitution, nothing in our grand tradition of American separation of powers allows Donald Trump to break the law in order to achieve those goals.

Let me repeat that. Donald Trump campaigned on cutting back the government. That is true. But he is not allowed—not allowed—to break the law to achieve those goals.

That is not how America works. You campaign. You put your ideas forward. In this case, Donald Trump won. But he did not campaign on breaking the law, and the American people don't want him to break the law.

The reason we have a system of checks and balances is so that even when one side wins an election, there is a check, there is a balance. That is what America has been all about for over 200 years. At this point, Donald Trump is trying to break that tradition in area after area after area. So the courts have begun to speak, and their message is very simple: The law is not optional, not even for a President of the United States.

Yesterday, at least five rulings were handed down in Federal courts against the President's brazen conduct in office: court rulings against his attempt to freeze trillions in Federal funding at OMB; court decisions against his heartless, cruel decision to stop billions in medical research funding through the NIH. Courts have ruled against his unlawful attempt to hollow out the Federal workforce regardless of the job they do.

To be sure, these decisions—these five decisions and many others like it; I think there are over 50—are all temporary, preliminary, and it is one step in a long process that will play out in Federal court. But the trend is clear: Donald Trump is not free to bulldoze his way through the rule of law. Donald Trump is not free to bulldoze his way through the rule of law. He is an executive, not a monarch. He swore an oath faithfully to execute the duties of his office, and when the courts speak, Donald Trump must accept their judgments and honor the Constitution.

Now, there are some on the hard right who think Donald Trump should ignore the courts. Even the Vice President seems to suggest the courts can't "control the powers of the executive." With respect to the Vice President, the issue here isn't the courts trying to control the President; it is the President trying to control the law. He

wants to decide for himself what the laws are, which ones should be applied, which ones shouldn't, and what they mean.

Congress makes the law. Courts interpret the law. We all learned that in grade school. That is how checks and balances work in a constitutional republic. Donald Trump does not reign supreme. When the courts speak, the President must adhere to their judgments. That is what his oath demands.

The courts will be an important venue for holding Donald Trump accountable whenever he breaks the law and breaks his promise to the American people. It is one tool in the toolkit for how Democrats and all Americans who care about the rule of law will make sure that Donald Trump does not break the law and do just what he wants. Our courts will be just one resource of several, but they will be among the most important, and as we have already seen, they are a critical front in the struggle to uphold the rule of law and prevent America from sliding into utter lawlessness.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on the shutdown, in 5 weeks, funding for the Federal Government will run out.

Let us remember, when there is talk about a shutdown, Trump and Republicans are already shutting down large parts of the government. Democrats do not want a government shutdown. It is the Republicans who are in charge. It is their responsibility to avoid a shutdown.

The idea that Democrats want a shutdown is laughable. Republicans who say this should look in the mirror. Let me repeat. Let me repeat: When there is talk about a shutdown, Republicans are already shutting down large parts of the government. Democrats do not want to shut the government down. It is the Republicans who are in charge; it is their responsibility to avoid a government shutdown.

Since the inauguration, unfortunately, President Trump and Republicans have been actively working to shut down parts of the government entirely on their own. They have shut down funding to CHCs. They shut down funding for research institutions; shut down exports for farmers; shut down protections for consumers; fired government watchdogs. Republicans are making plans to force Medicaid work requirements on Americans who even have disabilities and can't work. They are making plans to harm Social Security recipients. They are trying to cut any sort of oversight so that corporations can run rampant.

Nobody—nobody—unfortunately, is working harder right now to shut down the government than Donald Trump and congressional Republicans. Nobody is working harder to shut down the government than Donald Trump and congressional Republicans.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Now, Mr. President, on two upcoming nominations this week, Senate Repub-

licans will force two nominees through the Senate that they know perfectly well do not merit confirmation. But Republicans, it seems, are going to confirm them anyway because Donald Trump is strong-arming them into submission. Last night, 52 Republicans voted to advance the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard to serve as the Director of National Intelligence.

By now, there is no question about whether or not Ms. Gabbard is qualified to lead America's intelligence Agencies. By every objective measure, she is not. How could they choose—of all the people who might be available to do this job, how could President Trump choose her? The Director of National Intelligence must be fluent in the truth, above all. Intelligence, by its own definition, is a fact-gathering Agency—it depends on facts. But instead of speaking fact and truth, Ms. Gabbard repeatedly speaks the language of falsities and conspiracy theories.

The Director of National Intelligence must be strong against America's adversaries, but Ms. Gabbard has spent her entire career sympathizing with the likes of Vladimir Putin and Bashar al-Assad. On the night that Russia invaded Ukraine and launched the first full-scale invasion of a sovereign nation in Europe since World War II, what was Ms. Gabbard doing? Spending her energy blaming NATO and the U.S. for what Putin did. Putin invades Ukraine; Gabbard blames the U.S. for Putin's invading Ukraine.

How can we put this kind of person as the head of DNI? That alone should be disqualifying for anyone seeking to become the top intelligence adviser to the President of the United States.

And when Ms. Gabbard had the opportunity to repair her image before the Senate Intelligence Committee and ease the deep worries of Senators on both sides of the aisle—we all know a load of the Republicans on the Intelligence Committee felt she doesn't belong in office—what did Ms. Gabbard do? She only exacerbated those worries. Senate Republicans know very well that she has no business advising the President on matters of classified intelligence. They know her judgment is off the mark—way off the mark. They know her troubling history of pushing conspiracies and spreading propaganda.

So, deep down, this nominee is really about one very simple question: What do Senate Republicans care more about—doing the right thing for national security, for American national security, or doing what is necessary to keep Donald Trump happy even when they know how badly he is wrong? The American people will know the answer tonight after the Senate votes on the Gabbard nomination.

After that, we will move to another equally unqualified nominee. It is a parade of unqualified nominees. Robert Kennedy, Jr. is nominated to serve as the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

To state the obvious—the very, very obvious—putting a very wealthy, vaccine skeptic, and conspiracy theorist in charge of America's public health would put every single American in danger. Mr. Kennedy is neither a doctor nor a scientist nor a public health expert nor a policy expert of any kind. In fact, he is the face of the modern anti-vaccine movement. He has spread other outrageous claims, like saying antidepressants cause mass shootings or that AIDS might not be caused by HIV or that COVID spared certain ethnic groups. RFK has not made a living by promoting public health but, rather, by actively fighting it—by actively fighting it.

Is RFK really who Republicans want running HHS? Again, it is the same question with Ms. Gabbard. Of all of the people in America, how did they end up choosing him? How did Donald Trump end up choosing him, once again, for an Agency that depends on science, evidence, and impartiality to ensure the health of over 330 million Americans?

That vote—the vote on RFK—is about one simple question—one simple question: Will Republicans do the right thing for American public health, or will they do whatever is necessary to keep Donald Trump happy no matter how misguided he is? The American people will know the answer to this very soon also.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I just heard Senator SCHUMER, the minority leader, say that Democrats don't want a government shutdown. Well, I would recommend that the minority leader actually read the newspaper. He is going to see that Democrats are threatening and actually calling for a shutdown of the U.S. Government.

So here is USA Today, today, with a picture of Senator SCHUMER right there—a big picture in color, with his fist in the air—“Democrats open to shutting down the government.” So the Senator who just was on the floor, saying, oh, no; they don't want it, is calling for it across the country in USA Today this morning.

That is what we are seeing across this country: Democrats are so much in disarray after the fact that they lost the House, lost the Senate, lost the White House, that the Democrats now want to shut down the government.

Here was the headline in The New York Times on Sunday: “Democrats Hint at Government Shutdown to Stop Trump's Axing at Federal Agencies.”

President Trump is doing what people elected him to do—to get the wasteful Washington spending to end. So that was in USA Today and The New York Times.

What about The Washington Post?

The Democrats say:

They will not help avert a shutdown.

The Democrats are calling for a shutdown—in USA Today, The New York

Times, The Washington Post. The list goes on.

What are Democrats saying on television?

Well, on “Meet the Press” this Sunday, Senator ANDY KIM of New Jersey, said that Democrats in Congress would shut down the government, he says, “if we have to” in order to obstruct President Trump—not to help the country, not to provide services for the men and women in uniform, not to provide needs around the country. No—because they want to obstruct President Trump. That is why CHUCK SCHUMER and the Democrats are calling for a government shutdown.

It didn't end there.

CORY BOOKER of New Jersey—a member of the leadership of the Democratic Party—was on CNN this weekend. What did he say? “Democrats will use every tool possible” to stop President Trump.

The Democrats want to stop the President, who was elected with 312 electoral votes and won every one of the battleground States. The Democrats just want to stop him, and the American people want the kind of action and the urgency that we are seeing right now out of President Trump.

JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from Oregon, is open to shutting down the government. He said: “There's no [more] business as usual.” Shut it down.

President Trump is doing exactly what America voted for, but here are the headlines, and there are the pictures, and those are the Democrats in the U.S. Senate, saying: We don't care what the American people say. We are going to shut down the government.

President Trump is shrinking the size of government. We know the government is too big. We know it spends too much. President Trump is accounting for every single penny, and we are not going to make pennies anymore as a result of the fact that it costs 3 cents to make a penny. That is why Democrats want to shut down the government. They don't like the success that America is having today. They don't like the optimism that is pervasive throughout our country.

So, once again, if there is going to be a shutdown, we are talking about a “Schumer shutdown” of our country because they lost the election.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Additionally, Mr. President, here we are on the floor of the Senate, and the Senate will vote soon on the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard to be the Director of National Intelligence. She has the right background, she has the right experience, and she has the right perspective to keep our Nation safe and to keep it secure.

Congresswoman Gabbard has served in uniform for more than 20 years. She deployed to the Middle East several times. She serves in the military today and was recently promoted to lieutenant colonel. As a Member of Congress for 8 years, she served on the Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committees.

Her experience handling highly classified information is extensive. As Director of National Intelligence, she will handle classified information properly and lawfully. Congresswoman Gabbard is more than qualified to serve as the Director of National Intelligence.

Now, we have heard a lot of debate about her, but not one Senator has disputed the simple fact that she took a hard line on Russia and on Iran. In 2013, Congresswoman Gabbard cosponsored the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act. She wanted severe sanctions on Iran. Well, why would the Democrats not like that? Oh, because they were part of the group, with President Obama, who wanted to appease Iran. No wonder they oppose her now. She opposed the Iran deal. She viewed it as a threat to both America and to Israel. And she was right. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea. President Obama rejected sending tank-busting missiles to Ukraine. Remember what he sent? He sent blankets. Blankets.

The sanctions that President Obama imposed against Russia were terribly weak. Congresswoman Gabbard argued for U.S. military assistance to Ukraine back then, and she called for painful sanctions against Russia, things that the Democrats and their President—Obama—at the time were unwilling to do.

Tulsi Gabbard never sought war with Russia, yet she never kidded herself, never would look back about the aggressive nature of Russia's ambitions. She worked to stop wars even though she served and was ready to fight in them. She knows what it means when we talk about peace through strength.

Democrats attacked her patriotism. They attacked her loyalty. It is disturbing. There is no evidence to support that. The attacks on her are another case of Democrats equating political disagreement with disloyalty.

If Washington wants to trust our intelligence Agencies again, we need to take an ax to the weaponization of these very Agencies. Congresswoman Gabbard will keep politics out of intelligence gathering. She wants to return ODNI to its original size, its scope, and its mission. She wrote in Newsweek:

I promise to provide unbiased, timely, and accurate intelligence for those making decisions to protect the people of our country.

That is exactly what we need.

Tulsi Gabbard is the right choice to be the Director of National Intelligence, and I look forward to voting to confirm her later today.

GRIZZLY BEARS

Now, Mr. President, on a different matter, one critically important to my home State of Wyoming, under the Constitution, most decisions affecting our lives are meant to be made at the local or the State level. But for decades, unelected, unaccountable, heavy-handed Federal bureaucrats have taken away decisions from the States. They have centralized power and ignored the local experts. We need to put the power back into the hands of the people and

the States. That is where it belongs. That is what our Founding Fathers envisioned.

A perfect example of this is the status of grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park. The Yellowstone population of grizzly bears has been fully recovered—it was put on the endangered species list years and years ago, but it has been fully recovered for more than 20 years.

In Wyoming, we have invested more than \$50 million in this effort to make sure that the grizzly bears did fully and safely recover. Both Democrat administrations and Republican administrations have moved—have taken action to take the grizzly bear off of the endangered species list.

Wyoming has a strong, proven track record of science-based management of the bears. Today, grizzly bears in Yellowstone are thriving. They are thriving so much that they are now doing great damage to our livestock and to our wildlife.

In 2022, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said that there was “substantial scientific or commercial information” to warrant local control—not the heavy hand of Washington but local control. Yet the grizzly bear remains under Washington's control, and that is despite the best data and our State's success.

This issue isn't science; it is politics. There are partisan, liberal judges who refuse to listen to scientific evidence. The evidence shows that the grizzlies are fully recovered. The previous administration didn't want to give up control. That is kind of how the Biden administration did it. So on its way out the door, in the final weeks, it threw sand in the gears of change. The Biden administration rejected, at the midnight hour, Wyoming's good-faith efforts and management plans. They did it just before leaving office. The decision was wrong. It was wrong for the grizzly bear population, and it was wrong for the people of Wyoming.

It is time for Wyoming—not Washington—to be in charge of managing the grizzly bears. In Congress, Senator CYNTHIA LUMMIS and Congresswoman HARRIET HAGEMAN and I introduced legislation to delist the grizzly bears. Our legislation would restore State management. It would put power back into the hands of the people who understand the situation the best.

We are also working with the Trump administration to take immediate action. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum is a supporter of delisting the grizzly bears. He agrees that local communities and States should be in control of these decisions. He said in his confirmation hearing:

There's a belief that when they come off of federal protection that they're unprotected. No, they're managed as all the other species in the state by the locals who've got the closest data.

Secretary Burgum is right, and I am glad that we finally have an administration that is ready to work with the people of Wyoming.

So I am going to continue to work closely with the Secretary of the Interior on a path forward that allows the people of Wyoming to make decisions for Wyoming.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened to my colleague and friend from Wyoming, and I am struggling to understand his point of view. He announced at one point that the Republicans were in the majority in the House and Senate. Well, that is a fact. I know it. The Presiding Officer does as well. So to say that you are in the majority suggests that you are in charge, and it also suggests that if there is going to be a budget for the U.S. Government, which we need next month, the majority party in both the House and the Senate has that responsibility to come forward with a budget. That is a simple fact of life. It is a fact of political life.

To blame the minority for no budget is to ignore the obvious: The majority of votes in the House and the Senate belong to the Republican Party. If there is going to be a budget, it is fair to assume that they would have to lead in that effort. I look forward to seeing that leadership. We have seen precious little of it so far.

JANUARY 6 PARDONS

Mr. President, on a completely separate note, I realize that the President made these statements during the course of his campaign, but it still came as something of a shock when, on the first day of his Presidency, Donald Trump decided to issue a blanket pardon for those who had been convicted of the January 6 riot that took place in this building.

For those of us who were physically present, it is a moment we will never forget. The Vice President of the United States was sitting in the Presiding Officer's chair, presiding over the U.S. Senate as we addressed the constitutional responsibility of counting the electoral votes.

It was roughly 10 minutes after 2 in the afternoon when someone came along in a suit, walked up to the Vice President of the United States, grabbed him by the arm, and pulled him off of the chair. Those of us who were here wondered what was going on. While we could hear the demonstrators outside, we didn't understand why the Vice President was being removed from this Chamber.

A member of the Capitol Police then walked up to where the Presiding Officer is sitting and announced that this was going to be a safe room; yes, there were demonstrators outside, even some in the building, but stay here; the Senate Chamber will be a safe room; and be prepared for others to come into this safe room to avoid any conflict with the demonstrators.

That instruction lasted for about 10 minutes, and then the same officer

came up and stood before us and said: Change of plans. Everybody evacuate this room as quickly as possible.

We all headed out that door, going to another building on Capitol Hill that we thought might be safer, away from the demonstrators.

Think about that—the Capitol of the United States of America, taken over by demonstrators; the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives stopped in the progress of doing their constitutional responsibility of counting the electoral votes.

We have seen the videotapes—oh, there are plenty of them—that show these mob demonstrators breaking the windows to get into the Capitol Building, knocking down the doors, and then beating up on the police officers.

When the Presiding Officer and I came to work this morning, there were men and women—some in uniform, others in plainclothes—standing in the corridors of this building. Their responsibility is to keep us safe and to keep those who visit this Capitol safe. They are prepared—many of them have to be prepared—to risk their lives to do it.

To think what they went through on January 6 is outrageous. They were beaten up by these mobsters, these thugs, these demonstrators, who were egged on by the President of the United States to come up and go wild in the U.S. Capitol. Oh, they went wild, spraying bear spray into the faces of individual policemen, beating up on them with poles and pieces of furniture.

Yes, it was a pretty wild occasion, and it was a criminal occasion. It led to the most extensive criminal prosecution in the history of our country. Some 1,600 people were prosecuted for their conduct on January 6. And I will tell you, as someone who witnessed that and went through that experience, they deserved it. It just strikes me as outrageous.

If you heard on the news this afternoon that the Houses of Parliament in London had been invaded by a mob that had beaten down the doors of the House of Commons and took control of it, you would have said: That is impossible. That doesn't happen in a civilized country like England.

Well, it certainly shouldn't happen in the United States, and it did. I witnessed it.

Then came the President of the United States on his first day in office, and what did he do? He decided that every single person arrested for a crime related to January 6 should be released with a full and unconditional pardon. And that is what he did.

I asked my staff: Let's keep track of these people, see what happened to them. In the 3 weeks that have passed since the President made that decision, there are some interesting stories, sad stories.

Emily Hernandez pleaded guilty to entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds in relation to her actions in the Capitol on January 6.

Ms. Hernandez was seen holding a stolen, broken nameplate of House Speaker NANCY PELOSI. She served 30 days in Federal prison and was released. Days after being pardoned by President Trump—days after being pardoned by President Trump—she was sentenced to 10 years in prison for a 2022 deadly drunk-driving crash in Missouri during which she collided with a couple—Victoria and Ryan Wilson—who had just left dinner, celebrating their 15th wedding anniversary. Victoria died in the crash, and Ryan sustained serious injuries.

Then there is Daniel Ball. Daniel Ball was arrested for throwing “an explosive device” that detonated on at least 25 officers and forcefully shoving police at the Capitol on January 6. Daniel Ball was in possession of a gun and ammunition as he came into the Capitol, which was illegal considering his criminal background. The Department of Justice dismissed Ball's charges following President Trump's pardon.

I have a long list here, and I am not going to read them all, but there is one in particular, released with a full pardon by President Trump for the January 6 crimes he committed. Guy Reffitt, the first defendant to stand trial on charges related to the January 6 Capitol insurrection, was sentenced to 87 months in prison for bringing a firearm into the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Reffitt's 19-year-old son Jackson turned him into law enforcement after the attack. Jackson also indicated that Reffitt had threatened to shoot him and his sister Peyton if they reported him to authorities.

After receiving a pardon from President Trump, Guy Reffitt attended Kash Patel's Senate Judiciary Committee nomination hearing. Kash Patel is President Trump's nominee to be the Director and head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Reffitt attended that committee nomination, and here is what he posted on social media afterward.

Remember: a man who is released after he was granted a full pardon, after he was convicted of bringing a firearm into the Capitol on January 6, 2021—certainly not a casual tourist by any means.

Here is what he said on social media:

Present and in support of Kash Patel as the leftist commies continue to spew lies, misinformation, and disinformation. My man, clean house Kash.

So it certainly seems like he learned his lesson, right? He served time in jail and was released with pardon by the President. He is at it again, defying the authorities, defying anyone who disagrees with him politically—full, unconditional pardon from Donald Trump.

The reason I wanted to make a note of Mr. Reffitt's history is that it is apropos of what I want to speak to this morning.

NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Mr. President, this Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee is scheduled to consider whether to recommend Kash Patel's nomination to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to the full Senate for consideration. So far, my Republican committee colleagues have chosen to ignore the myriad redflags about Mr. Patel, especially his recurring instinct to threaten retribution—political retribution—against his and President Trump's perceived enemies. This is a dangerous characteristic for a person who wants to lead the Nation's most powerful domestic, investigative Agency, the FBI. I hope that what I reveal today from credible whistleblowers at the highest levels will give my Republican colleagues some pause before it is too late.

Multiple whistleblowers have disclosed to my staff highly credible information indicating that Mr. Kash Patel has been personally directing the ongoing purge of senior law enforcement officials at the FBI.

Let me remind the Presiding Officer, Mr. Patel, at this moment in time, is not on any public payroll, nor does he have any authority by our government.

Listen. On the morning of January 29, the day before Kash Patel's confirmation hearing, there was a meeting between the acting leadership of the Department of Justice and the FBI. Notes from that morning meeting read:

KP wants movement at FBI, reciprocal actions for DOJ.

Let me say that again. Notes from the meeting:

KP wants movement at FBI, reciprocal actions for DOJ.

Acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove told the participants in this meeting that he had received multiple calls from the White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller the night before. Miller had pressured him because Kash Patel—"KP"—wanted the FBI to remove targeted officials faster, as DOJ had already done with prosecutors.

The list of officials identified for termination was in the possession of a group of individuals who, according to our sources, were personally interviewed by Mr. Patel to be on what was known as the Director's Advisory Team.

This advisory team at the FBI is a group of political appointees who were brought in to prepare for Mr. Patel's arrival. The FBI's leadership understanding of the Advisory Team's list was that "a lot of names were people in the crosshairs."

According to my whistleblower sources, Mr. Patel is receiving information from within the FBI from the Director's Advisory Team. Mr. Patel then provides direction to Stephen Miller, who relays it to Acting Deputy Attorney General Bove.

It is unacceptable for a nominee with no legal or current role in government to personally direct the unjustified and

potentially illegal firings of dedicated, nonpartisan professionals at the FBI.

If these allegations are true, then Mr. Patel may have committed perjury before the Senate Judiciary Committee. A day after the meeting I described, where Mr. Patel's desire for FBI officials to be fired more quickly was discussed, was Mr. Patel's confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee. So the morning after he is putting the heat on the leadership at the FBI to dismiss more people more quickly, he testifies before the Judiciary Committee under oath.

During the hearing, Senator CORY BOOKER of New Jersey asked Mr. Patel:

Are you aware of any plans or discussions to punish in any way, including termination, FBI agents or personnel associated with Trump investigations? Yes or no.

Mr. Patel answered that he was "not aware of that," and continued:

I don't know what is going on right now over there, but I'm committed to you, Senator, and your colleagues that I will honor the internal review process of the FBI.

Yet, if these whistleblower allegations are true, just 2 days before, Stephen Miller, at Mr. Patel's direction, had ordered DOJ leadership not just to terminate a specific list of officials but to speed up those terminations.

Mr. Patel seems to be unable to wait for Senate confirmation to carry out retribution against his perceived political enemies.

Patel is a private citizen today, and he was when he testified, with no current role in government, directing baseless firings of career public servants. This speaks directly to the fact that Mr. Patel is not fit to be entrusted with government authority, which is evident to anyone who has seriously reviewed his record.

And let me remind you: He is not seeking a term of 2 years or 4 years but 10 years as Director of the FBI.

The ramifications of these terminations at the FBI are dangerous. They go way beyond Mr. Patel's fitness for office, because these terminations have greatly weakened the FBI's ability to protect the country from national security threats and have made America less safe.

This hollowing out of one of the major law enforcement Agencies of the Federal Government by the new Trump administration is at the risk of making America more dangerous and people in America more vulnerable to criminal and terrorist elements.

Among those who were removed so far—so far—by the Trump administration are the top officials who oversee the FBI's work combatting international and domestic terrorism.

Think about that. The Trump administration starts off by going to the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and comes up with a political list, and among those people who were eliminated are the people in charge of combatting international and domestic terrorism, cyber security threats, human and drug traf-

ficking, and violent crime. Does that make us any safer?

Mr. Patel's need to punish his perceived enemies is apparently greater than his interest in protecting the American people. Given the serious nature of these allegations and the need to protect the identities of my sources, I have asked the Department of Justice inspector general today, in a letter, to investigate these specific claims. I believe they are true, but the inspector general can make his own conclusion.

I will urge my Republican colleagues to, please, take these allegations seriously and, at least, pause for a moment and consider whether Kash Patel is the person you want to put in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for 10 years—10 years.

If this man is so fast and loose with the truth before our committee now, imagine what he will do if given the protection of office.

We need to pause in this consideration and consider what we already know about Mr. Patel. He has pledged to "shut down FBI headquarters," in writing, and, "come after" the President's enemies.

He has even published the enemies' list that he will target. I know I have read it, and anybody can in the book that he has published.

He falsely claimed that the FBI "was planning January 6 for a year," and has even sold musical recordings of a song performed by January 6 rioters who violently assaulted police officers on January 6.

He has left behind a trail of grievances throughout his life, lashing out at anyone who dares to disagree with him or fails to respect him sufficiently.

You want to give power to this man, the power of the investigation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation? I think not.

Now there are these credible allegations that he has personally orchestrated a purge of senior FBI law enforcement officials.

The FBI is an Agency that plays a critical role in keeping us safe from terrorism, violent crime, narcotics, and other threats. Our Nation needs an FBI Director who understands the gravity of the mission, not someone who is focused on settling a political score.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, after the Gabbard nomination, the next issue up for consideration by the Senate is cloture on the Robert F. Kennedy nomination to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. This Cabinet position is responsible for implementing the administration's health agenda.

As Secretary, Mr. Kennedy must spend his time focused on improving the health of all Americans, ensuring HHS is transparent and accountable to congressional oversight, and respecting whistleblowers.

I think Kennedy has made it very clear, in life as a citizen, talking about improving the health of all Americans.

So I would like to outline some of the priorities that Mr. Kennedy should focus on at Health and Human Services. And, obviously, I am asking him to focus on things and issues that are very dear to my heart and take up a lot of my time as a Senator from Iowa and a person very concerned about the quality of healthcare in rural America.

Our country spends more than \$4.5 trillion annually on healthcare. Growing healthcare costs don't just strain Americans' pocketbooks. Healthcare is also a major driver of widening budget deficits and the Federal Government's unsustainable fiscal outlook.

We are not getting our money's worth for all of that spending. Major healthcare programs spending eats up 34 percent of the Federal revenue today, and that will grow to 41 percent of revenue by 2055.

Mr. Kennedy must—and I think he is committed to—ensure that the key health programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, are protected and strengthened by rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse.

The nominee must increase transparency and accountability. These actions will help make our healthcare system more efficient for the taxpayers and the consumers.

I am the author of major and more recent updates to the Federal Government's most powerful tool in fighting fraud, and that is people that use the False Claims Act. Since the enactment of this legislation—I am talking about reforms to the False Claims Act—the Federal Government has recovered more than \$78 billion lost to fraud and saved billions more by deterring would-be fraudsters.

People in the Justice Department, both Republican and Democrat, say that the False Claims Act is their best tool to get after these fraudsters.

In the 1 year of just 2024—and Attorney General Garland reported this to me just a couple of days before he left office—in 2024, there was more than \$2.9 billion in False Claims Act settlements and judgments, with \$1.7 billion of it involving the healthcare industry.

Now, as you know, I listen to a lot of whistleblowers, and whistleblowers were responsible for helping to recover nearly all of that \$1.7 billion.

And I think I discussed the False Claims Act and the use of it by soon-to-be Secretary Kennedy. He seemed to be very enthused about listening to whistleblowers and use of the False Claims Act, and I think that he was probably being made aware of it for the first time. So I hope he will look into how he can use this act and, particularly, by listening to reports from whistleblowers of the waste of taxpayers' money.

Now, the Justice Department and HHS, in combination, need to more aggressively go after healthcare waste, fraud, and abuse and empower and encourage whistleblowers.

My top healthcare priority is lowering the cost of prescription drugs. We

can start by putting more sunshine on pharmacy benefit managers' practices and holding these PBMs accountable.

We should also establish price transparency on prescription drug TV ads. Knowing what something costs before buying it is just common sense and very helpful to the consumer. Transparency will bring more accountability and lower costs to consumers.

Mr. Kennedy must also protect and improve access to rural healthcare. The previous administration dragged its feet in opening up spots for what is termed the Rural Community Hospital Demonstration programs. HHS must also listen to the concerns from rural pharmacies and ensure rural hospitals benefit from additional physician slots that Congress has authorized.

I look forward to strengthening the new and voluntary rural emergency program to ensure that it is working for rural communities, extending telehealth access, and supporting physicians getting a fair reimbursement under Medicare.

I also expect HHS to support healthy moms and babies by improving care, coordination, and using telehealth in rural areas.

HHS should work with me to support kids with complex medical needs so these kids and their families are getting the right care at the right time and at the right place. Our programs helping support kids with complex medical needs covers probably six or—well, depending on how many problems these kids have—but they have to navigate across several different programs, and what we are trying to do through legislation we pass is to have help so that when you have to see five or six different specialists, you have somebody saying what is available and what can we do to help you make access to all this.

I also expect HHS to protect the most vulnerable and older Americans.

I have spoken at length with Mr. Kennedy about some comments that he made in regard to agriculture, and I have heard from farmers in Iowa and agricultural organizations and commodity groups in the State, fearful that Mr. Kennedy has some radical ideas on agriculture.

At the end of the hour meeting I had in his office, prior to his hearing before the Finance Committee, I was calmed quite a bit by what he told me about his views on agriculture. I hope that that calm can be maintained. But if it is not, Mr. Kennedy is sure to hear from me. So when we talked about this in my office, Mr. Kennedy prefaced our initial conversation by saying that he, as HHS Secretary, will not have jurisdiction over agricultural issues. So you can expect that I will expect him to leave agriculture practices regulations to the proper Agencies and, for the most part, that is the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency.

I have also sent letters to Secretaries of Agriculture and HHS requiring—re-

questing they provide information regarding conflicts of interest on the Dietary Guideline Advisory Committee to increase transparencies. The problem there is that there is a feeling among a lot of members of the Advisory Committee that they may have an unjustified conflict of interest in what they are suggesting we eat and the type of diet we have.

So I expect Mr. Kennedy to provide Congress with a confidential financial disclosure from the Advisory Committee before finalizing dietary guidelines so that we know that nobody has a vested interest in however those guidelines are written.

On issues of healthcare and agriculture, Mr. Kennedy said in his nomination hearing:

I agree with all of those provisions—

I am quoting him now.

I agree with all of those provisions, Senator.

Meaning this Senator.

My approach to [the] administration [of] HHS will be radical transparency. If members of this committee or other members of [the committee] want information, the doors are open. . . . [I]f Congress asks me for information, you will get it immediately.

That is the end of the quote. I don't know whether people, even in the Senate here but particularly outside, know how refreshing it is to have a member of the Cabinet say: If Congress asks me for information, you would get it immediately. Because over the years that I have been in the U.S. Senate, it doesn't matter whether it is a Republican or Democrat administration, carrying out our constitutional responsibilities to see that—checks and balances to see that the executive branch and the President faithfully executes the laws is not an easy process, and we have difficulty getting answers to our questions.

Now, I don't know how much of this—I have had trouble with HHS in the past, but I know when Pam Bondi came to my office, I showed her a file of 158 letters that I had written to the Justice Department in the last 4 years to get information and documents in regard to my investigations of wrongdoing, and most of them weren't answered. Or if we got answers, it was merely words on a sheet of paper. Not very helpful.

So thank you, Mr. Kennedy, for your promise. And I am going to quote again: If Congress asks me for information, you will get it immediately.

Because that is what our job is. Every high school student learns in government about checks and balances of government, that we not only pass laws and we not only appropriate money, but we have a responsibility to the taxpayers and the citizens of this country to make sure that a President does what the Constitution says he should do: faithfully execute the laws.

And Cabinet people are bound by that same thing. Every Cabinet member that comes to my office, I tell them

about the importance of our constitutional responsibility of oversight, answering our letters, and listening to whistleblowers. And in regard to answering letters, everybody that comes before a committee is asked by the chairman of that committee: Will you answer our letters? And everybody says yes. And I advise them to say “maybe” so that they aren’t turned out to be liars.

So I expect Mr. Kennedy’s Agency to provide timely and complete responses to congressional oversight. Oversight allows us to hold bureaucrats accountable to the rule of law and helps keep faith with the taxpayers.

So I look forward to working with Mr. Kennedy to improve the health of all Americans, make our healthcare system more efficient, and ensure HHS’s adherence to Kennedy’s radical transparency commitment.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the Governor of the great State of Texas, Greg Abbott, has made a request to the U.S. Congress to reimburse our State for the expenses we have incurred in attempting to combat the Texas-Mexico border security crisis during the 4 years of the Biden administration. I am proud to support this request, along with my colleague Senator CRUZ and Members of the Texas delegation in the House of Representatives.

Securing the Nation’s borders is the responsibility of the Federal Government, plain and simple. Given the division of responsibilities between the States and the Federal Government, there is no doubt that this is a Federal responsibility. For 4 years, though, President Biden and Vice President Harris and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas intentionally and willfully refused to enforce the laws on the books to keep the border secure and to keep our Nation safe.

Even before his first day in the Office, President Biden rolled out the welcome mat to illegal immigrants in speeches during his campaign, inviting—inviting—what ensued.

Early in his Presidency, President Biden ended President Trump’s very effective policy known as “Remain in Mexico.” This, very simply, provided that those who sought asylum needed to remain outside of the borders of the United States while their asylum claim was litigated and ultimately decided, knowing that only about 15 percent of people who claim asylum ultimately are awarded that by an immigration court.

The Biden administration ended construction of President Trump’s border wall, and, instead, spent Federal funds to store those materials that had already been paid for, squandering taxpayer dollars in the process.

And as this crisis was evolving and worsening, President Biden ended title 42 authority, the COVID-era policy that was the last string in place helping to keep the lid on the illegal immigration crisis. So not only did the Biden administration turn a blind eye to what was an international responsibility and thus a Federal Government responsibility, they went a step further and actually actively enacted policies to make it worse.

The Department of Homeland Security invited more illegal immigration when it created an app for your phone called the CBP One app, Customs and Border Protection app, which allowed immigrants to literally schedule an appointment at a port of entry in order to illegally enter the United States. Of course, even those who did not claim asylum were simply paroled or released into the interior, along with a work permit.

Here, again, there was no manner of deterrence saying: Well, if you want to enter the United States, you need to do so according to the rules in an orderly basis.

Essentially, all the rules were set aside, and a big green light and a welcome mat were laid out for anybody and everybody who wanted to come—and come they did. Tens of millions of people—we really don’t know exactly how many—took advantage of this open border policy by the Biden administration. Let’s say 10 million in round numbers. We know that about 1.7 million people were “got-aways,” which is what the Border Patrol calls those who were evading law enforcement who presumably are up to no good because they know they can’t enter otherwise because they have either a criminal record or they are transporting drugs or engaged in some other illicit activity.

At the same time that the Biden administration laid out the welcome mat to anybody and everybody who wanted to come to the United States across our border, they issued hundreds of millions of dollars in reimbursements to nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations that helped facilitate this illegal immigration through FEMA’s Emergency Food and Shelter Program. Instead of meeting their responsibilities to secure the border, they essentially funded those organizations that facilitated it.

Vice President Harris was assigned the task, as we know, of being the border czar that helped manage this crisis, but she failed to even understand the assignment and failed utterly at completing that assignment.

She visited the Texas-Mexico border once in sort of what I would call a driveby during the 4 years that President Biden and Vice President Harris were in office.

It is safe to say she had no concept or clue about what conditions were like on the border and how dangerous this open border policy was. Clearly she didn’t care and was unwilling to do anything about it.

On her one and only visit to the Texas border, she steered clear of the hotspots, like the Rio Grande Valley, which was the very epicenter of the border crisis at the time. Instead, she went to El Paso for a sanitized, made-for-TV visit. Different parts of the border are very different, and instead of going to the place where she knew the action would be, she went to a place that was relatively calm and sedate. But she did it for a TV hit and no other reason.

In 2024, when the Democratic Party deposed President Biden as their nominee and coronated Vice President Harris as their Presidential candidate, she suddenly found herself campaigning to be President of the United States, but she actually shirked from the responsibilities President Biden had given her as the border czar and claimed that she was never actually tasked to oversee the migration crisis.

Suffice it to say that the Biden administration’s handling of border security was an unmitigated disaster. As a consequence, the State of Texas, which has 1,200 miles of common border with Mexico, was basically left up to its own devices. We had no choice but to pick up the slack and try to secure some semblance of basic safety for Texans and the rest of the country. Everything the State of Texas did to fill the gap inured not just to the benefit of the 31 million people who live in Texas but to the entire Nation.

Governor Abbott initiated something called Operation Lone Star, which resulted in the apprehension of more than half a million illegal immigrants by Texas law enforcement. Thanks to Operation Lone Star, law enforcement arrested more than 50,000 criminals trying to make their way across the border. Texas also built 240 miles of border barriers when the Federal Government refused to do its job. And officers across the State have seized more than half a billion deadly doses of fentanyl, which is the No. 1 cause of death for young people between the age of 18 and 45 in this country. As a result of Operation Lone Star, without any help at all from the Federal Government, Texas was able to reduce illegal immigration into the State by 87 percent.

Unfortunately, the State had to spend nearly \$4.8 billion—money that should have been provided by the Federal Government—Texas taxpayers had to foot the bill for \$4.8 billion on walls and barriers, local grants to counties and cities, processing criminal arrests, and moving migrants out of small Texas towns. The State also spent \$3.6 billion to deploy the National Guard for building border barriers, guarding and constructing those barriers, and assisting Border Patrol and Customs

and Border Protection. Another \$2.25 billion has gone toward personnel cost for Texas State troopers, law enforcement who were responsible for repelling additional illegal immigrants, arresting those who were committing crimes, as well as transnational gang members, cartel members, human smugglers, and human traffickers.

But this was just the start. There were costs associated with the prosecution of border crimes. At Operation Lone Star's criminal processing centers, State game wardens had to pitch in to help control the Rio Grande River on the border to help prevent illegal entries, and criminal processing centers required health and safety services.

We are all familiar with the saying "There is no such thing as a free lunch," but President Biden and Vice President Harris failed to pony up for 4 years and then asked Texans to pick up the tab for their bill. All told, Governor Abbott and the State legislature had to spend more than \$11 billion to make up for the Biden administration's blunders and malfeasance and nonfeasance when it came to border security and immigration.

So it is not particularly complicated. Securing the country's borders is a function of the Federal Government. And \$11 billion is no small amount of money for a State—particularly one that doesn't have an income tax—to provide that benefits the rest of the country. But this is no different than when the Federal Government steps in to help States that have to deal with extraordinary expenses during the wake of a natural disaster, as they did for Texas in the case of Hurricane Harvey. But instead of a natural disaster, what we had during the 4 years of the Biden administration was a manmade disaster.

While every State became a border State during the last administration, there are costs that Texas had to shoulder that our neighbors had not. It is just fair and right and just for Texas taxpayers to be made whole for the border security responsibilities it took on as a result of President Biden's dereliction of duty.

I am proud to support Governor Abbott's request for the State to be reimbursed. My colleagues on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees should expect me and Senator CRUZ and the entire Texas delegation to be strongly advocating for reimbursement for Texas in the coming weeks. I look forward to working with them in order to make this a reality.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

TARIFFS

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk to you about President Trump's tariffs. The media is in full meltdown. They are in a full meltdown mode after President Trump imposed duties and retaliatory tariffs this week on countries that

have basically been ripping the United States of America off, and they have been doing it for decades.

Apparently, globalists and Democrats are just fine with other countries imposing tariffs on the United States, but when it comes to President Trump trying to equalize it up, establish a level playing field for domestic producers, well, that is a bridge too far.

No one has been paying attention to President Trump. If they have been paying attention to President Trump, they should not remotely be surprised. He campaigned on this platform three times and has been crystal clear on his intentions. Now he is following through on his campaign promises. But in the corporate media—it seems to still be confused about all these tariffs. So let me spell it out.

President Trump's view on tariffs is as both a negotiating tool to get other countries to do a few things that we asked them to do and a way to boost American manufacturing and put American workers and businesses first, not last. President Trump has his work cut out for him after a disastrous 4 years for our small businesses and our corporations under the Biden administration.

The Biden administration made it clear to our friends and foes alike that globalists—the globalist agenda would take precedence over the safety and well-being of the American people. It is mind-boggling. Thankfully, those days are over.

The American people gave President Donald J. Trump a clear mandate to restore our country's superpower status and put all Americans first, all businesses first, everybody that does something in this country, and that starts, No. 1, with securing our borders.

Like I said many times, if you don't have a border, you don't have a country. And we have really struggled in the last four years. That is changing. That is why the master negotiator in chief, President Donald Trump, threatened to impose 25 percent tariffs on Mexico and Canada in just the last couple of weeks.

Over the last 4 years, the Mexican Government basically turned a blind eye while caravans of illegal aliens overran our borders, coming from Mexico, coming from Central America, all over the world, just overrunning our country. Thousands of women and children were trafficked, raped along the way. Drug cartels made an absolute fortune—absolute fortune—not just with drugs, by the way, but from payments of these illegals coming all the way through either Central America or South America to the United States—with a big basically tariff of their own, charging these people to come to the United States.

Lawlessness had become the status quo under President Biden. Nobody cared. The Democrats in this room—they didn't care. They didn't care what was going on. Let's just let them all come in. Let's let the drugs come in.

We lose 300 people pretty much every few days to illegal drugs in this country with overdoses, but let's not worry about that. Let's just worry about controlling our country the way they wanted to. Well, it has been a disaster.

Mexico showed zero signs of willingness to negotiate when President Trump took office. When he did take office, on January 20, they woke up real quick. President Trump correctly understands that Mexico's economy is heavily dependent on the United States of America and the citizens of this country. In fact, more than 80 percent of Mexico's exports come to the United States—80 percent come here—and American citizens buy those products that are made in Mexico. Mexico's economy would almost instantly—instantly—feel the effects of a 25-percent tariff, leaving Mexico's President, Claudia Sheinbaum, no choice—no choice—but to come to the negotiating table under the master negotiator, Donald Trump. So that is why he uses his tariffs—to get his point across—because people across the world take us for granted.

As a result, within hours—hours—of President Trump's announcement of the tariffs, Mexico caved. They saw real quick. Obviously, they are not stupid. They agreed to help the United States secure the border and crack down on the cartels and the illegal drugs coming in almost immediately. We could have done the same thing with the past administration, but it just shows you they couldn't have cared less what happened at our border.

Our neighbor to the north also caved to President Trump after a 25-percent tariff was threatened on Canada. Not only are illicit drugs, like fentanyl, coming into our country from Mexico, but there was also about a 2,000-percent increase in drugs that came across the border in 2023 and 2024 from Canada—a 2,000-percent increase. In the last fiscal year alone, enough fentanyl was seized at the northern border to kill 9.8 million Americans.

To me, that would be a very serious problem, but do you think the Democrats cared? No. There was no action at all by the Biden administration on Canada and no action on Mexico. But thanks to President Trump's leadership, our North American neighbors to the north and south are making changes now daily that will protect American citizens from deadly drugs, criminals, and human traffickers.

The No. 1 job of the President of the United States is to protect the people in this country first, and that is what President Trump is doing.

In addition to using tariffs as a negotiating tool, President Trump also views tariffs as a way to right the wrongs of past ineffective trade deals. That is why, this week, he is imposing a 25-percent tariff on all steel and aluminum imports, including those of Canada and Mexico.

Contrary to what the media is telling you, this isn't unprecedented. It is not

unusual. In fact, President Trump has helped shine a light on the fact that U.S. exporters face higher tariffs more than two-thirds of the time. We pay more tariffs than anybody. For example, among our major trading partners, China applies higher tariffs on 85 percent of U.S. products, and 90 percent on U.S. products from India.

Just think about that. We are paying tariffs on things coming into this country, but when we send things out, we get the heck tarified out of us from other countries. It is not fair trade.

These export imbalances don't just impact bottom lines; they also discourage domestic production. We have got to produce more in this country, and we have got to build more things in this country. That is what President Trump is trying to do. If we don't cut back on spending and start producing more in this country, this will not be the United States of America much longer because we will be bankrupt, and we will be reporting to somebody like China, which is buying our Treasury bills right and left—or they were.

One report conducted by the Department of Commerce in the first Trump administration found that excess production and capacity, particularly in China, have been major factors in the decline of domestic aluminum production. Basically, we are getting overwhelmed by aluminum from China that is not near as good as what we make in this country.

President Trump built one of the strongest economies in modern history in his first term—in modern history—but the Democrats failed to know that. They wanted to change it, and did they ever. They almost destroyed our economy. Jobs and wages were up when President Trump was in, and inflation was down. Americans had more money in their pockets. Thanks to President Trump's strategic tariffs, along with the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, companies were reshoring businesses back in the United States, right and left. They were coming back because they could make a profit.

That is what it is all about when you have a corporation—you have got to make a profit. President Trump was able to, because of tariffs, make more money for manufacturing in this country than going out of this country. You had companies like Ford canceling plans to build in Mexico—back in President Trump's first term—and, instead, opening one in Michigan. This turned out to be extremely important when COVID hit, and we were forced to rely on goods that were manufactured right here in the United States. We also found out pretty quick, just in drugs alone, that we make very few drugs in the United States. Where are they made? They are made in India and China. They have got to come back here. We have to be self-sustaining. Whether it is our healthcare technologies, agricultural products, or steel and aluminum, there is no reason for us to depend on other countries.

We are the No. 1 country in this world—we have been and will be in the future—in manufacturing and production. America has some of the best and brightest manufacturers and the best and brightest producers, farmers, and businesses. We take second to none. And from a national security perspective, it is dangerous to be reliant on other countries, which may not have the best interests of the United States' in mind. You can't blame them. They are looking out for themselves first. Well, we need to do the same thing.

That is not to mention the fact that the United States produces the cleanest steel in the world. You would think the Democrats and the climate cult would at least be happy about that. Think about that.

You know, President Trump just put tariffs on steel and aluminum. A lot of the steel and aluminum come in, and because of how they make it, it is some of the dirtiest steel in the world. We make the cleanest. Why in the world would we want to import something that is going to be detrimental to our country alone with this environment?

The tariffs being imposed this week are an important step in President Trump's plan to restore fairness to trade, to boost domestic manufacturing, and to put consumers and producers first. It is about time.

Three weeks into his Presidency, President Trump is keeping his promises. President Trump's strategic tariffs will strengthen and revitalize our Nation's economy, stop the flow of illicit drugs and illegal immigration, and make sure our trade deals are fair to both taxpayers and American manufacturers—America first. President Trump is utilizing every tool at his disposal, as we speak, including tariffs, to usher in the golden age of the American economy. We have to make that change. If we don't, we will not survive as the No. 1 country in the world. We will not regain that status, and we will be losing our national security.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, today I will be speaking about the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard to be Director of National Intelligence and my reasons for opposing her confirmation.

First, I believe the Senate must consider with this nomination the examples of blatant lawlessness of the administration. At every turn, Donald Trump is attacking the rule of law, disregarding the constitutional role of Congress, and trying to purge civil servants who defend our country every day. Meanwhile, Elon Musk's minions are gaining access to some of the government's most sensitive systems and records. American democracy and national security are at stake. If the Senate is going to confirm nominees, we need to know whether they will stand up for democratic principles, no matter what.

At our hearing, I asked Ms. Gabbard what she would do if Donald Trump tried to illegally withhold funds from the intelligence community inspector general. This was hardly a hypothetical question. Donald Trump has, in fact, sought to unilaterally cut off funding for a broad range of organizations despite the money having been appropriated by Congress. It is not just me saying this is illegal, the courts have ordered the administration to cut it out and resume the funding.

But when I asked Ms. Gabbard the question, she said:

I don't believe for a second President Trump would ask me to do something that would break the law.

Well, he is breaking the law and the country needs leaders who acknowledge that fact and stand up to him.

My concerns about Ms. Gabbard are also based on her recent turn toward extreme partisanship. Other partisans have been confirmed to leadership positions and intelligence Agencies. George Herbert Walker Bush was the head of the Republican National Committee, and he was successful enough as Director of Central Intelligence that they literally named the headquarters after him. Party affiliation is not the issue.

The problem is when partisanship distorts one's views of intelligence matters. Ms. Gabbard has written about a coup being perpetrated by the so-called deep state that includes, among others, the DNC and also the FBI, the CIA, and "a whole network of rogue intelligence and law enforcement agents."

Madam President, I have spent almost a quarter century as a member of the Intelligence Committee seeking to bring to light and stop government abuses across a range of programs and activities. These conspiracy theories do not help the bipartisan reform movement. They only serve to encourage a President who wants to tear down the entire intelligence community and replace it with loyalists.

So what happens next? If Ms. Gabbard is confirmed, my first order of

business will be to hold her to the commitments she made during her confirmation process.

With regard to surveillance policy, she expressed her support for a warrant requirement for U.S. person searches of communications collected under section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. With section 702 reauthorization up next year, DNI support for reforms like these will be critical to protecting the privacy rights of Americans.

Ms. Gabbard also confirmed that she has significant concerns about the constitutionality of several provisions of the PATRIOT Act. Importantly, she opposed mandated backdoors into encrypted communications, which threaten both Americans' privacy and national security. As she stated during her hearing:

These backdoors lead down a dangerous path that can undermine Americans' 4th amendment rights and civil liberties.

We are living in a time of increasingly devastating cyber breaches, including the Salt Typhoon compromise of our telecommunications infrastructure. The lesson from that hack was that surveillance capabilities designed for law enforcement will be targeted by foreign intelligence services. In other words, there is simply no way for the government to mandate access to Americans' encrypted communications and not also expose those communications to the government of China or other adversaries.

Let me mention something particularly alarming last week. The press reported that UK officials insisted that Apple provide them a back door into files backed up to Apple's iCloud service. This is a development that threatens America's national security and Americans' privacy. That is even before U.S. Government officials come around once again asking for the very same dangerous and irresponsible accesses. That is why Ms. Gabbard's statement was so important and why, if she is confirmed, the Congress needs to hold her and the rest of America's intelligence Agencies to it.

During her confirmation process, Ms. Gabbard supported restrictions on the collection of communications records of America's journalists. She endorsed the Biden administration Justice Department policy prohibiting this collection except in very narrow circumstances. That was a policy she said was "essential to protecting press freedoms and maintaining the critical balance between national security and upholding the First Amendment." She also called for making sure that policy was actually codified.

I asked Ms. Gabbard about the collections of communications records of congressional Members and staff, as was detailed in a Department of Justice Inspector General report released late last year. She agreed that this spying on Congress was a "significant breach of the Constitution and separation of powers" and, most importantly,

she endorsed reforms to keep it from happening again.

During this confirmation process, she also confirmed that the Government Accountability Office should audit the intelligence community to ensure that it is not targeting Americans outside of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. She also expressed support for the Public Interest Declassification Board, which has the task of promoting transparency.

Finally, I asked Ms. Gabbard whether intelligence Agency whistleblowers must have a clear path to the Senate Intelligence Committee and don't need permission from Agencies to talk to the members. She responded that the answer was "clearly yes." Given Donald Trump's ongoing attacks on public servants defending the rule of law, that protection of whistleblowers that we discussed may be one of the most important principles of all.

Let me wrap up this way, Madam President. In just 3 short weeks since his inauguration, here is the checks and balances scoreboard on President Trump: He has illegally fired inspectors general; he has purged the three Democratic members of the independent Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, not only removing the most pro-privacy members, but leaving the board without enough members to function; he has appointed or nominated people to carry out political retribution, including a nominee to be FBI Director who comes with his own published enemies list. At the same time, Donald Trump has demonstrated thorough contempt for the security of Americans' private information by granting Elon Musk's people unsupervised access to the country's most sensitive security systems and databases.

So what will happen when he attempts to steamroll oversight and the rule of law and put the privacy and constitutional rights of all Americans at risk and on the line? If she is confirmed, it will be up to Ms. Gabbard to stand up to him and stick to the principles and commitments that she has expressed and answered in response to my questions. It will be our responsibility to ensure that she does just that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

RUSSIA

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I come to the floor to direct Members' attention to a very important article on the front page of yesterday's Wall Street Journal, February 10, 2025, by Thomas Grove. The headline states "Be Cruel," how Russia tortured Ukrainians. This is a most disturbing bit of news, and it demonstrates who we are dealing with in hoping somehow that there will be a negotiated settlement of Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion of a smaller neighbor that he thought was weaker, in violation of every international law dealing with this.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have the article by Mr. Grove printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[Feb. 10, 2025]

EXCLUSIVE—"BE CRUEL": INSIDE RUSSIA'S TORTURE SYSTEM FOR UKRANIAN POWS

(By Thomas Grove)

In the weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine, the head of St. Petersburg's prisons delivered a direct message to an elite unit of guards tasked with overseeing the influx of prisoners from the war: "Be cruel, don't pity them."

Maj. Gen. Igor Potapenko had gathered his service's special forces at the regional headquarters to tell them about a new system that had been designed for captured Ukrainians.

Normal rules wouldn't apply, he told them. There would be no restrictions against violence. The body cameras that were mandatory elsewhere in Russia's prison system would be gone.

The guards would rotate through Russia's prison system, serving a month at a time in prisons before other teams took their place. Across the country, other units—from Buryatia, Moscow, Pskov and elsewhere—received similar instructions.

Those meetings set in motion nearly three years of relentless and brutal torture of Ukrainian prisoners of war. Guards applied electric shocks to prisoners' genitals until batteries ran out. They beat the prisoners to inflict maximum damage, experimenting to see what type of material would be most painful. They withheld medical treatment to allow gangrene to set in, forcing amputations.

Three former prison officials told The Wall Street Journal how Russia planned and executed what United Nations investigators have described as widespread and systematic torture. Their accounts were supported by official documents, interviews with Ukrainian prisoners and a person who has helped the Russian prison officials defect.

The officials—two from the special forces and one member of a medical team—have entered a witness-protection program after giving testimony to the International Criminal Court's investigators. The two special-forces officers said they quit the prison service before they were forced to engage in torture but kept in touch with their colleagues who stayed.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian and Ukrainian ombudsmen overseeing the treatment of prisoners were in contact and that exchanges were continuing. He said broad generalizations about Russian prison conditions are unfounded. "You have to look at individual cases," he said.

Neither the office of Russia's commissioner for human rights nor its presidential human-rights commission responded to requests for comment.

The ICC has accused Russia of attacking civilians and unlawfully transporting Ukrainian children to Russia, issuing at least six arrest warrants for Russian officials, including for President Vladimir Putin. Other investigations are continuing, the ICC said, but it declined to comment further.

Russia has a long history of cruelty in its prison system, reaching back to the earliest decades of the Soviet Union, when Joseph Stalin created labor camps for those deemed dangerous to Soviet rule. In recent decades, Russia has taken some steps to improve conditions, such as separating first-time offenders from the rest of the prison population,

and some regions have introduced body cameras for guards after years of campaigning by human-rights groups.

But Russia's prison system remains a separate world inside the country, with its own rules, slang and even tattoos meant to denote authority within prison walls. Many prisons are in remote locations where the guards act with impunity, said the prisoners and rights advocates.

The special forces in the Russian prison services aren't regular guards who are based in individual prisons full time. Instead, they act as a praetorian guard that is called in to deal with particularly dangerous situations, such as conducting searches or controlling uprisings.

While dealing with Ukrainian prisoners of war, they were tasked with working with local prison guards to direct the POWs' activities. They interpreted Potapenko's instructions at that March 2022 meeting as a *carte blanche* for violence, said the two former guards. They pushed their mistreatment of Ukrainians to a new level with the belief that they had the permission of their leadership, said one of the former guards.

While on duty, the guards wore balaclavas at all times. Prisoners were beaten if they looked a guard in the eye. Those measures, along with the monthlong rotations, were taken to make sure individual guards and their superiors couldn't be recognized later, said one of the former officers.

In March 2022—the same month that Potapenko held the meeting with guards in St. Petersburg—Russia began preparing its penitentiary system for the arrival of prisoners from the war. Letters went out to prison authorities across Russia ordering them to clear out floors, wings and even entire prisons, according to documents and one of the former prison officials.

On the battlefield, Russia was encountering fiercer resistance from Ukrainians than Moscow had expected. Prison authorities were similarly unprepared for the number of POWs they would have to hold.

Pavel Afisov, who was taken prisoner in the city of Mariupol in the initial months of the war, was among the first Ukrainian prisoners detained in Russia. For 2½ years, the 25-year-old was moved from prison to prison in Russia before being released in October of last year.

He said beatings were the worst when he was transferred into new prisons. After arriving at a penitentiary in Russia's Tver region, north of Moscow, he was led by guards into a medical examination room and ordered to strip naked. They shocked him repeatedly with a stun gun while shaving his head and beard.

When it was over, he was told to yell "glory to Russia, glory to the special forces" and then ordered to walk to the front of the room—still naked—to sing the Russian and Soviet national anthems. When he said he didn't know the words, the guards beat him again with their fists and batons.

The violence served a purpose for the Russian authorities, according to the former guards and human-rights advocates: making them more malleable for interrogations and breaking their will to fight. Prison interrogations were sometimes aimed at extracting confessions of war crimes or gaining operational intelligence from prisoners who had little will to resist after they suffered extreme brutality.

The cruelty made them more willing to submit to Russian interrogators and drained "any will or ability to fight again if they are ever swapped," said Vladimir Osechkin, who heads human-rights organization Gulagu.net and has helped Russian officers from the penitentiary system leave the country and offer testimony to the ICC.

The former guards described a staggering level of violence directed at Ukrainian prisoners. Electric shockers were used so often, especially in showers, that officers complained about them running out of battery life too fast.

One former penitentiary system employee, who worked with a team of medics in Voronezh region in southwestern Russia, said prison guards beat Ukrainians until their police batons broke. He said a boiler room was littered with broken batons and the officers tested other materials, including insulated hot-water pipes, for their ability to cause pain and damage.

The guards, he said, intentionally beat prisoners on the same spot day after day, preventing bruises from healing and causing infection inside the accumulated hematoma. The treatment led to blood poisoning and muscle tissue would rot. At least one person died from sepsis, the officer said.

Many of the guards enjoyed the brutality and often bragged about how much pain they had caused prisoners, he said.

Ukrainian former POW Andriy Yegorov, 25, recalled how guards at a prison in Russia's western Bryansk region would force prisoners to run 100 yards through the hallway, holding mattresses above their heads. The guards stood to the side and beat them in the ribs as they ran by.

When they got to the end of the hall, they would be forced to do sit-ups and push-ups. Each time they came up, the guards would punch them or hit them with a baton.

"They loved it, you could hear them laughing between themselves while we cried out in pain," he said. "There I understood fear exists only for the future, you can be afraid of what happens in 10 or 15 minutes, you can be afraid of what might happen. But when it's happening, you're no longer afraid."

Two of the longest-held prisoners of war, both Afisov and Yegorov spent around 30 months in the Russian prison system before they were finally released in a swap that brought them home on Oct. 18.

Yegorov found out during his medical checkup following the exchange that he had five broken vertebrae. He is undergoing medical treatment for his injuries and has met with a hospital-appointed psychologist. But he is skeptical that the psychologist can help.

"If you haven't gone through what I've gone through, you can't help me," said Yegorov.

After returning home, Afisov resisted sleep for days, fearing it could turn out to be a dream and he would wake up back in prison. "Then whenever I finally trusted myself enough to fall asleep all I had was nightmares," he said.

The former prison officials were preparing to start new lives when they spoke with the *Journal*. They are now living in undisclosed locations and have had to cut off contact with people they had known all their lives.

One of them said he had always been a Russian patriot and never wanted to live anywhere else but Russia. But after the war began, he said, he couldn't stay in the country or remain silent. He said giving testimony to the ICC was one way to work toward justice.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, it starts out by saying that in the beginning of this war, which now has lasted almost 3 years, word came down from the leadership of Vladimir Putin's dictatorship in Russia to prisoners of war captured by the Russian soldiers, from Major General Igor Potapenko: "Be cruel, don't pity them," the Ukrainian prisoners.

We all know that war is hell. There is no question about it. We also are finding out that Russia has learned this. They thought that it would be a 1- or 2-day excursion and that they would be welcomed by pro-Russian Ukrainians as they rolled their tanks in. They found out very differently soon, and 3 years later, we have seen how the Ukrainians have fought and died for their own homeland.

Also, once a combatant has been captured, there are very important international rules and regulations and a matter of international law—which can be punished by life imprisonment, which can be punished by the death penalty—about treatment of prisoners of war.

This is what we are learning about what Major General Igor Potapenko told the Russian prison officials that they could do: "There would be no restrictions against violence" against these prisoners of war. "The body cameras mandatory elsewhere in Russia's . . . system would be gone. The guards would rotate . . . serving a month at a time in prisons before other teams took their place. Across the country, other units . . . received similar instructions."

We are not finding this out, by the way, from some international reporter that somehow got into the system and saw this.

This is information given by former Russian prison guards who were so disturbed by these orders that they defected to the West. Three Russian prison guards are telling *The Wall Street Journal* and Americans and anyone who would listen about the horrors. This resulted in nearly 3 years of relentless torture.

Guards applied electric shocks to prisoners' genitals until the batteries ran out.

I am almost reluctant to speak these words in public.

They beat prisoners to inflict maximum damage, experimenting to see what kind of material would be most painful. Then, when there were medical problems, as there would surely be, medical treatment was withheld to allow gangrene to fester, forcing amputations.

Three former prison officials told this reporter how Russia planned and executed what United Nations' investigators have described as widespread and systematic torture. Their accounts were supported by official documents, interviews with Ukrainian prisoners, and a person who helped the prison officials defect.

Thank God they were able to defect.

This is also borne out by a former prisoner of war, Pavel Afisov, taken prisoner in Mariupol early in the war. He was among the first Ukrainian prisoners detained in Russia. For 2½ years, this 25-year-old combatant, who was entitled to the protections afforded by the Geneva Conventions, was, instead, moved from prison to prison before being released just last October.

He said beatings were the worst when he was transferred. After arriving at a penitentiary in Russia's Tver region north of Moscow, he was led into a medical examination room and ordered to strip. Guards shocked him repeatedly with a stun gun while shaving his head and beard. When it was over, he was told to yell "Glory to Russia! Glory to the Special Forces!" and then, still naked, he was ordered to sing the Russian and Soviet—and Soviet—national anthems. When he said he didn't know the words, the guards beat him with fists and batons.

This is hard to read, but what did the former guards say—Russian citizens—who thankfully have been willing to defect and come forward and tell the truth about the vicious, brutal, illegal regime of Vladimir Putin?

The former guards described a staggering level of violence directed at Ukrainian prisoners. Electric shockers were used often, especially in showers; that officers complained they were running out of batteries too fast. Can't do this anymore because the batteries have gone dead. The guards used police batons until they broke. Officers tested other materials, including insulated hot water pipes, for their ability to cause pain and damage.

This is Putin's Russia. This is the regime that some people are hoping we can somehow negotiate with in good faith and depend on them to keep up their end of the bargain.

The guards intentionally beat the prisoners at the same spot on their bodies every day, preventing bruises from healing and causing infection, and at least one person died of sepsis because of this type of brutality.

The guards enjoyed their brutality. According to these Russians who were guards at the facility and who defected rather than countenance what their own government was doing, Ukrainian former POW Andriy Yegorov recalled how guards at a prison in Russia would force prisoners to run 100 yards through the hallway, holding mattresses above their heads. The guards stood to the side and beat them on the ribs as they ran by. When they got to the end of the hall, they would be forced to do sit-ups and push-ups, and each time they came up, the guards would punch them or hit them with a baton.

I would say to my colleagues that this is not a bunch of prison guards gone rogue; this is a bunch of prison guards in Vladimir Putin's dictatorship and Vladimir Putin's illegal regime that were following orders from a high-ranking major general.

There are differences about the United States' interest in Ukraine, but I will tell you that the countries around Ukraine—in the neighborhood—know what they are facing, and they know, if Vladimir Putin succeeds in his illegal war to take over a neighbor, that it will not be the end of it. One can only listen to what we are hearing out of neighboring countries—out of

the Republic of Georgia, out of neighboring Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Russia intends and the war criminal Vladimir Putin intends to return to as much of the old Soviet Union dictatorship as he possibly can.

I hope this war ends. Frankly, I have hoped for 3 years under the Biden administration that that administration would provide the freedom fighters inside their own country to have the necessary equipment, the necessary ammunition, the necessary permission to defeat this illegal invasion. But I simply, at this point, want to alert anyone who is listening—my colleagues, anyone who is listening to the sound of my voice in any way—to the reality of the utter cruelty, of the unspeakable conditions that Russia uses in violation of every international law.

If Vladimir Putin comes to the negotiating table and agrees to a cease-fire, we need to bear in mind that he is the gentleman who has countenanced this outrage that I have barely been able to speak about today. Any negotiations we have with the Russians and with the current leadership need to be done in light of the facts as outlined in this independent report.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise to oppose the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard to be Director of National Intelligence.

In its first few days in office, the Trump administration has been remarkably cavalier and incompetent in its handling of our national security affairs—shutting off foreign aid; threatening Panama, Greenland, and Canada; calling for the mass deportation of Palestinians from Gaza. And just last week, it was reported that the CIA sent an unclassified email, listing all employees it had hired over the last 2 years, in order to comply with an Executive order from President Trump. One former Agency officer called this a "counterintelligence disaster."

The President's choices to lead our national security Agencies have also not inspired confidence.

The Director of National Intelligence, or DNI, serves a critical role in leading the intelligence community and in collecting analysis so that the President, Congress, and decision-makers across the U.S. Government have the best and most timely information for our national security. Indeed, the office was created after 9/11 to better coordinate analysis across the intelligence community. The position of DNI requires someone of great experience, character, judgment, and the confidence to speak truth to power, especially when the findings of the intelligence community differ from the policy objectives of the administration.

While I respect Ms. Gabbard's military service, including overseas deployments, she does not have a demonstrated record of experience to qual-

ify her to lead the intelligence community. As DNI, she would oversee 18 different organizations, tens of thousands of military and civilian personnel, and an annual budget of more than \$100 billion. She has never even served in an intelligence role, much less led a global intelligence enterprise.

More concerning than Ms. Gabbard's lack of experience is her record of erratic statements and actions, many of which have run counter to the interests and findings of the intelligence community.

In 2020, Ms. Gabbard and Congressman Matt Gaetz cosponsored a resolution calling on the Federal Government to drop all charges against Edward Snowden. Snowden was a contractor who was indicted for espionage and for publicly releasing the details of some of our most sensitive intelligence efforts, including those that were conducted jointly with foreign allies and partners, before Snowden fled to Russia.

Former Deputy DNI Sue Gordon responded to Ms. Gabbard's defense of Snowden by saying:

It reflects a lack of understanding of who we are, and it reflects a lack of respect for what we do. Unauthorized disclosures of intelligence are always bad. Don't go with the good or bad, any good outcome or whether he was right or wrong. . . . He not only harmed intelligence, he harmed our allies and partners, and he harmed our businesses by what it allowed China to assume about that. There is nothing justifiable about what he's done. None.

Let me be clear: Edward Snowden's betrayal has cost American lives. He is a traitor by every definition of the word.

As the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, Senator COTTON, has said in the past, Mr. Snowden is an "egotistical, serial liar and traitor whose unauthorized disclosures of classified information have jeopardized the safety of Americans and allies around the world. Snowden's close and continual contact with Russian intelligence services speak volumes. He deserves to rot in jail for the rest of his life."

Yet, during her confirmation hearing, Ms. Gabbard was repeatedly asked whether or not she believed that Snowden was a traitor. I think colleagues on both sides of the aisle were stunned that she not only refused to do so but that she continued to defend him.

Our national security leaders consistently emphasize that the greatest advantage we have over our adversaries is our network of allies and partners, including those who share intelligence with us. If Ms. Gabbard is confirmed as DNI, I have serious concerns about whether or not our allies and partners will trust her with their nations' most sensitive intelligence given her past actions.

I am also concerned about the pattern of statements over the years by Ms. Gabbard peddling what the intelligence community has found to be Russian propaganda.

For example, at the outset of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, as eloquently described by the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Ms. Gabbard stated:

This war and suffering could have easily been avoided if [the] Biden administration [and] NATO had simply acknowledged Russia's legitimate security concerns regarding Ukraine's becoming a member of NATO, which would mean U.S. [and] NATO forces right on Russia's border.

After Ukraine bravely withstood Russia's initial assault, the Kremlin began a campaign of misinformation designed to legitimize its illegal war. These themes were repeatedly amplified by Gabbard in her public comments, including with respect to the widely disputed Russian allegation of a U.S.-funded covert biological weapons program in Ukraine.

As our former colleague Mitt Romney tweeted at the time she made these bogus claims, "Tulsi Gabbard is parroting false Russian propaganda. Her treasonous lies may well cost lives."

In reviewing Ms. Gabbard's statements, the New York Times found:

Ms. Gabbard honed her pro-Russia views on [Tucker] Carlson's show on FOX News before his program was canceled. She became a regular guest and occasionally filled in as host when Mr. Carlson was away.

Clips from her appearances on Mr. Carlson's show that repeated Kremlin talking points were quickly picked up by Russian state media.

In some cases, she echoed story lines that Russia's propagandists created, which the Russians then recycled on their own media as evidence that the conspiracy theories they had manufactured were true. For the Kremlin, it was a virtuous cycle.

Ms. Gabbard has been roundly and appropriately criticized for her unannounced 2017 trip to Syria, where she met with Syria's then-President Bashar al-Assad. She justified that trip by saying:

We've got to be able to meet with anyone that we need to if there's a possibility that we could achieve peace.

Ms. Gabbard's decision to carry out an unofficial trip to Syria in the midst of a civil war—a conflict in which Bashar al-Assad was using chemical weapons against his own people—showed incredibly poor judgment. Her visit did nothing to advance the cause of peace but, rather, helped to legitimize Assad's brutal dictatorship.

Just months later, Ms. Gabbard criticized President Trump's decision to use military force to deter further chemical weapons use by Assad and even expressed skepticism about whether Assad had actually used chemical weapons.

Madam President, it would be the height of charity to say that Ms. Gabbard has consistently demonstrated poor judgment on critical national security matters, but it is more than just that. Ms. Gabbard clings to her misjudgments even when she is shown to be wrong. That is a disturbing character flaw for this critical role.

Above all else, the DNI must be unquestionably loyal to our national interests and trustworthy with our national secrets. The intelligence they control has life-or-death consequences.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle—some of whom have indicated great discomfort with Ms. Gabbard and her troubling disregard for America's security interests—appear willing to vote for her confirmation despite their misgivings.

At this critical moment, all Senators must honestly answer these questions: Given everything you know about Tulsi Gabbard, do you trust her with life-or-death national secrets? Can you look members of our intelligence community in the eye and say that you believe Tulsi Gabbard will serve and protect them and this Nation?

I have seen enough to know my answer, and I urge my colleagues to vote against this nominee.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, I rise today as a very new Senator, a freshman Senator, to talk about the confirmation prospects for the nominee for the Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard.

I think context matters here. I am the first CIA officer to ever be elected to the U.S. Senate. Before I ran for office in Michigan, I had a career in national security. I am what is called a 9/11 baby. I happened to be in New York City on my second day of graduate school when 9/11 happened. It changed my life. I decided to go into national security.

I got recruited by the CIA right out of grad school and then was quickly sent on my first of three tours in Iraq alongside the military, providing intelligence to the U.S. military to deal with the groups that were shooting at U.S. forces and plotting against the U.S. homeland.

I worked in national security roles very proudly in both administrations, Democratic and Republican. I worked in the White House for George W. Bush, and I was there the Friday that he left office and the Monday that Barack Obama walked in. I did the same job for two very different Presidents, one for each party. I went on to be a Pentagon Assistant Secretary of Defense. But in between all of that time, one of the things I got to do was help stand up the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

I was the intelligence briefer in Baghdad for Ambassador John Negroponte, who was the first Ambassador to Iraq under the Bush adminis-

tration. I would provide him intelligence briefings early, early in the morning.

One day, he came back from a trip to Washington and said: I am going to be nominated to be the first Director of National Intelligence. It is this completely new position. It is a position that has been created because of the failures of 9/11, our failures to anticipate the attacks of 9/11, to put the pieces together between the FBI, the CIA, the military, all those who had a piece of the story but didn't have a place and a venue to combine it all together to anticipate the most devastating attacks on the U.S. soil since Pearl Harbor.

I came home and happened to be one of those first employees to set up the Director of National Intelligence. I think I was employee No. 5. I was John Negroponte's first special assistant. So I was his, you know, body person, helping him set up that office.

So when I talk about the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard, I don't do it willy-nilly. I don't do it without a background on these topics. And I believe that the people who should be taking the positions that are critical for national security should be people of competence and character.

What does the Director of National Intelligence do? The Office was created, as I said, to combine all of the different threads of information at the 17 different intelligence community Agencies that we have to prevent intelligence failures like we had on 9/11.

This is a serious position. This is a position that in the past has been in the Oval Office every morning with the intelligence briefings provided by the Agencies. This is the position that in the dead of night makes consequential decisions on the security and safety of people here.

Most Americans have no idea the number of threats we still thwart every single month against our homeland. We sleep well at night because the intelligence community is working together to prevent those threats, along with our partners and our allies and our military.

So, for me, I want to know that the person who is going to be woken up in the middle of the night to make those last-minute decisions—do we move on that intelligence? do we act based on that threat?—that they are someone, again, of competence and character, and what I have seen from Ms. Gabbard does not meet that threshold.

She has, first of all, repeatedly questioned the integrity of the intelligence community. She has gone after the intelligence community that she hopes to lead.

She has labeled tens of thousands of intelligence personnel as deep state without even a semblance of understanding of what they do every day to keep her safe.

She has questioned the findings of the intelligence community.

I think more egregious than anything, she has shown a repeated preference for our adversaries over the intelligence community and the United States of America. Most notably, a surprise trip to visit the now-ousted President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad.

Imagine the decision making that goes into planning a secret trip to visit a man who has killed thousands of his countrymen, thousands of relatives of Michiganders that I represent; a man who we know has used chemical weapons, violating international law, devastating communities; a man who has seemingly sat aside as insurgent groups, terrorist groups took territory in his area and allowed them to project attacks into neighboring states and to plot against the U.S. homeland.

She makes the decision to go and visit this man, throw flowers at his feet, do public TV with him, go publicly and show her support. Now, I don't know if she is just deeply naive. I don't know if in some twisted way, she thought that this was her way of being helpful. But whether she did it out of naivete or she did it knowing what this man has done and the implications of her actions, either way shows a complete lack of judgment.

The same goes for her seeming glorification of Vladimir Putin. It is hard to understand, coming from the country that defeated the Soviet Union in the Cold War, that we would put a woman in charge of our entire intelligence community who has shown over and over repeated interest in Vladimir Putin, taking his side of the argument, wondering what he has done right and our intelligence community has done wrong.

Can you imagine what it feels like to be a member of the intelligence community right now, with everything going on, with all of the discrediting of what they have done and what they do every single day, and now this woman is going to be in charge of this Agency? It is an insult to people who have dedicated their lives and put themselves in harm's way, to have her confirmed into this position.

Now, we have watched her flip-flop on a bunch of issues, right? Issues that Democrats and Republicans have concerns with. You know, she used to have a lot of concern about what is called section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. She fought against it. Now she is somehow for it. I am not saying people can't change, but I am just saying someone who doesn't have the backbone to stand up and be clear with their principles—I am having a hard time imagining them lead in the heat of the moment, when you are in the Situation Room and consequential decisions are being made.

I think the feeling that I have about where we are in this country right now is that we are sort of in this fever dream. There is this race to discredit, to attack, to cut. And, look, I will be the first person to say that there is fat on the bone in the Federal Govern-

ment. I worked in the Federal Government. There are plenty of things that can be reformed in the Federal Government. But the double whammy of attacking the people who keep us safe every day, of trying to push them out—I just had a Republican Member on my way here say: Hey, I just heard about what is going on at CIA. Are they trying to get everyone to leave? What about people who are in sensitive positions?

Great question. But the other punch is to put someone in charge of the intelligence community that has such disdain for our allies, for our intelligence officers, and such love for our adversaries.

So I urge all of my Republican colleagues to search their soul. Play the long game. Don't live in fear of the Trump administration and Donald Trump specifically. You know in your heart that these people aren't qualified and that the life and limb of American citizens is in their hands.

So I urge all of my colleagues to vote against Tulsi Gabbard. I will be voting against her here later today.

I hope that we as American citizens can come up for air from this fever dream and remember that reform of the Federal Government does not mean slashing the people that keep us safe every day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

KIDS OFF SOCIAL MEDIA ACT

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an epidemic that is affecting our Nation's youth, a crisis each and every parent should be concerned about and one that so many parents I know already are.

Our kids' worsening mental health is an emergency, and it is an emergency clearly and undeniably linked to social media. Emergency room visits among adolescents for anxiety, mood disorders, and self-harm have all risen dramatically in the years since social media apps exploded onto the scene.

Over that same time period and during the second decade of this century, rates of depression amongst teenagers more than doubled. By 2019, 20 percent of teenagers agreed with the notion that "life often feels meaningless"—almost a 100-percent increase from a decade earlier.

According to the CDC, in 2021, and buckle up for this, one in three high school—young women said she actually considered death by suicide; 25 percent of teenage girls made a plan to do so; 9 percent of high schoolers and 13 percent of teenage girls actually attempted death by suicide.

As a mom, that is beyond horrifying. I worry for my own kids. I worry for their friends. And as a Senator, I worry about the future of the next generation of Americans.

To make matters worse, social media companies know the harm their platforms create. Instagram's parent company, Meta, conducted internal re-

search that showed that one-third of teenage girls who use the app report: It makes them feel worse, but they cannot stop.

And while social media companies have taken some steps, it is clear that there is work for Congress to do. The last time a U.S. President signed a major piece of legislation addressing children and the internet was—wait for it—1998.

So you look. Almost 30 years ago, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act was signed into law. For reference, at the time that the law was signed, MySpace didn't even exist.

It is time for an update, and there is a clear place to start. Studies have shown the most damaging time for an adolescent to use social media is during their preteen years. And the 1998 law tried to address that. The law says that websites and other online services cannot collect personal information from children under 13 years old without parental consent. Now, the catch is that those websites have to know that the child is under 13.

The standard minimum age for social media platforms is 13. But current law creates an obvious incentive for companies not to verify whether their users are old enough to be on the app. And because social media companies have to know that a child is under 13 for the law to apply, they simply choose not to verify this information.

Look, anti-child-sex-abuse organization Thorn actually conducted a study in 2021 that showed that 49 percent of respondents between the age of 9 and 12 years old said that they had used Instagram; 52 percent said that they had used Facebook; 58 percent said that they had used Snapchat.

And it was just last week, in a Senate Judiciary Hearing, where I heard not one but two parents tell about their painful story where their children had died of fentanyl poisoning from a pill that they had bought on Snapchat, thinking it was something else. They thought they bought a Percocet; they thought they bought an oxycodone. It was laced with fentanyl, and now they are dead.

Sixty-nine percent of these people in this survey, between 9 and 12 years old, said that they had used TikTok.

The age limits social media companies claim they have mean absolutely nothing. That is why I introduced the Kids Off Social Media Act, alongside Senators TED CRUZ, CHRIS MURPHY, and BRIAN SCHATZ. The four of us approached this not as Democrats or Republicans, not as someone who sits on the right or the left, but as four concerned parents that are raising teenagers right now and dealing with this issue.

Our bill would set a minimum age of 13 years old for social media platforms, but that is not the only thing that it would do. The Kids Off Social Media Act would also prevent platforms from feeding targeted content picked by an algorithm to users under the age of 17.

For anyone who is curious about why that is in the bill, all you have to do is ask a teenager, especially a teenage girl. Former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy wrote that nearly half of all adolescents say that social media makes them feel worse about their bodies. That doesn't seem like an accident.

If you read—and many people have—Jonathan Haidt's book "The Anxious Generation," you will learn that these apps use algorithms that "home in on and amplify girls' desires to be beautiful in socially prescribed ways, which include being thin."

Once that starts, once the algorithm starts feeding teenage girls images of increasingly thin and unhealthy women, the vicious cycle begins, and those girls end up finding images or videos promoting anorexia and/or, as Haidt says:

Emaciated young women urging their followers to try extreme diets like the "corpse bride" diet or the water-only diet.

These algorithms on social media platforms are not just leading our daughters to starve themselves; they are leading them to torture themselves as well.

By turning the Kids Off Social Media Act into law, we can put a stop to this. I am so grateful that Senator TED CRUZ, from the great State of Texas, prioritized our bill in the Commerce Committee, and I am sure that parents everywhere are grateful too. After all, parents overwhelmingly support our mission.

A survey conducted by the Count on Mothers group showed that over 90 percent of mothers agree that there should be a minimum age of 13 on social media platforms, and 87 percent of mothers agreed that social media companies should not be allowed to use personalized algorithms to deliver content to our children.

If there has ever been a theme of the legislation that my colleagues and I have pursued so far this Congress, it is keeping American families and children safe. The Laken Riley Act will help keep kids safe from criminal illegal aliens. The Halt Fentanyl Act, which I spoke about on this very floor just last week, will help kids be safe from deadly fentanyl and fentanyl poisons. And the Kids Off Social Media Act will help keep kids safe from mental health effects that these platforms and their algorithms produce.

There is nothing more important we can do as a body than protect the people we serve. So let's do it. Let's get the Kids Off Social Media Act through Congress and to the President's desk. There are parents across this country that are counting on us to step up to put the proper guardrails in place so their children can be safe and their children have an opportunity to both explore and to succeed.

All of our country's children are free to pursue their own American dream, just as our generations were, and this will enable them to do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, we are living in an extremely dangerous time. Future generations will look back at this moment—what we do right now—and remember whether we had the courage to defend our democracy against the growing threats of oligarchy and authoritarianism. They will remember whether we stood with President Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg who, in 1863, looking out over a battlefield where thousands of people had died—thousands of soldiers died in the fight against slavery—and he stated that "this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that a government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

Do we stand with Lincoln's vision of America, or do we sit idly by and allow this country to move into a new vision, and that is a government of the billionaire class, by the billionaire class, for the billionaire class?

But it is not just oligarchy that we should be concerned about, not just the reality that today three people own more wealth than the bottom half of American society, 170 million—three people, more wealth than the bottom 17 million Americans. It is not just that the gap between the very, very rich and everyone else is growing wider. And it is not just that we have more income and wealth inequality today than we have ever had.

On top of all of that, the reality is that today we are moving rapidly under President Trump toward authoritarianism, more and more power resting in fewer and fewer hands.

Mr. President, as we speak, right now, Elon Musk, the wealthiest man on the planet, is attempting to dismantle major Agencies of the Federal Government which are designed to protect the needs of working families and the disadvantaged. These Agencies were created by the U.S. Congress, and it is Congress's responsibility to maintain them, to reform them, or to end them. It is not Mr. Musk's responsibility. What Mr. Musk is doing is patently illegal and unconstitutional and must be ended.

Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, President Trump attempted to suspend all Federal grants and loans, an outrageous and clearly unconstitutional act. As I hope every sixth grader—every kid in the sixth grade—in this country knows, under the Constitution and our form of government, the President can recommend legislation, he can support legislation, he can veto legislation, but he does not have the power to unilaterally terminate funding passed by the Congress. It is Congress—the House and the Senate—that controls the purse strings.

But in this move toward authoritarianism, it is not just the Congress that is being attacked; it is our judiciary.

This weekend, the Vice President of the United States—a graduate of Yale Law School who clerked for a Supreme Court Justice—said:

Judges aren't allowed to control the executive's legitimate power.

Really? I thought that one of the major functions of the Federal courts was to interpret our Constitution and, when appropriate, serve as a check on the unconstitutional power of the Executive. That is not just what I believe; that is what I suspect every legal scholar and lawyer in America understands to be the case.

Further, Mr. Musk, meanwhile, has proposed that the "worst 1 percent of appointed judges be fired every year," and he demanded the impeachment of judges who have blocked him from accessing sensitive Treasury Department files. No doubt, under Mr. Musk's rule, it will be him and his billionaire friends who determine who the worst judges are.

And no, Mr. Musk, I must tell you: You don't impeach judges who rule against you here in the United States. You may or may not know this, Mr. Musk, but under the U.S. Constitution, we have a separation of powers, brilliantly crafted by the Founding Fathers of this country in the 1770s, and it has worked pretty well throughout our country's history. We have an executive branch, we have a legislative branch, and we have a judiciary.

What we are seeing now is not just an organized attack on the power of the Congress and the responsibility of the judiciary; Mr. Trump and his friends are not just trying to undermine two of the three pillars of our constitutional government—the Congress and the courts; they are also going after the media in a way that we have never seen in the modern history of this country.

Trust me that every Member of Congress will tell you that the people working in the media and media organizations are not perfect. We have all had our experiences with the media. Media, like everything else, makes mistakes every day. But I do hope that every Member of Congress understands that you cannot have a functioning democracy, that you cannot have a free-flow of information, that you cannot have the pursuit of truth without an independent press—a press not intimidated by Presidents of the United States but a press who writes it and sees it the way they understand it to be.

In that regard, I want to mention to my colleagues what President Trump has done just in recent months.

Mr. Trump has sued ABC and received a \$15 million settlement. He has sued Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, and received a \$25 million settlement. He has sued CBS and its parent company, Paramount, and is right now in negotiations over a settlement. He has sued the Des Moines Register for poll results that he didn't like, and his FCC is now threatening to investigate PBS and

NPR—major news outlets in our country.

In other words, we have a President of the United States who is using his incredible power and the power of his Agencies to go after media in this country that are saying and doing things he does not like. How are we going to have an independent media if journalists are looking over their shoulders, fearful that their reporting will trigger a lawsuit from the most powerful Executive in the world?

In the midst of all of this, I think that now is the time to ask a very, very simple question, something, I think, that is on the minds of millions of Americans: What do Mr. Musk, Mr. Trump, and their fellow billionaires really want? It is not really taking over Greenland or the Panama Canal and all of that stuff. The real question is, What is their endgame? What is their goal? What are they striving for?

In my view, the answer really is not complicated. It is not novel. It is not new. It is, in fact, exactly what ruling classes throughout history have always wanted and have always believed to be their right—their right—and that is more power for themselves, more control for themselves, and more wealth for themselves, and in their pursuit of more power, more control, and more wealth, they are determined to not allow democracy and the rule of law to get in their way.

For Mr. Musk and his fellow oligarchs, the needs, the concerns, the pain, the ideas, the dreams of ordinary people are simply an impediment to what they, the oligarchs, are entitled to, and that is really what they believe. They are entitled to all of the wealth and the power they have, and they are determined to stop anyone who gets in their way.

This process—this phenomenon—that is going on right now is not the first time that we have seen this in our country's history. As I think many Americans understand, in pre-revolutionary America—before the 1770s, before the creation of the United States and the writing of our Constitution—the ruling class of that time governed through a doctrine called the divine right of Kings—the belief that the King of England was an agent of God, that God appointed him, and that he was not to be questioned by mere mortal human beings. He was appointed by God.

In modern times, we no longer have the divine right of Kings. What we now have is an ideology being pushed by the oligarchs which says that, as a very, very wealthy group of people—often self-made, often the masters of revolutionary new technology—and as high IQ individuals, it is their absolute right to rule. In other words, the oligarchs of today are our modern-day Kings.

It is not just power that they want. Despite the incredible wealth they currently have, they want more and more and more. Their greed has no end. Today, Mr. Musk is worth \$402 billion,

Mr. Zuckerberg is worth \$252 billion, and Mr. Bezos is worth \$249 billion. With a combined wealth of \$903 billion, these three people own more wealth than the bottom half of American society—170 million Americans—and, not surprisingly, since Trump was elected, their wealth has soared. Musk has become \$138 billion richer, Zuckerberg has become \$49 billion richer, and Bezos has become \$28 billion richer since election day in November.

Meanwhile, while the very rich become much richer, 60 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck, 85 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured in terms of healthcare, 25 percent of our seniors in this country are trying to survive on \$15,000 a year or less, 800,000 Americans are homeless, we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any major country on Earth, and real inflation-adjusted wages for the average American worker has not gone up in 50 years.

Does anyone really think that the oligarchs give a damn about ordinary Americans? Trust me, they don't. Musk's decision to dismember USAID means that tens of thousands of the poorest people in this world will either go hungry or die of preventable diseases—tens of thousands of people. But it is not just USAID and what is happening abroad. Here in the United States—mark my words—if we do not stop them, they will soon be going after the healthcare, nutrition, housing, and educational programs that protect the most vulnerable people in our country—all so that they can raise the money they need to provide huge tax breaks for themselves and for other billionaires.

As modern-day Kings who believe they have the absolute right to rule, they will sacrifice without hesitation the well-being of working people in order to protect their power and their privileges.

Further, they will use the enormous media operations they own to deflect attention away from the impact of their policies while they entertain us to death. Mr. Musk owns Twitter. Mr. Zuckerberg owns Meta, which includes Facebook and Instagram. Mr. Bezos owns the Washington Post and Twitch.

Further, they and their fellow oligarchs will continue within our corrupt campaign finance system to spend huge amounts of money to buy politicians in both major political parties.

The bottom line: The oligarchs, with their unlimited amounts of money, are waging a war on the working class of our country, and it is a war they are intent on winning.

Now, I am not going to kid anybody. The problems that our country faces right now are enormously serious, and they are not easy to solve. Our economy is rigged—the rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and the middle class struggles. Our campaign finance system is totally corrupt. Billionaires can now pour as much money as they want into both political parties. And climate

change is ravaging our country and the world with unprecedented levels of extreme weather disturbances, among many other crises our country faces.

In the midst of all of these crises, this is what I do know, and this is what I do believe, and that is that the worst fear of the ruling class of our country is that the American people, whether they are Black or White or Latino, whether they are urban or rural, whether they are young or old, gay or straight—whatever—the fear of the ruling class is that the American people will come together to demand a government that represents all of us, not just the people on top.

Their oligarchs' nightmare is that we will not allow ourselves to be divided up by race, religion, sexual orientation, or country of origin and will come together and have the courage to take them on.

Will this struggle be easy? No, it will not, and one of the reasons that it will not be easy is that the ruling class of this country will constantly remind us that they have the power. They control the government. They own the media.

But our job right now, in these difficult times, is to go back and remember the great struggles and sacrifices that millions of Americans have waged over the centuries in difficult times to create a more democratic, just, and humane society. Think about all of the sacrifices and the struggles that Americans went through to create a more democratic, just, humane society, and think about trying to put yourselves where they were in those times of crisis.

Think about what was being said at those times. Think about the 1770s. Overthrowing the King of England—the most powerful person on Earth—the British Empire, to create a new nation and have self-rule here in the Colonies—impossible. So many people thought it could not be done.

Establishing universal suffrage, the right of all people, whether they were wealthy or not, to vote—imagine that. What a radical idea: extending the right to vote to poor people—impossible. It couldn't be done. But it was done.

Ending slavery and segregation, taking on all of the power of the slaveholders—impossible. But it was done.

Granting workers the right to form unions and ending child labor, taking on the power of big business—impossible. But it was done.

Giving women control over their own bodies, taking on sexism, taking on the powers that be—it couldn't be done—impossible. But it was done.

Passing legislation to establish Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, a minimum wage, clean air and water standards—impossible. It couldn't be done. But it was done.

In other words, I think back to what Nelson Mandela told us, and he said: Everything is impossible until it is done.

So in these difficult days, when we find ourselves arrayed against the wealthiest people in the world, the most powerful people in the world, people who want to expand the power of the oligarchy, people who want to move us toward authoritarianism—I know. I know that people get discouraged that we can't take them on; that we cannot create a government that works for all and not just the few; that we cannot do what every other major country on Earth does—guarantee healthcare to all people as a human right—that we cannot raise the minimum wage to a living wage so that tens of millions of people do not earn starvation wages; that we cannot make sure that all of our kids get the quality education that they deserve; that we can't expand Social Security or lower the poverty rate among seniors. I know that, in this moment, people say: Well, that is an impossible dream; it can't be done.

But I think, if you look back on American history, you will find that, in very difficult and dark days, when people came together, they did the impossible.

This ain't going to be easy. We are taking on enormously powerful people who really do not believe in democracy or the rule of law. But if we stand together, we are going to win this fight. And not only will we save American democracy; we are going to create the kind of Nation that I think most of us know we should become.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, trust—trust is at the very center of our national security: the trust that we share with allies and partners around the world; the trust that the American people have in us and in our armed services and in our intelligence services; the trust that vital allies have that causes them to share with us information about threats, challenges, opportunities. That is the very foundation of our national security.

And today, I rise to warn my colleagues about the risks to our national security posed by the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard to be the Director of National Intelligence.

As ranking member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I have a significant involvement in our Nation's intelligence apparatus. And over the course of the confirmation hearings and the debate here on the floor about former Congresswoman Gabbard, I have concluded that she has an alarming record, revealed more fully in her confirmation hearings but also in a review of her speeches, her travels, her positions.

As a Democrat, as a Congresswoman, as a candidate for President, as a supporter of President Trump, she has gone quite a distance. She has defended Edward Snowden. Snowden is widely viewed by folks in our intelligence

community, our national security apparatus, our Armed Forces, and many here as a traitor who betrayed some of the most important secrets that are critical to keeping the United States secure.

She would not, in her confirmation hearings, answer the question: Is Edward Snowden a traitor?

Ms. Gabbard bemoaned the rise of HTS in Syria, which recently overthrew the brutal dictator Bashar al-Assad, without mentioning the fall of Assad. She talked about how tragic it was that HTS overran Damascus, without mentioning the side benefit of the fall of a brutal dictator. And in her confirmation hearings, she repeatedly dodged pointed and relevant questions about FISA and section 702, key tools for our intelligence community.

All of this is in keeping with a longstanding record as an apologist for authoritarians and even enemies of the United States. She has repeatedly blamed the United States and NATO for Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

And I will tell you, as someone who is about to go to the Munich Security Conference this weekend with a broad and bipartisan delegation from this body and from the House: I will never forget being at the Munich Security Conference just before Russia invaded Ukraine broad spectrum. They had been in eastern Ukraine at that point for years. They had occupied Crimea and then launched a war into the Donetsk, the Donbas, the eastern part of Ukraine.

But it was just days after the Munich Security Conference, in February 2022, that tens of thousands of Russian troops—whole divisions—poured over the line in a broad-spectrum invasion that included brutality against civilians, bombardment of the entire nation—ultimately, cruel acts of violence against women and children, fully documented in the press and courts around the world.

And yet Ms. Gabbard blamed the United States and NATO for provoking this invasion by Russia of a sovereign nation—a nation where the United States, in writing, guaranteed its territorial sovereignty in the 1994 agreement that led to them giving up their nuclear weapons.

Ms. Gabbard visited Syria and met with Bashar al-Assad for several days, in 2017, and relied on pro-Assad sources to cast doubt on accounts of his use of chemical weapons against his own people.

She has a long history of repeating pro-Kremlin talking points and has become a favorite on Russian state media. She appears frequently because she frequently is attacking the United States in Russian state media.

Mr. President, this body will all too soon take up the confirmation of Tulsi Gabbard. We should not proceed. We should not vote for her. Our Nation faces massive threats that are growing day by day. Our Nation is facing

threats around the world—from North Korea and Iran, from China and from Russia—and we need an intelligence service equipped to respond to these challenges.

Can we trust Tulsi Gabbard to lead our intelligence services and to respond to these threats? I cannot. We cannot, and we should not. This body should not vote to confirm Tulsi Gabbard as the next Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, do you remember where you were on September 11? Most Americans do. I do. I was right outside that door. I was in a meeting at 9 in the morning. And as we had the meeting, we looked down the Mall. We were watching a little television set, and we saw these planes flying into skyscrapers in New York.

Nobody could quite understand what was going on. First, we thought it was an accident, as most people probably felt the same way. Then, when the second plane hit, we knew there was more.

Then, there came a moment when somebody said: Look down the Mall.

We looked down the Mall and saw black smoke billowing across the Mall here in Washington from the Pentagon, because a plane had crashed into the Pentagon.

And there was this moment where people didn't know which way to turn, where to get answers, what was going on. Someone came racing into the room and said: Evacuate the Capitol Building. Another plane is coming directed toward this building.

We all raced out down the steps and stood on the lawn outside, didn't know which way to turn, had no idea what was going on.

Tourists were coming up to me because I had a suit and tie on and saying: Where are we supposed to go?

I told them where the Metro stations were and pointed in several directions.

That is a day you won't forget.

Most of us, I am sure, felt at that point that we had to figure out what happened first and to stop it from ever happening again.

So where did we turn? First, we turned to law enforcement, for obvious reasons. That is who you call—9-1-1—to see if they can give you any information, give you any advice, keep you safe.

But also in this town, you think: We hope our intelligence Agencies, the ones that collect information, know who those people were so we can stop them from ever doing this again.

Those intelligence Agencies are critical, not just for the security of this country but the survival of this country.

In the wake of September 11, the most historic terrorist attack in our Nation's history, we learned the hard way that Agencies within the intelligence community need to be good, effective, and coordinate what they are doing. So we embarked on several

projects—and one that I was a small part of—in rewriting the laws creating intelligence Agencies and making sure that each of our intelligence Agencies, as good as they are, speak to one another.

It seems so obvious. They need to coordinate. But they had what they called smokestacks where they kept their information to themselves and didn't share it with other Agencies. Well, that changed. It changed the whole attitude towards intelligence and coordinating information.

We created the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. It oversees 18 different intelligence Agencies that span the CIA, Defense Department, State Department, Energy Department, and others. It is now essential to modern safety in America. Yet the President, Donald Trump, has selected a person to run this critical Agency, coordinating 18 different intelligence Agencies, who has little or no experience leading this critical American security apparatus. Her name is Tulsi Gabbard.

During President Trump's first term, he made clear of his fondness for certain leaders in the world that were controversial, such as Viktor Orban of Hungary, Vladimir Putin of Russia, and Kim Jong Un of North Korea. So he ends up picking a person to run his intelligence network who shares a similarly terrible judgment on critical leaders.

Tulsi Gabbard, a former Congresswoman, is infamous for spending time with despots and autocratic leaders of the world, including Vladimir Putin of Russia and Bashar al-Assad of Syria, and traitors to the United States like Edward Snowden.

Her fondness for these oppressive, anti-democratic regimes does not go unreciprocated. They know her, they like her, and they say quite a few things about her. Let me show you one of these posters.

Hosts of Russian state media have cheered her nomination. Russia is cheering her nomination as Director of National Intelligence because it will "dismantle America." Some on Russian state channels have even referred to her affectionately as their "girlfriend." Russian state TV also called her a Russian "comrade" in Trump's emerging Cabinet. A pro-Putin propagandist, Vladimir Solovyov, once called Gabbard "our friend." Later, when asked if she was "some sort of Russian agent?" he replied, of course, "yes."

What is going on here? This woman wants to head up the intelligence Agencies, and she is being cheered on by the Russians?

In a glowing profile in a Russian state newspaper, it said of Tulsi Gabbard, "The C.I.A. and F.B.I. are trembling," noting that Ukrainians consider her "an agent of the Russian state."

Imagine that—the person tapped to head America's intelligence commu-

nity being called a puppet of an adversary's country by that very same country. It seems too ridiculous to be true, but I am sorry to say that it is.

To merely join America's intelligence community, never mind lead it, candidates have to go through a vigorous background check and earn a security clearance. I will just tell you that based on what she has done since serving in Congress, she could not pass a routine security clearance. If Tulsi Gabbard were applying for an entry-level position, her relationship with Russia alone would disqualify her for the job. Why, then, would we trust our entire intelligence network to the No. 1 friend of our No. 1 enemy? Why, then, would we want to put that sort of person in charge?

Given the examples that abound of Tulsi Gabbard proving publicly, shamelessly, and carelessly her sympathies for nations that undermine U.S. interests and security, that is unexplainable and irresponsible.

Perhaps this is summed up best by one of her people who worked with her for years. Here is what he had to say, according to *The Atlantic* magazine:

She was willing to do or say whatever. It was [like] she had [absolutely] no moral compass.

And to head up all of our intelligence Agencies? It is as controversial as choosing Kash Patel to head up our Federal Bureau of Investigation—no experience which qualifies him, nor does she have any experience either.

You see, our allies depend on us as much as we depend on them for security and to share critical intelligence. Now they are looking at us in disbelief that we would let someone like Tulsi Gabbard, with such an appalling record, anywhere near the leadership of the intelligence community.

Intelligence professionals from Canada and the United Kingdom—members of the critical Five Eyes intelligence alliance along with the United States, Australia, and New Zealand—have expressed concern about even working with her if she is in charge. In order to keep Americans safe throughout the world, we need to have the trust of our allies and their cooperation.

This position she is aspiring to at DNI does not just impact the collection of intelligence; it also impacts the action taken on it. Because of this, I have great concern about the impact Tulsi Gabbard's confirmation would have on our support of Ukraine in defending itself against Russia.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion, Gabbard has taken Russia's side many times, claiming, in reference to Ukraine and Russia, "Russia had legitimate security concerns." The words of Tulsi Gabbard. And then she blames NATO, our alliance—one of the most significant security alliances in the world.

Let me be clear. Supporting democracies has not historically been a partisan matter. For example, contrast Tulsi Gabbard's nonsense with former

President Ronald Reagan's clear-eyed understanding of the danger of the communist Russia empire.

Nearly 40 years ago, Ronald Reagan stood at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin and famously challenged the Soviet Union to "tear down this wall." Reagan understood the true nature and threat of the Russians.

We have all seen the horrific costs of Russia's war in Ukraine and increasing attacks on NATO allies. Is there a deal to be made to end this war? Perhaps. Doing so must be with the best intelligence available, a clear eye about who we are negotiating with and for, and long-term guarantees of the security of Ukraine, of Europe, and the transatlantic alliance.

One would think any American President navigating such difficult waters would want a top official to serve as the head of National Intelligence. Tulsi Gabbard fails that test. She would not be qualified for an entry-level position within the intelligence community and is certainly not qualified to lead it, period.

Some of the President's Cabinet nominees are hard to imagine because they are so unqualified, but for the position of Director of National Intelligence, putting someone unqualified in charge is not funny at all; it is life-or-death dangerous.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Vermont.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I want to speak about what Elon Musk is doing to destroy the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Here is what is happening. Mr. Musk—of course an unelected billionaire who knows really nothing and cares less about how the Federal Government works—is demolishing one of the most important Agencies we have for countering Russia, China authoritarianism, and anti-American extremism around the world, all being done in the name of "efficiency."

One former State Department official said:

Disbanding U.S. aid is the strategic equivalent of scuttling the Navy.

Mr. Musk bragged about feeding USAID into a wood chipper. What he is really doing, after locking USAID's staff out of their offices and blocking their access to email, is destroying the careers of thousands of professionals who administer programs that are critical to U.S. national security, not to mention the well-being of their families.

I want to acknowledge something. Many Americans ask me and they ask

the Presiding Officer, why should we send aid to other countries when we have so many problems here at home? And we do have problems at home, so that is a legitimate question. In my view, we haven't done enough in Congress to solve our own problems—the cost of food, housing, healthcare, or dealing with drug addiction, gun violence, homelessness, the challenges facing our farmers and small businesses, and the devastation to communities from wildfires, flooding, droughts, and other national disasters.

Both parties have an obligation to address these issues, and our citizens do come first, but we also have a role in the world that is absolutely vital to our own national security.

There is a sense—magnified by a lot of the misinformation Mr. Musk and others put out—that foreign aid is this huge component of our budget really compromising our ability to meet those needs that affect all of our citizens here in the country. People think it is like 25 or 30 percent of the budget. Foreign aid is less than 1 percent of our budget. So as a percentage, it is really quite modest. Incidentally, not that we necessarily want to compare, but as a per capita spending portion of our budget, what we spend in the United States on foreign aid is a lot less than our European allies and Japan. So it is modest but significant.

But even at this less than 1 percent, the foreign aid budget is very important to America, and it serves our national interest. Why is that? Our USAID program started 64 years ago under then-President John F. Kennedy.

He asked the question:

Is a foreign aid program really necessary?

His answer:

The answer is that there is no escaping our obligations: our moral obligations as a wise leader and good neighbor in the interdependent community of free nations . . . and our political obligations as the single largest counter to the adversaries of freedom.

There were adversaries then, and there are adversaries today.

President Kennedy went on to say:

To fail to meet those obligations now would be disastrous and, in the long run, more expensive. For widespread poverty and chaos lead to a collapse of existing political and social structures which would inevitably invite the advance of totalitarianism into every weak and unstable area. Thus our own security would be endangered and our own prosperity imperiled. A program of assistance to the underdeveloped nations must continue because the nation's interest—

That is, our Nation's interest—

and the cause of political freedom require it.

The words of John F. Kennedy.

But fast-forward. Only 5 months ago, George Bush's Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice said about the need for continued U.S. engagement in the world:

[T]he United States has got to make both a statement and a reality of America's willingness to remain engaged in the world, because great powers don't mind their own business. And if we don't shape the inter-

national environment, then others will. And they are others that we do not want to cede the territory for our values and our interests, powers like China and powers like Russia.

The words of former Secretary Condoleezza Rice.

So the question that we need to answer today is not why we spend money on foreign aid. I don't believe we need to answer that because I think President Kennedy and Secretary Rice explained that very well. The question is, How can we make the best use of the 1 percent of the Federal budget to protect our interests in an increasingly unstable and dangerous world?

As Secretary Rice said, "if we don't shape the international environment, then others will"—because no matter how many times President Trump and Elon Musk say "America first, isolationism," this is a decision that each one of us in the U.S. Senate must make. Isolationism is not an option. What does happen in Central America, in Africa, in the Middle East, in Asia does threaten our own security, far more so today than in President Kennedy's time.

Our Secretary of State, Marco Rubio—a valued former colleague, someone we are all quite proud of—has said this administration is not going to eliminate foreign aid and that many of USAID's programs will continue. He and others in the administration have called what the administration is doing a "review."

Let's talk about that a minute. If this were a review, I would be all for it. We should always be looking at the best way and the best use of taxpayer dollars to get the best outcomes from the programs we fund. I have been calling for a review of FEMA, an organization that was very helpful to Vermont to recover from the floods of 2023 and 2024. In my view, we should be doing a review of every Agency—from food stamps to the Pentagon. So if it were a review, I would be all in favor of it. But it is not a review. It is a frontal assault to destroy USAID.

Just consider: Emails go out telling people not to go to work. Emails go out telling people in foreign lands they have got to come home. Websites are closed down. Work is stopped in its tracks. That is not a review. That is a decision. It is an action to dismantle and destroy an organization. By the end of the so-called 90-day review, people in Africa working for USAID will be in the United States. There won't be anything left.

And the administration really makes no secret about it. It acknowledged that it has decided to reduce the number of USAID staff from 14,000 to a few hundred. That is not a review; it is a decision.

Many of us know a lot about USAID. Bring on reform, yes. But this organization has helped our country by doing good work in other countries. Many of us have met USAID staff at posts overseas, often in some of the world's most

dangerous places. The folks in that organization are serious, purposeful, and patriots. They put their lives at risk every day, and they don't have body armor.

If the goal really is reform of USAID, then I say to Secretary of State Rubio and I say to my Republican colleagues: I want to work with you. Anything we can do to make any program that we are responsible for better, I am absolutely all in. And we know there are ways we could make USAID better.

But what Elon Musk is doing is dangerous. It is cruel, and it is illegal. It is illegal because this Congress has appropriated money for these programs, and Elon Musk is making a unilateral decision, without any congressional oversight or authority, to discontinue those authorized programs.

Also, you know, what does it really say to the millions of people and governments around the world, when we have made a commitment, whether it is one that you agreed with or I did—but as a body, as a country, we made a commitment. And then, suddenly, there is an email out saying: We are just kidding. We are not going to follow through.

And what does it mean, when you think about it—that because of, in effect, this stop-work order, we have food for hungry people that is not being delivered? We have vaccines, medicines that can save lives, avert injury, and they are not being delivered. Why are we doing that? Why would anyone do that? It would be like your neighbor's house is on fire, you have a hose, and you won't let them use it. That is not the way we operate—at least, I hope so.

And, you know, the USAID work is invisible to most people. It shouldn't be invisible to us. We are supporting civil society leaders who are inspired by our own Declaration of Independence. These folks fight for human rights and democracy, and they do that in the face of corrupt and abusive governments that imprison their political opponents. These programs have been stopped. There are programs that have strong bipartisan support and have had it for decades. And I want to acknowledge many of my Republican colleagues who have done so much—in particular, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, who knows this does protect our national security, and they present the best face of America that the rest of the world sees.

You know, the administration talks about waste, fraud, and abuse. And when they talk about that, I ask myself the question: Is there a single American any of us can identify that is in favor of waste, fraud, and abuse?

So they raise the question without proof of where that waste, fraud, and abuse is found. And instead of looking to identify it specifically so they can actually take action to eliminate it, they just leave it out there as an explanation to justify shutting down a valuable program and not doing the hard work of reform.

That is applying not just as an approach, not just to USAID, but to many other programs, like farm programs, where I am getting calls from farmers: What happened to the agreement I had with the Federal Government, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, about doing a new type of crop rotation in exchange for getting a contract price?

What has happened to folks running domestic violence shelters who can't get on the portal to get money paid to them that they are owed?

This is happening throughout our non-profit systems, including at our community health centers. We had a woman who had an appointment with a dentist at a community health center and got a notice that it was closed because of the order that went out from the administration.

So I believe in USAID. I believe it is wrong for the administration to essentially make the decision to feed it to the wood chipper. I believe in reform, but I do not believe that this is a serious effort at reform. It is a serious effort to destroy the program started by President Kennedy that has been embraced by Republican and Democratic Presidents since President Kennedy started it 64 years ago.

And while there is a perception that it is 25 to 30 percent of our budget, it is 1 percent. And it is at a time when the reputation of the United States as a country that is going to stand behind the commitment it has made is being jeopardized.

So my hope is that all of us, whether we agree or disagree about the ultimate value of USAID, will stand up for protecting what we have already committed ourselves to, and that to the extent there is reform to be made, we work together on that so that the American taxpayer and American national security interests can continue to be served by the men and women of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Mr. President, I conclude my remarks on USAID.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. President, as you know, the Director of National Intelligence is a very critical position. The Director is the primary intelligence officer serving the President. She or he is tasked with managing America's 18 intelligence community Agencies and more than \$100 billion—\$100 billion—in the national and military intelligence program budgets. It is an awesome responsibility.

The DNI also has access to information about literally the most sensitive programs within the U.S. Government. These programs are so sensitive that most Members of Congress and Senators are not briefed about them, including even rank-and-file members of the Intelligence Committees. That alone indicates the magnitude of this responsibility.

And my view, on the basis of everything I have seen, is that the nominee

will put loyalty to Donald Trump first. And my apprehension is that, if there is information that he does not want or wants it interpreted a certain way, there will be excessive deference to the pressures that the President has shown he has the capacity and the inclination to exert.

Also, in the hearings, Ms. Gabbard did not reflect independent thoughts about the security of issues like Taiwan, the territorial integrity of Ukraine, nor the endless ongoing theft of U.S. data by the Chinese Government. She was asked, quite rightly: Where are you on this? What should we be doing?

She indicated she would leave that up to Donald Trump.

Now, I get it that, as someone who is serving the President, it is ultimately his decision. But a person who is in the highest level of national security, I would expect, would have opinions from prior experience, and Ms. Gabbard did not disclose what those opinions were at all.

My concern, as well, is that Ms. Gabbard does not have the sober experience where it is needed most. We are a few weeks into the second term of President Trump, and there is an immense amount of disruption. And depending on the point of view, disruption is a good thing. I actually see the argument for it. But what I am seeing is that it is done in such a meat-cleaver way that it is much more about destruction.

And I want to make certain that whoever is the Director of National Intelligence has the experience and the credibility within the intelligence community to defend the legitimate role that that intelligence community plays in our national security.

Ms. Gabbard has maintained a security clearance for many years. However, this job is much more than about having had a security clearance. It is about judgment and character and integrity that must go along with that. You are required to form a clear-eyed policy position free of politics and not just give the seal of approval to absolute poor judgment. That is a very, very challenging task for a person who serves in the Trump administration.

I have also been concerned about some of the judgment calls that Ms. Gabbard has made, refusing to acknowledge what we all know: Edward Snowden broke his oath to protect classified information. He betrayed the trust given to him and every other American who holds a security clearance. By the way, Mr. Snowden had a whistleblower protocol he could have followed but chose not to. People's lives were put in jeopardy.

Mr. Snowden, as you know, intentionally gathered and deliberately walked out the door with more than 1.5 million classified files. He went to China and eventually found safe harbor in Russia.

Also, I have some concern about where Ms. Gabbard is getting her news.

I have grave concerns that giving access to our Nation's most tightly held secrets to an individual who has amplified Russian talking points—and that is the spread of misinformation; that is what Russia does—and who watches Russia state-owned TV, which is a propaganda organization—I have concerns about that, as well as the trip to Syria to see Bashar al-Assad who was in the process of murdering his own people.

Of course, Ms. Gabbard said she was skeptical that his government was responsible for the 2017 chemical weapons attack that killed dozens of Syrians. Our intelligence community was not skeptical about that. Both sides of the aisle hold our national security in high regard, as you do, Mr. President, and I do, as well.

On the basis of the lack of experience, the questionable judgment, lack of confidence that I think many of us have in the capacity of this person to be the Director of National Intelligence, I urge that we vote no on her nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to join a number of my colleagues because of my concern for the national security of the United States.

Whether it is a terror attack, a cyber attack from a nonstate actor, whether it is a threat from Russia or China or Iran, we in the United States are the targets of foreign adversaries every single day.

But thanks to our intelligence community and the thousands of Americans who dedicate their lives to our security, we are safe. These brave men and women are counting on us to have their backs, which is why the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard is so concerning. Our adversaries will be thrilled if we confirm Tulsi Gabbard as Director of National Intelligence—none more so than Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ms. Gabbard has not hidden her positive views of Russia and President Putin. While Ukrainians fight valiantly to protect their homeland and defend freedom and democracy, Tulsi Gabbard cozies up to Putin and publicly defends Russia's brutal invasion. The former Congresswoman has parroted Russian propaganda, saying that the war could have been avoided if NATO and the Biden administration had "simply acknowledged Russia's legitimate security concerns."

We know that the nominee is problematic when the Kremlin has such nice things to say about her. On November 17, 2024, a major Russian state-controlled news agency called Tulsi Gabbard "superwoman" and noted her past appearances on Russian TV. I don't relish the idea of America's Director of National Intelligence, a role that includes such sensitive responsibilities as producing the President's

daily brief and setting U.S. policy for intelligence-sharing with foreign entities—I don't appreciate the fact that she is called "superwoman" by a mouthpiece for the Kremlin.

Not only does Putin have kind words for Ms. Gabbard, but they also share mutual friends, namely ousted Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. Since her clandestine meeting with Mr. Assad in 2017, a visit that took place while she was serving in Congress, former Congresswoman Gabbard has faced numerous questions about why she went to Syria and arranged this meeting in the first place.

She has answered none of those questions, nor has she provided any substantive details on her conversation with Assad. In fact, Ms. Gabbard has repeatedly refused to call Assad what he is, and that is an enemy of the United States, a brutal dictator who is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Syrians—Assad, who is Putin's best buddy in the Middle East, Assad who is backed by Iran, whose regime openly seeks to undermine and destroy American interests and values worldwide—this is the person who co-Presidents Musk and Trump want to lead our intelligence Agency, to spearhead our national security operations?

Well, that doesn't make me comfortable sleeping at night. To talk amiably about a brutal dictator who is openly opposed to American interests and human rights, a dictator like Assad—and like Putin, for that matter—shows, at best, a lack of judgment and, at worst, allegiance to our adversaries.

And even in cases of proven espionage against the American intelligence community, the very organization she seeks to lead, Tulsi Gabbard instead has sided with criminals. Of course, I am speaking about her support for Edward Snowden. In 2020, while she was a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, she introduced a resolution suggesting that the Federal Government should drop all charges against Edward Snowden. There was only one other Member who cosponsored this resolution, and that was former Congressman Matt Gaetz.

In 2025, Ms. Gabbard still refuses to call Snowden what he is: a traitor to the United States. When she was asked about that at her hearing, she was given several opportunities to indicate that she understood that Edward Snowden is a traitor who put at risk the lives of thousands of Americans in the intelligence community. She refused to acknowledge that he is a traitor.

With such a track record, how are we supposed to expect that she will properly classify our enemies? How are we to expect that she would label Xi Jinping or Kim Jong Un enemies of the United States or simply as foreign leaders or as friends? Who knows what Ms. Gabbard will do?

I think there is a stark difference between our adversaries who want to un-

dermine the United States and those who are our allies. It doesn't appear that Tulsi Gabbard understands the difference.

How can the men and women of the intelligence community trust that Ms. Gabbard will protect their secrets; that she will protect our secrets, the secrets of the United States? How many Russians are going to risk their lives to pass along information to our intelligence officers if they are worried that Ms. Gabbard will sell them out? How much will our allies in NATO and the Indo-Pacific share with Ms. Gabbard in charge?

The work of American covert operations and intelligence-gathering is based on one central principle, and that is trust. I wouldn't trust Tulsi Gabbard any further than I can throw her.

I think this Chamber faces a choice. We can choose to defend America's national security and keep our promise to our constituents to protect their lives and safety and their interests, or we can choose to give a gift to Vladimir Putin and our adversaries, to usher them into the inner halls of the American intelligence system.

I know which choice I intend to make. I intend to vote no on Tulsi Gabbard, and I hope that my colleagues, particularly those across the aisle—at least some of them—will have the courage to do the same.

I yield the floor.

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

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, every Member of this body is sworn to protect our national security and safety and the well-being of the American people. There is no more important responsibility for Congress to fulfill than this.

Senators take an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. And when the American people go to sleep at night, they rest assured that our homeland will be kept safe.

As Senators, we play a key role in making sure that the men and women in charge of our Nation's security—well, that they are up to the task, that they are experienced, that they are qualified, that they are prepared. These are jobs with enormous responsibility. There is zero—zero—room for failure here. When unqualified or inexperienced candidates make mistakes in these jobs, often the result is that innocent people get hurt and in some cases die.

That is why the Senate's confirmation process is just so important—because the stakes are so high, because there is no room for error when it comes to those who are placed in national security roles.

I take this aspect of my job incredibly seriously. Our intelligence community is made up of courageous men and women who collect and analyze information on our threats from around the globe. They are an integral part of our Nation's defense.

The Director of National Intelligence oversees and compiles intelligence from domestic, from military, from foreign sources for the President, who then uses it to make life-or-death decisions. The Director is a direct line from our intelligence community to the President. That is why this position needs to be filled by an experienced and trustworthy candidate—key qualities that Tulsi Gabbard does not have.

At a time of rising global threats, having Tulsi Gabbard serving in this role would make America less safe. I want to say that again. It would make us less safe—full stop. Our allies are dumbfounded. And our adversaries? Well, in Moscow, Beijing, Tehran, and all over the world, they are laughing at us. They are laughing at the idea that the United States of America would weaken its national security by placing someone so deeply unqualified in such a critical role for our safety, for our security. Our adversaries? Well, they are overjoyed that they are going to have an ally leading the American intelligence community.

My concerns are not political. After all, Ms. Gabbard and I used to serve in Congress together, in the same caucus, when she represented a district from Hawaii as a Democrat. My concerns are that she not only lacks the qualifications needed but that she has also peddled talking points straight from the Kremlin.

Think about it. Tulsi Gabbard has never worked in intelligence before. As a Member of the House of Representatives, she didn't even serve on the House Select Committee on Intelligence. During her time in the House, Ms. Gabbard actually voted against—she voted against—critical national security-related legislation, like increased funding for preventing terrorism in high-density, high-threat level urban areas like my city of Las Vegas. She voted against all of that security for Nevada.

This funding was actually pursued by former Nevada Congressman Joe Heck, who is a Republican, and it is something I have continued working to secure here in the Senate. Yet Tulsi Gabbard voted against this bipartisan proposal to protect our cities from terrorism.

She was the only member of the House Armed Services Committee to vote against the National Defense Authorization Act every year during markup.

As concerning as her lack of experience and tendency to vote against our security are, Ms. Gabbard's history of cozying up to America's adversaries is far, far more troubling. Her actions and words suggest that she has been directly influenced by foreign propaganda, whether that comes from Russia, from Syria, or other brutal dictatorships.

This isn't just me saying this; it is the view of many of Ms. Gabbard's former staff members during her time

here on Capitol Hill. We have public reporting that states that “[f]ormer advisers to Gabbard suggested that her views on Russia and its polarizing leader, Vladimir Putin, have been shaped . . . by her unorthodox media consumption habits. . . . Three former aides said Gabbard . . . regularly read and shared articles from the Russian news site RT—formerly known as Russia Today—which the U.S. intelligence community characterized in 2017 as ‘Kremlin’s principal international propaganda outlet.’”

Is this who Donald Trump wants to lead America’s intelligence community? Is this who he wants in a prominent national security role—someone who is so easily swayed by foreign propaganda?

It is clear that she has taken this propaganda and disinformation to heart. Just look at her justification of Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine, for which she did not blame Vladimir Putin, who—let’s be clear—is entirely responsible for the invasion. Instead, Ms. Gabbard has parroted Putin’s talking points and placed blame on the United States and on NATO for Russia’s vile assault upon the Ukrainian people.

We can also look at her attempts to give cover to Syria’s former dictator, Bashar al-Assad, who used chemical weapons on his own people—killing kids, killing babies—killing babies in his own attempt to hold on to power. Ms. Gabbard even went to Syria to buddy up with Assad. She then came back to the United States to defend his killing of innocent men, women, and children—those babies he killed—to hang on to power. It is sickening, actually. It is a betrayal of our country’s values.

Time and time again, Ms. Gabbard has rejected the findings and conclusions of our own intelligence officials and has instead chosen to, well, cozy up to dictators and our adversaries. She did so again in her defense of Edward Snowden, a man who committed treason against the United States of America by leaking highly classified information that jeopardized our national security, the safety of our troops, our men and women in uniform, who take an oath to serve and protect us every day. She jeopardized the clandestine intelligence operatives who are out there, working behind the scenes, again, to keep us safe and secure every day.

After committing these serious crimes against the United States, Mr. Snowden fled to Russia in his continued attempt to escape justice. Those weren’t the actions of a whistleblower; they were the actions of a traitor to the United States of America—a traitor whom Tulsi Gabbard has repeatedly defended.

Because of these incidents and so many more, America’s allies are rightfully concerned about what Tulsi Gabbard would do if confirmed to lead our intelligence community. In fact,

there have been reports that if Ms. Gabbard is confirmed, our allies might stop sharing crucial information with us in order to protect themselves, to protect their own country, to protect the people they love.

So think about that. If our allies no longer share intelligence with us, think about the damage that does to our national security, to our safety, to our men and women in uniform, to our operatives around the world, and to each and every one of us here in the United States of America. It doesn’t make us safer, I can tell you that. Our allies do not trust her, and neither should we.

I urge my colleagues to review Ms. Gabbard’s recent hearing before the Select Committee on Intelligence. In response to almost every question, Tulsi Gabbard avoided providing any real answer, whether it came from a Democrat or a Republican. She simply dodged the questions over and over and over. That is not leadership. This is not an example of someone who is qualified, and this is not a candidate who will keep America safe.

I urge my Republican colleagues to join me in listening to common sense, in thinking about our men and women who serve, in thinking about folks around the globe, and in thinking about everyone here in America and to reject this clearly unqualified and dangerous nominee.

It doesn’t have to be this way. Let’s have President Trump nominate someone else we can agree is qualified for this critical and consequential role and who has our Nation’s best interests in their heart. Tulsi Gabbard is not that person. The safety and well-being of our country depend on having a qualified nominee.

Again, I urge Republicans to join us—to reject Tulsi Gabbard—and to put someone up who has the heart and experience to do this important job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me this afternoon are three of my colleagues from my office: Ms. Jess Andrews, my communications director; Mr. Henson Webre; and Mr. John Lowery. As I said, they are three of my colleagues in my office. I depend on their counsel and their advice and their good judgment every day.

I want to talk for a few minutes about public broadcasting in America, but first I want to make a brief comment about the continuing saga that our new President is doing, in my judgment, a good job of prosecuting here in Washington. I am talking about his audits of Federal Government spending and all of the wasteful spending—I call it spending porn—that he is finding.

I want to make two quick points.

No. 1, it strikes me as breathtakingly ironic—the Senate might say cynical—that the people who are screaming so loudly about President Trump’s deci-

sion to audit Federal spending are the very same people who, under President Biden, wanted to hire 80,000 new IRS agents—with guns—to audit the American people. As I have said before, if it weren’t for double standards, there wouldn’t be any standards at all in this town.

The battle lines are drawn. The battle lines are drawn. Some of my colleagues have decided to support the bureaucracy and the spending porn over the American taxpayer. That is what they have done. And some of the same people—it is not just my Democratic colleagues. There are many people in Washington, DC, who have grouped together. They have circled the wagons, and they have decided to support the spending porn and the bureaucrats over the American taxpayer. That is their right. It is not against the law or unconstitutional to be foolish in America. But these are the same people—these are the same people—who chose to support illegal immigration over the rule of law. These are the same people who have chosen to support teachers unions over parents and kids. These are the same people who have chosen to support criminals over cops and victims. These are the same people who have chosen to support transgender athletes over women’s sports. These are the same people who have chosen to support Hamas over Israel.

They think they are winning. Maybe in this town—in this town—they are if you listen to a lot of the pundits up here, if you listen to a lot of the members of the “wokerati” in Washington, but they are not winning in America. The justice stick is coming, and I am very proud to be a part of that effort.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Mr. President, now, let me say a word about public broadcasting.

There was a time—I don’t know if the Presiding Officer remembers it, but I do—when families, in the evening, would gather around a single radio—they just had one radio in the house—or a single TV, often a black-and-white TV, to hear the evening news. For many Americans, particularly in rural areas, public broadcasting was the only option for them. That was true in some parts of our country. They could only access public broadcasting to get up-to-date news and information.

Those days are gone. Things are much different today. Today, Americans get their news everywhere—everywhere: websites, podcasts, social media posts, radio shows, cable TV, streaming, broadcast television. The world has changed, particularly the world of mass communications.

I think back 10, 15 years ago in my State, Louisiana. Newspapers were king, followed closely by local television stations. Newspapers led with the news, and everybody else followed in terms of what was newsworthy.

Boy, have those days changed. I polled recently in Louisiana to find out where my people in Louisiana get their news. And 4 percent—4 percent of the

people in Louisiana get their news from the newspapers. That is just a fact. No. 1, as you might imagine, is the internet.

The world has changed. This trend is not partisan. It is not a Republican thing; it is not a Democratic thing. President Trump and former Vice President Harris, they both did popular podcasts in their election, and many of my fellow Senators and many of my friends in the House running for election also did podcasts as well. A lot of the pundits have even called the 2024 race the podcast election.

No American today—not one that I know of—is dependent on a single source of news to remain informed, and that is a good thing.

It might have made sense many, many, many years ago for the Federal Government to subsidize and fund public broadcasting. So 50 years ago, that might have made sense, but the ability of the American people today to access whatever news they would like to hear from whatever form of media they choose is no longer limited. It is virtually unlimited—only by the imagination.

So here is my question, Mr. President. It is something we need to think about. If all this is true, if media has changed and it is accessible to everyone, why is the U.S. Congress—why is the U.S. Congress still spending half a billion dollars a year—not half a million a year—half a billion dollars a year to fund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting? It makes no sense.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting—we call it CPB—as the Presiding Officer knows, is a nonprofit entity that takes taxpayer money that it gets from Congress and distributes it to local TV and radio stations.

Now, you might not have heard of CPB, but you probably heard of two of its—I won't call them subsidiaries but two of its closely affiliated entities. I will call them the public broadcasting station—we call it PBS—and National Public Radio, NPR.

Now, here is how it works. Every year, Congress gives the Corporation for Public Broadcasting \$500 million, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting takes that money and gives it to a lot of the local TV and radio stations. And a lot of those local TV and radio stations are encouraged to and, indeed, do buy programming, if they are radio stations, from NPR; or, if they are television stations, they buy prerecorded, predeveloped programming from PBS.

Congress established this system and established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in 1967—what—over 50 years ago. At the time, Congress tasked CPB—and I am not saying it didn't make sense then. It probably did make sense then. But Congress tasked the CPB with a mission to ensure that the American people had—and I want to quote here to be precise—“universal access to non-commercial, high-quality content and telecommunications services.”

And, indeed, CPB boasts on its website that 99 percent of Americans have access to public media. Hell, they ought to; we are spending half a billion dollars of your taxpayer money to make sure they do.

That is not the question, because Americans have access to all different types and forms of media today. They don't need to get their news from public broadcasting. This isn't the old days when people had one television set or one radio and lived in a rural area and that was the only source of news. The world has changed.

The issue today is whether the American people need taxpayer-funded public broadcasting to access high-quality content anymore. And they don't, and we all know they don't. You don't have to be Walter Cronkite's cousin to figure that out. Everybody has got a cell phone. Everybody is on the internet. Everybody has heard of podcasts. Everybody has heard of cable. Many people have streaming services.

Today, 97 percent of Americans have access to the internet. Why do we need public broadcasting? That is more than double the number of Americans who could access the internet two decades ago. Things have quickly changed. People now have a bottomless supply of news sources right at their fingertips, whenever they need them. Why do we have to give a half a billion dollars a year to subsidize a certain small, favored section of the media?

Parents can also, very easily, find free educational programming if they want to. They don't have to go to public broadcasting. All they have to do is go to YouTube. All they have to do is go to other streaming services. The popular YouTube series “Crash Course,” for example, has more than 16 million subscribers. “PragerU” is another educational content provider. It has 3.3 million subscribers.

For comparison, PBS only has 1.4 million subscribers. You know what the difference is? You give them half a billion dollars of your hard-earned money. That is the difference.

Now, some may argue: Well, we still need public broadcasting because it offers noncommercial programming. They argue it is really cool because you don't get interrupted by commercials. Well, the new Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Mr. Brendan Carr, has just called that into question. He has called into question whether NPR and PBS are really noncommercial broadcasts. Mr. Carr has noted that NPR and PBS regularly run commercial advertisements during their shows and broadcasts, in contravention of Federal law.

No advertising? All you have to do is turn on the stations. Give me a break. And, in fact, the FCC has launched an investigation into NPR and PBS to determine whether they have been violating Federal law. There seems to be no distinction between the advertiser-funded content on PBS or NPR and the content Americans can access for free anywhere else.

But there is a key difference. I am going to keep coming back to it. PBS and NPR receive a truckload—a bucketload—of cash from the American people. In total, Congress will send the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and, indirectly, NPR and PBS, \$535 million in 2025. That is an increase of 20.2 percent since 2020. Has your income gone up 20.2 percent since 2020? I know your expenses have. By 2027, CPB wants Congress to send it nearly \$600 million. For what? For what?

PBS alone received roughly \$130 million last year in taxpayer-funded grants from the Federal Government through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. That is 35 percent of its total budget. NPR, similarly, receives \$96 million through taxpayer-funded grants from CPB. That is also roughly 32 percent of NPR's total budget. Why? Why? Why CPB? Why NPR? Why any of these alphabet-soup entities? Why not the New York Times? Why not the Washington Post? Why not FOX News? Why these three particular entities? That is a question we have to ask. And we are not talking chump change here. We are giving them half a billion dollars a year.

NPR is one of the few—as far as I know, they are the only newsroom in the country that gets taxpayer funding. And you would think that after receiving nearly \$100 million—I want to single out NPR for a second. You would think that after receiving nearly \$100 million from taxpayers, that would motivate NPR to play it right down the middle, to only publish fair reporting. You would think that, with the American taxpayer giving NPR 100 million bucks every year like clockwork, you should be able to go to NPR and look at the news and say: I don't know what party these folks are in. I don't know whether they are liberals. I don't know whether they are conservatives. I don't know whether they are left of center or right of center. I just know that they fairly report the news.

But that is not the case, Mr. President. That is not the case. I want to give you a few examples of stories that NPR has published using taxpayer money. I will just read the headlines. The first headline, NPR News Service:

Michael Avenatti: A Profile of the Media-Savvy Attorney.

They love Michael Avenatti. You know where Michael Avenatti is today? He is in jail. You know why? He is a crook. But for a while, he was a media darling on NPR.

Here is another headline from NPR: How racism became a marketing tool for country music.

I kid you not. The American taxpayers are spending half a billion dollars a year to pay a local station to buy content that says country music is racist.

Here is another headline from NPR: Donald Trump's Long Embrace of Vladimir Putin.

Remember the Russiagate, the Steele dossier? NPR was right in there promoting it.

A couple more headlines that NPR is putting out there using your tax dollars. This headline:

Monuments and Teams Have Changed Names—

Let me say it again.

Monuments and Teams—

Presumably sports teams—

have Changed Names as America Reckons With Racism. Birds Are Next.

I don't know any birds that are racist.

Here is another headline:

Eating less beef is a climate solution.

I don't have anything against vegetarians. I am a semivegetarian myself: I eat beef, and cows eat grass. So that makes me a semivegetarian, but that is my choice.

Not on NPR.

Eating less beef is a climate solution. Here is why that is hard for some American men.

Here is a final headline. I could go on the rest of the evening.

How the Taliban adds to Afghanistan's woes when it comes to climate-fueled disasters.

Boy, I can tell you that is on the mind of every person in Afghanistan today, is climate change—and the Taliban, I can guarantee you.

I don't have a problem with these headlines. This is America. If you want to publish articles like this—which no person with a brain above a single-cell organism would call fair and balanced—if you are a news outlet and you want to publish this kind of stuff, that is your right as an American. We have freedom of the press. We have the First Amendment. You are not free in our country if you can't say what you think. You are not free in our country if you can't express yourself.

I am all for this if that is what these outlets want to do, but I am not for taking \$500 million every single year and giving it to these stations to the exclusion of everybody else so they can do it. That is immoral. That is illegal, as far as I am concerned—or should be.

Now, I am sure that there is an audience in some campus coffee shop that wants to learn about racist birds or the different ways in which cheeseburgers and the Taliban are contributing to climate change. But most American taxpayers would probably prefer that Congress spend their money on something other than these controversial points of view that appeal to only a small segment of America's population while the rest of us foot the bill.

Now, that is not just my opinion; a former editor at NPR, someone by the name of Uri Berliner, Mr. Berliner—he used to be an editor at NPR. He published a column last year, and in the column, he outlined the extreme bias at NPR. He detailed how NPR decided to censor the Hunter Biden laptop story. They wouldn't run stories about it; they said it wasn't real.

Mr. Berliner, the former editor at NPR, said that NPR told its readers:

We don't want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories, and we don't

want to waste the listeners' and readers' time on stories that are just pure distractions.

The Hunter Biden laptop is real. The FBI has it. It is there at the FBI Headquarters bigger than Dallas. Of course, we now know that the laptop was not just a distraction. Every bit of it was real. But NPR censored it using American taxpayer money.

NPR also similarly covered the COVID-19 lab leak theory as though it was a conspiracy. That is how the news coverage reads, in my opinion, that if you believe that COVID-19 originated from a lab leak, you are a conspiracy theorist.

I would point out that we are going to have to get some new conspiracy theories in America because all the old ones turned out to be true. The conspiracy theorists are up something like 37 to nothing—but not if you read NPR. They say or said that the COVID-19 lab leak theory—you had to be some kind of cone head, some kind of meathead, some kind of whack job to believe in that stuff. Now the Federal Government, the CIA, the FBI—they have stated publicly that the pandemic likely originated from—what?—a lab leak. I can't make this stuff up.

Now, other independent analysts have shown that NPR's content also leans left, and that is fine. As I say, that is fine. Many Americans lean left. I have got a lot of friends who lean left. I lean left on some issues. I think it is great. But I will tell you what isn't great: having American taxpayers spend half a billion dollars a year to fund a news service that, in turn, we all have to pay for. That is not right.

Since 1970, the U.S. Congress has given NPR more than \$14.5 billion. With all those taxpayer dollars, the NPR bought a \$201 million office space just up the road from the Capitol. It is swell office space, 200 million bucks' worth. NPR pays its hosts as much as \$532,000 a year. It pays its chief diversity officer \$320,000 a year. Pretty good work if you can get it. Not NPR's money. It came from you. You paid those salaries. Despite all the spending, NPR's audience continues to decline because they are obsolete.

Now, Congress does not send taxpayer money to the most popular podcast host in America. We don't. The anchors on FOX News, the anchors on CNN, the anchors on MSNBC, nor their stations—they don't get any taxpayer dollars, nor do any of the journalists that ask me questions every day in the hallway in this building—unless they work for NPR or PBS or their affiliates or the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Congress should not be picking winners and losers in the news media, but that is what we are doing.

The United States of America is \$36 trillion in debt. We can't afford anymore to blow half a billion dollars for public broadcasting when Americans can find the same content—and in many cases better content—online for free.

Now, if you want to support NPR and PBS or any other public media outlet, that is great. God bless you. This is America. You are free to do it. You are free to donate to those nonprofits as you see fit. Donate to them. But Congress should not compel taxpayers to fund a service that the American people don't need, especially when the content—well, you can read what the content is, and maybe you agree with it, but a whole bunch of Americans don't. A whole bunch of Americans don't think that birds are racist.

President Trump's Department of Government Efficiency is looking for fat to trim. As far as I am concerned, this gravy train, this gravy train with biscuit wheels called the Corporation for Public Broadcasting is the perfect example of a project the American people no longer need and should not fund.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. President, I have been given instructions to read this.

I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII—oh, I love this. This is great. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII—this makes me so happy—the confirmation vote with respect to the Gabbard nomination occur at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, February 12; further, I ask that the cloture motions filed on Thursday, February 6, ripen following disposition of the Gabbard nomination; and finally, that if cloture is invoked on the Kennedy nomination—that is Mr. Robert Kennedy—the postcloture time count as if invoked at 1 a.m., Wednesday, February 12.

Thank you, Jesus.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield to Senator PETERS, my good friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the nomination of former Representative Tulsi Gabbard to serve as our Nation's Director of National Intelligence.

Intelligence is absolutely fundamental to our national security. Our intelligence community, spread out all across the Federal Government, has built the world's greatest network of information gathering and analysis. This information keeps us and our community safe by providing the people who make policy decisions with a full picture to understand the current as well as potential threats to our national security, from terrorism risks to our homeland to emerging conflicts across the globe.

Spearheaded by the Director of National Intelligence, the U.S. intelligence community is responsible for monitoring terrorist activities, tracking foreign military capabilities, and even intercepting nefarious cyber attacks.

The courageous men and women in this community, stationed both here as

well as abroad, put their lives on the line to identify and neutralize espionage efforts against Americans by our foreign adversaries.

Their work is absolutely critical, particularly in today's modern digital era where information is power. But the foundation of intelligence is trust.

We must trust that our intelligence experts are providing completely unbiased, fact-driven analysis of the intelligence that our Agencies are collecting. Our experts must trust their ability to pursue intelligence that keeps Americans safe, wherever it may lead, without fear that discovery of the wrong issue might result in the end of their career. Our intelligence Agencies must trust that government officials will protect their sources and their methods to ensure that critical missions and safety of Americans all across the globe are not placed into jeopardy.

Unfortunately, I do not believe that Tulsi Gabbard has the qualifications—nor has she earned our trust—to serve as Director of National Intelligence. She has spread conspiracy theories peddled by our adversaries. She claimed that those who were investigating domestic terrorism and the deadly January 6 insurrection were “domestic enemies”—more dangerous than the individuals who violently stormed the U.S. Capitol, attacked law enforcement officers, and tried to overturn a free and fair election.

She cannot differentiate between our adversaries and our allies, between those who seek to harm our country and those who seek to defend it. Time and time again, Ms. Gabbard has proven that she does not hold the judgment to serve as the leader of our intelligence community.

Let's start with Russia. Start with Russia. As we know, Russia engaged in a widespread disinformation campaign before its deadly invasion of Ukraine in an attempt to justify its actions and manipulate public opinion. Russia actually claimed that the United States was to blame for the war for failing to recognize Russia's “legitimate” security concerns about Ukraine's accession to NATO. Tulsi Gabbard agrees with Putin and Russia. She said that the United States was entirely to blame for the war in Ukraine. Russian propaganda efforts also push lies that the United States was supporting bio-weapons labs in Ukraine—a claim, by the way, that has been debunked by Ukraine's Government, the U.S. Government, news organizations, and independent researchers around the world. But Ms. Gabbard posted on her social media, in 2022, supporting this conspiracy and accusing the Biden-Harris administration of a coverup.

Former Republican U.S. Senator Mitt Romney called Ms. Gabbard's post treasonous, saying she was “parroting fake Russian propaganda.”

So now let's talk about Syria.

Tulsi Gabbard has a long history defending former Syrian ruler Bashar al-

Assad. In 2015, she even introduced a bill to end U.S. support to the opposition to the Assad regime. She didn't think the opposition to Assad, who is responsible for crimes against humanity and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of his own people, should be supported.

Not only did she oppose the support, Gabbard then traveled to Syria and met with Assad in 2017. Gabbard tried to justify her meeting, going as far as to say that Assad is not the enemy of the United States.

And despite U.S. intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard continued to turn a blind eye to Assad's horrific use of chemical weapons on civilians, claiming there was no real evidence linking this regime to those attacks, even though the intelligence community under the first Trump administration attributed these chemical attacks to the Assad regime.

Ms. Gabbard has promised to “end the politicization of the intelligence community,” but what we have seen in just the last few weeks from the administration—in the name of freeing our government from politicization and weaponization—should certainly give us pause.

This administration has fired dozens of prosecutors in a matter of days for doing their duty to provide justice on criminal cases stemming from the January 6 attack on our Nation's Capitol. The administration has also fired most of the senior leaders of the FBI and is trying to go after every single FBI agent who was involved investigating January 6, even if they were just doing their job as ordered by their superiors.

Let's be clear. January 6 was an attack on our Nation, our Constitution, and our democracy.

But to be a part of the Trump administration, you have to show absolute loyalty to him over anything else. Don't worry about facts; just show loyalty. And don't worry about the law; just show loyalty.

So this pattern certainly begs the question: With Ms. Gabbard at the helm, will the intelligence analysts and operatives who worked on investigations into January 6 or any other domestic terrorism plot—are they now going to be fired as well? Will Ms. Gabbard follow the lead of Trump's newly confirmed Attorney General and shut down U.S. efforts to collect intelligence on malicious foreign influences from our adversaries, like China and Russia? Will she penalize anyone who has been responsible for tracking our adversaries' misinformation and disinformation campaigns that target our elections? Will she stand up to President Trump if he seeks to use the powers of the U.S. intelligence community against the American people? Will individuals in the intelligence community who disagree with her views on Russia, Syria, or the threats of chemical and biological weapons be in danger of censorship or, worse, even retribution?

We have no reason—no reason—to trust that Ms. Gabbard will not simply

follow the lead of others in this administration and oust those who do their jobs to serve all the American people and not just Donald Trump.

But in addition to this questionable lack of judgment on who our Nation's enemies are, Tulsi Gabbard is simply, simply, unqualified. Tulsi Gabbard does not have the extensive experience needed to oversee this highly complex network of intelligence operatives and analysts—experience that Directors of National Intelligence, until this point, have all possessed because it is understood how essential this position is and why these qualifications are critical.

There is broad, bipartisan consensus that we are facing one of the most dangerous times in American history. Threats from our adversaries, like the Chinese and Russian Governments, continue to grow and evolve with every passing minute. We need the person leading our intelligence community to be the most qualified candidate available. This is the person briefing our senior leaders, all the way up to the Commander in Chief, on the real threats that face our Nation each and every day. This is the person tasked with protecting our vast network of sources and highly classified methods of collecting information.

We need someone we can trust to safeguard the tools that our intelligence Agencies need to access the darkest corners of the world, but also someone with the knowledge and understanding of this community to protect the brave Americans who are risking their lives gathering this information and intelligence firsthand, on the frontlines.

We need someone who our allies will trust to share their own intelligence, to help protect our people and our interest, because without America's utmost confidence in Ms. Gabbard's ability to do this job, where will that leave us as a country? It will leave us in the dark, vulnerable against our adversaries. It will make our allies question whether or not they should share their intelligence with us because they do not know whether the head of our intelligence community will actually share that information with our adversaries instead of our allies. It will leave us with an intelligence community that is afraid to speak truth to power, or even just do their jobs for fear of offending the Trump administration and then getting fired.

We are in unprecedented times with an administration that has shown that it is willing to break the law in order to break our government. We are in uncharted times, with an administration that would rather target our institutions than protect our people.

We are in perilous times, with foreign adversaries waiting to pounce, as the administration strips away the tools that we have used to protect ourselves.

Our national security is on the line. We cannot destroy our intelligence community and the progress that generations of Americans have built to

keep our country safe by confirming someone whom we cannot trust to act in the United States' best interest or who simply lacks the necessary experience to lead this critical organization. That is why I am voting no on Ms. Gabbard's nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, almost 3 years ago, President Vladimir Putin launched a massive, illegal ground invasion of Ukraine, which has become the largest and deadliest conflict in Europe since World War II.

Now, I have stood up, again and again, with my fellow Senators—leaders of both parties—and our allies across the world to condemn Putin's war, which has killed thousands of civilians, including hundreds of children, and left millions of Ukrainians displaced. It is not a hard position to take.

But Tulsi Gabbard has repeatedly justified Putin's expansionist war. She chose to blame the United States, our NATO allies, and even Ukraine itself for Putin's war.

Now, Mr. Trump—excuse me; President Trump—wants Ms. Gabbard to be the Director of National Intelligence. The day the war started, she echoed Russian state media and said: The war could have been avoided if the U.S. and NATO had acknowledged Russia's "legitimate" security concerns.

She made baseless claims that Russia was justified in invading Ukraine because the United States had secret biolabs there. Where did she find that claim? It came directly from a Kremlin propaganda website.

The Director of National Intelligence position was created after the September 11 terrorist attacks to act as the principal adviser to the President, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council on intelligence matters related to our national security.

It seems obvious to anyone who holds this position that they should have extensive national security experience, something Ms. Gabbard doesn't have. And somebody who holds this position should not be parroting Russian talking points.

Now, I have worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure that Putin is held accountable for the atrocities that have been committed in Ukraine. It is shocking to me that we are on the cusp of confirming a Director of National Intelligence who was so quick to defend one of the United States' biggest adversaries.

Now, cozying up to Putin would be bad enough, but, unfortunately, he is not the only autocrat that Ms. Gabbard has ties to. She also has an alarming connection to the ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Assad was a ruthless dictator who engaged in human right abuses, and that is a documented fact. But, inexplicably, Ms. Gabbard disputed credible accusations

that Assad used chemical weapons against his citizens, and, worst of all, she actually chose to travel in her personal capacity to Syria to meet with this dictator in person. All the while, she repeatedly cast doubts on our intelligence community's assessment of the extent of the horrors of Assad's regime.

Now, I understand the desire to seek out multiple points of view. But, again and again, Ms. Gabbard has taken healthy skepticism too far, suggesting to the American people that they can't trust our intelligence while, instead, echoing Russian and Syrian disinformation. That is just unacceptable.

President Trump claims that he wants to make America safe. He says he wants to maintain American's standing in the world. He says he wants to forge stronger ties with our allies.

Well, confirming Ms. Gabbard to be Director of National of Intelligence is in opposition to those goals. The Director of National Intelligence oversees 18 Agencies in the U.S. intelligence community, including the CIA and the NSA. The Director has the legal authority to direct intelligence gathering and choose which intelligence to share with foreign Agencies.

As Director of National Intelligence, Ms. Gabbard would have access to our most closely guarded secrets. She would know the identities of the brave men and women who gather intelligence from our foreign adversaries. There should be absolutely no question about the trustworthiness or the judgment of our Director of National Intelligence.

The Director of National Intelligence should not sympathize with autocrats, blame our allies for wars of aggression, or parrot Kremlin talking points. This is a low bar to clear.

I am here in the Senate to represent the people of Nevada. They are relying on me to work to keep them and our community safe. And I tell you what: I pledge to help keep Nevada safe by opposing Ms. Gabbard's confirmation, and I hope my colleagues follow suit.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, every one of us remembers where we were when the first plane struck the World Trade Center the morning of September 11, 2001. On that day, we watched in horror as the North and South Towers fell, terrifying debris clouds flooding the ground beneath them. We witnessed the Pentagon, the heart of our national defense, engulfed in flames as a hijacked plane crashed into it head-on, taking the lives of all the people aboard that flight and over 125 employees in the building itself. Our hearts broke as we saw yet another plane go down in an open field in Pennsylvania, after brave Americans decided to fight back and regain control of the aircraft before it reached its intended target here in this very Capitol building.

From that day forward, we pledged to never forget the nearly 3,000 Americans who lost their lives that day and the thousands more who were first responders that have died since. That pledge led us to immediately establish a bipartisan commission devoted to understanding how our Nation's intelligence Agencies could have left us vulnerable to this attack.

And the 9/11 Commission discovered that our intelligence community had received warnings about the dangers posed by al-Qaida but that a systemic lack of communication and coordination between intelligence Agencies that were effectively stovepiped off from one another had left glaring blindspots at the highest levels of our government. And to fix this, the Commission recommended that our government establish a new Cabinet-level position called the Director of National Intelligence, the DNI.

The DNI is specifically dedicated to coordinating all of our intelligence-gathering operations that protect the safety and security of the American people. For the last two decades, the Director of National Intelligence has played a vital role in every administration as the leader of our intelligence community overseen in coordinating 18 of our intelligence Agencies.

The Director of National Intelligence is also one of the main voices that any President hears from, literally, each and every day. That is because the DNI serves not only as the coordinator of our intelligence community but as the compiler and presenter of the President's daily brief. This is the daily high-level, highly classified briefing on the most pressing and sensitive national security matters. This is where all of our Presidents have gathered critical information needed to make incredibly difficult military or foreign policy decisions. And it is where our Presidents learn about potential threats from our adversaries, from nonstate terrorist organizations, and to think through how to combat those.

Put simply: Our national security depends on the person that we entrust in that role.

In fact, we need to implicitly trust that this person is relying on and providing incredible and accurate information so that our country's Commander in Chief can make the decisions that will determine our security as a nation. As a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for the last 12 years, I do not say this lightly: I do not believe that Ms. Gabbard has demonstrated the judgment to merit our trust as Director of National Intelligence.

Ms. Gabbard's statements and actions leading up to and during the confirmation process should make all of us question her qualifications for this essential national security role, and they should make us seriously question her basic judgment.

Time and again, Ms. Gabbard has elevated conspiracy theories, parroted

dictator's talking points, and repeatedly undermined our country's national security.

Let me give you some specific examples of her statements and her legislative track record. In 2017, while she was still serving in the House of Representatives, Ms. Gabbard exercised seriously questionable judgment in scheduling a foreign trip into Bashar al-Assad's pariah state of Syria. This was after Assad had committed well-documented crimes against his own people, including the use of chemical weapons, and plummeted his country into a bloody civil war and devastating humanitarian crisis.

Both before and after this trip, Ms. Gabbard undermined U.S. intelligence and echoed Russian and Syrian disinformation regarding Assad's use of chemical weapons on his own people. She has made statements that appear to defend Assad.

For example, on February 6, 2019, Ms. Gabbard claimed in an interview that: Assad is not the enemy of the United States because Syria does not pose a direct threat to the United States.

This is a shockingly narrow view of threats to U.S. national security. During the course of Syria's civil war, Assad used chemical weapons more than 300 times against his own people, killing and wounding thousands. To this day, Syria has still not accounted for this.

The U.S. has also described Syria as being in "flagrant noncompliance" with the Chemical Weapons Convention. And there is no question that Assad's regime posed a serious threat to international peace and security.

It is mystifying to me how Ms. Gabbard could not understand this then and still, apparently, doesn't understand it today.

Ms. Gabbard's 2020 Presidential campaign website stated that she remains "skeptical" about two particular chemical weapons attacks in Syria in 2017 and 2018. Her website wrongly stated that:

Both attacks occurred in towns under the control of al-Qaeda-linked opposition forces. Both attacks resulted in multiple civilian casualties, and both were immediately blamed on the Assad government. However, there is evidence to suggest that the attacks may have been staged by opposition forces for the purpose of drawing the United States and the West deeper into the war.

Of course, there never was such evidence.

Disturbingly, Ms. Gabbard decided to take the views of a discredited professor, who was himself taken in by a Syrian Australian YouTube influencer, that somehow the opposition forces had staged these chemical weapons attacks.

As a Member of Congress, she could have taken the time to read the summary of a declassified U.S. intelligence report released the week after the 2017 attack, warning that claims shifting blame to rebel groups reflected the "false narratives" spread by Syria and its patron state, Russia.

Instead of looking to the intelligence community for answers, Gabbard sought out fake intelligence, demonstrating her distrust in the very intelligence Agencies that she could soon coordinate and oversee.

Her trip to Syria and her visit with Assad himself should be alarming to all of us. Normally, if any Member of Congress goes on a foreign fact-finding trip like this, we take precautions to not jeopardize our vital national security interests. We coordinate with the State Department. We coordinate with the Pentagon. We carefully account for our schedules. And we sure as hell make sure we are not giving a platform to state-sponsors of terrorism or terrorist leaders.

Ms. Gabbard did none of these things on this rogue trip into Assad's Syria. In fact, she sat down for an unscheduled meeting with Assad himself, not once but twice. She also met with the Grand Mufti of Syria. The Grand Mufti was appointed in 2005 to be Syria's most senior Sunni Muslim cleric. In 2011, he threatened Western countries, including the United States, against taking military actions in Syria. And he said in his speech:

I say to all of Europe, I say to America, we will set up suicide bombers who are now in your countries.

During her confirmation hearing last month, I asked Ms. Gabbard directly about this meeting with the Grand Mufti, Mr. Hassoun. She claimed that this was the first she had ever heard about Mr. Hassoun's threats to set up some suicide bombers to target America and our European allies. However, records from her congressional office suggest that almost immediately after returning from her controversial trip, she was fully aware that she had met with a leader with direct ties to terrorism.

According to recent reporting in the Washington Post that helped to unearth these records right after she returned from Syria, Ms. Gabbard and her congressional staff worked feverishly to account for her meetings and official paperwork and to contain the political fallout. In the documents that the Post reviewed, Ms. Gabbard's staff asked her:

Did you know you were meeting with people with direct ties to terrorist organizations?

And her response in those documents:

Is this question re the Mufti?

I want to be clear, I am not suggesting that Ms. Gabbard endorsed or endorses the despicable views or actions of this particular Syrian terrorist leader. What I am suggesting is that Ms. Gabbard's false denial to me in her confirmation hearing of any prior knowledge of this terrorist leader whom she personally met with should be evidence enough that we cannot trust her. And in the position that we are being asked to confirm her for, telling the whole truth accurately is the whole point.

On top of this, Ms. Gabbard has repeatedly made public statements that echo Russian justification for Putin's unjustified, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. She has blamed our NATO allies for failing to recognize Russia's "legitimate security concerns."

Those are literally her words. And she has amplified Russia and Putin's disinformation campaigns alleging Ukraine's development of bioweapons.

On February 23, 2022, Ms. Gabbard echoed Russian talking points blaming Putin's invasion of Ukraine on the Biden administration. Specifically, she tweeted:

This war and suffering could have easily been avoided if Biden Admin/NATO had simply acknowledged Russia's legitimate security concerns regarding Ukraine's becoming a member of NATO, which would mean U.S./NATO forces right on Russia's border.

As my colleague Senator BENNET said so powerfully as he pointed out at Ms. Gabbard's confirmation hearing, she sent this tweet at the very moment that Russian tanks were rolling over Ukraine's border, essentially saying that Vladimir Putin was justified invading the free nation of Ukraine.

Then-Senate Intelligence Committee Vice Chair and now Secretary of State Marco Rubio tweeted in response saying, this is "simply not true," noting that the week before the invasion, Putin once again demanded NATO leave every country that joined after 1997, including Bulgaria, Romania, and 12 others.

Ms. Gabbard chose not to listen to the vice chair of the Intelligence Committee or the intelligence community itself, which had issued a declassified threat assessment two weeks prior. Ms. Gabbard decided, instead, to give the benefit of the doubt to Vladimir Putin. How can we trust that she won't do that again?

Ms. Gabbard has also repeatedly praised Edward Snowden, a former National Security Agency contractor who fled to China and then to Russia after he was charged in 2013 with illegally exposing government surveillance methods and classified information.

Ms. Gabbard has called him a "brave whistleblower" and even went so far as to introduce legislation in the House of Representatives to pardon Edward Snowden.

In 2016, the House Intelligence Committee issued a declassified, scathing report that found Snowden leaked secrets that caused tremendous damage to U.S. national security. This included leaking secrets that protect American troops and American personnel overseas. As that report made clear, Snowden was not a whistleblower; he was and is a traitor to this Nation.

Ms. Gabbard and anyone who is interested in understanding the impact of the leaked secrets has access to the declassified House Intelligence Committee report and many other public sources of information explaining the damage that Snowden caused to our national security. Yet she continues to

believe her own sources of information instead and to this day will not say that Snowden betrayed this country.

Let me be clear. Edward Snowden is not a whistleblower; he is a traitor. Ms. Gabbard should know this full well.

If we confirm her as our next Director of National Intelligence, Ms. Gabbard will be responsible for transmitting lawful whistleblower complaints to Congress. Her past statements on Snowden reveal a deficient understanding of our Nation's whistleblower laws that should be patently disqualifying for any Director of National Intelligence, much less any national security appointee.

When my colleagues on the Intelligence Committee pressed Ms. Gabbard during her confirmation hearing about whether her views had changed and if she would acknowledge that Mr. Snowden were a traitor, she refused. This is who we want to lead our intelligence community—someone who outright refuses to condemn the actions of someone who jeopardized our national security and put the lives of many members of our intelligence community and national security community at risk? It is hard to believe that we could be so reckless.

Finally, Ms. Gabbard has also advocated for a full repeal of section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA. Section 702 is one of our intelligence community's most important tools to effectively fight terrorism, disrupt foreign cyber attacks, impede drug trafficking, and protect U.S. troops serving abroad. Ms. Gabbard introduced a bill in the House that would have completely repealed section 702.

I will be the first to say that there are reforms to section 702 that we should make to ensure that this law always focuses on the communications of foreign targets abroad and is never inadvertently used in a way that threatens the privacy of innocent Americans. In the past, including just last year, I worked closely with my colleagues to advance some of these reforms. A wholesale repeal of section 702, however, is a wildly out-of-step and dangerous proposal.

Do we really want to confirm a Director of National Intelligence who has advocated for the dismantling of such a foundational source of foreign intelligence to protect our national security?

Any number of Ms. Gabbard's statements or actions would be disqualifying for a nominee to lead our intelligence community and keep our President accurately informed on pressing national security matters. But I am not alone in raising concerns about this nomination. As with many of President Trump's unqualified nominees, I have heard from many New Mexicans—from many constituents in my own State—in opposition to Ms. Gabbard's nomination, and I want to take a moment to read to you from some of these letters that I have received.

Addie from Mountainair wrote to me to share her concern about Ms. Gabbard's lack of experience to safeguard our Nation.

Addie said:

Running the DNI requires an unwavering commitment to evidence-based decision-making, national security, and independence from political or foreign influence. Tulsi Gabbard has none of that. She is completely unfit for this position.

A constituent and former intelligence officer from Santa Fe who wished to remain anonymous is concerned how Ms. Gabbard's background will impact operations critical to defending the United States from foreign threats.

This individual told me:

As a retired intelligence officer, I urge you to do everything you can to keep Tulsi Gabbard from becoming the next [DNI]. Our allies will be reluctant to share intelligence with her, as will our own intelligence professionals, given her past support for Putin and for other dictators. This is a job that needs to be filled by a serious expert in intelligence and national security policy.

Katy from Tularosa is troubled by Ms. Gabbard's past association with dictators and tyrants.

Katy wrote to me:

Tulsi Gabbard is known to have had sympathies for Russia and has met with Bashar al-Assad, the unrepentant dictator and war criminal. Her appointment threatens U.S. national security.

Gary, also from Tularosa, is a retired intelligence officer. Gary is worried about Ms. Gabbard's lack of national security experience and how it will affect efforts to safeguard the United States.

Gary wrote:

As a retired U.S. Air Force intelligence officer, I urge you to use all [of] your influence to block Tulsi Gabbard as the next Director of National Intelligence. She is absolutely unqualified to assume this key position in the Intelligence Community. To serve our nation, the DNI must have a deep understanding of the strengths and limitations of the broad array of civilian and military intelligence agencies. Only then can the DNI lead effectively and offer unbiased counsel to the President. Tulsi Gabbard has none of these qualifications or experience.

Walter from Santa Fe is a veteran who served as an intelligence officer as well. He wrote to me to convey his disgust with President Trump in putting individual loyalty over national security with his nomination.

Walter said:

I am appalled at President Trump putting individual loyalty above competency in his appointments. While Ms. Gabbard is a veteran, she lacks experience in the field of national security, and her playing with conspiracy theories lacking valid documentation raises serious questions about her judgment.

I agree with my constituents in New Mexico.

Ms. Gabbard's poor judgment and lack of national security experience make her wholly unqualified to serve as our next Director of National Intelligence. Confirming her to this role will make our Nation less safe. For all

of these reasons, I will not be supporting Ms. Gabbard's confirmation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here to speak in opposition to the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard to serve as the Director of National Intelligence of the United States of America.

Setting aside her lack of qualifications and setting aside her rotten judgment, her nomination strikes me as being part of a pattern of unilateral disarmament by the Trump administration against Russia. One can hazard as to why this is happening, but the fact that it is happening seems hard to deny.

In November 2024, the Washington Post wrote this:

Gabbard's planned appointment as the head of national intelligence elicited the most excitement in Russia because she has been long regarded as a darling of the propagandist Russian RT network, which amplified her sympathetic takes on Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad and Putin.

Russian state TV has called Ms. Gabbard "our friend Tulsi."

The Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda published an op-ed, and it was titled "The CIA and FBI are trembling: Why Trump protégé Tulsi Gabbard will support Russia as head of National Intelligence."

So the Russians are telling us pretty plain and simple: She is with us.

If you look at some of her behavior particularly relevant to the DNI position, she has constantly opposed section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which is a key source of foreign intelligence for our national security and which—I guess I would have to say in this location—presumably is useful at getting intelligence on Russia.

She is not alone. Over at the FBI, Trump's nominee for FBI Director, Kash Patel, we just found out was paid \$25,000 by a Russian filmmaker with Kremlin ties to participate in a documentary attacking the FBI, which is an adversary of Russia's, which spends a great deal of time and effort keeping an eye on Russia's adverse intelligence activity in the United States.

To make it worse, Kash Patel has said he wants to shut down what he calls the intel shops—the part of the FBI that would go after Russian intelligence operations and Russian criminal networks in the United States. He has even said he wants to shut down the FBI building and run everybody out into the field offices around the country. Well, guess what takes place at FBI Headquarters? Our intelligence and counterterrorism operations. If you empty that place out and you move everything out to the field where people are doing regular criminal work, it is another way of saying: We are going to shut down our intelligence operations.

Just in the past week, since she has been in, Attorney General Bondi has pulled down the DOJ Kleptocracy Asset

Recovery Initiative, which has recovered billions of dollars in ill-gotten gains from foreign kleptocrats—many Russian, many close to Vladimir Putin. She shut down DOJ's Task Force KleptoCapture, which is the entity that has been working to target the Russian oligarchs around Putin, seize their assets that have been used to support Putin in his illegal, brutal invasion of Ukraine, and take those assets and provide them to the Ukrainians for their rebuilding and defense.

So a common theme here: Tulsi Gabbard wants to come in as "our friend Tulsi," according to Russian state TV, to have the CIA and FBI trembling because she will support Russia. Kash Patel is coming into the FBI, who takes money from a Kremlin-associated filmmaker and promises to shut down or at least degrade our intelligence capabilities within the FBI. And Attorney General Bondi is busy over at the DOJ taking down the anti-kleptocracy initiatives that focus on Putin's little gang of oligarchs who prop him up. It is three for three in unilateral disarmament by the United States against Russia.

There is a little history here that is worth going back to in evaluating all of this, and it includes that Russia interfered in the 2016 election through a Kremlin-linked internet research agency. There has been a good deal of reporting on that, but since that reporting, there has been a persistent, rightwing Trump narrative to pretend that never existed, that there was no Trump-Russia thing, that Trump-Russia was a hoax.

In fact, it was not a hoax. Trump-Russia was a thing, as a bipartisan report from the Senate Intelligence Committee pointed out. That bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee report found that Russian President Putin had ordered the Russian effort to hack computer networks and accounts that were affiliated with the Democratic Party and that were affiliated with the Democratic National Committee and that the purpose was to find and to leak information that would be damaging to Hillary Clinton in that election.

Here is what the committee found. I quote the report, the bipartisan report:

Moscow's intent was to harm the Clinton Campaign, tarnish an expected Clinton presidential administration, help the Trump Campaign after Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee, and undermine the US democratic process.

That was the finding of the U.S. intelligence community as well as the finding of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

It went on. You remember that famous meeting where Trump took the Russian Ambassador and the Russian Foreign Minister right into the Oval Office and divulged to them highly classified information—highly-classified information—which caused U.S. officials to warn that Trump's revelations jeopardized a key source of intel-

ligence in the Islamic State. They had to ping out to other intelligence Agencies and to our officers in the field: Look out. Classified information has just been given to these Putin officials to try to shore up and defend our sources and methods.

The Mueller report went to exhaustive effort, with all of the support of grand jury and senior FBI and Department of Justice officials, and they concluded that the Trump campaign both knew of and welcomed the Russian interference and expected to benefit from it.

It even talked about obstruction of justice by President Trump. But what they concluded in talking about obstruction of justice by President Trump is that he could not be indicted as a sitting President and therefore it would not be fair to lay out the conclusion that he had committed this crime because he wouldn't have a process by which to acquit himself and to clear the accusation. But they certainly laid out plenty of evidence that was suggestive that had he been an ordinary individual, he would have been indicted, charged, and convicted for obstruction of justice relating to this whole Trump-Russia saga.

Later, when he was asked about all this in a conversation about Vladimir Putin, he said in November of 2017 about Putin—he said: Putin "said he didn't meddle" in the election. "I asked him. . . . He said he absolutely did not meddle in our election. He did not do what they are saying he did."

Everybody in the intelligence community knew that he did, in fact, do what they are saying he did, but Trump, for some reason, some connection, some Trump-Russia connection, went with Putin rather than the U.S. law enforcement and intelligence services.

The next year in Helsinki, Trump met privately with Putin for 2 hours. We don't know what happened because they just met with their interpreters. Then they went out for a news conference, and there again, standing right next to Putin, he sided with him over our own intelligence Agencies. But the meddling was real, the meddling was documented, and the Mueller report helped document the meddling.

If you go into the details, you see the subplots. Paul Manafort was Trump's 2016 campaign chairman. He was meeting regularly, communicating regularly with a Russian intelligence officer named Konstantin Kilimnik and with a Russian oligarch named Oleg Deripaska through the campaign.

The Senate Intelligence Committee's bipartisan report found that on numerous occasions, Manafort sought to secretly share internal campaign information with Kilimnik. This did not end well for Paul Manafort; he was indicted by a Federal grand jury for the crime of conspiracy against the United States, convicted, and sentenced to more than 7 years in prison—oh, except that Trump pardoned Manafort in late 2020.

There was the infamous Trump Tower meeting in which Donald Trump, Jr., the same Paul Manafort, and son-in-law Jared Kushner met with Russian billionaire Emin Agalarov and a Russian lawyer connected to the Kremlin right in Trump Tower. The meeting came about because Donald Trump, Jr., had been told by a contact that the Russian Government wanted to offer—and I am quoting here—"official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary." Official documents and information from the Russian Government that would incriminate Hillary.

The response:

If it's what you say I love it.

They went ahead to the meeting. Clearly, the Trump campaign's purpose for that meeting was to obtain from Russia incriminating information on Clinton to influence the election.

The special counsel decided not to prosecute the attendees in part because it couldn't determine that that information would actually have been determinative because it related to orphans, and what didn't connect with the Trump attendees at that meeting was that the interruption of the orphans being delivered to the United States for parents who wanted to adopt them was the response to sanctions against oligarchs and people around Putin, and this was an effort to get the sanctions lifted.

If you could crack the code, you would know that that is what the orphans conversation was about, because that is why the orphans blockade had been set up.

Ultimately, Russia did, in fact, hack emails—both from the DNC and from the Clinton campaign chair. Russian intelligence got their hands on those documents.

Here is what the Intelligence Committee wrote about that:

Trump and senior Campaign officials sought to obtain advanced information about WikiLeaks' planned releases through Roger Stone. At their direction, Stone took action to gain inside knowledge for the Campaign and shared his purported knowledge directly with Trump and senior Campaign officials on multiple occasions.

This wasn't just a one-off; this was information being channeled through Roger Stone to the Trump campaign. It didn't end well for Stone. He was indicted and convicted on charges of lying to Congress about what he and then-Candidate Donald Trump knew about Russian efforts to discredit Hillary Clinton's campaign and witness tampering and obstruction.

On we go to Carter Page, also associated with the campaign, who traveled to Moscow in that timeframe—July 2016—to deliver a commencement speech while working for the campaign. Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich there expressed "strong support for Mr. Trump"—"strong support for Mr. Trump and a desire to work together."

Another campaign operative, George Papadopoulos—same year, May—was

traveling and told the Greek Foreign Minister that the Russians have “dirt” on Hillary Clinton.

So you have all these pieces coming together about the Russians seeking dirt on Hillary Clinton, getting it, leaking it through WikiLeaks, and constantly having a back channel through members of the Trump campaign.

It didn't end well for Papadopoulos either. He was arrested for lying to FBI investigators and pleaded guilty. And, of course, Trump pardoned him too. Trying to cover up his traces.

Michael Flynn in 2015 delivered remarks at a Moscow gala honoring Russia Today, RT, the same organization that Tulsi Gabbard was the darling of. He was seated at the gala next to Putin—next to Putin. He was paid \$33,750 from RT—whose darling Tulsi Gabbard was—for this one speech. He didn't correctly report the payment. He ended up being paid more than \$67,000 by Russian companies before the 2016 Presidential election.

It didn't end well for him either. He lied to Vice President Pence and to the FBI about communications he was having with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak about sanctions imposed by the Obama administration while President Obama was in office. Yes, the sanctions related to the orphans conversation at Trump Tower. Flynn pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about that conversation, and, of course, Trump pardoned him days before Flynn was due to be sentenced.

It is kind of an ongoing thing between Trump and Russia. A lot of us on both sides of the aisle are very concerned about what is going on in Ukraine—indeed, furious that Putin would launch his army into Ukraine and perform massive atrocities and war crimes: firing rockets into children's hospitals, having the soldiers murder through neighborhoods. It is a foul spectacle, and it started with Russia's invasion of Crimea, the so-called little green men.

Trump thought that was all a pretty good thing. You will remember that the way they started it was to foment riots by Russian-speaking people in Crimea to provide a justification for coming over the border—sort of 1930s Europe style tactics coming back to us here. So that kicked it off. There were these demonstrations. Putin said “Oh, my people, my people; they are being abused by those terrible Ukrainians,” and in went the little green men.

Here is how Trump praised Putin's invasion then of Crimea:

When you see the riots in a country because they're hurting the Russians, OK, 'we'll go and take it over.' And he really goes step by step, and you have to give him a lot of credit.

And of course there is the famous comment to Russia publicly, saying:

Russia, if you're listening—

This was during the campaign—

I hope you're able to find the 30,000 e-mails that are missing. I think you will probably be rewarded mightily by our press.

Then there were the episodes that I mentioned earlier where he said “No, Russia wasn't meddling in our elections” despite the fact that everybody knew they were. But he took Putin's side in all of that.

Most recently, he refused to condemn Putin for the death of Alexei Navalny, who had been such a brave fighter, standing up against the corrupt Putin regime, and died in a penal colony at the age of 47.

For a long time, I have described the United States as being in a clash of civilizations with rule-of-law countries like ours on the one side and kleptocrats, autocrats, and governments run by criminal organizations like the narco-traffickers on the other side. Fairly simple clash—rule of law versus rule of thuggery.

There ought to be bipartisan support for making sure that the United States does not become a safe haven for kleptocrats and criminals. We should not be giving aid and comfort to our enemies by allowing them to park their funds here in our country.

We have made progress to combat the kleptocrats and the international criminals who are on the other side of this clash of civilizations. Ms. Gabbard is not on the right side of that clash, not when she is so chummy with Putin, not when she is so chummy with the murderer Bashar al-Assad, not when she is “our darling Tulsi” to Russian media channels, and not when she is lined up with Kash Patel, threatening to take down the FBI Offices that track Russia, taking money from a Russian filmmaker, and then stack that up with Attorney General Bondi taking down the kleptocracy and klepto-capture efforts at the DOJ that have been making the Russian oligarchs' lives miserable by going after their assets.

One, two, three—all unilaterally disarming against Russia in the wake of all that time in which the Trump-Russia connection appeared over and over and over and over again. And as far as I can tell, still persists today.

I see my colleague here on the Senate floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, today the Senate is deciding whether COL Tulsi Gabbard should be the person who, each day, makes the call on which intelligence gets in front of the President of the United States. That is what the Director of National Intelligence does. They sift through the intelligence collected and analyzed by all of our intelligence Agencies, from the CIA to the NSA, and decide what to brief the President on. This includes information about terrorists planning attacks here in the United States or on our servicemembers abroad. It includes evidence of adversaries backing cyber attacks.

Often, the intelligence is incomplete, or there are pieces that contradict one

another. It is this person's job to cut through the noise and present the President with what he needs to know.

There can't be any spin. There can't be a finger on the scale to get him to do one thing or not do another. It requires impeccable judgment and sound decision making.

Everything we have learned about Colonel Gabbard during her confirmation process suggests that she is not the person for this job. It is that simple.

Now, I went into this process with an open mind. Colonel Gabbard and I, we had a long meeting in my office. She responded to a number of written follow-up questions that my colleagues and I had for her. And I was able to ask her questions in an open and closed hearing of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

And after each of those steps, I became more and more concerned.

Colonel Gabbard is often dismissive and has been, at times, outright hostile towards our intelligence community and the tools that it uses to protect this country.

Now, I have a tremendous amount of respect for Colonel Gabbard's service to this Nation, and I do think that healthy skepticism is a good thing. It is something that I always valued in my crew members at NASA, and I value it today in the Senate.

But that is not what we have seen from Colonel Gabbard. She has a track record of embracing overblown, flimsy claims that confirm her own viewpoint while easily dismissing the thorough assessments and the methods of our own intelligence community. That is not the person that we should want in this job.

Now, let's start here with her record on Edward Snowden. Edward Snowden was a government contractor who stole and then leaked highly classified information from the National Security Agency in 2013. Snowden could have used whistleblower protections to securely and legally share concerns that he had about the legality of certain surveillance programs, but he didn't do that. Instead, he stole millions of documents—most of which didn't pertain to the programs that he had raised concerns about—and then he leaked them, without caring about what would the lasting damage be to our national security.

After the Department of Justice revealed charges against him for committing espionage, Snowden fled to Russia, where he was welcomed with open arms.

Edward Snowden exposed our government's secrets to the world, including to our adversaries. He put intelligence operatives and servicemembers around the world at risk, at great risk. And he made all of us less safe, and that is true even today. He should be in prison for betraying our country.

COL Tulsi Gabbard wanted him to be pardoned. She introduced legislation calling on the Federal Government to

drop all charges against Snowden and, unsurprisingly, it failed to gain support.

This was in September of 2020, after he had been in Russia for nearly 7 years, and after the House Intelligence Committee had released a bipartisan report to the public detailing about how he had broken the law and made our country less safe. This came after that.

And she publicly lobbied President Trump to pardon Snowden during his first term. He didn't.

And on October 6 of 2020, Gabbard called Snowden a brave whistleblower. Two weeks later, Vladimir Putin gave Snowden permanent residency in Russia.

This should, obviously, be a great concern to anyone considering her for this job, and it is clear that Colonel Gabbard knew it would be an issue in her confirmation hearing. She knew that. So she came prepared with a well-practiced answer, and she used it, word for word, over and over again.

Vice Chairman WARNER's first question was whether she thinks Edward Snowden is brave. She said that Edward Snowden broke the law, but that he released information that led to reforms. She didn't mention the harm he did to our national security.

He followed up. She started with the same answer. And on and on it went. Next, with Senator KING.

Then Senator YOUNG asked if she agreed with the House Intelligence Committee report that Snowden caused damage to national security. She repeated the same answer she had given just before. At least eight times, by my count, as I sat there in the hearing room, she gave the same answer word for word.

But the real moment of truth came when Senator LANKFORD of Oklahoma asked her what he himself has publicly said was a softball question, and the question was: Is Edward Snowden a traitor?

It really should have been pretty easy. If you believe Edward Snowden broke the law and the law he broke is the Espionage Act, it is pretty clear that is exactly what he is. He is a traitor.

She wouldn't answer.

Senator BENNET gave her another opportunity. She didn't take it.

Now, Colonel Gabbard came into our confirmation hearing with a plan to give the same nonanswer over and over about Edward Snowden, and she was counting on that being enough to skate by. It wasn't for me.

And I still can't understand. To this day, I still can't figure it out, why she will not call this guy a traitor. Colonel Gabbard would be leading the men and women of our intelligence Agencies whose work and lives Edward Snowden put at risk.

I ask my Republican colleagues: How can we entrust this responsibility with someone who wanted to free Edward Snowden and still, to this day, cannot say whether or not he is a traitor?

For a lot of nominees, that would be a way big enough issue to prevent them from getting this job. That is pretty clear. But so, too, would her hostility toward FISA 702, one of the most important intelligence collection tools that we have. This is the program that enables us to monitor the communications of foreign actors outside of the United States. It has stopped terror attacks. It has protected American troops serving abroad. About 60 percent of the President's brief every single day is derived from intelligence that is gathered from this program, the very brief that Colonel Gabbard would be responsible for compiling every single day. Without it, we would be exposed. We would be less able to detect and prevent terror attacks or other attacks against the American people.

But that is exactly what Colonel Gabbard tried to do. She voted against reauthorizing this program in 2018. And in 2020, she introduced legislation to repeal it—all of it. Not just the piece—the piece of it that Congress was debating how to reform, she wanted to just get rid of the whole thing, all of it. And when she advocated for doing away with the program, she made false statements about how it works and how it impacts American citizens.

This should be a concern for anyone being considered for this job. Because while the Senate Intelligence Committee has a range of views on how this program should work, none of us on the committee, on either side of the aisle, has any interest in getting rid of it because we know how important it is, how critical it is to the safety of all of us. In fact, we came together with others in Congress to deliver reforms that further protect our civil liberties as Americans while retaining the tools our President needs to stay ahead of threats.

Once again, Colonel Gabbard knew that this would be an issue with her confirmation. And, again, she bet that she could just say as little as possible to just get by. That is why, in a written response to the committee, she said:

My prior concerns about FISA were based on insufficient protections for civil liberties . . . Significant FISA reforms have been enacted since my time in Congress to address these issues.

Sounds reasonable. Well, here is the problem. Just last year, she was on a podcast trashing those very reforms she is now saying back up her position on FISA. She said:

This legislation that was just passed recently expanded those authorities . . . in some other ways, it took an already bad problem and made it many, many times worse.

So which is it? Did these reforms fix the issues she had with FISA, as she said in her written response? Or did they make the problem worse, as she said in the podcast? It can't be both.

Colonel Gabbard was asked about this inconsistency during her confirmation hearing, and she couldn't answer

for it. In fact, she couldn't answer for what these reforms are and how they address her concerns or don't.

And, folks, this is not trivial. The Director of National Intelligence works with the Attorney General to assess compliance with the law and improve internal procedures that decide how the intelligence community will collect, use, and store foreign intelligence to combat threats like terrorism while ensuring Americans' constitutional rights are protected. That means Colonel Gabbard would be responsible for implementing these reforms and advising Congress on their effectiveness.

Finally, as we are all aware—well, all of us in the Senate, we are aware—this program is up for reauthorization in just over a year. President Trump has been all over the map on this program, but as recently as last year, he told Congress to kill FISA. The next Director of National Intelligence is going to play a critical role in advising the President and making recommendations to Congress about this program, FISA. Do we really trust that Colonel Gabbard will fight to protect this program, given her track record on this?

I know I don't. That, too, should be disqualifying for this job.

But the last example of Colonel Gabbard's hostility toward the intelligence community is the one that should give everyone the most concern. It is for me. As I said earlier, the primary responsibility of this job is to coordinate across 18 intelligence organizations and sift through intelligence, make some sense of it, and decide what to take to the President of the United States. In her confirmation hearing, I asked Colonel Gabbard: What does a good process look like?

And her answer to this question—it was fine. She said: Build a strong team, welcome dissenting voices, and make sure the truth is reported.

That is great. But then we got into a real-life example when she had sought out the intel, claimed to be reporting the truth, and then got it wrong. That is where, for me, it was obvious she is not the right fit for this job.

Colonel Gabbard accepts the conclusion that former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons against his own people, except for two incidents. She has publicly disputed the confident conclusion of our intelligence community and international experts that Assad used chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhun in 2017 and in Douma, both in Syria, in 2018. She authored a report—this was put on her campaign website—questioning whether these attacks were staged by anti-Assad groups, despite the repeated determinations that this was yet another incident of him murdering his own citizens.

You might be asking yourself: Why? Why did Colonel Gabbard go to such great lengths to sow doubt about these two attacks, knowing that it would have to be useful to Assad's goals? Why

did she doubt our intelligence community's conclusion in these two cases, but not the others?

Well, I asked her, and here is how that answer began. This is a quote from Colonel Gabbard:

These two cases are being looked at to be used as a pretext for major military movement. And another—my fear was a repeat of the deployment of another half million soldiers like we saw in Iraq towards what was the Obama administration's goals, which was regime change in Syria.

Setting aside that Obama didn't deploy a half million soldiers to Syria, here is the problem. By her own admission, Colonel Gabbard's doubts about U.S. intelligence in these two situations began with her disagreements about how the intelligence was going to be used. She didn't want the United States and our allies to strike Syria as punishment for these chemical weapons attacks. So instead of making a strong argument on the policy, she tried to question whether the attacks happened in the first place.

Colonel Gabbard also invoked the Iraq war. She is right. We needed to learn important lessons from the lead-up to the invasion. The biggest lesson was to carefully follow the intelligence where it actually leads, rather than bending it to fit the outcome that you want, which is exactly what Colonel Gabbard did in this case.

It is that simple, folks, and it is also that dangerous, especially for someone in this job. If she has already disputed intelligence because of how it would be used, would she do it again in this position—the position of the Director of National Intelligence? She is the person deciding what the President would see.

Would she withhold information or would she seek out confirmation without regard for whom it came from or that her viewpoint was correct? Because that is what she did in this case—the report she authored questioning whether these attacks were staged relied on a professor without expertise in chemical weapons. His theories in this case were deeply flawed and have been widely debunked by experts.

I asked Colonel Gabbard if she was aware that this professor had appeared on Russian propaganda news stations. She said she had no idea.

To produce his findings, this professor relied on an Australian chemistry student with a history of defending the Assad regime. I asked her if she was aware of that. She said she was not—not at the time—but since she has been made aware.

Here is what that tells me: Colonel Gabbard was unwilling to even examine, let alone weigh, the biases and shortcomings of the sources she was seeking out and elevating. She embraced these people and their half-baked theories because they confirmed what she wanted to be true—that Assad didn't gas his own people in these two cases. She wanted it to be true so badly that, 5 years later, she says that she

was still unaware of the facts of their background—facts that me and my staff found with some rather routine searching of public information. It was not hard.

And she trusted and further publicized their claims without verification, despite our government making clear that Assad and Russia would attempt to raise these sorts of questions and theories to distract America and our allies.

Mr. President, if that is not a redflag, I don't know what is. Still, 5 years later, Colonel Gabbard came before the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee and repeated all of this as if it weren't in contention. She continues to apply less skepticism toward these sources and narratives than the assessments of American intelligence operatives, professionals who have a ton of experience at this and whom she is nominated to lead—all because they support her point of view: The United States should not have struck Syria in retaliation for their use of chemical weapons. That is why she believed the people online.

Now, that kind of reverse engineering to try to steer a policy outcome is dangerous in a job like this.

Mr. President, the next couple of years are going to be challenging for our national security. I think we all agree upon that. We face threats that grow more complicated each and every day. And our intelligence community, they are the best in the world. They are really good at gathering intelligence of all kinds. The hardest part is sifting through that information and making some sense of what it all means, making determinations. That is what this job is all about. And everything we have seen from Colonel Gabbard throughout this process suggests that she is the wrong person for this job.

She lifted up Edward Snowden as a hero and is unwilling to call him a traitor. She tried to get rid of one of the most important intelligence collection tools that we have and has contradicted herself when answering for it. And most central to this role, she has displayed poor judgment and poor decision making when assessing intelligence, especially when it comes to chemical weapons use in Syria.

Each of these—each one of them on their own—should be disqualifying for holding this job. Taken together, they paint a picture of someone who is especially ill-suited and unprepared to take on this responsibility.

I know that these concerns are shared by my Republican colleagues. So let's be honest about it. Let's say no to the political pressure. And let's put our national security first, and let's vote no on this nominee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be

in a period of morning business for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, the Committee on Armed Services has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 119th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Ranking Member REED, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

UNITED STATES SENATE—COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES RULES OF PROCEDURE, 119TH CONGRESS

1. Regular Meeting Day—The Committee shall meet at least once a month when Congress is in session. The regular meeting days of the Committee shall be Tuesday and Thursday, unless the Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, directs otherwise.

2. Additional Meetings—The Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, may call such additional meetings as he deems necessary.

3. Special Meetings—Special meetings of the Committee may be called by a majority of the members of the Committee in accordance with paragraph 3 of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

4. Open Meetings—Each meeting of the Committee, or any subcommittee thereof, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the Committee or a subcommittee thereof on the same subject for a period of no more than fourteen (14) calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated below in clauses (a) through (f) would require the meeting to be closed, followed immediately by a record vote in open session by a majority of the members of the Committee or subcommittee when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings

(a) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of the foreign relations of the United States;

(b) will relate solely to matters of Committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(c) will tend to charge an individual with a crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise to expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy or will represent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(d) will disclose the identity of any informer or law enforcement agent or will disclose any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interests of effective law enforcement;

(e) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets or financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if—

(1) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(2) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(f) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under other provisions of law or Government regulations.

5. Presiding Officer—The Chairman shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the Committee except that in his absence the Ranking Majority Member present at the meeting or hearing shall preside unless by majority vote the Committee provides otherwise.

6. Quorum—(a) A majority of the members of the Committee are required to be actually present to report a matter or measure from the Committee. (See Standing Rules of the Senate XXVI.7(a)(1)).

(b) Except as provided in subsections (a) and (c), and other than for the conduct of hearings, nine members of the Committee, including one member of the minority party; or a majority of the members of the Committee, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of such business as may be considered by the Committee.

(c) Three members of the Committee, one of whom shall be a member of the minority party, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking sworn testimony, unless otherwise ordered by a majority of the full Committee.

(d) No measure or matter or recommendation shall be reported by the Committee in the absence of the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Committee who are present.

(e) Proxy votes may not be considered for the purpose of establishing a quorum.

7. Proxy Voting—Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures and matters before the Committee. The vote by proxy of any member of the Committee may be counted for the purpose of reporting any measure or matter to the Senate if the absent member casting such vote has been informed of the matter on which the member is being recorded and has affirmatively requested that he or she be so recorded. Proxy must be given in writing. In order to report out a nomination, measure or treaty, the "yes" votes must come from those physically present in the room *only* and must outnumber the "no" votes—whether the no votes are cast by members present in the room or by proxy.

8. Announcement of Votes—The results of all roll call votes taken in any meeting of the Committee on any measure, or amendment thereto, shall be announced in the Committee report, unless previously announced by the Committee. The announcement shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor and votes cast in opposition to each such measure and amendment by each member of the Committee who was present at such meeting. The Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, may hold open a roll call vote on any measure or matter which is before the Committee until no later than midnight of the day on which the Committee votes on such measure or matter.

9. Subpoenas—Subpoenas for attendance of witnesses and for the production of memoranda, documents, records, and the like may be issued, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, by the Chairman or any other member designated by the Chairman, but only when authorized by a majority of the members of the Committee. The subpoena shall briefly state the matter to

which the witness is expected to testify or the documents to be produced.

10. Hearings—(a) Public notice shall be given of the date, place and subject matter of any hearing to be held by the Committee, or any subcommittee thereof, at least 1 week in advance of such hearing, unless the Committee or subcommittee determines that good cause exists for beginning such hearings at an earlier time.

(b) Hearings may be initiated only by the specified authorization of the Committee or subcommittee.

(c) Hearings shall be held only in the District of Columbia unless specifically authorized to be held elsewhere by a majority vote of the Committee or subcommittee conducting such hearings.

(d) The Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee shall consult with the Ranking Minority Member thereof before naming witnesses for a hearing.

(e) Witnesses appearing before the Committee shall file with the clerk of the Committee a written statement of their proposed testimony prior to the hearing at which they are to appear unless the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member determine that there is good cause not to file such a statement. Witnesses testifying on behalf of the Administration shall furnish an additional 50 copies of their statement to the Committee. All statements must be received by the Committee at least 48 hours (not including weekends or holidays) before the hearing.

(f) Confidential testimony taken or confidential material presented in a closed hearing of the Committee or subcommittee or any report of the proceedings of such hearing shall not be made public in whole or in part or by way of summary unless authorized by a majority vote of the Committee or subcommittee.

(g) Any witness summoned to give testimony or evidence at a public or closed hearing of the Committee or subcommittee may be accompanied by counsel of his own choosing who shall be permitted at all times during such hearing to advise such witness of his legal rights.

(h) Witnesses providing unsworn testimony to the Committee may be given a transcript of such testimony for the purpose of making minor grammatical corrections. Such witnesses will not, however, be permitted to alter the substance of their testimony. Any question involving such corrections shall be decided by the Chairman.

11. Nominations—Unless otherwise ordered by the Committee, nominations referred to the Committee shall be held for at least seven (7) days before being voted on by the Committee. Each member of the Committee shall be furnished a copy of all nominations referred to the Committee.

12. Real Property Transactions—Each member of the Committee shall be furnished with a copy of the proposals of the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, submitted pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2662 and with a copy of the proposals of the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, submitted pursuant to 50 U.S.C. App. 2285, regarding the proposed acquisition or disposition of property of an estimated price or rental of more than \$750,000. Any member of the Committee objecting to or requesting information on a proposed acquisition or disposal shall communicate his objection or request to the Chairman of the Committee within thirty (30) days from the date of submission.

13. Legislative Calendar—(a) The clerk of the Committee shall keep a printed calendar for the information of each Committee member showing the bills introduced and referred to the Committee and the status of such bills. Such calendar shall be revised from

time to time to show pertinent changes in such bills, the current status thereof, and new bills introduced and referred to the Committee. A copy of each new revision shall be furnished to each member of the Committee.

(b) Unless otherwise ordered, measures referred to the Committee shall be referred by the clerk of the Committee to the appropriate department or agency of the Government for reports thereon.

14. Except as otherwise specified herein, the Standing Rules of the Senate shall govern the actions of the Committee. Each subcommittee of the Committee is part of the Committee and is therefore subject to the Committee's rules so far as applicable.

15. Powers and Duties of Subcommittees—Each subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive evidence, and report to the full Committee on all matters referred to it. Subcommittee chairmen, after consultation with Ranking Minority Members of the subcommittees, shall set dates for hearings and meetings of their respective subcommittees after consultation with the Chairman and other subcommittee chairmen with a view toward avoiding simultaneous scheduling of full Committee and subcommittee meetings or hearings whenever possible.

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 119th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Ranking Member BLUMENTHAL, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS RULES OF PROCEDURE 119TH CONGRESS I. MEETINGS

(A) Unless otherwise ordered, the Committee shall meet on the first Wednesday of each month. The Chairman may, upon proper notice, call such additional meetings as deemed necessary.

(B) Except as provided in subparagraphs (b) and (d) of paragraph 5 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public. The Committee shall prepare and keep a complete transcript or electronic recording adequate to fully record the proceedings of each meeting whether or not such meeting or any part thereof is closed to the public.

(C) The Chairman of the Committee, or the Ranking Majority Member present in the absence of the Chairman, or such other Member as the Chairman may designate, shall preside over all meetings.

(D) Except as provided in rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no meeting of the Committee shall be scheduled except by majority vote of the Committee or by authorization of the Chairman of the Committee.

(E) The Committee shall notify the office designated by the Committee on Rules and Administration of the time, place, and purpose of each meeting. In the event such meeting is canceled, the Committee shall immediately notify such designated office.

(F) Written or electronic notice of a Committee meeting, accompanied by an agenda

enumerating the items of business to be considered, shall be sent to all Committee Members at least 72 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) in advance of each meeting. In the event that the giving of such 72-hour notice is prevented by unforeseen requirements or Committee business, the Committee staff shall communicate notice by the quickest appropriate means to Members or appropriate staff assistants of Members and an agenda shall be furnished prior to the meeting.

(G) Subject to the second sentence of this paragraph, it shall not be in order for the Committee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee unless a written or electronic copy of such amendment has been delivered to each Member of the Committee at least 24 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) before the meeting at which the amendment is to be proposed. This paragraph may be waived by a majority vote of the Members and shall apply only when 72-hour written notice has been provided in accordance with paragraph (F).

II. QUORUMS

(A) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (B), ten Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the reporting or approving of any measure or matter or recommendation. Seven Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for purposes of transacting any other business.

(B) In order to transact any business at a Committee meeting, at least one Member of the minority shall be present. If, at any meeting, business cannot be transacted because of the absence of such a Member, the matter shall lay over for a calendar day. If the presence of a minority Member is not then obtained, business may be transacted by the appropriate quorum.

(C) One Member shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of receiving testimony.

III. VOTING

(A) Votes may be cast by proxy. A proxy shall be written and may be conditioned by personal instructions. A proxy shall be valid only for the day given.

(B) There shall be a complete record kept of all Committee actions. Such record shall contain the vote cast by each Member of the Committee on any question on which a roll call vote is requested.

IV. HEARINGS AND HEARING PROCEDURES

(A) Except as specifically otherwise provided, the rules governing meetings shall govern hearings.

(B) At least one week in advance of the date of any hearing, the Committee shall undertake, consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, to make public announcements of the date, place, time, and subject matter of such hearing.

(C)(1) Each witness who is scheduled to testify at a hearing of the Committee shall submit 40 copies of such witness' testimony to the Committee not later than 48 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) before the witness' scheduled appearance at the hearing.

(2) Any witness who fails to meet the deadline specified in paragraph (1) shall not be permitted to present testimony but may be seated to take questions from Committee members, unless the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member determine there is good cause for the witness' failure to meet the deadline or it is in the Committee's interest to permit such witness to testify.

(D) The presiding Member at any hearing is authorized to limit the time allotted to each witness appearing before the Committee.

(E) The Chairman, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, is authorized to subpoena the attendance of witnesses and the production of memoranda, documents, records, and any other materials. If the Chairman or a Committee staff member designated by the Chairman has not received from the Ranking Minority Member or a Committee staff member designated by the Ranking Minority Member notice of the Ranking Minority Member's non-concurrence in the subpoena within 48 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) of being notified of the Chairman's intention to subpoena attendance or production, the Chairman is authorized following the end of the 48-hour period involved to subpoena the same without the Ranking Minority Member's concurrence. Regardless of whether a subpoena has been concurred in by the Ranking Minority Member, such subpoena may be authorized by vote of the Members of the Committee. When the Committee or Chairman authorizes a subpoena, the subpoena may be issued upon the signature of the Chairman or of any other Member of the Committee designated by the Chairman.

(F) Except as specified in Committee Rule VII (requiring oaths, under certain circumstances, at hearings to confirm Presidential nominations), witnesses at hearings will be required to give testimony under oath whenever the presiding Member deems such to be advisable.

V. MEDIA COVERAGE

Any Committee meeting or hearing which is open to the public may be covered by television, radio, and print media. Photographers, reporters, and crew members using mechanical recording, filming, or broadcasting devices shall position and use their equipment so as not to interfere with the seating, vision, or hearing of the Committee Members or staff or with the orderly conduct of the meeting or hearing. The presiding Member of the meeting or hearing may for good cause terminate, in whole or in part, the use of such mechanical devices or take such other action as the circumstances and the orderly conduct of the meeting or hearing may warrant.

VI. GENERAL

All applicable requirements of the Standing Rules of the Senate shall govern the Committee.

VII. PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS

(A) Each Presidential nominee whose nomination is subject to Senate confirmation and referred to this Committee shall submit a statement of his or her background and financial interests, including the financial interests of his or her spouse and of children living in the nominee's household, on a form approved by the Committee, which shall be sworn to as to its completeness and accuracy. The Committee form shall be in two parts:

(1) Information concerning employment, education, and background of the nominee, which generally relates to the position to which the individual is nominated and which is to be made public; and

(2) Information concerning the financial and other background of the nominee, to be made public when the Committee determines that such information bears directly on the nominee's qualifications to hold the position to which the individual is nominated.

(B) At any hearing to confirm a Presidential nomination, the testimony of the nominee and, at the request of any Member, any other witness shall be under oath.

(C) Committee action on a nomination, including hearings or a meeting to consider a motion to recommend confirmation, shall

not occur until at least five days (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) after the nominee submits with respect to the currently pending nomination the form required by this rule unless the Chairman, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, waives this waiting period.

VIII. NAMING OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES

It is the policy of the Committee that a Department of Veterans Affairs facility may be named only after a deceased individual and only under the following circumstances:

(A) Such individual was:

(1) A veteran who (i) was instrumental in the construction or the operation of the facility to be named, or (ii) was a recipient of the Medal of Honor or, as determined by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, otherwise performed military service of an extraordinarily distinguished character;

(2) A Member of the United States House of Representatives or Senate who had a direct association with such facility;

(3) An Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, a Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a Secretary of Defense or of a service branch, or a military or other Federal civilian official of comparable or higher rank; or

(4) An individual who, as determined by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, performed outstanding service for veterans.

(B) Each Member of the Congressional delegation representing the State in which the designated facility is located must indicate in writing such Member's support of the proposal to name such facility after such individual. It is the policy of the Committee that sponsoring or cosponsoring legislation to name such facility after such individual will not alone satisfy this requirement.

(C) The pertinent State department or chapter of each Congressionally chartered veterans' organization having a national membership of at least 500,000 must indicate in writing its support of such proposal. Under certain circumstances, the Committee may grant a waiver to accept written support from pertinent chapters or posts of chartered veterans' organizations in lieu of the State department.

(D) The above criteria for naming a VA facility may be waived by unanimous consent.

IX. AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES

The rules of the Committee may be changed, modified, amended, or suspended at any time provided, however, that no less than a majority of the entire membership so determine at a regular meeting with due notice or at a meeting specifically called for that purpose. The rules governing quorums for reporting legislative matters shall govern rules changes, modification, amendments, or suspension.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF PROTECTORS OF ANIMALS

● Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Protectors of Animals, a remarkable nonprofit organization dedicated to the advocacy and promotion of animal welfare.

Protectors of Animals is a no-kill animal shelter and rescue that was formed in 1975 in East Hartford, CT, to rescue abandoned, abused, and stray

cats and dogs. Today, the shelter stands as one of the oldest and most respected animal welfare organizations in the northeastern United States.

Protectors of Animals has grown into a truly exceptional organization, providing critical animal welfare support and services throughout Connecticut. From online resources for pet owners, to services including low-cost spay and neuter clinics, to the all-important adoption center, Protectors of Animals has truly advanced the cause of animal welfare.

I have been honored to be involved with Protectors of Animals for over 20 years. One of my personal priorities is to treat animals humanely, and I am a long-time advocate for the safeguarding of animals against abuse and neglect. That is why I have been so grateful for the support of Protectors of Animals over the years; they perform incredible advocacy work, and above all else, they truly care about the animals they serve.

I would like to extend my thanks to the dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters of Protectors of Animals who have helped this august organization save thousands of animals and connect them with their forever home, enhancing the quality of life of so many Connecticut residents.

Protectors of Animals is celebrating their 50th anniversary on Saturday, February 15—50 years of incredibly important advocacy and services, and I am sure that there are many more to come. I hope my colleagues will join me in celebrating Protectors of Animals and the remarkable work they do.●

RECOGNIZING BHFO

● Ms. ERNST. Madam President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize BHFO of Cedar Rapids, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 2003, Jon and Stacie Sefton founded BHFO in the basement of their home in Cedar Rapids. The company's name reflects their family-oriented approach, incorporating the initials of their daughters Brittany and Hannah, along with "Factory Outlet," to emphasize accessibility to premium products. The couple wanted to provide high-quality, designer apparel at affordable prices. The emerging world of e-commerce provided an opportunity for Jon and Stacie to sell brand-name fashion items online through eBay. In 2010, they launched their own website and have continued to reach customers all around the world.

BHFO started as a single online marketplace with two suppliers and has now grown to operate across 18 different marketplaces with hundreds of brand partnerships. Jon, who serves as the CFO and President, and Stacie,

who serves as CEO, relocated the business multiple times to accommodate their rapid expansion before settling into a state-of-the-art, 240,000-square-foot facility in Cedar Rapids. This facility serves as the hub for their operations, allowing them to efficiently source, process, and distribute an extensive selection of clothing, shoes, and accessories to their customers worldwide. Today, BHFO employs over 100 team members, including their daughter Brittany who works as a buyer for the company. The company prides itself on adapting to changing consumer trends and embracing technological advancements to optimize its e-commerce platform and logistics. Their business continues to grow and thrive, with over 2.8 million positive reviews on eBay.

Beyond their impressive business achievements, BHFO remains committed to giving back to the community by supporting food pantry collections and a cancer walk that raises funds towards cancer research. BHFO is a member of the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, and in 2013, they awarded BHFO with the Bravo Award for their local growth and economic impact. In 2024, Newsweek ranked BHFO in the top 30 for best multibrand online shop in the United States. The business contributes to charitable organizations such as the Zach Johnson Foundation, Youth for Christ, and Many Hands for Haiti International, reflecting BHFO's belief in using their success to uplift others. In March, BHFO looks forward to celebrating its 22nd anniversary in Iowa.

The entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to excellence demonstrated by BHFO is clear. I want to congratulate Jon and Stacie, their family, along with their entire team, for their hard work, innovation, and dedication to enriching their community in Iowa. I look forward to seeing their continued success.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Kelly, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:03 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the

following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 224. An act to amend section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to require the exclusion of service-connected disability compensation when determining whether a person is a person of low and moderate income, a person of low income, or a person of moderate income, and for other purposes.

H.R. 386. An act to require the United States Governor of, and the United States Executive Director at, the International Monetary Fund to oppose an increase in the weight of the Chinese renminbi in the Special Drawing Rights basket of the Fund, and for other purposes.

H.R. 692. An act to require the United States Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund to advocate for increased transparency with respect to exchange rate policies of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes.

H.R. 736. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to modify the deadline for filing beneficial ownership information reports for reporting companies formed or registered before January 1, 2024.

H.R. 965. An act to amend section 3(b)(4) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 to exclude certain disability benefits from income for the purposes of determining eligibility for the supported housing program under section 8(o)(19), and for other purposes.

H.R. 975. An act to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to modify the frequency of board of directors meetings, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803(a)), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, the Minority Leader appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Congressional Award Board: Mr. David Trone of Potomac, Maryland.

At 4:16 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 11. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 224. An act to amend section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to require the exclusion of service-connected disability compensation when determining whether a person is a person of low and moderate income, a person of low income, or a person of moderate income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 386. An act to require the United States Governor of, and the United States Executive Director at, the International Monetary Fund to oppose an increase in the weight of the Chinese renminbi in the Special Drawing Rights basket of the Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 692. An act to require the United States Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund to advocate for increased transparency with respect to exchange rate policies of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 736. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to modify the deadline for filing beneficial ownership information reports for reporting companies formed or registered before January 1, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 965. An act to amend section 3(b)(4) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 to exclude certain disability benefits from income for the purposes of determining eligibility for the supported housing program under section 8(o)(19), and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 975. An act to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to modify the frequency of board of directors meetings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Armed Services, without amendment:

S. Res. 69. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LEE, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. Res. 70. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. ERNST, from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, without amendment:

S. Res. 71. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. COTTON, from the Select Committee on Intelligence, without amendment:

S. Res. 73. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Select Committee on Intelligence.

By Mr. MORAN, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, without amendment:

S. Res. 74. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. WICKER for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Daniel Driscoll, of North Carolina, to be Secretary of the Army.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. MORAN, Mr.

HAGERTY, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. LUMMIS, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. BANKS):

S. 505. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to modify the deadline for filing beneficial ownership information reports for reporting companies formed or registered before January 1, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 506. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to coordinate, navigate, and manage care and benefits for veterans enrolled in both the Medicare program and the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 507. A bill to enhance the participation of precision agriculture in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 508. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act relating to grants for beach monitoring, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. KING, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 509. A bill to exempt certain 16- and 17-year-old individuals employed in logging operations from child labor laws; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. RICKETTS):

S. 510. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the publicly traded partnership ownership structure to energy power generation projects and transportation fuels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 511. A bill to amend chapter 71 of title 5, United States Code, to charge labor organizations for the agency resources and employee time used by such labor organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. BUDD, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 512. A bill to impose criminal and immigration penalties for intentionally fleeing a pursuing Federal officer while operating a motor vehicle; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 513. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish and carry out a grant program to conserve, restore, and manage kelp forest ecosystems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 514. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to modify the Methane Emissions Reduction Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 515. A bill to repeal the Impoundment Control Act of 1974; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 516. A bill to provide that it is unlawful to knowingly distribute private intimate visual depictions with reckless disregard for the individual's lack of consent to the distribution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 517. A bill to amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 to modify the forest inventory and analysis program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 518. A bill to prohibit Federal funding for the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio and to provide for the transfer of certain Federal funds that would have been made available to those organizations to reduce the public debt, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 519. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to prohibit Federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 520. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to increase grants to combat domestic violence for States that implement domestic violence prevention training for cosmetologists and barbers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FISCHER:

S. 521. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive certain distance requirements for certain hospitals electing to be designated as critical access hospitals; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HAGERTY (for himself and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER):

S. 522. A bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to modify the frequency of board of directors meetings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. WICKER, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH):

S. 523. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to prohibit Federal Medicaid funding for the administrative costs of providing health benefits to individuals who are unauthorized immigrants; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 524. A bill to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 525. A bill to transfer the functions, duties, responsibilities, assets, liabilities, orders, determinations, rules, regulations, permits, grants, loans, contracts, agreements, certificates, licenses, and privileges of the United States Agency for International Development relating to implementing and administering the Food for Peace Act to the Department of Agriculture; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. ERNST, Mr. WELCH, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 526. A bill to prevent unfair and deceptive acts or practices and the dissemination of false information related to pharmacy benefit management services for prescription drugs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. WELCH, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. COONS, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. LANFORD):

S. 527. A bill to require the Federal Trade Commission to study the role of intermediaries in the pharmaceutical supply chain and provide Congress with appropriate policy recommendations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MORENO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HUSTED, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FETTERMAN, Ms. SLOTKIN, Mr. SCHUMER, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 528. A bill to reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WARNOCK (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KIM, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. WELCH):

S. 529. A bill to limit cost-sharing for prescription drugs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. RISCH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 530. A bill to repeal a rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to conservation and landscape health; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 531. A bill to assist States in, and pay for the Federal share of the cost of, defraying the cost of pre-apprenticeships or related instruction associated with qualified apprenticeship programs, and for other programs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. WICKER:

S. Res. 69. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Armed Services; from the Committee on Armed Services; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. LEE:

S. Res. 70. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. ERNST:

S. Res. 71. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship; from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. COTTON, Ms. ROSEN, and Mrs. BRITTY):

S. Res. 72. A resolution affirming that Hamas cannot retain any political or mili-

tary control in the Gaza Strip; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. Res. 73. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Select Committee on Intelligence; from the Select Committee on Intelligence; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. Res. 74. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 51

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 51, a bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, D.C. into the Union.

S. 94

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 94, a bill to award 3 Congressional Gold Medals to the members of the 1980 United States Olympic Men's Ice Hockey Team, in recognition of their extraordinary achievement at the XIII Olympic Winter Games where, being comprised of amateur collegiate players, they defeated the dominant Soviet ice hockey team in the historic "Miracle on Ice", revitalizing morale in the United States at the height of the Cold War, inspiring generations, and transforming the sport of ice hockey in the United States.

S. 157

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 157, a bill to authorize certain States to take certain actions on certain Federal land to secure an international border of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 169

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 169, a bill to assist States in carrying out projects to expand the child care workforce and child care facilities in the States, and for other purposes.

S. 183

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 183, a bill to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2025, and for other purposes.

S. 292

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BANKS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 292, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for charitable donations to nonprofit organizations providing education scholarships to qualified elementary and secondary students.

S. 299

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 299, a bill to establish a competitive grant program to support the establishment, expansion, or enhancement of youth mentoring programs for eligible youth, and to provide for social and emotional learning, employability skill development, career exploration, work-based learning, and other youth workforce opportunities.

S. 331

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 331, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 339, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of multi-cancer early detection screening tests.

S. 363

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 363, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign governments that resist efforts to repatriate their citizens who have unlawfully entered the United States and foreign governments and foreign persons that knowingly facilitate unlawful immigration into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 385

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 385, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to periodically review the automatic maximum coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program and the Veterans' Group Life Insurance program, and for other purposes.

S. 391

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 391, a bill to clarify the rights of certain persons who are held or detained at a port of entry or at any facility overseen by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

S. 410

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 410, a bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and services for surviving spouses, and for other purposes.

S. 442

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 442, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of the Air Force to operate a Technical Training Center of Excellence, and for other purposes.

S. 469

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 469, a bill to restore the exemption of family farms and small businesses from the definition of assets under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

S. 477

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 477, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act and the Controlled Substances Import and Export Act to modify the offenses relating to fentanyl, and for other purposes.

S. 491

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 491, a bill to establish the position of Director of Foreign Assistance in the Department of State, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 10, a joint resolution terminating the national emergency declared with respect to energy.

S. CON. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 6, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that tax-exempt fraternal benefit societies have historically provided and continue to provide critical benefits to the people and communities of the United States.

S. RES. 61

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 61, a resolution expressing support for the continued value of arms control agreements and negotiated constraints on Russian and Chinese strategic nuclear forces.

S. RES. 68

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 68, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States shall not deploy United States military assets or personnel to Gaza for purposes of "taking over" Gaza.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 507. A bill to enhance the participation of precision agriculture in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 507

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 "Promoting Precision Agriculture Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **ADVANCED WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY.**—The term "advanced wireless communications technology" means advanced technology that contributes to mobile (5G or beyond) networks, next-generation Wi-Fi networks, or other future networks using other technologies, regardless of whether the network is operating on an exclusive licensed, shared licensed, or unlicensed frequency band.

(2) **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.**—The term "artificial intelligence" has the meaning given the term in section 238(g) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Public Law 115-232; 10 U.S.C. note prec. 4061).

(3) **FOREIGN ADVERSARY.**—The term "foreign adversary" means any foreign government or foreign nongovernment person engaged in a long-term pattern or serious instances of conduct significantly adverse to the national security of the United States, or security and safety of United States persons.

(4) **PRECISION AGRICULTURE.**—The term "precision agriculture" means managing, tracking, or reducing crop or livestock production inputs, including seed, feed, fertilizer, chemicals, water, time, and such other inputs as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, at a heightened level of spatial and temporal granularity to improve efficiencies, reduce waste, and maintain environmental quality.

(5) **PRECISION AGRICULTURE EQUIPMENT.**—The term "precision agriculture equipment" means any equipment or technology that directly contributes to a reduction in, or improved efficiency of, inputs used in crop or livestock production, including—

- (A) global positioning system-based or geospatial mapping;
- (B) satellite or aerial imagery;
- (C) yield monitors;
- (D) soil mapping;
- (E) sensors for gathering data on crop, soil, and livestock conditions;
- (F) Internet of Things and technology that relies on edge and cloud computing;
- (G) data management software and advanced analytics;
- (H) network connectivity products and solutions, including public and private wireless networks;
- (I) global positioning system guidance, auto-steer systems, autonomous fleet, and other machine-to-machine operations;
- (J) variable rate technology for applying inputs, such as section control; and
- (K) any other technology that leads to a reduction in, or improves efficiency of, crop

and livestock production inputs, which may include—

- (i) seed;
- (ii) feed;
- (iii) fertilizer;
- (iv) chemicals;
- (v) water;
- (vi) time;
- (vii) fuel;
- (viii) emissions; and
- (ix) such other inputs as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(6) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(7) **TRUSTED.**—The term "trusted" means, with respect to a provider of advanced communications service or a supplier of communications equipment or service, that the Secretary has determined that the provider or supplier is not owned by, controlled by, or subject to the influence of, a foreign adversary.

(8) **VOLUNTARY CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION.**—The term "voluntary consensus standards development organization" means an organization that develops standards in a process that meets the principles for the development of voluntary consensus standards (as defined in the document of the Office of Management and Budget entitled "Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities" (OMB Circular A-119)).

SEC. 3. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

- (1) to enhance the participation of precision agriculture in the United States; and
- (2) to promote United States leadership in voluntary consensus standards development organizations that set standards for precision agriculture.

SEC. 4. INTERCONNECTIVITY STANDARDS FOR PRECISION AGRICULTURE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Federal Communications Commission, shall—

- (1) develop voluntary, consensus-based, private sector-led interconnectivity standards, guidelines, and best practices for precision agriculture that will promote economies of scale and ease the burden of the adoption of precision agriculture; and
- (2) in carrying out paragraph (1)—

(A) coordinate with relevant public and trusted private sector stakeholders and other relevant industry organizations, including voluntary consensus standards development organizations; and

(B) consult with sector-specific agencies, other appropriate agencies, and State and local governments.

(b) **CONSIDERATIONS.**—The Secretary, in carrying out subsection (a), shall, in consultation with the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Federal Communications Commission, consider—

- (1) the evolving demands of precision agriculture;
- (2) the connectivity needs of precision agriculture equipment;
- (3) the cybersecurity challenges facing precision agriculture, including cybersecurity threats for agriculture producers and agriculture supply chains;
- (4) the impact of advanced wireless communications technology on precision agriculture; and
- (5) the impact of artificial intelligence on precision agriculture.

SEC. 5. GAO ASSESSMENT OF PRECISION AGRICULTURE STANDARDS.

(a) **STUDY.**—Not later than 1 year after the Secretary develops standards under section

4, and every 2 years thereafter for the following 8 years, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study that assesses those standards, including the extent to which those standards, as applicable—

- (1) are voluntary;
- (2) were developed in coordination with relevant industry organizations, including voluntary consensus standards development organizations; and
- (3) have successfully encouraged the adoption of precision agriculture.

(b) REPORT.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report that summarizes the findings of each study conducted under subsection (a).

Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. RISCH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 530. A bill to repeal a rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to conservation and landscape health; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 530

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 “Western Economic Security Today Act of 2025” or the “WEST Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RULE.

The final rule based on the proposed rule of the Bureau of Land Management entitled “Conservation and Landscape Health” (88 Fed. Reg. 19583 (April 3, 2023)) shall have no force or effect.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 69—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. WICKER submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Armed Services which was referred to the committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 69

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Armed Services (in this resolution referred to as the “committee”) is authorized from March 1, 2025,

through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

- (1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;
- (2) employ personnel; and
- (3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed \$6,092,832, of which amount—

- (1) not to exceed \$37,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and
- (2) not to exceed \$12,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed \$10,444,856, of which amount—

- (1) not to exceed \$65,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and
- (2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed \$4,352,023, of which amount—

- (1) not to exceed \$27,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and
- (2) not to exceed \$8,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

- (A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;
- (B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;
- (C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;
- (D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;
- (E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;
- (F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or
- (G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for “Expenses of Inquiries and Invest-

tigations” of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

- (1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;
- (2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and
- (3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 70—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. LEE submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 70

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (in this resolution referred to as the “committee”) is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

- (1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;
- (2) employ personnel; and
- (3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed \$4,394,583, of which amount—

- (1) not to exceed \$17,500 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and
- (2) not to exceed \$8,750 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed \$7,533,571, of which amount—

- (1) not to exceed \$30,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and
- (2) not to exceed \$15,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed \$3,138,988, of which amount—

- (1) not to exceed \$12,500 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof

(as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$6,250 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for “Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations” of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 71—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ms. ERNST submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 71

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship (in this resolution referred to as the “committee”) is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the com-

mittee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed \$2,769,908, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed \$4,748,413, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed \$1,978,505, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for “Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations” of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 72—AFFIRMING THAT HAMAS CANNOT RETAIN ANY POLITICAL OR MILITARY CONTROL IN THE GAZA STRIP

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. COTTON, Ms. ROSEN, and Mrs. BRITT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 72

Whereas Hamas was established in 1987, with the Hamas Covenant stating “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until [it is] obliterated[.]” clearly signifying the intent of Hamas to destroy the State of Israel, eradicate the Jewish population, and undermine peace and prosperity in the Middle East;

Whereas, on October 8, 1997, the Secretary of State designated Hamas a foreign terrorist organization in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189) for their repeated support for acts of terrorism;

Whereas, since 2007, Hamas has served as the de facto governing body in the Gaza Strip;

Whereas, on October 7, 2023, Hamas—

(1) launched an unprovoked attack against the State of Israel;

(2) brutally murdered more than 1,200 innocent men, women, and children;

(3) took more than 250 individuals hostage; and

(4) injured thousands more individuals in the deadliest attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust;

Whereas the United States Government has concluded that—

(1) “Hamas has received funding, weapons, and training from the Islamic Republic of Iran”; and

(2) “Iran provides up to \$100,000,000 annually in combined support to Palestinian terrorist groups, including Hamas”; and

Whereas Hamas has threatened to attack the State of Israel again and stated “We must teach Israel a lesson, and we will do this again and again. The Al-Aqsa Deluge [the name Hamas gave its October 7 onslaught] is just the first time, and there will be a second, a third, a fourth”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that Hamas cannot be allowed to retain any political or military control in the Gaza Strip;

(2) calls upon the President to use all economic and diplomatic tools possible to halt all sources of funding for Hamas from the Islamic Republic of Iran and all other sources of revenue; and

(3) supports the State of Israel as it continues to defend its sovereignty against attacks from Hamas, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and all other Iranian proxies.

SENATE RESOLUTION 73—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. COTTON submitted the following resolution; from the Select Committee on Intelligence which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 73

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under Senate Resolution 400 (94th

Congress), agreed to May 19, 1976, in accordance with its jurisdiction under sections 3(a) and 17 of such Senate Resolution, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by section 5 of such Senate Resolution, the Select Committee on Intelligence (in this resolution referred to as the "committee") is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed \$5,261,497, of which amount not to exceed \$10,208 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed \$9,019,709, of which amount not to exceed \$17,500 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed \$3,758,212, of which amount not to exceed \$7,292 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for "Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations" of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 74—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. MORAN submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 74

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs (in this resolution referred to as the "committee") is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed \$2,673,928, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$58,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed \$4,583,876, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$100,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$70,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed \$1,909,948, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$42,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$30,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for "Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations" of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I have three requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 10 a.m., to consider an original resolution and adopt subcommittee assignments.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed business meeting and closed briefing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following detailees in the Senate Judiciary Committee be granted floor privileges for

the remainder of the 119th Congress: Allison Kent and Dorothea Lay.

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

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in accordance with Public Law 93-618, as amended by Public Law 100-418, on behalf of the President pro tempore and upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Committee on Finance, appoints the following Members of the Finance Committee as congressionally advised on trade policy and negotiations to International conferences, meetings and negotiation sessions relating to trade agreements: the Senator from Idaho, Mr. CRAPO; the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY; the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN; and the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN; and the Senator from Washington, Ms. CANTWELL.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—READING OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the order of January 24, 1901, the traditional reading of Washington's Farewell Address take place on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, following the prayer and pledge of the flag.

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

APPOINTMENT OF SENATOR ROGER WICKER TO READ WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the order of the Senate of January 24, 1901, as modified by the order of February 11, 2025, appoints the Senator from Mississippi, Mr. WICKER, to read Washington's Farewell Address on Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 12; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume Executive Calendar No. 18 under the previous order; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senators BLUMENTHAL, WARREN, and SCHUMER.

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to ask my colleagues to join me in a very simple truth: Tulsi Gabbard should not be the next Director of National Intelligence.

It is a simple, unequivocal truth, and it should be so clear to everyone because she is unprepared and unqualified for this role. She lacks the confidence and character, and that has been made crystal clear in the proceedings so far during her confirmation.

I urge my colleagues to consider not just her lack of preparedness but the existential threat her confirmation would pose within the intelligence community that she would have.

Since the Revolutionary War, our Nation's intelligence professionals have served out of the spotlight, never expecting recognition or adulation or award. They serve in some of the most demanding, dangerous posts, in harm's way and hostile environments, far from their families—in many cases, unable to speak to their friends and loved ones for long periods of time and unable to tell them where they are or what they are doing. Others serve in the Nation's most sensitive facilities here in Washington, DC, or elsewhere in this country. Many of them constitute the best mathematicians, the best linguists, the best analysts, and cryptographic minds in the world.

These silent sentinels choose to serve because they believe in the values and institutions that we should cherish and protect: democracy, integrity, the truth. We expect our intelligence professionals to live to the standards personified by one of Connecticut's greatest sons, Nathan Hale, whose dying regret was that he had but one life to give to his country. He served ably and instrumentally during the Revolutionary War. He came to be admired and adulated for his patriotism, his dedication, his willingness to give his life for his country.

That is the tradition of our Nation's intelligence community. They know they are going into some of the riskiest places on the planet. They do it for their country, and they keep it secret. I can't support Tulsi Gabbard to be in charge of them. I can't countenance allowing someone who is this risky to them and to our country having responsibility over their lives and their capacity to contribute to the intelligence that is critical to this country avoiding disasters.

What I have learned in this body is that, very often, the most important

work of the intelligence community is to avoid disaster—a terrorist attack or other kinds of catastrophes—and the country never knows about it because it has been avoided. The history of these last 2½ decades, since 9/11, is we have avoided some of the greatest disasters that might have befallen us because of that intelligence community—their competence and their dedication.

Ms. Gabbard has given a part of her life to the Nation through uniformed service, and I respect her service in that role, but she has given another part of her life to our adversaries—in service to those who would see us become supplicants of ruthless, ruinous powers. Her integrity is, at best, suspect. Her judgment is flawed. Her moral compass is capricious. That is a nice way of putting it. For the last several years, she has made a career of antagonizing the very patriots who serve in the community she now wants to lead. Her disdain for the intelligence community undermines the public's trust in those very Agencies that often serve as our first line of defense and avoid those catastrophic attacks on this country or on our allies and partners and friends around the world. Those Agencies are not just our first line of defense; they are sometimes the line of defense against attacks.

Make no mistake, we are in an age of strife and conflict that demands leaders of principle and determination, leaders who are willing to counter the efforts of anyone who would seek to end all of our democratic and free people. A revanchist Russia is waging an illegal, murderous war against Ukraine. It is hell-bent on establishing itself as a disruptor in Europe for the foreseeable future—a disruptor of democracies. It is using disinformation through social media and tech for spreading lies and dividing democracy, bolstering far-right movements that threaten the fabric of our allies.

Democracy: It isn't just our Nation that is at risk; it is democracies around the world that are at risk from Russia. In the Indo-Pacific, the People's Republic of China is determined to defy the international norms that have maintained security in the region for 60 years. Iranian temerity in the Middle East throws the region potentially into an uncontained religious war, stained by sectarian zeal, and a potential use of nuclear weapons.

We must stop a nuclear-armed Iran at every potential cost, and we should be siding with our ally there—our great friend and partner, Israel—to stop a nuclear-armed Iran. We should support their effort to eradicate terrorism— Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis—proxies of Iran.

The axis of evil that we are seeing now—Russia, China, Iran—is moving against us. They are working together, and they are developing new methods to threaten the United States and our allies around the globe. They are potentially disastrous to our security and

our allies, and the intelligence community stands as a bulwark, seeking information sometimes at great cost, developing human sources of intelligence, using electronic surveillance—all of it depending on secrecy and trust.

The credibility of this Nation will crater if Tulsi Gabbard is confirmed. Ms. Gabbard's confirmation would be a self-inflicted wound.

I don't believe that conflict is unavoidable or inevitable, but we should not do our adversaries' work for them. Confirming Tulsi Gabbard puts in place someone who has been proven untrustworthy throughout her career, potentially an aide to Moscow, Beijing, Tehran, and others. They are waiting for this body to give her control of the intelligence community.

Putin's minions call Ms. Gabbard "dyevuchka nasha"—"our little girl." I am probably mispronouncing the Russian, but I have got the English right—"our little girl." She has routinely parroted the Kremlin's talking points on the war in Ukraine, castigated NATO, and painted Vladimir Putin as a victim. That is exactly how Vladimir Putin wants to be depicted—and Mother Russia—to seek the reestablishment of the Russian Empire, including Ukraine, potentially Poland, and other Eastern European countries. That is his agenda, and Ms. Tulsi Gabbard, apparently, is sympathetic.

As my colleagues in the intelligence community noted, she went as far as meeting with President Bashar al-Assad and upending the Obama administration's efforts to isolate a vicious dictator. For years, she has been one of the most effective apologists for autocracy—exactly what we should be eschewing at this moment when autocracy poses such a threat around the world. Her comments on podcasts were shared millions of times by the Kremlin's media arm in Africa, South America, and Asia. She is a star but not in a good way. She is a star for our adversaries, our enemies, and others who mean us harm.

She is either complicit in Putin's machinations or completely unable to distinguish fact from fiction. Either one makes her unqualified for this highly sensitive and critically important role. We can't let her—the proverbial fox—into the henhouse. We can't let her into a position that demands character, integrity, and sound judgment.

We can't let her be confirmed. I ask my colleagues to join with me in saying no to Tulsi Gabbard.

There are other confirmations that we have opposed. There are other individuals whom I have said are unqualified for positions of high trust in the President's Cabinet.

There is a general deference that should be paid to the President in choosing his team, but this position is one of the most critical in sensitivity and importance, demanding the highest trust and credibility. It should not be occupied by Tulsi Gabbard.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saying and voting no.

I yield the floor to my great colleague from the State of Massachusetts, Senator WARREN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. LUMMIS). The Senator from Massachusetts.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, I thank Senator BLUMENTHAL for his unrelenting work to help protect our Nation and in raising this issue around Tulsi Gabbard as a nominee to be the Director of National Intelligence. I appreciate his work here, and I am proud to be able to follow him in this effort.

I am here today because Tulsi Gabbard's nomination is a national security threat. We are being confronted with a vote that could put all of us at risk.

Look, everybody in the Senate understands the threat that Tulsi Gabbard poses, but I want to make sure that everyone understands the job she would have.

Why do we even have a Director of National Intelligence? The short answer is to prevent another 9/11. The Director of National Intelligence position was born in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on New York that caused the Twin Towers to crash to the ground, that collapsed part of the Pentagon, that led to the deaths of 40 brave passengers on Flight 93. These terrorist attacks together killed almost 3,000 people, and they affected millions of family members, coworkers, neighbors, and people in every State in our country and around the world.

Soon after the attacks, we asked the most obvious questions: How did this happen? Why didn't we see this coming? Why weren't we able to head it off?

It rapidly became clear that our Nation had major intelligence failures. We were gathering intelligence abroad and here at home, but we were not effectively integrating and coordinating foreign, military, and domestic intelligence, and the result of that failure was catastrophic.

That is where the DNI Director comes in. The Director of National Intelligence is the keystone that holds together our intelligence community. This is the person who coordinates across Agencies to make sure that each component of our intelligence system is talking with every other, to make sure that what happened on 9/11 doesn't happen again. This person is the principal adviser to the President on any national security-related intelligence.

The Director of National Intelligence is central to how we make decisions about where our military should be deployed, is central to how we identify our greatest national security threats, and is central to knowing what our enemy is going to do next—all of that.

Tulsi Gabbard is aggressively unqualified for this job, and making her

the Director of National Intelligence will increase the risk of a national security crisis. For starters, she has no experience in the intelligence community, and she has never served as a national security official in the executive branch.

Tulsi Gabbard is also disqualified to be Director of National Intelligence—not just unqualified but actually disqualified. Her disqualifications mean she should be kept far, far away from any part of our government intelligence system.

The problems with Tulsi Gabbard are many. She is an apologist for Vladimir Putin, routinely spreading Russian misinformation and Russian talking points about both Ukraine and Syria. She rejected our own U.S. intelligence that Assad used chemical weapons against Syrian civilians, and she went to Syria to meet with Assad and with a Syrian cleric who had threatened to activate a network of suicide bombers within the United States and Europe.

So let me say this as clearly as I can: Tulsi Gabbard would be the No. 1 person in charge of all of our Nation's secrets—all of them: all of our intelligence, every piece of secret information that we gather from around the world and every secret that our allies around the world might share with us. She would know all of it, and she would have access to all of it, and she would be the one who would fit it all together. Then she would be one of the people responsible for advising the President on when and where to use our military.

I am deeply concerned about Tulsi Gabbard's track record and whether she can be trusted with our secrets, but I am not the only one who is worried. With the history that Tulsi Gabbard has, can we reasonably expect other nations to trust us with the secret information they gather?

Even if Gabbard behaved admirably as DNI, the United States would likely have less access to sensitive information because our allies just wouldn't want to take a chance on her, just wouldn't want to take a chance that information they gathered and passed along—information that could put their own operatives at risk, for example—would not want to take the chance that they would pass that information along to the United States, that Tulsi Gabbard would see it, and then who knows where it goes.

I am concerned that other countries would say, because they don't want to take a chance on her, that it would further undercut national security if Tulsi Gabbard were confirmed as DNI.

What I am saying tonight is not breaking news. There is nothing here that hasn't been said before. Concerns about Tulsi Gabbard have been circulating on Capitol Hill for years. Every single Senator—Democrat, Republican, or Independent—knows that they are putting our national security at risk if they support Tulsi Gabbard's confirmation to head our Nation's intelligence

coordination. Every single Senator—Republican, Democrat, Independent—knows the threat that Tulsi Gabbard poses. Every single Senator—Republican, Democrat, or Independent—knows that Tulsi Gabbard could be handing our secrets over to our staunchest adversaries.

The risks our Nation faces are rising by the hour. Tulsi Gabbard at DNI. Pete Hegseth at DOD. And it isn't just confirmed Cabinet appointees who are putting our Nation at risk; just look at what is going on with Elon Musk and his team of DOGE minions at Treasury. In order for this handful of programmers to gain access to our over \$6 trillion payment system, we don't know what safeguards those hackers pulled down. We don't know what gates they opened. And they have apparently tried to get access to sensitive information at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and they have gained access to Medicare and Medicaid records—which, by the way, is another \$1.5 trillion in payments every year. They seem to be rushing to access more large datasets across the U.S. Government every day.

When Musk's team got into our Federal databases, were the gates opened for hackers from China, from North Korea, from Iran, from Russia? What criminal gangs and black hat hackers now have access to our personal data?

I never thought we would get to this moment. My colleagues in the Senate, despite our differences, have always taken national security seriously, but at a moment when they are faced with a choice between endangering our country or bending a knee to Donald Trump, too many Republican Senators are too afraid of billionaires and Trump in their own party to do what they know is right.

I want to take some time to underscore just how dangerous Tulsi Gabbard will be to our national security. Let's start with Tulsi Gabbard's ties to Russia. These connections are laid out nicely in the New York Times article "How Tulsi Gabbard Became a Favorite of Russia's State Media."

In 2017, when she was still a Democratic member of Congress, Tulsi Gabbard traveled to Syria and met the country's authoritarian president, Bashar al-Assad. She also accused the United States of supporting terrorists there.

The day after Vladimir [V.] Putin began a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Ms. Gabbard blamed the United States and NATO for provoking the war by ignoring Russia's security concerns.

She has since suggested that the United States covertly worked with Ukraine on dangerous biological pathogens and was culpable for the bombing of the Nord Stream gas pipeline from Russia to Germany in September 2022. European prosecutors and U.S. officials say that sabotage was carried out by Ukrainian operatives.

According to analysts and former officials, Ms. Gabbard seems to simply share the Kremlin's geopolitical views, especially when it comes to the exercise of American military power.

Let me just say that again.

According to analysts and former officials, Ms. Gabbard seems to simply share the

Kremlin's geopolitical views, especially when it comes to the exercise of American military power.

Back to the story.

In Russia, the reaction to her potential appointment has been gleeful, even if Mr. Putin's government remains wary of American policies, even under a second Trump administration.

"The C.I.A. and the F.B.I. are trembling" . . . Pravda, a Russian newspaper, wrote on Friday in a glowing profile of Ms. Gabbard, noting, positively, that Ukrainians consider her "an agent of the Russian state." Rossiya-1, a state television channel, called her a Russian "comrade" in Mr. Trump's emerging cabinet.

Russian media has emphasized Ms. Gabbard's desire to improve relations with Moscow, according to FilterLabs, a firm that analyzes social media, state-run news organizations and other internet postings to track public sentiment in Russia.

"Gabbard fits an overall pattern of Trump breaking with much of the post-Cold War consensus," said Jonathan Teubner, the chief executive of FilterLabs. "She is, for Russia, the one that perhaps most perfectly embodies the changes they were hoping for from the U.S."

In other words, Tulsi Gabbard is Russia's dream come true.

Mr. Trump's critics called the choice a dangerous one that would undermine national security and that signaled a deference to Mr. Putin's world view.

"Nominating Gabbard for director of national intelligence is the way to Putin's heart, and it tells the world that America under Trump will be the Kremlin's ally rather than an adversary," Ruth Ghat, a professor of history at New York University and author of "Strongmen," a 2020 book about authoritarian leaders, wrote on Friday. "And so we would have a national security official who would potentially compromise our national security."

Let me say that again: "And so we would have a national security official who would potentially compromise our national security."

"This war and suffering could have easily been avoided if Biden Admin/NATO had simply acknowledged Russia's legitimate security concerns regarding Ukraine's becoming a member of NATO, which would mean US/NATO forces right on Russia's border," Gabbard wrote on Twitter, now known as X, when the war began in February 2022.

A month later, she posted a video on the platform saying the United States was operating 25 to 30 biological research labs in Ukraine. She accused the Biden administration of covering them up and said they could release dangerous pathogens, although she stopped short of claiming the labs were making biological weapons, as Russia has falsely claimed.

Ms. Gabbard's remarks were quickly called out by Republican Members of Congress, including Representative Adam Kinzinger of Illinois and Senator Mitt Romney of Utah.

Her willingness to criticize the Biden administration made her, like other prominent critics of the government, a favorite source of anti-American content on Russia's state television networks.

Vladimir Solovyov, a popular talk show host, called her "our girlfriend" in a segment in 2022. The program included an interview Ms. Gabbard did with Tucker Carlson, in which she claimed that Mr. Biden's goal was to end Mr. Putin's control of the Russian

Government, according to Julia Davis, the creator of the Russian Media Monitor, which tracks Kremlin propaganda.

Her appearances were regularly picked up by Russia's state media, including the international network RT, which promoted her critiques and lauded her with headlines such as "Tulsi Gabbard dares to challenge Washington's war machine" and "Biden wants regime change in Russia—ex-congresswoman."

By this year, Ms. Gabbard's politics converged with Mr. Trump's. In October, she joined the Republican Party and hit the campaign trail on his behalf, extolling him as a peacemaker.

"A vote for Donald Trump is a vote for a man who wants to end wars, not start them," she said at Mr. Trump's rally at Madison Square Garden shortly before Election Day, "and who has demonstrated already that he has the courage and strength to stand up and fight for peace."

That is the end of the article.

Ah, Tulsi Gabbard—beloved by Russian press, touted in Russian press, an attacker of American's military.

Or take key sections from this letter that William Webster—the only person to lead both the FBI and the CIA—sent to me. He was appointed by President Jimmy Carter, remained Director under President Ronald Reagan, and Reagan tapped him to be the head of the CIA.

I will quote directly from the letter:

DEAR SENATOR WARREN,

I had the honor of serving as Director of both the FBI and CIA, organizations vital to safeguarding our Nation. Their effectiveness depends on operating with complete independence from political influence—a principle essential to maintaining public trust and national security.

History has shown us the dangers of compromising this independence. When leaders of these organizations become too closely aligned with political figures, public confidence erodes and our nation's security is jeopardized. This underscores the necessity for these institutions to serve the American people, not the political agendas of the executive or legislative branches.

Congresswoman Gabbard's profound lack of intelligence experience and the daunting task of overseeing 18 disparate intelligence agencies, further highlight the need for seasoned leadership. Effective management of our intelligence community requires unparalleled expertise to navigate the complexities of global threats and to maintain the trust of allied nations. Without that trust, our ability to safeguard sensitive secrets and collaborate internationally is severely diminished. As someone who transitioned from the FBI to the CIA, I can attest to the steep learning curve even for a seasoned professional. This is no time in world history for a novice in the field to learn this role.

Every President deserves appointees they trust, but the selection process must prioritize competence and independence to uphold the rule of law. As you consider these and future nominations, I urge you to weigh the critical importance of nonpartisan leadership and experience. The safety of the American people—and your own families—depends on it. Trust in our intelligence and law enforcement agencies is also crucial for our international partners. Without that trust, we cannot be effective in guarding sensitive secrets or collaborating to address shared threats.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these pivotal appointments.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM WEBSTER,
Former director of the CIA and FBI.

That is the end of his letter. I just want to say how grateful I am both for William Webster's outstanding public service and commitment to our Nation and for his willingness to stand up now and call out the threats posed by Tulsi Gabbard's nomination to DNI.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists echoes these concerns in a piece they published this week entitled "Tulsi Gabbard as U.S. intelligence chief would undermine efforts against the spread of chemical and biological weapons."

Gabbard's confirmation would undermine one of the signature foreign policy accomplishments of President Donald Trump's first term: countering the threat posed by chemical weapons. Following a sarin attack on the Syrian city of Khan Sheikhoun on April 4, 2017, the Trump Administration launched a cruise missile strike against an airbase that U.S. intelligence determined Assad's forces had used to launch the chemical assault. After intelligence agencies determined that Syrian helicopters had conducted a chlorine gas attack on Douma on April 7, 2018, Trump authorized another missile strike, this time along with the United Kingdom and France, against Syrian chemical weapons facilities. Both strikes were effective at deterring further Syrian use of chemical weapons. After April 2017 the Syrian air force did not use sarin and after April 2018 Syrian helicopters stopped dropping chlorine barrel bombs.

Gabbard, however, has repeatedly claimed, including at her confirmation hearing, that the chemical attacks against Khan Sheikhoun and Douma were staged by anti-Assad groups to provoke a Western military intervention. In 2019, Gabbard, then a Democratic presidential candidate, accused Trump of launching the strikes based on flawed intelligence: "Rather than waiting for evidence, Trump acted on impulse and emotion, relying on social media posts and unverified sources originating from within territory held by al Qaeda. In March 2021, Gabbard repeated her unfounded allegation that there is no evidence supporting the Syrian government's responsibility for conducting the "alleged" chemical attack on Douma. She accused the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, (OPCW), which administers the global treaty banning chemical weapons and investigated the attack, of a cover-up and claimed that Trump's missile strikes on Syria were "unconstitutional."

Gabbard's claims about false-flag attacks, however, ignores intelligence put forward by the Trump Administration and France, an investigation by the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, and multiple investigations by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. These national and international investigations based their conclusions on a compelling combination of signals intelligence, eyewitness testimony, photographs, videos, chemical forensic analyses, medical records, analyses of munitions fragments, satellite imagery, and information provided by third parties. For Gabbard to accuse opposition groups, [who were] the victims of Syria's chemical atrocities, of attacking themselves with chlorine and sarin is a grotesque perversion of the truth.

And yet she continues it.

Instead of relying on reputable sources, Gabbard has repeated Russian and Syrian disinformation and discredited conspiracy theories to call into question the quality of US intelligence, Trump's judgment, and the credibility of the Organization for the Prohi-

bition of Chemical Weapons. In March 2021, Gabbard signed a "statement of concern" about the organization's investigation of the Douma attack that echoed Russian propaganda and was promoted by a group linked to Wikileaks. Gabbard has made her claims about the Syrian chemical attacks despite warnings from the US intelligence community that these types of allegations are a common feature of the Kremlin's disinformation campaigns. Her reliance on these dubious sources demonstrates a dangerously poor lack of judgment for someone seeking the highest-ranking position in the intelligence community.

Gabbard's deeply flawed position on Syria's use of chemical weapons is still highly relevant today. With the fall of the Assad regime last December, the issue of how to secure and destroy Syria's remaining chemical weapons is back on the international agenda. How can Gabbard be trusted to oversee intelligence on this topic if she refuses to believe that Syria used chemical weapons after it joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, CWC, that treaty banning chemical weapons, in 2013? Will she provide Trump with intelligence that undermines her own strongly held position on this issue or will she twist intelligence to fit her [own] worldview?

And there is more at stake than just the threat posed by Syria's remaining chemical weapons. Between 2017 and 2020, the Trump Administration found Russia in violation of both the chemical weapons treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention, which bans biological weapons. Trump imposed two rounds of sanctions on Russia for using the Novichok nerve agent to poison a Russian defector. In August 2020, Trump blacklisted three Russian institutes responsible for developing chemical and biological weapons. Since then, the United States has accused Russia of using the chemical weapon chloropicrin, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has confirmed Russia's use of riot control agents on the battlefield in Ukraine, both of which are violations of the chemical weapons treaty. There are also disturbing signs that Russia is modernizing its biological weapons program by building a new maximum containment laboratory in a military facility.

To divert attention from its own chemical and biological weapons, Russia has made a series of unfounded and debunked allegations that the United States and Ukraine are developing and using these weapons. Gabbard came perilously close to endorsing these claims in 2022 and she did embrace other elements of Russian (and Chinese) disinformation about the allegedly nefarious and dangerous activities of US-supported public health labs in Ukraine, including labs built during Donald Trump's first term. How can Gabbard be trusted to advise the president on issues related to the verification of Russia's compliance with chemical and biological arms control?

Based on this track record, it is difficult to see how Gabbard can be relied upon to provide the quality of intelligence and national security advice needed by the commander in chief during these perilous times. For the Senate to confirm Gabbard would be national security malpractice.

And that is the end of the piece.

I am looking to see who else is going to be here.

Just finish up? OK. Just wanted to make sure, because I know what is happening here.

In a relay race, it is always important to know if you have to hand off the baton.

Look, I will conclude with this: National security officials and experts in

intelligence are begging the Senate to exercise their constitutional duty and vote no on Tulsi Gabbard for Director of National Intelligence. We are being asked to vote for someone whose loyalty to this country has been questioned repeatedly and has raised alarms for our allies across the globe. It would be a dangerous mistake to give Tulsi Gabbard access to all of our secrets, and an even greater mistake to trust Tulsi Gabbard to protect this country.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this week, Senate Republicans will force a pair of nominees through the Senate they know perfectly well do not merit confirmation. But Republicans will confirm them anyway because Donald Trump is strong-arming them into submission.

Today, Senate Democrats are here on the floor to oppose one of those two nominees, Tulsi Gabbard. She has been nominated by the President to serve as Director of National Intelligence, the No. 1 intelligence officer of the entire Federal Government.

By now, there is no question about whether or not Ms. Gabbard is qualified to lead America's intelligence Agencies because by any objective measure and by every objective measure as well, she is not qualified.

From the moment she was nominated, both Democrats and Republicans were puzzled by this choice. Of all people Donald Trump could have picked to oversee national intelligence, he picked someone known for repeating Russian propaganda and getting duped by conspiracy theories. Do Republicans honestly think this is the best person for the job of all the other so many qualified people?

Fifty-two Republicans voted last night to advance her, but I know both sides of the aisle still remain troubled by this nominee. I hope—I pray—for the sake of our country, of our security, Republican colleagues think very carefully before casting their vote. I hope they think about the safety of our people, the concerns of our allies, and the threats—the threats—posed by the likes of Putin and Xi and others before casting their vote.

Every single Democrat, I am proud to say, will oppose the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard because we simply cannot in good conscience trust our most classified secrets to someone who echoes Russian propaganda and falls for conspiracy theories. It is alarmingly dangerous—dangerous—not just bad but dangerous—to trust someone like that. The job of national intelligence is a matter of life and death. The job is to oversee all 18 of the Nation's intelligence Agencies.

DNI would be the top intelligence adviser to the President of the United States. It would be their job to decide what intelligence reaches the President's desk and what does not. Few positions in government carry the burden that DNI will carry every single day.

The person who serves as DNI, therefore, cannot be someone controversial; they cannot be someone who has to literally convince Senators to ignore their checkered past, to ignore their conspiratorial views, and, essentially, ask Senators to hold their nose while they support her. And that is what Tulsi Gabbard has had to do with so many Senate Republicans.

Who is kidding who? Who are our Republican colleagues kidding when they talk about that she is a good choice? It is incredible. It is incredible given her long list of frailties and dishonesty and conspiracies. There should never—never—be a shred of doubt that the DNI is qualified, informed, and shows sound judgment. Tulsi fails to meet—she wouldn't meet a low bar, but this job has a very high bar because it is so important to our security.

The Director of National Intelligence must be fluent in the truth—fluent in the truth. But Ms. Gabbard speaks the language of falsities and conspiracy theories.

Shortly after—listen to this, America. This is who they want to put in. This is who Donald Trump wants to put in, someone who, shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, Gabbard infamously spread a false conspiracy theory. She suggested that the U.S. was supporting bioweapon laboratories in Ukraine without a shred of evidence.

You know where this myth came from, Donald Trump? From Russia. It was spread to justify Putin's invasion. That alone is more than enough to be disqualified for anyone seeking to become the top intelligent adviser to the President of the United States.

But the world is inside-out, turned topsy-turvy, upside down by Donald Trump. And it is confounding that America is at this point and even more confounding that our Republican colleagues at this point are going along with someone they know is so patently bad for this Agency. They should be ashamed of themselves. There are certain times when you have to buck up. And with Ms. Gabbard, this is one of them.

The Director of National Intelligence must be strong against America's adversaries. But Ms. Gabbard has spent years sympathizing not with America's allies—oh, no—but with the likes of Putin and Bashar al-Assad. Nobody who plans a secret face-to-face meeting with Bashar al-Assad while in the middle of slaughtering his own people should be in this job. You can't possibly claim to be strong against America's adversaries after Assad used chemical weapons against his own people. This list goes on and on. It is almost fictional, it is so bad.

After Assad used chemical weapons against his own people in 2017 and 2018,

Tulsi Gabbard turned against U.S. intelligence and sided with fringe conspiracy theorists to cast doubt on these two specific incidents.

I want to be clear on how strange and troubling this episode was. On the one side, you had the entire U.S. intelligence ecosystem and the intelligence of the French Government and the organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons all saying the same thing: Assad used chemical weapons against his own people in both 2017 and 2018. These findings were not just conjecture; they were based on satellite imagery, witness accounts, medical experts. In other words, the kind of intelligence data that Ms. Gabbard would be responsible for evaluating on this important job.

And then on the other side, on the other side of all these intelligence experts and all this evidence, you have Tulsi Gabbard relying on the judgment of an individual who had appeared on Russian-funded propaganda outlets. That is who she relied on, someone who appears on Russian-funded propaganda outlets, puts out this crazy theory against all evidence of every intelligence Agency in the U.S. and other countries. And Gabbard goes for it.

She was trying to shield Assad for his inhumane conduct because she met with him. She supported Assad.

I have to say, I have never heard—never heard—of a nominee for any intelligence Agency who was so ready and willing to question the findings of America's own intelligence operations, yet accepts Russian disinformation so easily without the same kind of skepticism.

And, of course, I am deeply troubled by Ms. Gabbard's long record showing weakness against Russia when it comes to Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

On the night Russia invaded Ukraine—a horrible night—and launched the first full-scale invasion of a sovereign nation in Europe since World War II, what was Ms. Gabbard doing? She was on Twitter at 11:30 blaming NATO and the U.S. for starting the war.

This is the head of national intelligence? Give me a break.

She was saying that the war could have been avoided had NATO and the U.S. just accommodated Putin. That is who we are going to have as the head of DNI when we deal with our adversary Vladimir Putin. Russian TV, of course, aired Tulsi Gabbard's comments shortly thereafter.

And now—and now—with all this evidence, Republicans want to make this person the top U.S. intel chief. Who could believe it? Where is all our right-wing friends in the hawkish community? Where are the editorial pages of these rightwing newspapers?

When Ms. Gabbard had the opportunity to repair her image before the Senate Intel Committee and ease the deep worries Senators from both sides of the aisle had about her, she only exacerbated the worries. She refused to

state the very obvious truth about Edward Snowden: that he is a traitor—a traitor—who stole sensitive intelligence and now lives in Russia under the watchful eye of Russian security services. We had so many of our Republican colleagues denounce Snowden, and now they vote for Ms. Gabbard. Incredible.

I can't imagine what our allies were thinking, watching Tulsi Gabbard testifying, refusing to do something as simple as condemning Edward Snowden. I fear the great erosion of trust between the United States and our allies, whose intelligence we rely on to keep America safe. We have a good sharing arrangement with them. I fear that erosion should Gabbard be confirmed.

Senate Republicans know very well that Gabbard has no business advising the President on matters of classified intelligence. They know her judgment is way off the mark—way off the mark. They know her troubling history of pushing conspiracy theories and repeating Russian propaganda.

So deep down, this nominee is about one very simple question: What do Senate Republicans care more about? Doing the right thing for national security, making sure a known conspiracy theorist, a believer in false information, someone who has no fact-based analysis of anything—do they care more about doing the right thing for national security? Do Republicans care more about doing the right thing for national security? Or doing whatever is necessary to keep Donald Trump happy? The American people will know the answer tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:40 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

KIRSTEN BAESLER, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE FRANK T. BROGAN.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

SEAN CAIRCROSS, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE NATIONAL CYBER DIRECTOR, VICE HARRY COKER, JR., RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

JOHN HURLEY, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR TERRORISM AND FINANCIAL CRIMES, VICE BRIAN EDDIE NELSON.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CHARLES KUSHNER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO. WARREN STEPHENS, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

OLIVIA TRUSTY, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2025, VICE JESSICA ROSENWORCEL.

OLIVIA TRUSTY, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS FROM JULY 1, 2025. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

GARY ANDRES, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE MELANIE ANNE EGORIN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

DANIEL ARONOWITZ, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE LISA M. GOMEZ, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

JAMES BAEHR, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, VICE RICHARD A. SAUBER.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

JOSEPH BARLOON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A DEPUTY UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE (GENEVA OFFICE), WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, VICE MARIA PAGAN, RESIGNED.

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION

BENJAMIN BLACK, OF NEW YORK, TO BE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION, VICE SCOTT A. NATHAN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

KEVIN CABRERA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

GUSTAV CHIARELLO III, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE ROBERT MICHAEL GORDON.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TYLER CLARKSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, VICE JANIE SIMMS HIPP.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

JASON DE SENA TRENNERT, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE JOSHUA FROST, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THOMAS DINANNO, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, VICE BONNIE D. JENKINS, RESIGNED.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

SEAN DONAHUE, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE JEFFREY M. PRIETO.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DAVID EISNER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ENERGY, VICE ANDREW EILPERIN LIGHT, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

DAVID FOGEL, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES AND FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE, VICE ARUN VENKATARAMAN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

GEORGE GLASS, OF OREGON, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO JAPAN.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

JONATHAN GOULD, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE COMPTROLLER OF THE CURRENCY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE JOSEPH OTTING.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

CATHERINE HANSON, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE FAISAL AMIN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

LONDON HEID, OF MISSOURI, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE THEA D. ROZMAN KENDLER, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

PETER HOEKSTRA, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO CANADA.

ALLISON HOOKER, OF GEORGIA, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (POLITICAL AFFAIRS), VICE VICTORIA NULAND, RESIGNED.

MIKE HUCKABEE, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SCOTT HUTCHINS, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS, VICE CHAVONDA J. JACOBS-YOUNG, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RONALD JOHNSON, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

TAYLOR JORDAN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE MICHAEL COTTMAN MORGAN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

PAUL KAPUR, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, VICE DONALD LU.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

DAVID KEELING, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE DOUGLAS L. PARKER, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NICHOLAS KENT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, VICE JAMES RICHARD KVAAL, RESIGNED.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

JOSEPH KENT, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER, OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE, VICE CHRISTINE ABIZAID, RESIGNED.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

JESSICA KRAMER, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE RADHIKA FOX.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

HENRY MACK III, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE JOSE JAVIER RODRIGUEZ, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NED MAMULA, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, VICE DAVID APPLGATE, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JENNIFER MASCOTT, OF MARYLAND, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE ELIZABETH MERRILL BROWN, RESIGNED.

BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION

JONATHAN MCKERNAN, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE ROHIT CHOPRA.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JONATHAN MORRISON, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION, VICE STEVEN SCOTT CLIFF, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

BRIAN MORRISSEY, JR., OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, VICE NEIL HARVEY MACBRIDE.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BRIAN NESVIK, OF WYOMING, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, VICE MARTHA WILLIAMS, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

KEVIN O'FARRELL, OF FLORIDA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CAREER, TECHNICAL, AND ADULT EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE SCOTT STUMP.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CALEB ORR, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS), VICE RAMIN TOLOUI, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

WAYNE PALMER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH, VICE CHRISTOPHER JOHN WILLIAMSON, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

LUKE PETTIT, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE GRAHAM SCOTT STEELE.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

TINA PIERCE, OF IDAHO, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE JOHN G. VONGLIS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CHRIS PRATT, OF UTAH, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (POLITICAL-MILITARY AFFAIRS), VICE JESSICA LEWIS, RESIGNED.

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

BRIAN QUINTEZ, OF OHIO, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION, VICE ROSTIN BEHNAM.

BRIAN QUINTEZ, OF OHIO, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION FOR THE TERM EXPIRING APRIL 13, 2029, VICE CHRISTY GOLDSMITH ROMERO, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

DAVID RADER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE GRANT T. HARRIS, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOEL RAYBURN, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS), VICE BARBARA A. LEAF, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

KIMBERLY RICHEY, OF TEXAS, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE CATHERINE ELIZABETH LHAMON, RESIGNED.

MARY RILEY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LEGISLATION AND CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE GWEN GRAHAM, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

AUDREY ROBERTSON, OF COLORADO, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ENERGY (ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY), VICE DANIEL SIMMONS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SARAH ROGERS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, VICE ELIZABETH ALLEN, RESIGNED.

REED RUBINSTEIN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE LEGAL ADVISER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, VICE MARGARET L. TAYLOR.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

KATHLEEN SGAMMA, OF COLORADO, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, VICE TRACY STONE-MANNING, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

MICHAEL STUART, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE SAMUEL R. BAGENSTOS, RESIGNED.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

AARON SZABO, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE JOSEPH GOFFMAN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

RICHARD TOPPING, OF OHIO, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, VICE JON J. RYCHALSKI.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

CRAIG TRAINOR, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE ANNA MARIA FARIAS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MATTHEW WHITAKER, OF IOWA, TO BE UNITED STATES PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on February 11, 2025 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

LUKE PETTIT, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE GRAHAM SCOTT STEELE, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON FEBRUARY 3, 2025.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE OF LARRY GLASS, SR.

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Larry Thomas Glass, Sr.

Larry, a lifelong resident of Barren County, Kentucky, was a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather to two children, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Larry is survived by his family, including his wife Sylvia.

Larry was a pillar of the Barren County community as the proud owner and operator of Larry Glass Construction Company, in Glasgow. Larry and his wife of 54 years Geraldine, who passed away in 2016, came from humble beginnings, having built their company from the ground up. Their business has been a stalwart of the community in Barren County and south-central Kentucky for decades. Their charitable work includes helping local community partners and refusing to send them a bill afterwards.

You didn't have to meet Larry to be impacted by him in Barren County. Larry was very generous and devoted to international mission work, especially to the people of Ukraine. His philanthropy allowed him to help build a ministry school in Ukraine that continues to train preachers so that they may spread the gospel throughout the country. Larry's ministry also reached the Philippines where he helped to build churches, homes, and support orphanages across the country.

On behalf of Kentucky's Second District, please join me in remembering the life of Larry Glass, Sr.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I recently gave birth and am unable to travel to D.C. to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 36 and YEA on Roll Call No. 37.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIMMY GOMEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, on February 10, 2025, I was not recorded on Roll Call Votes No. 36 and No. 37. Had I been present, I would have voted "YEA" on Roll Call Votes No. 36 and No. 37.

RECOGNIZING REBECCA CARD ANGELSON

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my Chief of Staff, Rebecca Card Angelson, who will leave my office at the end of this week.

Becky, as many know her by, has been a member of my team since 2019. Becky got her start on Capitol Hill over a decade ago when she interned for fellow Ohioan, Speaker John Boehner. Becky quickly rose through the ranks by working on the best committee in Congress, the Energy and Commerce Committee, and then with Congresswoman Susan Brooks of Indiana.

Since joining my office, Becky has committed countless—and often thankless—hours dutifully serving the people of Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. The hard work Becky has put in over the years has made an immeasurable difference in my life and the lives of my staff.

I'd be remiss without mentioning that during Becky's time in my office, she, and her husband Alex, welcomed two beautiful girls—Amelia and Daphne—into the world. In my view, they're members of Team Latta, too.

My office will not be the same without Becky helping to man the ship, but I can say with the utmost certainty that we are all better for knowing and working alongside her.

I am extremely grateful to Becky for her hard work, and I am sad to see her go, but I am excited to see what she will accomplish in the next chapter of her career.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, due to airline schedules, my flight was delayed. My vote on H.R. 692 was not recorded before time expired.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 36.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, due to unforeseen circumstances, I regrettably missed votes on February 10, 2025. Had I been present, I would have voted:

Yea on Roll Call No. 36, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 692. Nay on

Roll Call No. 37, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 736.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF WILL SROKA

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Will Sroka and his service and contributions to Virginia's First District and the Nation.

Will earned his bachelor's degree from the reigning NCAA college football champions Ohio State University, where he majored in sociology. Will then held internship positions at a public affairs firm and in the office of former Congressman Pat Tiberi and then served as a Constituent Aide in the Ohio House of Representatives before starting his career on Capitol Hill.

Will joined my office as a Legislative Assistant after working for former Congressman Bob Gibbs, a member from his home state of Ohio, for five years. Will soon became my Legislative Director and has led my legislative team with distinction for the past 18 months.

As my Legislative Director, Will spearheaded numerous legislative efforts that delivered tangible results to the constituents of my district, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the country. Will worked to pass the America's Conservation Enhancement Reauthorization Act of 2024, which was signed into law on December 23, 2024. He also led on the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act, securing 150 bipartisan cosponsors and ushering the bill through the Committee on Ways and Means.

Will served as a mentor and leader for my legislative staff and the entire office, sharing his expertise and experience with the rest of my team. His counsel and guidance have shaped my staff into the most effective and successful team on Capitol Hill.

I would like to thank Will for his many contributions and dedicated service over the last two years. He has been an invaluable member of my team, and I wish him the best of luck as he moves on to the next chapter of his professional career at Ernst & Young.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing Will Sroka for his service to Virginia's First District and the Nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SETH MAGAZINER

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Mr. MAGAZINER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 36.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

HONORING THE LIFE OF KAYI
LEWIS

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Kayi Gambill Lewis. Kayi was the dedicated wife of former Congressman Ron Lewis for nearly 60 years, and together they proudly served Kentucky's Second District for fifteen years in the House of Representatives.

Kayi was a dedicated wife, mother, and grandmother. She is survived by her husband, former Congressman Ron Lewis, their son Brent Lewis and his wife Amanda, their daughter Allison Coffey and her husband, Tyler, and multiple grandchildren.

Kayi was integral to her husband's success in the U.S. Congress—she was his most ardent supporter and his fiercest advocate. She was a key representative on her husband's behalf at events across the district when Congressman Lewis' duties kept him in Washington.

Kayi a Hardin County, Kentucky resident, was a force in her community and a dedicated

member of the Youngers Creek Baptist Church. When Ron returned to being a pastor following his service in Congress, she helped him to lead their congregation's service each week. Kayi was also the former President of the Hardin County Republican Women's Club and a member of the Congressional Women's Club. Kayi was beloved by many in our community and will be deeply missed.

On behalf of Kentucky's Second District and a grateful community, please join me in remembering the life and legacy of Kayi Lewis.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S823–S870

Measures Introduced: Twenty-seven bills and six resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 505–531, and S. Res. 69–74. **Pages S859–60**

Measures Reported:

S. Res. 69, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Armed Services.

S. Res. 70, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. Res. 71, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

S. Res. 73, authorizing expenditures by the Select Committee on Intelligence.

S. Res. 74, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. **Page S859**

Appointments:

Congressional Advisers on Trade Policy and Negotiations: The Chair, in accordance with Public Law 93–618, as amended by Public Law 100–418, on behalf of the President pro tempore and upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Committee on Finance, appointed the following Members of the Finance Committee as congressional advisers on trade policy and negotiations to International conferences, meetings and negotiation sessions relating to trade agreements: Senators Crapo, Grassley, Cornyn, Wyden, and Cantwell. **Page S865**

Washington's Farewell Address: The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the order of the Senate of January 24, 1901, as modified by the order of February 11, 2025, appointed Senator Wicker to read Washington's Farewell Address on Tuesday, February 18, 2025. **Page S865**

Washington's Farewell Address—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding the order of January 24, 1901, the traditional reading of Washington's Farewell Address take place on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, following the Prayer and Pledge of the Flag. **Page S865**

Gabbard Nomination—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the nomination of Tulsi

Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence. **Pages S823–32, S832–55**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding Rule XXII, the vote on confirmation of the nomination occur at 11 a.m., on Wednesday, February 12, 2025; that the motions to invoke cloture filed on Thursday, February 6, 2025, ripen following disposition of the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard; and that if cloture is invoked on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, the post-cloture time count as if invoked at 1 a.m., on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. **Page S847**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 10 a.m., on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, as under the previous order. **Page S847**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Kirsten Baesler, of North Dakota, to be Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education.

Gary Andres, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Sean Cairncross, of Minnesota, to be National Cyber Director.

Daniel Aronowitz, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

John Hurley, of California, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

James Baehr, of Louisiana, to be General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Charles Kushner, of New York, to be Ambassador to the French Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Principality of Monaco.

Joseph Barloon, of Maryland, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative (Geneva Office), with the rank of Ambassador.

Warren Stephens, of Arkansas, to be Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Benjamin Black, of New York, to be Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation.

Olivia Trusty, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2025.

Kevin Cabrera, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Panama.

Olivia Trusty, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2025.

Gustav Chiarello III, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Tyler Clarkson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture.

Jason De Sena Trennert, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

Thomas DiNanno, of Florida, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

Sean Donahue, of Florida, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

David Eisner, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy.

David Fogel, of Connecticut, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service.

George Glass, of Oregon, to be Ambassador to Japan.

Jonathan Gould, of Virginia, to be Comptroller of the Currency for a term of five years.

Catherine Hanson, of South Carolina, to be Chief Financial Officer, Environmental Protection Agency.

Landon Heid, of Missouri, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Peter Hoekstra, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to Canada.

Allison Hooker, of Georgia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs).

Mike Huckabee, of Arkansas, to be Ambassador to the State of Israel.

Scott Hutchins, of Indiana, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics.

Ronald Johnson, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the United Mexican States.

Taylor Jordan, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Paul Kapur, of California, to be Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs.

David Keeling, of Kentucky, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

Nicholas Kent, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Education.

Joseph Kent, of Washington, to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Jessica Kramer, of Wisconsin, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Henry Mack III, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

Ned Mamula, of Pennsylvania, to be Director of the United States Geological Survey.

Jennifer Mascott, of Maryland, to be General Counsel, Department of Education.

Jonathan McKernan, of Tennessee, to be Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection for a term of five years.

Jonathan Morrison, of California, to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Brian Morrissey, Jr., of Virginia, to be General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury.

Brian Nesvik, of Wyoming, to be Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Kevin O'Farrell, of Florida, to be Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Department of Education.

Caleb Orr, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs).

Wayne Palmer, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health.

Luke Pettit, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

Tina Pierce, of Idaho, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy.

Chris Pratt, of Utah, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs).

Brian Quintenz, of Ohio, to be Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Brian Quintenz, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for the term expiring April 13, 2029.

David Rader, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Joel Rayburn, of Oklahoma, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Near Eastern Affairs).

Kimberly Richey, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education.

Mary Riley, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs, Department of Education.

Audrey Robertson, of Colorado, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy).

Sarah Rogers, of New York, to be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy.

Reed Rubinstein, of Maryland, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

Kathleen Sgamma, of Colorado, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

Michael Stuart, of West Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Aaron Szabo, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Richard Topping, of Ohio, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Craig Trainor, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Matthew Whitaker, of Iowa, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador. **Pages S869–70**

Nomination Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nomination:

Luke Petit, of Washington, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, which was sent to the Senate on February 3, 2025. **Page S870**

Messages from the House: **Page S858**

Measures Referred: **Pages S858–59**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S859**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S860–61**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S861–64**

Additional Statements: **Pages S857–58**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S864**

Privileges of the Floor: **Pages S864–65**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:40 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S865.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 69) authorizing expenditures by the committee, and the nomination of Daniel Driscoll, of North Carolina, to be Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense.

Also, committee adopted its rules of procedure for the 119th Congress.

SEMIANNUAL MONETARY POLICY REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress, including S. 257, to improve the resilience of critical supply chains, after receiving testimony from Jerome H. Powell, Chair, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 70) authorizing expenditures by the committee.

Also, Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments for the 119th Congress:

Subcommittee on Energy: Senators McCormick (Chair), Barrasso, Risch, Cotton, Justice, Cassidy, Hyde-Smith, Hoeven, Gallego, Wyden, Hirono, King, Cortez Masto, Hickenlooper, and Padilla.

Subcommittee on National Parks: Senators Daines (Chair), Barrasso, Cassidy, Murkowski, King, Hirono, and Gallego.

Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining: Senators Barrasso (Chair), Risch, Daines, Cotton, Justice, Hyde-Smith, Murkowski, Cortez Masto, Wyden, Hirono, King, Hickenlooper, and Padilla.

Subcommittee on Water and Power: Senators Hoeven (Chair), Risch, Daines, McCormick, Justice, Cassidy, Wyden, Cortez Masto, Hickenlooper, Padilla, and Gallego.

Senators Lee and Heinrich are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 74) authorizing expenditures by the committee, and adopted its rules of procedure for the 119th Congress.

BUSINESS MEETING

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 73) authorizing expenditures by the committee for the 119th Congress.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 43 public bills, H.R. 1180–1222; and 3 resolutions, H.J. Res. 39; H. Con. Res. 11; and H. Res. 125, were introduced.

Pages H643–45

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H646**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Strong to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.

Page H617

Recess: The House recessed at 10:35 a.m. and reconvened at 12 p.m.

Page H621

Recess: The House recessed at 1:04 p.m. and reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

Page H629

Midnight Rules Relief Act—Rule for Consideration: The House agreed to H. Res. 122, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 77) to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for “midnight rules”, by a recorded vote of 216 ayes to 205 noes, Roll No. 39, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 210 yeas to 184 nays, Roll No. 38.

Pages H623–29, H629–30

Providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President: The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 11, providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

Pages H630–31

Committee Election: The House agreed to H. Res. 125, electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives.

Page H631

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H629–30 and H630.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Committee Meetings

EXAMINING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN FARM COUNTRY

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Examining the Economic Crisis in Farm Country”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

A GOLDEN AGE OF DIGITAL ASSETS: CHARTING A PATH FORWARD

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Digital Assets, Financial Technology, and Artificial Intelligence held a hearing entitled “A Golden Age of Digital Assets: Charting a Path Forward”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

EXAMINING THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA’S STRATEGIC PORT INVESTMENTS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR HOMELAND SECURITY, PART I

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security held a hearing entitled “Examining the PRC’s Strategic Port Investments in the Western Hemisphere and the Implications for Homeland Security, Part I”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PART 1: COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 119TH CONGRESS

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Part 1: Committee Funding for the 119th Congress”. Testimony was heard from the following Chairman: Mast, Walberg, Westerman, Green of Tennessee, Babin, Moolenaar, Graves, Hill of Arkansas, and Smith of Missouri; and Representatives Meeks, Scott of Virginia, Huffman, Thompson of Mississippi, Lofgren, Krishnamoorthi, Larsen of Washington, Waters, Williams of Texas, Velázquez, Crawford, Himes, and Neal.

REINING IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE STATE: REGULATORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE LAW REFORM

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on the Administrative State, Regulatory Reform, and Antitrust held a hearing entitled “Reining in the Administrative State: Regulatory and Administrative Law Reform”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

RESTORING ENERGY DOMINANCE: THE PATH TO UNLEASHING AMERICAN OFFSHORE ENERGY

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled “Restoring Energy Dominance: The Path to Unleashing American Offshore Energy”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

RESTORING MULTIPLE USE TO REVITALIZE AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing entitled “Restoring Multiple Use to Revitalize America’s Public Lands and Rural Communities”. Testimony was heard from Eric Clarke, County Attorney, Washington County, Utah; Dan Gibbs, Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources, Colorado; and public witnesses.

EXAMINING THE GROWTH OF THE WELFARE STATE, PART I

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services held a hearing entitled “Examining the Growth of the Welfare State, Part I”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

AMERICA BUILDS: CLEAN WATER ACT PERMITTING AND PROJECT DELIVERY

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment held a hearing entitled “America Builds: Clean Water Act Permitting and Project Delivery”. Testimony was heard from Robert Singletary, Executive Director, Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma; Shawn M. LaTourette, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection, New Jersey; and public witnesses.

BUREAUCRATIC BARRIERS: MAKING VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION SERVICES WORK FOR VETERANS AND NOT THE BUREAUCRACY

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing entitled “Bureaucratic Barriers: Making VBA Education Services Work for Veterans and not the Bureaucracy”. Testimony was heard from Ken Smith, Acting Executive Director, Education Service, Department of Veterans Affairs.

IRS RETURN ON INVESTMENT AND THE NEED FOR MODERNIZATION

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Oversight held a hearing entitled “IRS Return on Investment and the Need for Modernization”. Testimony was heard from Kristen Kociolek, Managing Director, Financial Management and Assurance Team, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

MODERNIZING AMERICAN HEALTH CARE: CREATING HEALTHY OPTIONS AND BETTER INCENTIVES

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled “Modernizing American Health Care: Creating Healthy Options and Better Incentives”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on the Budget: business meeting to markup the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2025, 10 a.m., SH-216.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the Arctic and Greenland’s geostrategic importance to U.S. interests, 10 a.m., SR-253.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine advancing carbon capture, utilization and sequestration technologies and ensuring effective implementation of the USE IT Act, 10 a.m., SD-406.

Committee on Finance: business meeting to continue consideration of the nomination of Jamieson Greer, of Maryland, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, 11 a.m., S-216, Capitol.

Committee on Indian Affairs: to hold an oversight hearing to examine Native communities’ priorities for the 119th Congress, 2:30 p.m., SD-628.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Deputy Attorney General, and Abigail Slater, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, both of the Department of Justice, 10:15 a.m., SD-226.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: business meeting to consider S. 298, to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to relocate 30 percent of the employees assigned to headquarters to duty stations outside the Washington metropolitan area, S. 300, to improve accountability in the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, S. 371, to require certain reports on small business disaster assistance to be published on the website of the Small Business Administration, and committee rules for the 119th Congress, 9:30 a.m., SD-106.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine optimizing longevity from research to action, 3:30 p.m., SD-106.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “Career Ready Students: Innovations from Community Colleges and the Private Sector”, 10 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Protecting American Interests in a Convergent Global Threat Environment”, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and Workforce, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1048, the “DETERRENT Act”; H.R. 649, the “Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025”; H.R. 1069, the “PROTECT Our Kids Act”; H.R. 1005, the “CLASS Act”; and H.R. 1049, the “Transparency in Reporting of Adversarial Contributions to Education Act”, 10:15 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade, hearing entitled “AI in Manufacturing: Securing American Leadership in Manufacturing and the Next Generation of Technologies”, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled “The Federal Reserve’s Semi-Annual Monetary Policy Report”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Part 2: Committee Funding for the 119th Congress”, 10 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, hearing entitled “The Censorship-Industrial Complex”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 231, the “Colorado River Basin System Conservation Extension Act of 2025”; H.R. 249, to redesignate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.; H.R. 302, the “Water Rights Protection Act of 2025”; H.R. 331, to amend the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act to clarify a provision relating to conveyances for aquifer recharge purposes; H.R. 618, to amend the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 to include the City of North Las Vegas and

the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association, and for other purposes; H.R. 1001, to provide for a memorandum of understanding to address the impacts of a certain record of decision on the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund; H.R. 1044, to amend Public Law 99–338 with respect to Kaweah Project permits; H.R. 1110, the “Grazing for Wildfire Risk Reduction Act”; and the Committee’s Authorization and Oversight Plan, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled “Leaving Indian Children Behind: Reviewing the State of BIE Schools”, 2 p.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, hearing entitled “The War on Waste: Stamping Out the Scourge of Improper Payments and Fraud”, 10 a.m., 2247 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled “From Transformative Science to Technological Breakthroughs: DOE’s National Laboratories”, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Driving Economic Growth: SBA Lending Programs and the Vital Role of Community Banks”, 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, hearing entitled “America Builds: A Review of Programs to Address Roadway Safety”, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled “Roles and Responsibilities: Evaluating VA Community Care”, 2:15 p.m., 360 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1155, the “Recovery of Stolen Checks Act”; H.R. 1155, the “Recovery of Stolen Checks Act”; H.R. 997, the “National Taxpayer Advocate Enhancement Act of 2025”; H.R. 998, the “Internal Revenue Service Math and Taxpayer Help Act”; H.R. 1152, the “Electronic Filing and Payment Fairness Act”; and H.R. 1156, the “Pandemic Unemployment Fraud Enforcement Act”, 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Wednesday, February 12

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, February 12

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence, post-cloture.

At 11 a.m., Senate will vote on confirmation of the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard, followed by a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 77—Midnight Rules Relief Act.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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