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# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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No. 37

## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

### PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, National Chaplain Daniel DePozo, the American Legion, Henderson, NV.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Most Heavenly Father, whose love is given freely, we thank You, Lord. May all of our lawmakers who make decisions be guided in Your Name. May they have the wisdom and the courage and, most importantly, the courage of love and heart. We ask You, Lord, for those who are serving now, to give to them the help that is needed.

This great Nation of ours is entrusted to You, O Lord. Your blessings on the men and women who are protecting us as a great Nation, who are also under Your care, we ask You to bless them as well.

We ask this all in Your 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 executive clerk read the nomination of Daniel Driscoll, of North Carolina, to be Secretary of the Army.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### NOMINATION OF JAMIESON GREER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, soon, we will be voting on the nomination of Jamieson Greer of Maryland to be U.S. Trade Representative.

I will be supporting that nomination. I voted for his nomination to get out of the Finance Committee because I believe we need a clear change from the last 4 years, when there was never any attempt to do anything to reduce trade barriers.

Unlike his predecessor, I am confident that Mr. Greer will pursue an aggressive trade strategy that includes opening access to new markets through new trade deals. I also believe that Mr. Greer will work to level the playing field for U.S. farmers to compete with Brazil fairly and to deal with China head on. As my colleagues know, I am a free and fair trader, and though I would not like to see extreme tariffs, I am hopeful that Mr. Greer and President Trump will bring us to freer and more fair trade.

We often think of Europe, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, and China as being big problems for us when it comes to trade. I would like to remind my colleagues that there are about 190 other countries on this globe that we can seek agreements with, and taking time to seek those agreements would be good.

Along this line, Senator BOOZMAN, chairman of the Ag Committee, and I,

a member of the Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over trade, sent letters to members of the Finance Committee, the Agriculture Committee, and the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives. We asked our colleagues to listen to somebody who has had some experience in dealing with some of these smaller nations with bilateral trade agreements. That person is a person by the name of Al Johnson.

During the George W. Bush Presidency, he negotiated trade agreements with about a dozen countries that added up to about six or seven different agreements—all bilateral. I think, this is the way President Trump prefers—bilateral negotiations rather than multilateral negotiations. He was very successful, and that success can be measured by the fact that he has shown in his studies that, with these dozen countries with which we negotiated bilateral free-trade agreements during the George W. Bush administration, we increased our trade with those nations by about 600 percent.

So I hope my colleagues will give Al Johnson a chance to talk to them. I know he has already visited with some Members of the U.S. Senate, and he is very vigorously promoting the idea that we ought to have bilateral negotiations—and with a lot of countries that we never think about—that could be beneficial to American exports.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive 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 JAMIESON GREER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday evening, we invoked cloture on the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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nomination of Jamieson Greer to be U.S. Trade Representative.

Mr. Greer is admirably qualified for this position. He spent most of his career specializing in trade law and has extensive international experience. He served as a missionary in Brussels, received a master's degree from two Paris institutions, served as law clerk for the European Court of Justice, and was stationed in both Türkiye and Iraq as a member of the Air Force. Most significantly of all, he spent 3 years of the previous Trump administration serving as Chief of Staff to then-U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who spoke highly of Mr. Greer's work. He is, in short, very well prepared for this role.

One of my top priorities when it comes to trade is expanding opportunities for our Nation's agriculture producers, like the many farmers and ranchers in my State of South Dakota.

The Biden administration frequently seemed to have no interest in trade beyond negotiating on climate and labor issues. Witness the fact that there was not a single FTA negotiated during the Biden administration—not a single one—with all the opportunities across the globe to enter into trade agreements to open up and provide access to America's farmers and ranchers and small business people. Well, that was a real disservice to America's ag producers and to our small businesses.

Trade is critical to the continued success of American agriculture. Twenty percent of U.S. ag products are exported yearly, and exports provide substantial farm income. Soybeans and corn alone accounted for 22 percent of all U.S. exports by value in 2024.

Thanks, in part, to the Biden administration's almost complete inaction on trade, the current agricultural trade deficit is at an alltime high. That is an area of our economy where we have always run trade surpluses historically. Consistently over time, decade after decade, we had always run trade surpluses in agriculture until the last few years under the Biden administration, when we started racking up not only deficits but now record trade deficits. They are at an alltime high. I have to say that is a real problem for our ag producers, especially considering the other challenges that they have been facing, and it is something that needs to be addressed.

I know that the Trump administration is committed to meeting the needs of farmers and ranchers, and I am looking forward to working with Mr. Greer to expand opportunities for our agricultural producers.

I am very encouraged by the fact that Mr. Greer has expressed his commitment to working closely with the Senate Finance Committee, of which I am a member, and with Congress.

President Biden's Trade Representative was completely uninterested in working with Congress. So it is very encouraging to hear of Mr. Greer's commitment to communication and collaboration.

I look forward to a close partnership between the administration and Congress in the coming months and years, as we work to expand opportunities for American producers.

#### ENERGY

Mr. President, this afternoon, we are going to vote on a resolution to end the energy emergency that President Trump declared upon taking office.

Apparently, according to the resolution's authors, this energy emergency declaration isn't justified. In response to that, I would like to just read a headline from the Washington Post last March. That headline is:

Amid explosive demand, America is running out of power.

Let me just repeat that for my Democratic colleagues:

Amid explosive demand, America is running out of power. [Running out of power.]

The article stated:

Vast swaths of the United States are at risk of running short of power as electricity-hungry data centers and clean technology factories proliferate around the country, leaving utilities and regulators grasping for credible plans to expand the nation's creaking power grid.

Then, of course, there was this headline from another major news outlet in December:

More than half the US faces blackout risks in next decade, NERC finds.

Again:

More than half the US faces blackout risks in next decade . . .

Large swaths of the US—

The article noted—

could experience rolling blackouts due to capacity shortfalls during extreme weather events in the next decade, according to a grid reliability analysis released Tuesday.

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator faces the highest risk of energy shortfalls starting as soon as this summer, according to the report from the North American Electric Reliability Corp., which can force grid operators to trigger rolling outages to prevent wider system harm.

These aren't niche publications. These are mainstream media outlets—mainstream media outlets reporting on the fact that “America is running out of power.”

If my Democrat colleagues don't consider that an emergency, I just don't know what to say.

As these articles—and others—make clear, the U.S. electric grid is extremely shaky.

Thanks in substantial part to a movement to shut down fossil fuel-fired powerplants before reliable sources of clean energy are available to replace them, America is running out of power, even as we face huge new power demands. The boom in data center construction—in particular to power the rise of artificial intelligence—is placing, and will place, vast new demands upon the grid.

A recent CNBC headline noted:

Data centers powering artificial intelligence could use more electricity than entire cities. [. . . more electricity than entire cities.]

If we continue on our current course, there is a very real risk that we are not going to be able to meet that demand; that we are going to end up with widespread brownouts and blackouts or electricity rationing or de facto rationing forced by sky-high energy bills.

I realize that this is an inconvenient truth to my Democrat colleagues. Why? Because it interferes with their plans to force the United States off conventional energy.

If Democrats acknowledge that we are rapidly approaching an energy crisis, they might have to actually consider the consequences of their energy plans; to consider what might happen when you put immense new power demands on an already shaky grid by forcing Americans into electric vehicles; to consider what might happen if you drastically limit domestic oil and gas production, even as the Nation continues to require steady and affordable supply of conventional fuels.

So I do understand why Democrats prefer not to acknowledge our national energy emergency. But acknowledge it or not, it is there. And if we don't take action, we are going to be facing some very serious problems in the very near future.

So I am grateful to have a President who recognizes and acknowledges the energy emergency facing our Nation, and I look forward to working with him to unleash American energy production and achieve a secure, affordable, and reliable energy future with the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive 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, over the last month, it has become clear how Donald Trump and Republicans govern. Donald Trump and Republicans have focused on things most Americans don't care about or don't like while refusing to focus on things Americans actually do care about.

Donald Trump and Republicans have focused on things most Americans don't care about or don't even like while refusing to focus on things Americans actually do care about.

Exhibit A of these things that Americans don't like is what is happening today in the House of Representatives. As soon as today, House Republicans will advance a budget resolution clearing the way for perhaps the most draconian cuts to Medicaid in American history, all so Republicans can cut taxes for their billionaires club and have the American people pick up the tab and pay the price. This is in the

category of things Americans really don't like.

There is only one proper way to describe the Republican plan that is moving through the House this week: radical. Radical. The Republican plan radically hurts American families while radically helping the billionaires club. Republicans are so eager to cut taxes for billionaires that they would increase the deficit by a trillion dollars or more to make room for their sweetheart-deal tax cuts for billionaires like Elon Musk.

Republicans are also pushing for trillions in cuts for working- and middle-class Americans, endangering everything from Medicaid to nutrition programs, to housing assistance, and so much more. The Republican bill could cut as much as \$880 billion from Medicaid alone. That means 80 million Americans—kids, veterans, people with disabilities, rural Americans, the elderly—are all at risk.

And why? Why are Republicans putting these people at such risk and hurting things that benefit them—not waste; things that actually go to people and help them? They are doing it to make life easier for the billionaires club. They are doing it to cut taxes for the ultrawealthy.

Last week, here in the Senate, during vote-arama, I pushed an amendment that said we should have no tax breaks for billionaires. I pushed an amendment calling for no billionaire tax breaks if even one dollar of Medicaid spending was cut. What is more important: helping people get healthcare, helping the elderly stay in nursing homes, helping our veterans—especially those who may be out of work—get the healthcare they need? What is more important—that or a tax break for someone who is very wealthy already?

Well, on both amendments—the one that said no tax breaks for billionaires and the one that said no tax breaks for billionaires if even one dollar of Medicaid spending was cut—both times, Republicans overwhelmingly said no.

Let us hope—let us hope—it may be a distant hope, but let us hope that House Republicans show more courage, more compassion, and more common sense to reject these horrible, harmful, radical cuts.

This is not what the American people signed up for in this election. Billionaire tax cuts is a clear example of things Americans don't like. Just look at all the backlash Republicans are seeing in their townhalls. And Republicans know this. Republicans know that cutting taxes for wealthy billionaires is something most Americans don't like at all. They didn't campaign on it. Oh, no. I didn't hear any of our Republican colleagues who were running go home and say "I want to cut taxes for the billionaires," although that is the first thing they are doing when they get here. Yet Republicans seem to be full steam ahead all the same.

This, of course, is part of the pattern I am talking about. Over the last month, Donald Trump and Republicans have spent their energy focused on things Americans don't like while refusing to focus on things Americans actually do care about—like inflation, rising prices.

We already see that Americans are upset with the Trump administration because prices continue to rise, as they have over the last many years. Donald Trump promised to bring down costs on day one. He said that the first day he is elected, he is going to start bringing costs down, but instead, inflation has gone up, grocery prices are up. Chicken, pork, steak—all more expensive. Eggs are up 15 percent from last month. All the while, Republicans are focused on things that Americans either don't like or don't care about.

Americans don't like, for instance, pardoning violent insurrectionists. It was one of the least popular things we have seen; a recent poll in the Washington Post is clear. But that was the first major decision Donald Trump made as President, the first major decision.

Most Americans don't care whether you call it the Gulf of Mexico or the Gulf of America or something else. Most Americans don't care about building hotels in Gaza or annexing Canada. Yet these are the things that Donald Trump is focused on to distract people from the fact that he doesn't actually have real solutions to the things Americans really worry about.

Of course, there are things that Republicans are focused on that make things actively worse. Most Americans don't think it is a great idea to get into a trade war with our closest allies. That is going to make trips to the grocery store even more expensive than they are now.

Of course, most Americans do care about making government more efficient. While everyone certainly supports cutting waste, Americans don't like the harmful chaos that Elon Musk and DOGE have unleashed. They don't want to see a rich billionaire treat Federal workers with immense disrespect. And make no mistake, Americans did not sign up for DOGE to endanger their Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid benefits. That is not government efficiency; that hurts the American people.

What DOGE is doing is chaos, and Americans know that the chaos being unleashed by DOGE is causing a lot of harm to the country. Americans don't want to see their air traffic safety personnel fired in droves, no questions asked. That is not government efficiency; that is chaos and danger at the airports and in airplanes, at security checkpoints.

Our veterans don't want to see the VA starved of resources. Someone came over to me the other day and said: My brother is in a VA hospital. He has a rare disease. Seven of the people were let go. Who is going to take care of him?

They don't want to hear about cuts to the Veterans Crisis Line, where veterans who may have come back from Iraq or Afghanistan with PTSD or other problems have a place to go and a place to call. That is not government efficiency, cutting the Veterans Crisis Line; that is just more chaos, more harm, more hurt. Can you imagine the callousness of firing personnel who operate the veterans suicide crisis line, as was reported by the staff at the VA? It is a cruel and vindictive way to treat America's heroes.

Of course, our 9/11 families did not sign up for DOGE trying to cut the 9/11 survivor health program—the people who rushed to the Towers, the brave heroes, police, fire, first responders, and others who rushed to the Towers in the days after that horrible day of 9/11 and got illnesses in their lungs and gastrointestinal tracts and now are getting some help. The 9/11 families didn't sign up to cut that, but that is precisely what DOGE tried to do. We pushed back, and I am glad that President Trump and DOGE reversed themselves on that issue. They should be reversing themselves on many other issues also that hurt people so badly.

But the takeaway is they are very clear: What DOGE is doing is not making government more efficient; it is creating more chaos. And if there is one thing Americans don't want in these turbulent times, it is more chaos.

Rather than actually cut waste in government in a smart way, a careful way, an efficient way; rather than putting the needs of working people first, Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and the Republican Party have plunged basic government services into chaos and taken a meat ax at programs that help workers, middle-class families, and low-income Americans, all for the sake of cutting taxes for billionaires and mega corporations.

Republicans are focused on the wrong things. They are helping the wrong people, and they are ignoring the vast majority of Americans they promised to serve.

Under Donald Trump's Republican Party, billionaires win, American families lose.

So let me say it once again. Over the last month, it has become clear how Donald Trump and Republicans govern. Donald Trump and Republicans have focused on things Americans don't care about or don't like while refusing to focus on things Americans actually do care about.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have just come to the floor, having listened to the minority leader, the

Democratic Senator from New York, say something to the effect that he thought that President Trump's policies were not popular with the American people.

As he was saying this, I recalled a poll, a Harvard-Harris poll, conducted just this past week. Trump's policies—the key thing why he won election as President of the United States—huge popularity of what the President is doing today: promises that he made prior to the election, promises kept now that he is in the White House.

Let's take a look at No. 1—deportation of illegal immigrants who have committed crimes. Mr. President, 81 percent of the American people—and that includes a lot of Democrats—say that is a very popular position taken by President Trump and now being enforced by President Trump.

Eliminating fraud and waste in government expenditures—76 percent of Americans agree. What have we seen happen with DOGE? What we have seen is actually pointing out fraud and waste in government. The American people are supportive.

Then, of course, closing the border. Again, 76 percent of Americans—Republicans, Democrats, Independents—all across the board support what President Trump is doing.

President Trump ran for office against a party that was a party of high prices and open borders, and it is because of those things that President Trump won and Republicans won the House and the Senate.

So now the minority leader comes to the floor and says that what President Trump is doing is not popular. Well, they sure are in terms of wasteful Washington spending and closing the border, which were the two reasons that President Trump and Republicans won the elections in November.

Let's talk about the things the American people care about. Republicans, President Trump—all of us promised to get America back on track. That is what we said we would do. That is what we are doing right now. We committed to cutting Washington's wasteful spending. We committed to reducing the size of a bloated government. This is going to make life more affordable for all Americans.

President Trump and Republicans are now doing exactly what we promised we would do. We are rooting out waste, we are rooting out fraud, and we are rooting out abuse by a bureaucracy, all across a bureaucracy. We are ripping it out root and stem.

The Department of Government Efficiency has already uncovered more than \$55 billion in savings. Who benefits from the savings? The American taxpayers.

U.S. taxpayers were spending \$2 million—take a look at this list—\$2 million to develop “sustainable recycling models” in the Balkans. Well, we have canceled that.

U.S. taxpayers were spending \$19 million on “biodiversity conversation” in Nepal. Well, that has been canceled.

U.S. taxpayers were spending \$47 million to improve “learning outcomes in Asia.” We canceled that.

U.S. taxpayers were spending \$1.5 million on “voter confidence” in Liberia, Africa. Well, we have canceled that.

U.S. taxpayers were spending \$21 million for voter turnout in India. Canceled.

More savings are on the way.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin, who we recently confirmed to that post, uncovered \$20 billion—with a “b”—\$20 billion in taxpayer money that the Biden EPA shoveled out the door on their last days before leaving office.

This was a slush fund, and it was funneled to eight leftwing climate groups. Now, all of this was in the service of the left's extreme, radical climate agenda—an agenda that makes energy more expensive and life less affordable for American families.

Who received these taxpayer-funded, undeserved gifts? Does anybody remember Georgia Democrat Governor candidate Stacey Abrams? Well, she was one of them. Her leftwing organization got a \$2 billion kickback from the Biden administration. I am so glad that Ambassador Zeldin caught this scam and is working to claw back the money for the taxpayers of this Nation.

I heard the minority leader admit just this morning—he said: Of course there is some wasteful spending. He didn't mention any of those things. He didn't actually point out what it is. But I don't hear him say what wasteful spending he wants to cut. In fact, I haven't heard any Democrats say what wasteful spending, if any, should be cut. What about that \$2 billion that was sent to Stacey Abrams?

Democrats added almost \$5 trillion to our debt in 4 years. Joe Biden and Democrats' reckless spending caused painfully high prices.

Cutting wasteful Washington spending is long overdue. President Trump and Republicans are uncovering massive evidence of wasteful Washington spending, and we are stopping it.

Democrats seem more upset that the waste they support is now being exposed than about the massive waste itself. Instead of defending the indefensible and the obscene level of spending, what are they doing? What do the Democrats do? They are demanding that the courts intervene. Hey, let's get the courts involved. This is the next chapter of destructive Democrat behavior.

Democrats have now filed over 80 lawsuits in 1 month against the Trump administration. Now, often, they go judge shopping. What are they looking for? They are looking for partisan, activist judges.

So how does that work? Well, last month—and it is unbelievable—last month, the State of New Jersey wanted to sue the administration, so they filed suit not in New Jersey but in Massachusetts. They sued in a district where

11 of the 13 district judges were appointed by Democrat Presidents. They didn't think they could accomplish what they wanted to accomplish in their own home State, so they go to Massachusetts, one of the most liberal States in the country. That is not a coincidence. It is intentional. It is premeditated. What is the aim of it? It is to obstruct President Trump's popular cost-cutting efforts.

Let me tell you how far the Democrats are taking this. Earlier this month, a Federal judge in New York issued a knee-jerk order that forbids political appointees from accessing records within the Treasury Department. The judge actually went so far as to block the Secretary of the Treasury, Scott Bessent, from accessing important data within the Agency that he runs, that he has been confirmed to serve as the Secretary of the Treasury by this very body, by the U.S. Senate, and you got a judge saying he doesn't have access to the Treasury records.

So a Federal judge blocks a Senate-confirmed Secretary of Treasury from getting the information he needs to run the U.S. Department of the Treasury. That is where the Democrats are headed.

District courts should not get to micromanage the executive branch. Yet that is what Democrats want to do with the courts, and that is why they have filed 80 lawsuits so far. It is not based on the law. It is not based on policy disagreements. This is based solely on political disagreements.

This is the real crisis we are facing in America. It is what I hear about in Wyoming. I heard about it this past weekend. It is unelected, unaccountable, heavyhanded Federal bureaucrats who have taken America off track. We are getting America back on track.

The American people are being strangled by Washington's wasteful spending, by burdensome redtape. According to a poll last month from the Associate Press, almost two in three Americans say government inefficiency is a major problem.

The bureaucracy must be accountable to the American people, and they are there to serve the American people. Americans voted in November for more accountability. They voted to drain the swamp. This is the swamp I am talking about, and that is exactly what President Trump is doing.

Working with President Trump, Senate Republicans are going to deliver on our mandate, and it is going to involve massive change in Washington because it is time, Mr. President, to get America back on track.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, did you see over the weekend Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, dancing on a stage with a chain saw? Did you see that? Most Americans did. That was his approach to DOGE government efficiency—take a chain saw to it, put an

Agency like USAID in the “wood chipper,” in his words. Does this sound like a thoughtful approach to making government more efficient or does this sound like a meat-ax approach from a man who has no business being there, an unelected individual who somehow has been given authority by this President to lop off tens of thousands of jobs day in day out?

Yes, we have gone to court. Many of the Agencies in the government—the employees and their representatives—have gone to court to question this ham-handed approach to making this government work, and they have been successful in the overwhelming percentage to receive temporary restraining orders and the like because on its face, serious questions are raised as to the authority of this President.

We have time-honored traditions when it comes to things like impoundment of Federal funds. The President cannot make that decision unilaterally. The power of the purse happens to be with the article I agency of the government, the legislature, not with the article II agency, the executive. As a consequence, when the President decides to do this unilaterally, he is being challenged in court, and he should be challenged in court.

This is not just a political issue, as one Senator just described; it is more importantly a constitutional issue and a legal issue, and it is going to be resolved ultimately by the court. Perhaps the President will win some of his cases and lose others. But this is a legitimate exercise of the authority in the Constitution.

I might add that this notion that we are going to start lopping off air traffic controllers and people who are responsible for aviation safety—I would just say to those who are for that and believe that is draining the swamp: Pay attention to what is happening across America. These terrible aviation disasters like the one that happened here in Washington, DC, should be taken seriously by us every day, and putting people in charge of these Departments who don't have adequate staff to monitor the flights of our Nation is active irresponsibility, as far as I am concerned.

The same thing is true with avian flu. Yes, the price of eggs is terrible. One of the reasons is avian flu is killing off the flocks of laying hens. As a consequence, we have fewer eggs and higher prices.

It is a very real concern because the avian flu is going to jump from these birds and fowl into the human chain, and we will face another pandemic. Do we want that? For God's sake, no. But the notion that we are going to lop off employees that are responsible for public health one after the other and somehow make this a safer nation is irresponsible on its face. Should it be challenged in court? Of course it should be, and I stand by that.

I just want to say to the Senator and others who make these comments: Think about what you are inviting

here, to give the President the authority this Congress has, the authority under the Constitution—to just give it away. Are we going to give away our responsibility under the Constitution because of the popularity of this President with some Members? I pray that we won't.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 710 are printed in today's RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### VOTE ON DRISCOLL NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Driscoll nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 28, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 90 Ex.]

##### YEAS—66

Banks	Grassley	Moran
Barrasso	Hagerty	Moreno
Bennet	Hassan	Mullin
Blackburn	Hawley	Murkowski
Boozman	Heinrich	Paul
Britt	Hickenlooper	Peters
Budd	Hoeven	Reed
Capito	Husted	Ricketts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Collins	Johnson	Rosen
Cornyn	Justice	Rounds
Cortez Masto	Kaine	Schmitt
Cotton	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Crapo	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Curtis	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Daines	Lankford	Sheehy
Durbin	Lee	Sullivan
Ernst	Lummis	Thune
Fetterman	Marshall	Tillis
Fischer	McConnell	Warner
Gallego	McCormick	Wicker
Graham	Moody	Young

##### NAYS—28

Baldwin	Booker	Duckworth
Blumenthal	Cantwell	Gillibrand
Blunt Rochester	Coons	Hirono

Kim	Ossoff	Warnock
King	Padilla	Warren
Lujan	Schatz	Welch
Markey	Schiff	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schumer	Wyden
Murphy	Slotkin	
Murray	Smith	

#### NOT VOTING—6

Alsobrooks	Cruz	Tuberville
Cramer	Sanders	Van Hollen

The nomination was confirmed.

(Mr. CURTIS assumed the Chair.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The majority leader.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator KENNEDY be recognized for up to 15 minutes and, upon the use or yielding back of time, then make a motion to proceed to Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11.

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

The Senator from Louisiana.

#### TRIBUTE TO JESS ANDREWS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I rise today for two reasons. No. 1, I am losing one of my best colleagues—she is sitting right here next to me—Ms. Jess Andrews. Jess has run my communications shop for—I don't know how many years—5 years.

I try to hire really good people, and, certainly, Jess is one of them. She is a very moral person. She is whip-smart. But when you hire good people, you know you are going to lose them because good people, capable people, like Jess, are ambitious people, and they want to move on to new positions.

Jess is becoming deputy chief of staff to our new Senator from Ohio. I wish her well, and I just wanted to thank her publicly.

Jess Andrews is the real deal, and she has just done an extraordinary job for the people in Louisiana and for the American people, and I am so, so grateful.

I congratulate our new Senator from Ohio. He is getting a good one.

So thank you, Jess.

#### S.J. RES. 11

Mr. President, the second reason I rise is to talk about a regulation that I am trying to get rid of, but I want to begin with this observation.

Nearly 5 years ago, when he was running for President—I remember it like it was yesterday—President Biden said:

I guarantee you, we are going to end fossil fuels.

“I guarantee you,” he said, in front of God, country, and the American people. “I guarantee you,” he said, “we are going to end fossil fuels.”

And he tried. For 4 years, he tried.

Here is why I point that out.

The first well drilled in the Gulf of America—I know some people call it the Gulf of Mexico. I don't want to get off into that discussion. But the first

well drilled offshore in the Gulf of America was drilled 87 years ago, in 1938. Since then, we have drilled, I think, 6,000 wells. There are 6,000 platforms in the Gulf of Mexico.

Now, before an oil company drills a well, on its own volition and at the suggestion of the Department of the Interior, the oil company surveys the seabed. It just makes sense for safety reasons but also for the sake of history because we want to look for shipwrecks.

We have found—I don't know how many—shipwrecks. I had it written down: 4,000 shipwrecks. We have surveyed the entire Gulf of America in the 87 years since we started drilling there. We have surveyed 311,652 square nautical miles, the surface area of Texas and California put together. That is how we found 4,000 shipwrecks. And it has cost hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars. So we know what is there. We know what is there.

Well, in September of 2024, the Department of the Interior, in a midnight regulation, in an effort to try to further hurt fossil fuels, passed a new rule, and they said: Look, we know we have surveyed the entire gulf, and we know we have found 4,000 shipwrecks. And we know that the area that we surveyed is the size of California and Texas put together. But every time you drill a new well, we want you to survey again.

Well, why? I mean, what is the benefit? We know what the cost is. It costs anywhere from \$10,000 to \$1 million to resurvey again. It just makes no sense.

And a third of the production in the gulf is from independent oil companies. Maybe the majors can support this, but if an independent oil company has to survey what has already been surveyed, it can add, as I said, \$10,000 to \$1 million to a well cost.

What is the point? I can tell you what the point is. Somebody over at BOEM, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Department of the Interior, hates fossil fuels—somebody or somebodies.

Now, I am not saying that the person who came up with this rule is the dumbest guy in the world, but that person better hope that the dumbest guy in the world doesn't die because this is just bone-deep, down-to-the-marrow dumb. This is the kind of “spending porn” that we all ought to abhor.

So I am going to try to kill the regulation today under what, as the Presiding Officer knows, is called the Congressional Review Act, and we will be voting on that shortly.

I realize that common sense, as I have said before, is illegal in Washington. This is not a normal place. But I hope folks who still have common sense will vote to get rid of this foolish rule.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO “PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES”—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11.

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to “Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources”.

## VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 91 Leg.]

## YEAS—54

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hickenlooper	Paul
Budd	Hoeven	Ricketts
Capito	Husted	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Collins	Johnson	Rounds
Cornyn	Justice	Schmitt
Cortez Masto	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Sheehy
Cruz	Lummis	Sullivan
Curtis	Marshall	Thune
Daines	McConnell	Tillis
Ernst	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

## NAYS—42

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schiff
Booker	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coons	Lujan	Slotkin
Duckworth	Markey	Smith
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Fetterman	Murphy	Warnock
Gallego	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

## NOT VOTING—4

Alsobrooks	Tuberville
Cramer	Van Hollen

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO “PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES”

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 11) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to “Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources”.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of 5 USC 802, there will now be up to 10 hours of debate equally divided.

## RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:02 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO “PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES”—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

## CHINA

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it has been a little over a month since President Trump was inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States. One of his key promises on the campaign trail—and, really, throughout his service in the White House—has been to confront the threat of the Chinese Communist Party and to hold China accountable for failing to play by the rules. The American people voted resoundingly for that agenda this past November, delivering both the electoral vote and the popular vote to President Trump, as well as Republican majorities in both the House and the Senate. Now, the task at hand is to actually begin to implement those promises to hold China to account.

Xi Jinping has made clear his plans to “reincorporate” Taiwan in 2027, just 2 years away. We don't know exactly what that entails, but the threat is ominous.

Time is running short to make any potential conflict with China undesirable from their standpoint—in other words, to reestablish deterrence. But the good news is, we have a number of tools available to us and a track record of success on confronting the threat of the CCP during the Trump administration.

Back in 2018, I was proud to work with President Trump on modernizing the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, otherwise known as CFIUS. This interagency committee reviews foreign direct investment into the United States for potential national security concerns.

The bill we ultimately passed and that was signed into law by President Trump was called FIRREA, the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act. In that law, we updated CFIUS to expand its scope and process to ensure that we are more comprehensively reviewing any investments that might allow influence by foreign entities for nefarious purposes in the United States.

This bipartisan legislation was signed into law by President Trump as part of the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. FIRREA was a critical step toward derisking from China.

While this was a big win for Republicans and for President Trump, the truth is we still have more work to do. The top of our to-do list now is to address outbound investment flowing into China by American investors.

At this very moment, American investors—some of these are businesses; some of these are individuals. The investments they are making are fueling China's military buildup and modernization by funneling capital into potentially dual-use technology and military capabilities that could eventually be used against the United States and our allies.

According to the U.S.-China Economic Security and Review Commission's 2024 Report to Congress, U.S. investments in China's semiconductors, quantum computing, and AI alone totaled about \$2 billion in 2023.

In 2020, more than 90 percent of these investments were concentrated in the semiconductor industry. And from 2015 to 2021, U.S. investors made up 37 percent of China's global funding for artificial intelligence.

Congress is acutely aware of the threat posed by China's rapid capture of the autonomous vehicle market, advanced cellular technologies, and semiconductor manufacturing. We have acted on these issues before, and it is time to do so again.

I was proud to lead the CHIPS for America Act to help the United States reestablish manufacturing for advanced semiconductors here in America, where the percentage of advanced semiconductors that fuel everything from our cell phones to the avionics in an F-35 Joint Strike Fighter—only 12 percent of those were made here in the United States. The rest of them were

made in Asia, principally in Taiwan and South Korea. But we are in the process of turning that around.

But there is another side to this coin. How can we expect to outcompete or even catch up to Chinese companies if, unbeknownst to us, American dollars are continuing to fuel their rise, economically and militarily?

We are simply not being serious about confronting our greatest strategic adversary if we continue to be blind to the investment of billions of dollars in the very technologies that could be potentially used to kill American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

Now, we have an opportunity on a bipartisan basis to finish the job we began with CFIUS reform just a few short years ago. We can do this by passing legislation to address outbound investment into China. To start with, we need greater transparency. We need some sort of accountability so we know exactly what the facts are.

It is no secret to any of my colleagues that I have been working on this issue for some time now. During the previous Congress, my amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act with provisions to increase transparency around outbound investment passed by a vote of 91 to 6, demonstrating the high level of consensus in this Chamber on this issue. But, unfortunately, this amendment was dropped from the National Defense Authorization Act when it went to conference, and it didn't make it into the final version that was sent to the President's desk and ultimately signed into law.

Then, last year, we made progress along a bipartisan path and in a bicameral manner, with Speaker JOHN-SON and Congressman MICHAEL MCCAUL, who was then the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, working on the House's legislative provisions around outbound investment. But, unfortunately, that didn't make it across the finish line before the end of the year.

But there are reasons for optimism that this year will be the time we get these provisions over the finish line. We have worked hard to work with the House's version and to work with the Senate version that passed overwhelmingly, previously, to make sure we marry those up and we establish a bill that enjoys bipartisan, bicameral support.

I have been working with everyone, from the Speaker of the House to the chairman of the Select Committee on the CCP, JOHN MOOLENAAR, to Congressman MCCAUL, as well as TIM SCOTT, chairman of the Banking Committee here in the Senate. We have all made input into a piece of legislation that will finally accomplish what we have been working on for these last few years.

We know time is of the essence, and we are working hand in glove with the Trump administration to ensure this

legislation actually accomplishes the goals that we set out for it.

I can't emphasize what a great opportunity this is and what a great win it will be for all parties involved. Addressing U.S. outbound investment in China will be a great opportunity for all of my colleagues here in the House and the Senate to deliver a big win for our country and for our national security.

It will be a home run for all Americans, who can feel safe that American companies and investors are not helping China not only rebuild its economy but also its military as well. And, of course, China continues to be our greatest strategic adversary on the planet.

The only party that stands to lose from this legislation will be the Chinese Communist Party, and it is high time that they be held accountable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

S.J. RES. 11

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I rise today in opposition to S.J. Res. 11, which would repeal a policy that helps protect archeological sites in the ocean when oil and gas development is planned in the area.

I want to be clear that this policy does not prevent any oil and gas development. It simply requires that companies take a good look at the ocean floor with sonar where they are planning to drill a well and see what historic and prehistoric resources are there.

The Outer Continental Shelf, where these wells are typically drilled, is home to one-of-a-kind cultural resources, from incredible historic shipwrecks to old maritime infrastructure, even evidence of human settlements on land that used to be on dry ground but is now on the sea floor.

This policy is a small change, and it simply brings offshore oil and gas up to the exact same standard that we already apply to offshore wind projects. It is entirely reasonable to require energy developers to identify archeological sites and other cultural resources on the ocean floor, just as they do when they produce energy on land.

In fact, in my home State of New Mexico, energy companies routinely work with Tribal representatives, State agencies, and other experts to identify cultural resources in an area proposed for development and to make a plan to limit the impact of development on those resources. It is reasonable for us to expect the same of offshore energy developers.

This policy was supported by two federally recognized Tribes, the Chickahominy and the Rappahannock. Passage of this resolution means not only that this would be repealed but that any similar policy could never be put back in place.

Our cultural resources are too valuable to let them go unprotected just because they are on the ocean floor, and I would urge my colleagues to oppose the resolution.



The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Democratic whip.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 91

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the years, Federal funding for medical and scientific research has helped split the atom, defeat polio, create the internet, map the human genome, and so much more. No nation has ever made such a significant investment in science and medicine—none. And no nation's researchers have done more to approve the quality of life, not only here but around the world.

But we are in a pivotal moment in history. All the progress we have made—all the progress we hope to make—is in danger because of Donald Trump and Elon Musk. That is right. These two men promised to bring down the price of eggs and gasoline and make housing more affordable. Well, none of that has happened. Instead, they are carrying out an unprecedented and devastating campaign to cut research on cancer, ALS, Alzheimer's, dementia, and infectious diseases.

Instead of making life better for Americans, they want to slash research funding for the National Institutes of Health. If you have never heard of this Agency, I hope you will Google it or take a look and research to figure out who they are and what they do. It is the premier medical research agency in the world.

If you or someone you love receives a dreaded diagnosis, you turn to the doctor and ask: Is there a cure? A surgery? A medicine? I know I have been there and asked those very questions.

There is a difference between the doctor saying, "I'm sorry, there is nothing we can do" and "I have got some good news; there has been some research at NIH we should look into."

You know all the miracle drugs you see on TV? You can't get away from them, can you? And 99 percent of those drugs approved in the last 10 years were the product, in some way, of NIH research. NIH funding is why people are beating cancer, why babies are being spared from preventable diseases, why HIV is no longer a death sentence, why progress is being made on dementia and other neurological diseases.

Since the start of this administration, we have seen the White House unleash a lawless chaotic attack on everything from funding for farmers to biomedical research. Planes are crashing, and they are cutting aviation safety. Avian flu is on the rise and threatening to make that leap to humans, and we are cutting public health experts. Elon Musk dances across the stage with a chain saw; people laugh and cheer. First, let me tell you this: There is nothing to cheer about when it comes to medical research.

It was this bizarre memo from Office of Management and Budget that illegally froze Federal grant funding. They even prohibited the recipients of Federal grants and medical research from physically meeting in the same place. Oh, you are going to hear arguments:

We have got to cut back on the waste and fraud and abuse. I am all for that. But having researchers unable to even sit down and talk about the next breakthrough, how can that possibly be good for our country?

These cuts that were announced by this administration were quickly halted by a Federal judge in a Federal court. There was comment on the floor earlier today that too many people are going to courts. Thank God they went to courts to keep this policy from being implemented by this administration.

But it seems, even though the court made a ruling, this administration is still holding up funding in violation of the court's order. As a result, NIH is delayed awarding approximately \$1 billion in grant funding, delaying research at institutions nationwide. Does the delay hurt? Not unless you are the one sitting in that waiting room at a doctor praying to God there is a breakthrough to save your child.

Listen to what is at stake for one of my constituents, Dr. Timothy Koh, professor of kinesiology and nutrition at the University of Illinois in Chicago. For 15 years, Dr. Koh has been researching why people with diabetes develop wounds that do not heal, as well as researching treatments to address these wounds.

While having steady Federal funding for his research through the years, Dr. Koh was recently informed in the last few weeks that his NIH grant application is on hold because of the Trump-Musk Federal funding freeze. His current grant is scheduled to end on Friday of this week. And if his grant is not renewed, he will have to lay off his lab staff and will see major setbacks in the research he has been involved in. Dr. Koh said:

It's going to potentially put an end to my research career and we won't be able to develop these new therapies for diabetic [patients].

Is diabetes research important? If it is someone in your family, it is very important.

Make no mistake, under the Constitution, Congress is supposed to have the power of the purse—that is what it reads. But over the decades, bipartisan Members of Congress have worked in concert on a bipartisan basis to do something about NIH funding. It was a little over 10 years ago—Francis Collins, I consider to be an American hero and a saint. He headed up the NIH. And I went out to see him, and I said: I can't double your appropriation. I would do it if I could. What can I do to help you?

He said: Give the NIH Agency 5 percent real growth every year, and I will tell you this: Two things will happen. We will line up the scoreboard with breakthroughs and cures for diseases in America; and, secondly, my researchers will take heart because one of the things that destroys their interest in pursuing a career is the uncertainty of Federal funding.

Well, we went from \$30 billion to \$48 billion in 10 years because we had a bipartisan team to do it. PATTY MURRAY joined me on the Democratic side. She has always been a champion of medical research; and on the Republican side, Senator Blunt of Missouri was the leader. He was the best. When he chaired a subcommittee on Appropriations that funded this Agency, he was committed to the 5 percent. And then Lamar Alexander of Tennessee—both of those gentlemen have retired. The four of us put together an effort to raise the NIH funding from \$30 billion 10 years ago to \$48 billion—a dramatic, dramatic increase.

We did it because we all agreed this is not a partisan issue. It should never be. We knew that NIH funding leads to new cures and treatments for patients in need. It supports well-paying jobs nationwide. And it cements our global leadership.

Illinois universities and hospitals receive approximately \$1.2 billion in NIH funding a year, which supports 14,000 jobs in our State and 3.5 billion in economic activity. But I will tell you, Mr. President, virtually every State in the Nation can tell that story in one form or another.

Each year, the State of Wyoming receives approximately \$12 million in NIH funding. Now, Wyoming is a small State, but they clearly have good research facilities that merit NIH grants. This money supports 265 jobs in Wyoming and \$49 million dollars in economic activity. The top NIH funded institution in Wyoming is the University of Wyoming.

With this NIH funding, researchers at the University of Wyoming have recently conducted the following projects. See if any of these sound close to home or close to your family:

No. 1, why Alzheimer's disease and dementia can worsen at specific hours of the day.

No. 2, a project in Wyoming, links between menopause and cardiovascular disease in women.

And developing a new noninvasive tool to help treat people suffering from epilepsy, schizophrenia, anxiety, and autism.

They all sound like worthy projects to me.

Unfortunately, President Trump and Elon Musk aren't finished there. They tried indiscriminately to slash how NIH pays for indirect costs. Without funding, universities wouldn't be able to afford the technology that allows them to conduct research. Cuts to indirect costs are, simply, cuts to research, period.

The other day, we had a debate on the floor on this NIH. One of the Republican Senators talked about the outrageous outlying indirect cost in this country. Let's look at them. Let's review them.

But to stop all meetings of all medical researchers while we do this, to stop the funding for all the grantees, to stop all of the medical research because there might be 1 or 2 or 10



schools that ask for too much or hospitals—thankfully, the Illinois Attorney General, along with 21 other States' leading attorneys general, sued and secured a temporary reprieve for universities and researchers.

Trump and Musk illegally froze Federal medical research funding. They tried to illegally cut funding for medical research, and now they are firing the medical researchers themselves.

Reports indicate that 1,200 NIH employees have been fired so far, from experienced vaccine researchers to the next generation of scientists to the Acting Director of the NIH's Alzheimer's and dementia program.

Further, Trump and Musk have reportedly ended a popular trainee program that brought 1,600 young scientists just out of college to the NIH world-renowned campus in Maryland to get them started working in labs and eventually running labs. They are our future when it comes to medical research, and the Trump and Musk chain saw of chaos of budget cuts has made them victims.

How does this make us a greater nation? How does this make us a healthier nation? A better nation? It doesn't.

NIH research leads to new cures and treatments that extend, improve, and save lives, which is why I am introducing this resolution today to simply say to Senators of both sides of the aisle: Let's pledge our support to make NIH an exception. Let us not let wanton cuts stop something very valuable.

The resolution is straightforward. It says: The work of NIH should not be subject to interruption, delay, or funding disruption in violation of the law—in violation of the law. And it reaffirms that the workforce at NIH is essential to sustaining medical progress.

Can we really debate that point? Do we think the best medical research Agency in the world is being staffed by people who aren't the best? This is not controversial. It shouldn't be. Americans get sick on a bipartisan basis; shouldn't we support medical research on a bipartisan basis?

For as long as I can stand and for as long as I can speak, I will fight to protect NIH and medical research. I hope my Republican colleagues wake up and join me before it is too late.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 93, submitted earlier today; further, that the resolution be agreed to, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Republican whip.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. The American people voted to get spending under control.

Two in three Americans say that a major problem that we face today in this country is government inefficiency.

And I agree. Three in four Americans support eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse in government spending; and there is plenty of it.

We need to review how much money we spend. We need to see where it is going. We need to see what is effective and what is not. This is common sense. Families have to do it. States do it. Washington ought to do the same thing.

Every family audits their own budgets, their own spending. Every CEO audits their business operations.

President Trump and Republicans are doing exactly the same thing, and it is something that the Federal Government has not done for a long time.

Let me be clear. I am a doctor; I support so much of the good work being done by the National Institutes of Health and through the universities around the country. It is essential that America continues to lead the world in medical innovation.

I am a strong supporter of continuing smart investment in our National Institutes of Health. Americans deserve better care. Americans deserve better prevention and, of course, better transparency.

So the total budget for the NIH is almost \$48 billion. Hard-working taxpayers deserve smart scrutiny and serious transparency over that kind of money.

There is indisputable evidence that there is wasteful overspending of administrative costs associated with medical research, and this is why I am here saying this must stop. In 2024, Harvard University spent \$135 million of government grant money on overhead costs. Clearly, we can do better. They used hard-working taxpayer dollars to pay for heating bills, electricity bills, for maintaining buildings. They used it to cover payroll for people not involved in research. This is money that should have been spent on advancing researching for cures.

Harvard's overhead costs related to the National Institutes of Health research—69 percent of the money goes for overhead. That is taxpayer money, Mr. President. That is one university, one year. Clearly, we can do better—if you look at that all across the country.

Imagine all the new cures we could find if we just spent the money efficiently. That is what is at stake today, and that is why I am here on the floor of the Senate.

Democrats don't want to have a serious debate about wasteful Washington spending. Instead they are wasting the Senate's time on predictable distractions like this one. And, therefore, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if standing in this Senate and asking Republicans and Democrats to come together to preserve and build medical research is a waste of time, what in the world are we doing here?

If you were asked to take the Federal budget and put your priorities in there, maybe No. 1 would be national defense. Well, I might make that No. 1 as well; but I can tell you, No. 2 is medical research.

Because what happens when you reach a point where you cut off medical research? These researchers leave the laboratories and say: Honey, I don't know if I will have a job here next year. Let's start looking someplace else.

That is not an unusual thing to occur. So the next generation of researchers are being discouraged by the uncertainty of funding, and this notion that we have to get spending under control—how much does it cost to find a cure? What does it cost to have no cure? Let's get down to the bottom line here. We are talking about how long people stay in the hospital or whether they are alive at the end of the experience or not.

Some of these medical treatments they have to turn to are extremely expensive, unless you can find a cure at the front end of it. And you don't find it by saying, Well, maybe next year we will spend some money on medical research. That isn't the way it works. You want to have a good doctor you can trust from year to year, not a new one every year with a question mark.

The same thing is true with researchers. If you have the best researchers, why in the world would you discourage them from their continued work?

I listened to this comment about \$48 billion. It is a lot of money, for sure. That is taxpayers' money, and I take it very seriously. But how much do you think it would cost if we didn't find these cures, didn't find these drugs? What would it cost in human terms and the experience of families who would give up hope because there is no place to turn? That is the reality.

We all have friends—and I had one today—I won't get into the details—who has just learned that he has pancreatic cancer. We don't have a cure yet. If we could find one, do you know how that would change the lives of so many people and their families? Is that worth putting our research into, our tax dollars into, or is it, as the Senator who objected to my resolution said, just wasting time here on the floor?

Well, I am going to come back and waste time over and over again. I am not giving up on this. I am not giving up on families who are waiting for cures and research. I am not giving up on the researchers who dedicate their lives to finding them.

Of course, if we have some overspending, whether it is at Harvard or Illinois or even the University of Wyoming, let's clean it up. But is it possible to clean that up without jeopardizing the basic mission of the National Institutes of Health? I certainly hope so. To think that we would have to close down the whole Agency because a handful of schools are overcharging the Federal Government—and there is no

proof that they are—I think that is part of the reality.

This is an issue that is important to every single American whether they know it or not. We can get spending under control and do it thoughtfully but not at the expense of the best researchers in the world and the expense of cures which would give families hope once and for all.

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. 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.

#### DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I would like to speak about DOGE.

The verdict is in: It has been a colossal failure. It has done immense damage to many of our institutions and inflicted immense pain on innocent people. Also, it is not going to be successful in its stated goal of reducing spending and wasteful spending.

But before I go on, let me just say what all of us know. Every single person in this U.S. Senate is all in when it comes to attacking waste, fraud, and abuse. Every single one of us knows that we should kick the tires on every program we have in the Federal Government and look to see how we can make it be more efficient. And there may even be some programs where we say: You know what, its purpose has been served; it is time to move on.

So those of us who are being critical of DOGE are just looking at what DOGE is doing but not at all quarreling with the notion that every one of us, Republican and Democrat and Independent, has a responsibility to be the best stewards of taxpayer money that we can be.

But here is my problem with DOGE: They are not looking in the right places. There is so much rip-off that is going on. Let's just talk about a couple of examples in our healthcare system. United Healthcare is rigging the system on Medicare Advantage Programs. Our seniors—we want them to have the healthcare they need. But they have set up these billing systems where they have paid nurses and forced doctors essentially to overanalyze and overprescribe and overstate what medical conditions were. This was not to help the senior on a Medicare Advantage Program; this was to pad their bottom line and make billions of dollars.

Of course, I am referring to the series of articles that was in the Wall Street Journal that documented the rip-offs and what I think were corrupt practices by United Healthcare.

Where is DOGE? All that money is just wasted. It has gone into the pockets of executives at United Healthcare. It has gone into shareholder payouts and dividends, but it hasn't gone into improving healthcare for seniors.

Another one: the pharmacy benefit managers. They are ripping us off so badly. We had a bipartisan bill with enormous Republican support and Democratic support to curb the rip-offs in the PBM industry. That was in our final budget deal last year. It got derailed. Why? Elon Musk. He was against it, and he gave the word that this has got to go down. The thing blew up, and we don't have the PBM reform that both sides of the aisle knew was necessary—something that was going to save hundreds of billions of dollars for American taxpayers and allow us to reinvest in healthcare and make things better.

So my first question with DOGE is, Why don't you look where the money is, where the rip-offs are, instead of just sending out emails overnight telling people they are fired whose performance has been absolutely exemplary?

So that is the core question I have about DOGE. Why are you leaving these practices that we know are really corrupt and a rip-off untouched, unexamined, and allowing them to continue when it is hammering taxpayers and citizens?

We have work to do on saving money, and we have places where it is absolutely essential that we act. DOGE is blind to all of those, all of those situations, and that is disgraceful, especially when you have Elon Musk as the person who sabotaged our effort for PBM reform.

The second thing is, there is a basic question if you are going to go about examining a program. You can ask hard questions. You can look under the hood. How is it working? How is it not working? Where do we have too many personnel? Where can we actually improve the practices and the performance by some reforms?

DOGE is not doing that. It literally is not doing that. It has not even taken a day, an hour, to come up with a plan on how to examine the various programs they are engaging with. What they are doing is firing people. People are waking up in the morning, and they are getting an email that says: Due to your poor performance, you are gone.

Now, this is a situation that obviously is incredibly cruel. You are working at the Department of Agriculture, you are working at the NIH, you are working on a USAID program, and life is going on, and suddenly you get this email out of the blue that clearly is a mass email but has a very specific impact on you, your life, your livelihood, and your hopes and dreams. That is just a savage, savage way to treat people who have been working in our various governmental Agencies, and it has enormous impact on our communities.

By the way, DOGE is picking on veterans. Literally thousands of veterans have been fired. The VA has announced the dismissal of more than 1,000 employees. That includes researchers working on cancer treatments, opioid

addictions, prosthetics, and burn pit exposure.

So the issue here was not “How do we help them do that job better? Where are there ways we can economize?” The procedure is “You are gone; that is it.”

President Trump and Elon Musk fired around 350 employees at the National Nuclear Security Administration. These are folks who safeguard nuclear weapons. Now, it was so embarrassing that even Musk had to acknowledge it was a mistake, and those people are now back on their job.

But what it does I think very clearly is show how there is nothing about a plan to execute a thoughtful way to save taxpayer money. It is just shoot first and aim later. And 4,000 employees at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

By the way, this is incredibly important: These are all things that affect red States and blue States. This has no political orientation on one side or the other because the impacts of these are going to be felt by the farmers in Indiana just as they are going to be felt by the farmers in Vermont.

Another example that is really pretty cruel, and I just don't understand this: We have farmers across the country that I have spoken to—farmers in Vermont—who entered into contracts with the Federal Government under the provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act. What the deal was is the farmer agreed, say, to install solar panels or create a buffer zone between cattle grazing in a streambed or change the tillage practices to try to improve the soil.

I get it that President Trump and Mr. Musk are against the Inflation Reduction Act, and they have a right to do everything they possibly can to try to reverse that policy. So this is not about their right to use Executive authority. But here is what I don't understand: How do you stiff farmers who went out and borrowed money because they had a contract, they agreed to do certain things around their farm, and then they get an email saying: Just kidding. We, the Federal Government, are not going to honor our contract.

I am thinking of one farm in my own town of Norwich, VT, where folks did borrow the money and they did the work, and it was in anticipation of the Federal Government keeping its part of the bargain and coming through with the cash that it had agreed to, and they are told: No, we are not doing it anymore.

I know that the Presiding Officer is like me when it comes to keeping your word. You give your word; you keep your word. The folks you represent, the folks I represent, that is what they do, that is what they expect. But we have DOGE saying: Well, that doesn't apply to us because we want to “save money.” That is just flat out disgraceful and unacceptable.

FEMA. FEMA is absolutely essential to help folks respond to a catastrophic event. We need reform in FEMA, and I

want to work with colleagues in order to do that. But when that disaster comes—you know, a fire in Hawaii or California, floods in Vermont or North Carolina, hurricanes down south, or drought—the response from FEMA is essential because the local community doesn't have the infrastructure in place to provide that immediate emergency assistance that folks need for saving lives and keeping themselves together during that immediate storm event.

We are hearing that DOGE and the President want to just abolish FEMA. We have to be there for one another when it is our community that is affected by a catastrophic event where our citizens, the folks we represent, to whom we have a real duty—it is no fault of their own—they are on the receiving end of Mother Nature. It has always been the tradition in the Senate that we help one another on that. That is not a partisan deal. DOGE is hammering us on that.

The people who get hurt—it is the everyday people whom we represent that are working hard, who are struggling each month to pay their bills. They are anxious about the safety of their kids, they are anxious about inflation, they are anxious about meeting the challenges of daily life, and they want to make a contribution to strengthening their community as well as their family, and they are getting hammered.

I mentioned, too, that among them are the 6,000 veterans who have been fired by DOGE across the Federal workforce. I mean, that just astonishes me. How do we say to a veteran who showed up to serve us and protect our country and to whom we claim we have great respect and allegiance—how do we send them an email that says “You are fired,” with no explanation, no sitdown, no face-to-face, just contempt for the value of what they contribute and how hard they are working? I do not understand that. I just don't.

Even in a tough business environment where some of our employers have to make tough decisions because they just know their business can't handle the workforce they have and they may have to make, against their desires, some reductions in force, our employers will sit down with folks face to face: Here is what we can do. Let's work out a plan. We know you need healthcare.

DOGE just dispenses with that when it has no plan. So the cruelty—the cruelty of this is so abhorrent to me.

We as a society, really, despite whatever our differences are, have to have some mutual respect, and is it so essential to people that they have meaningful work. If we are going to make adjustments, we have to have a plan to include them, where DOGE says: We don't have to do that.

This isn't just about Elon Musk being a multibillionaire. No matter what happens, it is not really going to affect him. It is about Elon Musk treating people with what I think is the utmost cruelty. You are gone—you

are gone—such disrespect for people who work hard at the VA, work hard in the NIH, work hard in the Department of Agriculture, work hard in the Department of the Treasury. So that element of this, we should all be shocked at.

You know, I can give a few examples of people in Vermont, but I know I am like every single Member of the U.S. Senate: We can give examples of people in the States we represent.

Our Small Business Administration Office has been a real help to Vermonters—very effective. One employee there got a performance review that—this is shortly after the performance review:

In a very short period of time, you established yourself as an invaluable asset.

That was the performance review. The next day, February 7, she was fired because the email said:

Your performance has not been adequate to justify further employment at the Agency.

So arbitrary, so unfair, so Elon Musk-like. We have a scientist at the Department of Agriculture, Caitlin Morgan. She studies sustainable agriculture and food systems at the agricultural services Food Systems Research Center. She was fired despite glowing performance reviews.

So what we have with DOGE is an assertion that they are seeking to cut waste, fraud, and abuse. Who is to argue? There is not a person here that wants to vote in favor of waste, fraud, and abuse, but the reality is they do have a plan. It is not to look at each Agency and then make adjustments so that the Agency, at the end of the operation, will be fit for purpose and better able to do its job.

They have a very simple plan: Kill the headcount, reduce the headcount, fire people. That is it. That is the plan.

So we are going to be left with a decimated FEMA, a decimated Department of Agriculture, a decimated National Institutes of Health, and then who is going to put it back together? This brings me back to the cruelty of a guy like Musk. He doesn't have to worry about that. That is not his concern. Tesla is doing fine. SpaceX is doing fine. You know, things are great for him.

But they won't be great—not just for the people whose jobs have been savagely terminated, it will be bad for the cancer research that scientists are doing. It will be bad for our Vermont farmers who now find themselves deeply in debt because the Federal Government stiffed them. It will be bad for our FEMA response to the next community in our country that gets hit hard by a natural disaster.

So we have got to wake up here and be honest about what is going on with DOGE. We do agree—we do agree, I believe, Republicans and Democrats—that we have got to kick the tires on programs in government, and it is everything from food programs to commodity programs to the Defense De-

partment. And we may have some fierce debates about what the priorities are and what we think is important and what we don't think is important, but that has got to be an on-the-level debate.

What Musk has done is just said: Hey, leave it to me. Let me send out a bunch of emails. Let me fire a lot of people in a lot of Agencies. Let's move fast and break things, and it will come back together.

It doesn't work that way. You know, you destroy the foundation of your house just like you destroy the foundation of a government program like FEMA or the National Institutes of Health, it just doesn't come back overnight because the organizations that we are trying to build, institutions that are essential to the well-being of our own country, those often take generations to create. It takes the commitment, the service, the dedication, and hard work of Americans of all kinds in all States.

This guy Musk is just destroying it all and cavalier about it and contemptuous to the rest of America about what he is doing. We can pay the price.

It is wrong what they are doing and how they are doing it. My view is that we do, in fact, have an opportunity here because both sides are quite willing to come to the table and ask these questions: How can we do it better?

But you know, if we came to the table and we asked how can we do it better, we would be looking at the long-term function: How do we have FEMA work better; how do we have our NIH work better; how do we assess grants better; how do we help our Small Business Administration be more effective in helping our young entrepreneurs? We would be asking those questions.

The other thing we would be doing—and I believe this because I have such respect for all of my colleagues here—we care about how it affects the people. We might have to make some tough decisions because this program could be cut; this one might have to be expanded. But we wouldn't just send off an email telling people to get lost. We wouldn't just be sending off an email to a farmer who just went to the bank and got a loan based on the credit of the United States of America promising to contribute a grant.

We would be considering that. DOGE isn't. In my view, we should all be outraged at the cruelty with which DOGE is operating. It is cruel to the institutions that are important for each of our States, and it is cruel to the people who have been doing this work in good faith for so long.

We have got to speak up and acknowledge that DOGE is destructive. We can embrace the effort to address waste, fraud, and abuse. We can embrace the opportunity to streamline and save money, make things work better, but we can never abandon our commitment to the people of this country who work so hard. We can

never abandon, in a cavalier way, the veterans to whom we have an immense debt of obligation.

Mr. President, DOGE is pretty dumb and pretty cruel and pretty destructive the way that it has operated under Elon Musk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

#### ENERGY

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of President Trump's energy dominance agenda and to oppose my colleagues who want to keep America literally in the Dark Ages when it comes to producing energy. This, the greatest energy-producing country, is being asked to take a step back.

Our energy is cleaner. We produce it cleaner. We transport it cleaner. And yet the Biden agenda had us deferring to other countries that produce energy dirtier, transport it to countries that are paying for it so the Russians, for example, can spend money to fight a war that we are on the other side of.

These are matters that President Trump is addressing and has committed to the American people, pursuant to his Executive order on January 20 of this year—the first day he took office—to make it a priority. As we all know, during President Trump's campaign, he chose to make exporting energy dominance and energy independence a hallmark of his campaign.

He did it because he knows about the connection between energy independence and bringing down inflation. When you go to the grocery store, we see products all over the shelves that have been brought there by trucks—trucks that are paying a lot for gasoline and diesel fuel.

You see frozen food refrigerators lining the aisles that are plugged into electricity that comes from oil, gas, coal, wind, and solar. And the more expensive it is, the more expensive the products are that we buy in those stores.

The same is true in any retail store around this country. Over the last 4 years, the Biden administration worked overtime to stick it to the energy industry at every turn while my colleagues here cheered them on and helped them. On day one, President Biden placed a moratorium on public land energy development that never truly went away until January 20, 2025, when President Trump was sworn into office and signed an Executive order.

Wyoming and the West have fallen victim to the previous administration's regulatory regime designed specifically to kill the industry. Then, once he kills it, he goes overseas and asks countries like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela to fill in the difference. These are countries that cannot produce energy as cleanly as we can and do, and yet he would rather get the energy from them to placate the radical environmental community in this country—that very same community that knows that we can do it cleaner here.

During the Biden administration, the BLM declined to offer up lands for oil and gas leasing. And when they did, they ignored the spirit of the law and offered the fewest acres possible.

In September 2023, the BLM collected a measly and insulting \$27,000 from an oil and gas lease sale in Wyoming. Compare that to the September 2021 lease sale that netted over \$1.3 million.

The people of Wyoming are elated that President Trump, on day one, committed to fixing the sins of the previous administration by declaring a national energy emergency.

You know, I was in Seoul, South Korea, last spring. And one day, we had clear air. The next day, it was so dirty that you couldn't see, Mr. President, from where I am standing to where you are sitting. And I said: What went wrong over 24 hours? And they told me the wind shifted and was coming in from China. China's dirty air was blowing in because China is producing dirty energy.

And yet we would rather defer to them when we know we can produce it cleaner. In my State of Wyoming, the Dry Fork energy plant is the cleanest coal-producing energy ever produced anywhere. In fact, it is so clean that when they began emitting from that plant, they didn't want to tell the U.S. EPA how clean they could do it for fear that the EPA would apply that same standard to all of America's legacy coal plants—none of which could afford to retrofit to the modern technology of Gillette's coal-fired powerplant.

In Wyoming, we have abundant oil, gas, uranium, coal, and more. Under the order, Wyoming's public lands can return to Congress the intended goal of multiple use, which includes responsible resource extraction. If you go back to FLPMA, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which passed in the 1970s, it mandates multiple use of public lands—not single use, not preservation or conservation alone, not oil and gas alone, not recreation alone. It is all of these multiple uses.

Energy production is the backbone of my State and many other Western States. We are proud to power the Nation and to support a President who supports us.

With the rise of artificial intelligence and a thriving data center industry, our Nation will need all the energy it can get. I was out in California during October and went to AI companies—large, medium, and small—and they all told me the same thing: that the bottleneck for America in being the world leader in AI is energy.

We are going to need way more energy than we have needed in the past, and in order to make artificial intelligence work for us and to be dominant in this technology, we need more energy, not less. And we know we can do it cleaner than other countries.

If my colleagues succeed in passing their resolution that is under consideration, we are setting the stage for failure. We are setting up our economy

and future generations for failure. Voting to approve the resolution is a vote for an unstable energy supply, higher energy costs, and more.

I urge my colleagues to vote no against the resolution that is brought by my colleague Senator HEINRICH from New Mexico. I urge my colleagues to stand with President Trump and to oppose this resolution.

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

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

#### FINLAND

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to describe an amazing journey that I took this weekend that was a powerful journey connected to my Virginia National Guard and also to issues that are very, very prominent right now in the world.

We finished voting on the Senate floor a little bit before 5 a.m. on Friday, on the reconciliation bill, and, a few hours later, I went to Dulles Airport and flew to Finland, landed in Helsinki at about 1:30 on Saturday, went back to the airport at 1:30 on Monday—spent 48 hours on the ground with one of our newest NATO allies to work together with them on a number of issues.

The reason for the visit over the weekend was to see my Virginia National Guard. The Virginia Guard, as in most States, are active participants in the State Partnership Program that was established back in the 1990s, where a State's Guard unit connects with the military of an allied country and engages in joint training exercises. Once Finland decided to join NATO, Virginia—which already has a partner in the State Partnership Program—reached out and said to Finland: We would like to work together with you as well.

My Governor, Governor Youngkin, helped preside over the signing of this partnership program in 2024, and the Virginia Guard—about 50 members of the Guard—were engaged in the first training exercises in Finland.

As Governor of Virginia, I used to be the commander in chief of the Virginia Guard. I have been very close to them, and I wanted to go see my Virginians training in snowy birch forests in southern Finland this weekend, and I was able to do that.

My Guard unit is training with the Karelia Brigade, which is one of the three brigades of the Finnish Army. It has got a long history of very heroic service. And on Sunday, it was a delight to drive 2½ hours outside of Helsinki and visit with my 50 Virginians and to hear the Finnish Army brag about them: Your Guard are well-trained. They are great marksman, even shooting Finnish rifles, which are

different than the rifles they use every day and doing it in temperatures that are far colder than Virginians normally have to experience on training exercises.

In addition to my time with the Virginia Guard, I spent time in Finland with our own Embassy team; with representatives from EUCOM, the European Command of the U.S. Army; with the President of Finland, President Stubb, who is a pretty amazing guy, who attended Furman University on a golf scholarship and manages to drop the word “y’all” into a lot of sentences in a pretty thick Finnish accent. I spent time with the Foreign Minister and the Permanent Defense Secretary, and also visited the Helsinki Shipyard, which is about to start working in tandem with the United States and Canada to build icebreakers, which is something we desperately need.

So it was a great trip—too short but really powerful—and I returned last night having interacted with my Virginians and knowing a lot more.

There was a sobering element to it, too, and that is really why I wanted to come and speak. To be in Finland, a nation that had to fight two wars against Russia in the late 1930s, early 1940s, to maintain its independence, and to be there with those leaders on the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine was sobering and thought provoking.

Finland knows Russia and Russian leadership better than just about anybody because of these hundreds of miles of border between the two nations. And that memory of fighting two wars against Russia to maintain Finnish independence is still a very present-day and palpable memory for the Finns, even though those wars happened in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

And you can be sure that our friends, our allies, those we are training together with, had some pretty strong thoughts about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the commemoration of the third anniversary. I was very disappointed and I think many were yesterday that the U.N. considered competing resolutions on the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

One was a Ukrainian resolution that talked about Russia as the invader, Russia as the instigator of the war. That resolution passed the General Assembly, but in a shocking move, the United States voted against it because of the language placing the blame for the war on Russia.

There had been previous resolutions after the invasion and on the second anniversary and the first anniversary saying that this war was started by Russia. The United States led those resolutions. But now the United States, through our President, through our Secretary of Defense, through the U.N.—we don’t have a permanent U.N. Ambassador now—through the U.N. representative at the U.N. was unwilling to sign on to and vote for a resolu-

tion that talked about Russia as being responsible for the war.

So we opposed the Ukrainian resolution. Who voted with us to oppose this resolution? Russia opposed, North Korea opposed, Nicaragua opposed, and another 15 nations opposed. About 60 nations abstained, including China. China wouldn’t vote no. China abstained, and 90-plus nations voted yes. The resolution passed, but it passed with the United States unwilling to sign on to the proposition that Russia started this war and should not have done so.

There was also a U.S. resolution that was tendered to the U.N. General Assembly. That U.S. resolution did not mention anyone being responsible for the war but called for a cease-fire and peace, obviously. The U.S. resolution was subject to an amendment that was offered by the UK and other nations inserting the language that Russia was responsible for the war and should not have done so. That amendment passed, and because it passed, the United States ended up not even being willing to vote yes on its own resolution and instead abstained.

These Finnish colleagues who are friends and allies were pretty candid about their disappointment in the United States for not being willing to state a truth—that this war was instigated by Russia—and they deeply want to be partners with the United States on defense; hence their accession to NATO; hence their agreement to the State Partnership Program with Virginia. But they are puzzled with an American leadership—from the President, to the Secretary of Defense, to the U.N.—that is unwilling to state that Russia started this war.

I came home last night. It was a long flight made too long because of a cancellation. I got back a little bit later than I originally planned. But I had a lot of time to think. What I thought about was basically this: We need to learn some lessons.

We need to remember the lessons of 1938. Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of England, went to Munich, thinking he could find an end to war and deliver what he called “peace” in our time. He negotiated with the German Government and came back to England and said: There is now peace in our time—which anyone in politics would love to be able to say. But we all know that Munich Agreement was a disaster. It was negotiated between England and Germany, but many of the other nations that were later invaded by Germany weren’t there, and it wasn’t a peace agreement, and they suffered.

But did England at least protect itself from suffering by signing a deal and proclaiming peace in our time? No. England was attacked as well after the Germans had attacked Belgium and France and Poland and other nations.

So an illusory “peace in our time” deal was just that—it was illusory. You can’t appease a bully. They will bully

you and others unless you stand up to them.

We could remember 1975. In 1975, the Helsinki Accords, right in the community where I was visiting, were signed—the Soviet Union was a signatory, along with the United States and Canada and European nations—to guarantee certain principles, including the guarantee of the inviolability of national sovereignty and that no nation should be able to invade the sovereignty of others. We need to remember that. We celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Accords this summer. We need to remember those principles and who has violated them and who has not.

Let’s remember 1995. In 1995, as an aftermath of the Helsinki Accords, we helped form the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. It is the one organization that includes all European nations, including Russia. NATO doesn’t include them all; the OSCE does. The OSCE was committed to the principles of the Helsinki Accords protecting national sovereignty, and we need to remember who has violated those principles and who hasn’t.

We should remember 2020, 5 years ago this week in 2020—the Doha accord. President Trump negotiated a “peace” accord with the Taliban—a peace accord with the Taliban. Afghanistan was not allowed to be at the table. The Government of Afghanistan that had been our partner, in whom we had invested hundreds of billions of dollars, was not allowed to be at the table. So, yes, there was a “peace” deal. There was peace in our time, but the peace proved to be illusory and catastrophic months later when the United States removed troops pursuant to the Doha accord.

The absence of inclusion of the Afghan Government led to a demoralization and a collapse. The inspector general that analyzed the end of our military participation in Afghanistan had plenty of blame to assign—blame to the Biden administration but also blame to a President, President Trump, who negotiated a deal without including the party that was most affected.

I thought of the Doha accord when I saw the news of negotiations in Riyadh between the United States and Russia to end the war in Ukraine and noticed Ukraine was not at the table. A peace deal about a nation’s sovereignty where you are not allowing that nation to be at the table is doomed to failure.

We need to remember those lessons in connection with any discussion about the future of Ukraine.

Mr. President, you don’t even need to completely remember history; just remember what your mom or dad told you. I know I had this call, and I think most people will remember this. You are getting bullied at school, and you go home and complain to your parents. What do your parents tell you about bullies? If you give in to them, they will keep bullying you and others. If

you stand up to them, they are more likely—not guaranteed but more likely to stop bullying.

The United States should have been willing yesterday in the U.N. to stand up to a bully. The United States should have been willing to say that this was an illegal war unjustly initiated by Russia. If you are unwilling to state a truth, you begin in a very weak position.

So my thought in coming home from visiting my own troops, who are sacrificing and risking to train for an action that they know they may one day be called on to support—else they wouldn't be conducting training in a snowy birch forest in southern Finland in February of 2025—they are there because they are willing to sacrifice. It takes sacrifice to protect democracy.

Our Nation is coming up on the 250th anniversary of our democracy—and not only our democracy but our leadership role in democracies around the globe. The world needs us to continue to stand strong. Our friends like Finland are hoping and praying that we continue to stand strong. It is my belief that in the heart of the American people is a desire to continue to stand strong.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 724

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, we are dealing with a crisis that all hundred Members of this body understand has taken the lives of hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people, and that is the scourge of fentanyl.

One of the things we have been doing as a result of that is temporarily scheduling fentanyl analogs, these horrific substances that are manufactured in order to pour onto our streets. Such a small amount of this drug—it literally could be the size of one pill—as they say, one pill can kill. It is very important to me that we see the temporary scheduling of this continue until the Senate finds a more wholesome response to this crisis. We must rise to meet this crisis in a wholesome way, in way that meets the gravity of the crisis and does not just continue to do the things we have done over and over again.

So as we are working in a bipartisan way in the Senate Judiciary Committee with the understanding that the temporary scheduling may expire in the coming weeks—in order to remove that pressure and allow us to work in a bipartisan fashion, I have come to the floor today to ask for unanimous consent that we continue that temporary scheduling while we work in a bipartisan fashion to make sure that we give the most fulsome response possible to this crisis.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 724, the Temporary Extension of Fentanyl-Related Substances Scheduling Act, which is at the desk; I further ask unanimous consent

that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, for years, one more time, Congress has refused to make a definitive, permanent decision. It has failed to make schedule I classification of fentanyl-related substances permanent.

Law enforcement needs permanence. It needs a definitive change to combat the opioid crisis and go after the criminals flooding communities with deadly drugs.

Congress's inaction only emboldens China, drug cartels, and other criminals who exploit our communities, and that should not happen.

We need a lasting solution. There is no reason to do any temporary extension. We have the bipartisan votes to make the schedule I classification permanent.

This Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee, with the support of Judiciary Chairman GRASSLEY and Senator HEINRICH, is marking up the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act, or the HALT Fentanyl Act. This legislation permanently classifies fentanyl-related substances as schedule I controlled substances.

Let's be clear. The HALT Fentanyl Act is not controversial. For two consecutive Congresses, it passed the House of Representatives with strong bipartisan support. There are enough votes to pass HALT in the Judiciary Committee and on the Senate floor this Congress. My Democratic colleague's legislation delays that permanency. Schedule I classification will once more be in jeopardy when the next deadline comes around. Law enforcement cannot continue to have this uncertainty.

That is why, after my objection, I will ask unanimous consent to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act. This legislation has already passed the House of Representatives and has bipartisan support in the Senate. I hope all my Democratic colleagues will join in supporting the bill.

We have a responsibility to provide law enforcement the tools they need to address the scourge of deadly drugs in our communities. Failure to act puts Americans in harm's way.

For those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 27

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, because of my objection, I ask unanimous consent to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act to permanently classify fentanyl-related substances as schedule I controlled substances. The bill also removes barriers that impede the ability of researchers to conduct studies on these substances.

The HALT Fentanyl Act has already passed the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support. It has support from Democrat and Republican Senators now.

This is the bill the Senate should be voting on today, not just a temporary extension that creates greater uncertainty in our effort to address the opioid crisis but, again, one which establishes permanence, something which gives certainty to law enforcement to combat this, as I said earlier, scourge of illegal fentanyl.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 27 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. In reserving the right to object, this is why I am down here today—really, literally, at this point—and I want to jump here.

I thank the Presiding Officer for recognizing me. I truly appreciate that, but this gets me excited because this is the point that I want to illustrate.

My colleague is far smarter than I on medical issues. I could not have passed organic chem at Stanford. I am sure he passed it with flying colors. Of my colleague, who is truly one of my more favorite colleagues in this place because of how rational and pragmatic he is on approaching real crises like this, I am begging and hoping he will listen to me, and I am begging this body to listen to me.

We have had a fentanyl crisis in this country of monumental proportions. It is one of the greatest killers in America. Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues have literally been responsible for lowering the life expectancy for Americans. It is one of the greatest crises we have seen to human life in America in my lifetime. There is so much data-driven evidence and evidence-based answers to this, of how we can approach this crisis, but yet the only bill that we seek to do is a bill that does what we have already done on a temporary basis. I support classwide scheduling for fentanyl analogues, but here we have this bill, the HALT bill, that my colleague pointed out did pass in a bipartisan way and now is in the Judiciary Committee.

The reason I am down here is not to drag my dear friend down here because he is a busy man, and I wanted to go over to him before this conversation started to apologize, but I needed to make this point on the floor in this kind of standoff.

He is asking us to pass the HALT bill, which would give classwide scheduling to fentanyl analogues, which we have already done. For years, it has been temporarily scheduled, and what



has happened to opioid deaths in America when we have used this that law enforcement has called for, "Schedule. Schedule. Give us these tools?" Well, we have had these tools, and deaths in the Presiding Officer's State, deaths in my colleagues' States, and deaths in my State have continued to go up.

Now, here is the beauty of the conversation we are having and why we should be passing the temporary one to let us go back to work, and I know this because I know his heart and I know your heart. There are evidence-based, bipartisan amendments to that HALT Act that are widely supported. My colleague's partner Senator from his State, in committee, said: I don't understand why we are not putting the test strips on this. Why? Because kids who are using fentanyl right now don't know that they are using this fentanyl analogue. Kids in your State and my State think they are taking Adderall, not realizing that this has those toxic things that can kill.

Here we were in committee, with a bipartisan test strip bill, and my colleague's partner Senator said: This makes sense to me. And the one excuse they were using for not doing a bipartisan bill to give us more of a response than doing what we are already doing and wiping our hands and saying, "We did great things," was saying, "We didn't have time" because of this artificial deadline.

So I am down here to say: Wait a minute. Let's do the temporary extension and take time to do bipartisan bills.

But don't take my word for it. Take the word of the Republican witnesses who came to our hearing. We just had a painful hearing of law enforcement leaders and other Republican witnesses who told us the scourges of fentanyl that we all know. Those people all said that this can't be all Congress does; that the HALT bill cannot be our only response because the whole bill permanently schedules what we have already scheduled temporarily.

I believe in the 99 Members here who know that our response to this crisis cannot be what we have already been doing for the last 5 years when there are bipartisan bills that we could be putting on this bill to show America that we are not going to just puff ourselves up and make permanent something that was already done in a temporary way.

Let me read some of this pleading from Republican witnesses.

Republican witness Jaime Puerta, a courageous parent who lost his child to an overdose, testified:

It is imperative that we educate our children on the dangers of any kind of drug use due to the lethality that can come with any kind of experimentation or self-medication . . . we must have specific fentanyl education introduced to . . . our schools as soon as possible; otherwise, more children will . . . die.

That doesn't even cost money.

We could be doing things through the Department of Education in supporting

education campaigns. Bipartisan support for that idea—is it on the HALT bill? No. Let me go on.

Republican witness Sheriff Donald Barnes highlighted the successes of a multifaceted strategy to address both supply and demand for illicit drugs. These are the bullet points he said that we should do, imploring Congress: Don't just do what you have already done. Do something more. Give law enforcement officers naloxone to reduce overdoses; education for fifth and sixth graders; ensure the continuity of care and successful reintegration of people who are returning to the community from the scourge of these drugs.

Witness after witness—from law enforcement to scientists to doctors—have offered up bipartisan supportive ideas so that our response to one of the biggest scourges of our country isn't just to do what we have been doing for the last half decade or more.

I have got bipartisan bills on the committee, and my colleagues from Texas have bipartisan bills on the committee, and the only excuse that people gave for us not to have more consideration was: Oh, well, the deadline is coming up in a few weeks for temporary passage. But I realize we have passed temporary scheduling by unanimous consent before. It is not hard to do.

I beg of my colleagues—I beg of my colleague who is here and others: We have a moving bill that has to go back to the House because we have already added a managers' package to it. I promise you, if we add truly bipartisan things that give a more fulsome approach—a more comprehensive approach—to stop our children from dying, it will pass in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives because it was a bipartisan year. I am in agony over the deaths in New Jersey. I have met with parents who have looked at me and said: What are you going to do?

Let me read to you the words from one of these parents.

Susan Ousterman, who is a courageous mother who lost her son to an overdose—I beg of my colleagues listen to this—said:

I urge you to stop crafting policies based on stigma, false narratives, and political loyalty, and most of all, stop using our dead children to justify these failed approaches. Harsher penalties for drugs, like those for the HALT Fentanyl Act, do not deter drug use. They only push people into riskier behaviors, increase the likelihood that someone will die rather than call for help, and make our communities less safe. How many more Americans must die before we finally admit that the War on Drugs was a failure?

I am a former mayor. I oversaw a police department that had to answer the calls with children dying on floors. They had these law enforcement tools. They would tell me more needs to be done. The HALT Fentanyl Act will get passed. Fentanyl analogues will never again be unscheduled in our country. That is not the challenge right now to save lives. The challenge to save lives

in America right now is, What are we going to do more than is being done right now? Fentanyl analogues are scheduled right now, and if the only thing we can do—the only bill that is moving through here—is to just do what we have been doing, shame on us.

I am asking this body to give time. Extend the temporary scheduling so that we can work in a bipartisan fashion, like Senator KENNEDY, who said: I want more time to look at this. This seems rational; this seems logical; it seems like something we should do. Then, when bipartisan Senators step up like that and say, "I want to work with the man or the woman across the aisle," we will have the time to do it.

So, God, I am sorry that my friend who is truly a great American leader and one of the smarter people in here—I am sorry that he objected to my bill, but I will stand up in our committee meeting on Thursday and make this same plea; that we don't just pass the HALT Fentanyl Act but that we actually put things in it that aren't partisan ideas. They are the ones that law enforcement is calling for. They are the ones that scientists are calling for. They are the ones that doctors are calling for—bipartisan bills.

Dear God, the parents of dead children are calling for us to step up and do more than the same old thing we have been doing around the War on Drugs since I was a kid myself.

With that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague's passion.

Everybody watching me right now knows somebody who has died from a fentanyl overdose. You cannot minimize the impact of this on everyday families, but what is presented to us is a false choice and I would say the wrong choice.

I think my colleague is saying, unless we pass his amendment to put this temporarily on hold—and, once more, refuse to make a decision to make this permanent—that somehow things will not get better.

Let me repeat what I said in my earlier remarks: This Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee, with the support of Judiciary Chairman GRASSLEY, a Republican, and Senator HEINRICH, a Democrat, is marking up the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act, or the HALT Fentanyl Act. This Thursday is when it is going to be marked up.

Now, this is a moving piece of legislation. If you want to do something more than this legislation does, you should have 2 months ago started working with that committee. Don't stop now. Call people tonight, and say: Listen. On Thursday, we are going to be marking this up. Will you consider my amendment? Make the case that was so impassionately given that we have got to do more than what we are doing.

I agree. So the way to do it—because this has not yet been marked up this



can still be modified. By the way, this is not the end of what we are going to do to address the issue of fentanyl. It does allow law enforcement to say: Listen, this isn't temporary. We now can kind of go to the bank, if you will. This is the law going forward. But if my esteemed colleague wants to make this more than it is now, that is the opportunity on Thursday. The process matters. Going Thursday, on a bipartisan basis and getting that buy-in, sitting down with a Senator who is undecided and working through it with that Senator and getting him or getting her to a yes, is part of that process. Delaying once more—delaying once more the permanence? Then we will say a year from now, once more, we will make it temporary, and we will make it temporary.

There is something about deadlines. Deadlines sharpen a man's mind. If there is a deadline Thursday to get this on and then, when it is brought to the floor, there is a deadline to amend it on the floor, now is the time to act, but now is not the time to delay.

I appreciate my colleague's passion, and I look forward to working with him. Neither of us ever wants to go to a family member, to a friend, to a fellow American and have to comfort them over the issue of another death from opioids. I just think that this is an important step and that, if there is more to be added, then let's add it, but let's not complain because it hasn't already been added.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I just want to clarify because my colleague pounded on the desk, and that was hard for me to watch. I am not here because we haven't been trying to get a bipartisan consensus on this and calling and doing all the work. I have watched this now for three Congresses. Number 2, I am here not because I am trying to stop the HALT Act. I am here because I heard two Republicans in our committee say the only reason we can't consider bipartisan approaches, even if they are good ideas, is because of the urgency of this moment.

All I am saying is—this is, obviously, a fait accompli—I just don't want my colleague to walk away thinking this is some kind of stunt. This is my attempt to take away an argument for us to do the work on Thursday. Clearly, it has been objected to. I am going to go back and try my hardest on Thursday to do something more.

The one prediction—I don't want to call it a "prediction." But my colleague says we have a lot more time. I have watched now for at least three Congresses that I have worked on trying to get a larger approach to meet the fentanyl crisis; and in three Congresses, this body has failed to rise to the challenge.

I am dying to be here when my colleague tells me: I told you so—and I give him permission to do that—that

this body would do something beyond just scheduling. Because, as I have read, law enforcement, scientists, doctors, and parents are not just asking for the HALT Fentanyl Act; they are asking for us to do more to save lives.

Now, I have only been here 12 years, but I know the window is open to get things done when something is a must-pass bill to move. This is an opportunity to put some things on to show the larger public that we are not going to do what we always do.

I am really worried when this window closes, there will be a lot of people thumping their chests and saying: We have dealt with the fentanyl crisis, and all these other ideas won't have vehicles to go through.

I will not stop working until this body does more than just scheduling what has already been scheduled. People on both sides of the aisle are demanding us to do more. And we don't need to go left; we don't need to go right. We need to do the commonsense, evidence-based approaches that are being supported and called for. In fact, some of the commonsense amendments are already bipartisan supported by Senators. So I am grateful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

S.J. Res. 11

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I have a resolution under the—we call it a CRA, to rescind one of President Biden's regulations.

In 1938, we drilled the first well in the "Gulf of America," which some people still call the Gulf of Mexico.

Since then, 87 years have passed, and we have drilled about 6,000 wells in the gulf. We have laid hundreds of thousands of miles of pipelines.

The oil and gas companies who did this have surveyed, they have x rayed every square inch of the seabed in the gulf. They have surveyed, they have x rayed 311,652 square nautical miles in the gulf. Put Texas and California together, that is the geographical area that has been surveyed by the oil and gas industry.

Why did they do that? For safety reasons. So before they put a platform in the gulf, they knew where they were putting it. And, No. 2, to preserve history, because we have—or had a lot of shipwrecks in the gulf, from which we can learn about the past.

In fact, as a result of this effort by the oil and gas industry to x ray the entire gulf, we have discovered 4,000 shipwrecks.

In the waning days of the Biden administration, September of 2024, the Department of the Interior, under the Biden administration, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management—we call it BOEM—promulgated a midnight regulation. This is what the regulation said: You have to survey it again. Even though the entire gulf has been surveyed, you have to do it again, oil and gas industry. If you want to drill a well, or if you want to lay some pipe-

line, you have got to x ray it again. Why? Because the government says so.

This is going to add anywhere from—I don't know—\$20,000 up to, potentially, \$1 million to the cost of drilling a well, to x ray after an x ray has already been done. That, of course, is going to increase the cost of the well, which is going to increase the cost of the oil and gas from the well, which is going to be passed on to the consumer, which is going to raise the price of energy, which is going to contribute to inflation in America.

You want to know why we had such outrageous inflation under President Biden? Because of regulations like this. And there are hundreds more that increased prices needlessly. That is why under President Biden, the average person's electricity bill in America went up 20 percent under President Biden.

We don't need this regulation. I do not know—well, let me put it another way. I am not saying that the person at the Department of the Interior who came up with this idea is the dumbest person in the world. I am not saying that. But I am saying that the person at BOEM who came up with this idea better worry that the dumbest person in the world doesn't die because he is in the running.

My CRA would kill this rule dead as Woodrow Wilson, and I hope my colleagues will vote for it.

I yield back all time on Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11.

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

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

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

VOTE ON S.J. RES. 11

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 92 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Banks	Crapo	Husted
Barrasso	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Blackburn	Curtis	Johnson
Boozman	Daines	Justice
Britt	Ernst	Kennedy
Budd	Fischer	Lankford
Capito	Graham	Lee
Cassidy	Grassley	Lummis
Collins	Hagerty	Marshall
Cornyn	Hawley	McConnell
Cortez Masto	Hickenlooper	McCormick
Cotton	Hoeben	Moody

Moran	Risch	Sheehy
Moreno	Rosen	Sullivan
Mullin	Rounds	Thune
Murkowski	Schmitt	Tillis
Paul	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Ricketts	Scott (SC)	Young

## NAYS—44

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Sanders
Baldwin	Kaine	Schatz
Bennet	Kelly	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kim	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	King	Shaheen
Booker	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Cantwell	Lujan	Smith
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Galleo	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

## NOT VOTING—2

Cramer	Tuberville
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The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 11) was agreed to, as follows:

## S.J. RES. 11

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to “Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources” (89 Fed. Reg. 71160 (September 3, 2024)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 24.

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

## VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 93 Leg.]

## YEAS—51

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hoeven	Paul
Budd	Husted	Ricketts
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cassidy	Johnson	Rounds
Collins	Justice	Schmitt
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Sheehy
Cruz	Lummis	Sullivan
Curtis	Marshall	Thune
Daines	McConnell	Tillis
Ernst	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

## NAYS—47

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Galleo	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

## NOT VOTING—2

Cramer	Tuberville
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The motion was agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

## CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

## CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 24, Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education.

John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, James E. Risch, Katie Boyd Britt, Tommy Tuberville, James Lankford, Markwayne Mullin, Marsha Blackburn, Tom Cotton, John R. Curtis, Bernie Moreno, Tim Sheehy, Mike Rounds, Joni Ernst, Roger F. Wicker, David McCormick, Rick Scott of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me today is Mr. John Lowery, who is one of my colleagues from my office, who has been a big help to me.

## NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. President, as you know, when Vice President HARRIS and President Trump ran against each other for the Presidency, one of the planks in President Trump's platform was that he was going to review every penny of Federal Government spending.

Why did he say that? Why did he promise to do that? Well, first, there is a moral principle involved. People work hard for their money, and when they give it to government, they are entitled to expect government to spend it efficiently.

Number 2, President Trump ran on that plank because of our debt. The Federal debt is \$36.5 trillion. You know, we throw these numbers around—like a trillion, you know—and we start to take them for granted.

To give you a little perspective, this \$36.5 trillion grows bigger by the second. It is going to increase—if we just keep doing what we have been doing, it is going to increase \$1 trillion every 100 days. If we just keep doing what we have been doing, it is going to increase \$10 billion a day. Today, nothing changed. We added \$10 billion in debt. That is also \$417 million an hour. That is \$6.9 million a minute. I think I have been talking about a minute; we just added \$7 million to our debt. That is why the President wants to get rid of spending porn.

The reaction here in Washington has been breathtaking. I understand Washington is not exactly a slice of America. I get that. I understand that Washington is not normal. Normal in Washington, DC, is a setting on the dryer. So I get all that. We are different in Washington. But the pushback to President Trump's effort through Mr. Musk and his team to reduce spending has just been extraordinary. I mean, people are barking and yelping and shrieking about it. They sound like the game room in a mental hospital.

I get that a lot of people don't like President Trump, and I get that many people don't like Mr. Musk. I get that Mr. Musk is different. I kind of like that. I mean, I like different. You know, he is the sort of guy that would wear—I don't know—he would wear Crocs to a wedding. I get that. I find it kind of refreshing. But nobody has ever called him a dummy. And he has found an incredible amount of waste and abuse of taxpayer money, what I call spending porn.

I am not going to repeat everything I have repeated or said the first time we talked about this, but it just seems to me to be, once again, extraordinary that people are mad at President Trump or Mr. Musk for the process they are using, but they are not mad about the money being wasted.

I mean, Mr. Musk, whether you like him or not, has found, for example, \$7.9 million that we spent to teach Sri Lanka journalists to avoid binary gendered language. He found money that was given to an NGO to empower the LGBT community in Armenia. He found \$1.5 million that we spent to rebuild the Cuban media ecosystem, \$2.1 million to the BBC to strengthen the media ecosystem in Libya, and \$8.3 million spent for equity and inclusion education in Nepal. Does no one care about how the money was actually abused and wasted?

It is not unusual for me to be disappointed for some things I see in Washington, and under the last administration, I have to admit, I was disappointed just about every single day. I had almost gotten used to it.

But last week—and this is what I want to talk about—I read a story. It

was a story about the abuse of taxpayer money in the last administration, and it was so nauseating that it triggered my gag reflex.

In April of 2024—not that long ago—the EPA, under President Biden, gave \$2 billion in taxpayer money to an organization that had absolutely no experience, that was backed by a very prominent Democratic politician by the name of Ms. Stacey Abrams.

Here is what happened: In 2022, as you know, President Biden and my Democratic colleagues passed the Inflation Reduction Act. Not a single Republican voted for it—not one—either in the House or in the Senate.

We knew, at the time, that spending \$1.2 trillion—that is what the Inflation Reduction Act cost—would only make inflation worse, not better. And even President Biden eventually admitted that the Inflation Reduction Act did absolutely nothing to lower prices. Even President Biden, at the end of his term, admitted that.

So where did all the Inflation Reduction Act money go? A fair question for taxpayers to ask. I mean, there is nothing wrong with wanting to know what they do with our money.

Let me say that again. There is nothing wrong with wanting to know what they do with our money.

So where did all the Inflation Reduction Act—this \$1.2 trillion—go? Well, President Trump and DOGE, the group appointed by President Trump, and the EPA under new leadership, under Mr. Lee Zeldin, have begun to follow some of that money.

Now, this is where Ms. Stacey Abrams comes in. I think it is fair to say that Ms. Abrams is—I don't know. I would call her controversial. She has the right to believe what she believes. This is America, and she has the right to free speech. I am not criticizing that, even though I disagree with some of what she says. But I think it would be fair to describe her as controversial. She is probably best known for the fact that she ran for Governor of Georgia twice, and she lost.

In her career, Ms. Abrams has said the following. I don't want to just articulate hyperbole here. I want you to read her words, not mine. On April 20, 2024, Ms. Abrams appeared on MSNBC with Rev. Al Sharpton, and this is what Ms. Abrams said:

What we know is that the attack on diversity, equity, and inclusion, DEI, is an attack on democracy.

On September 20, 2022, during a panel discussion in Atlanta, Ms. Abrams said this about a baby's heartbeat—a fetal heartbeat—the heartbeat of a baby in a mother's womb. This is what Ms. Abrams said about a fetal heartbeat. She said:

It is a manufactured sound designed to convince people that men have the right to take control of a woman's body.

Her words, not mine.

In May of 2022, during a Georgia gubernatorial debate—she is running for Governor of Georgia now—Ms. Abrams

called Georgia “the worst State in the country to live” in.

In October of 2022, during another Georgia gubernatorial debate, Ms. Abrams accused the sheriffs—all the sheriffs in Georgia who endorsed her opponent, Governor Brian Kemp—of wanting “to be able to take Black people off the streets.”

In October of 2022, Ms. Abrams appeared on MSNBC. She suggested that abortion is the solution to inflation. Here is what she said. She said:

Let's be clear. Having children is why you're worried about your price for gas. It's why you're concerned about how much food costs.

Her words, not mine. Let me say again, Ms. Abrams has the right to her opinion. This is America. You are not free if you can't express yourself. But I do think any fairminded person would have to conclude that Ms. Abrams is controversial.

So in March of 2023, not that long ago, Ms. Abrams went to work for an organization, a nonprofit, called Rewiring America. You have probably seen that name in the news: Rewiring America.

Ms. Abrams' title—she went to work for Rewiring America. Her title was senior counsel. She was paid for her work for Rewiring America. We don't know how much, though there will probably be an investigation to find out.

Now, nonprofits like Rewiring America, Ms. Abrams' group, they have to file documents with the IRS, and one of the documents they have to file is called Form 990. This form by the IRS asks a number of questions about nonprofits. One of the questions the IRS asks is for the organization—the nonprofit—to list its accomplishments.

Rewiring America, Ms. Abrams' group, told the IRS in 2023 on this Form 990 that this was Rewiring America's “startup year for the organization,” and the form goes on to say that the only accomplishment Rewiring America listed was that it had “joined a coalition of other national organizations to apply for a grant from the Inflation Reduction Act's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.”

In other words, Ms. Abrams' organization told the IRS that this filing was their first-ever tax filing, in 2023; that the organization was a startup; and its purpose was exclusively to seek a grant from President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act—fair enough.

So what do we know about this coalition Ms. Abrams' group wanted to form? Rewiring America, Ms. Abrams' group, announced on October 12, 2023, that it was joining Habitat for Humanity, it was joining United Way Worldwide, and two other organizations, and these four organizations were going to form another nonprofit—a coalition of nonprofits—called Power Forward Communities.

So you have got Power Forward Communities up here. You have got Rewiring America and some other organiza-

tions down here. And all together, they make up Power Forward Communities. And they also announced that a gentleman by the name of Tim Mayopoulos, a former Obama administration appointee, would lead the coalition.

Now, as a nonprofit, I told you that Rewiring America had to file forms with the IRS. Well, so did this new group Power Forward. It had to file Form 990, as well, with the IRS.

According to its filings, Power Forward had just \$100 in total revenues in 2023. According to the IRS filing, it didn't list a single accomplishment. I have seen Girl Scout troops with more business credentials. Yet Power Forward Communities, of which Ms. Abrams' Rewiring America was a part, had the audacity to ask the Federal Government for a \$2 billion grant. For what, you ask? It was supposed to be “to expand access to clean energy by prioritizing housing, equity, and resilience.”

Power Forward Communities said it wanted to take this taxpayer money and help people install energy-efficient upgrades to their homes.

What are we talking about? Heat pumps, getting rid of gas stoves.

Now, it is good to dream big in America. I am all for that. But under any reasonable standard—under any reasonable standard—one is entitled to ask how these organizations—Ms. Abrams' Rewiring America and Power Forward Communities—brandnew organizations, no business experience, \$100 in the bank, are qualified to receive \$2 billion of taxpayer money from the Biden administration.

Now, that didn't stop the Biden administration from cutting a check, though. They took our money and gave Power Forward Communities and Rewiring America \$2 billion.

Do you want to know how we ran up \$36 billion in debt? That is how.

Now, the EPA announced in 2024, under President Biden, just 6 months after Power Forward was formed—Power Forward was formed, and 6 months later President Biden and his team announced they were giving them \$2 billion. And as I said, that is billion with a “b.”

Now, look, I try to see the world from other people's bell towers as much as I can, but I cannot come up, not for the life of me, with a single rational justification as to why the EPA under the Biden administration thought it was appropriate to give Power Forward and Rewiring America—two brandnew nonprofits with no business experience, no accomplishments according to the IRS forms, and only 100 bucks in the bank—\$2 billion of taxpayer money, especially to the exclusion of every other qualified applicant for that money, if there were any other qualified applicants. We don't know. I don't know. I don't know if there was a competitive bid.

Now, I do know that the EPA, under President Biden, gave Ms. Abrams' group—her two groups—\$2 billion cash.

In the grant approval, President Biden's EPA said that Power Forward had to allocate this money to get rid of stoves and to put in heat pumps. They had to allocate the money—they had to spend it—in 21 days.

Now, that meant that Ms. Abrams' group, Rewiring America, which was part of the larger group, likely received or was supposed to receive a check for \$490 million, about a quarter of the total of \$2 billion, by the end of May 2024. And the other organizations, within 21 days, President Biden directed, were also supposed to receive their share of the money.

But get this: President Biden and his team directed these NGOs to distribute \$2 billion in 21 days, but the Biden administration also told Power Forward, within 90 days, to go take a course. You know what the course was? The name of the course was "How to Develop a Budget"—"How to Develop a Budget."

So President Biden gave Power Forward 21 days to spend the money but said: You have got 90 days to go take a course about how to put together a budget.

And why would anybody in the Milky Way give \$2 billion of taxpayer money to two organizations that had just been formed that, according to the IRS filings, had no accomplishments and one of them only had 100 bucks in the bank?

I think I know why. I certainly know what it looks like. I mean, this would be comical if it wasn't so odious—\$2 billion.

You know, the last 4 years under the last administration have been very difficult for America. The cost of everything has gone up. The cost of many things have gone up by 20 percent, and our wages didn't keep up. The average electricity bill in America went up 19 percent. The average Louisianian, because of President Biden's inflation, had to spend an extra \$890 a month—extra—for food and clothing and car notes, and they didn't get an \$890-a-month raise.

President Biden and my Democratic colleagues told us that the Inflation Reduction Act—I remember when it was passed. They said: If you spend \$1.2 trillion on the Inflation Reduction Act, it will be a lifeline to every family in America.

That is not what it looks like to me. It is starting to look like to me that it was really a slush fund—a slush fund for Washington insiders.

Now, I don't want to make accusations that are unfair. I think EPA Administrator Zeldin needs to get to the bottom of this. I believe in fairness. I believe in due process. Mr. Zeldin has announced that he is going to try to claw back as much of this \$2 billion and other moneys as he can. Again, I think he ought to do it fairly and accord everybody due process.

But you know what, if the shoe fits, wear it, Cinderella. Here is what I see. I see two organizations formed in the

last year or so of President Biden's administration—on their IRS filings, they say: We have no experience. We have no accomplishments.

One of them only has a hundred bucks in the bank. One of them—their senior counsel is Ms. Stacey Abrams, a well-known Democratic politician.

I see them asking the President of the United States and his EPA for \$2 billion cash to fight gas stoves and getting it—and getting it—to the exclusion of every other applicant who might have been able to use that money.

Now, this is just the beginning of the type of spending porn that President Trump and Mr. Musk are uncovering that people are screaming about.

I am going to repeat what I started with. There is nothing wrong with wanting to know what they do and did with our money. That is all President Trump and Mr. Musk are doing.

#### MAURITIUS AND CHAGOS ISLANDS

Mr. President, I want to spend 5 minutes talking about another subject because President Trump tomorrow has a very important meeting with Prime Minister Starmer of the United Kingdom.

This is the Indian Ocean. You have heard me talk about this. A group of islands right here are the Chagos Islands. This is China over here. Down here is another group of islands called Mauritius that I will talk about in a second.

Why do I talk about the Chagos Islands? Well, from 1715 to 1810, the Chagos Islands were owned by France. In 1814, France gave the Chagos Islands to the United Kingdom. At the time, the United Kingdom—after France gave the islands to them—not only owned the Chagos Islands, but the United Kingdom also owned Mauritius.

The United Kingdom administered both the Chagos Islands and Mauritius from headquarters in Mauritius. Mauritius never owned the Chagos Islands—never. They were always owned either by France or by the United Kingdom, which owns them today. The only connection Mauritius had with the Chagos Islands was that the United Kingdom owned both at the same time and administered the two groups of islands from headquarters in Mauritius.

After the United Kingdom acquired the Chagos Islands here, the United States of America built one of the most important military bases in the world on one of the islands called the Diego Garcia—hugely important. The United Kingdom helped, but we put up most of the money.

Now, Mr. Starmer, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, has decided that he wants to give the Chagos Islands, with our military base, to Mauritius. He wants to give it to them.

We said: Wait a minute. We have a military base here. What about our military base?

Mr. Starmer says: Well, I am going to give all of the islands, including the military base, to Mauritius—even though Mauritius never owned them.

Now that Mauritius owns them, we are going to pay Mauritius \$9 billion over time—I want to be fair, over time—for a military base that we built. What? Why? Well, I will tell you why. Prime Minister Starmer feels guilty because the United Nations—actually, it is not the United Nations; rather, a group called the International Court of Justice, which is loosely affiliated with the United Nations, issued a ruling that criticized the United Kingdom for actually owning the Chagos Islands.

They said: United Kingdom, you are an anti-colonialist. You should feel guilty, you should feel bad, and you need give the Chagos Islands away. You need to give them to Mauritius even though Mauritius never owned them.

That is what is going on. That is all that is going on.

Now, how did this get started? The Prime Minister of Mauritius—his name was Prime Minister Jugnauth—sued in the International Court of Justice—he sued the United Kingdom. He said: Give me Mauritius and the military base.

He filed a lawsuit. The International Court of Justice, based in the Netherlands, issued a ruling in Mauritius's favor. It is an advisory opinion. It is not binding on anybody. But Mr. Jugnauth got what he wanted on behalf of Mauritius.

A few weeks later, Prime Minister Jugnauth got beat, and he was replaced by a new Prime Minister, whose name is Prime Minister Ramgoolam. Prime Minister Ramgoolam said: Not only do I want the Mauritius Islands, you are not paying us enough, United Kingdom and America.

According to news reports, he wants not only \$9 billion, he wants \$18 billion for our own military base.

He said: We will lease you the base that you built, which we, Mauritius, now own, back to you, but you have to give us between \$9 and \$18 billion.

Isn't that special? Isn't that special? That is what is going on.

Now, there is one other thing you need to know. Mauritius is very close to China. Mauritius has a very lucrative trade agreement with China, and you might be surprised to learn that after all of this has been developing, China all of a sudden is Mauritius's best friend. Do you know why? Because if Prime Minister Starmer does this, Mauritius is going to own the base. They are going to own the base.

Now, Prime Minister Starmer is going to meet with President Trump tomorrow to try to talk President Trump into agreeing to this. The Prime Minister of the U.K. has already said: If President Trump is not comfortable with me giving away an American military base—I want to giggle when I say that—if President Trump is not comfortable, I won't do it.

Here is what the Prime Minister is going to tell President Trump tomorrow. He is going to say, No. 1: Mr. President, we need to do this because it is the right thing to do.

The United Nations' International Court of Justice, which is comprised of

a bunch of weeny wokers, has issued an advisory opinion saying that we and the United Kingdom should feel guilty because we used to own Colonies.

Prime Minister Starmer is going to say: Mr. President, we need to give these islands away and your military base, Mr. President, because it is the right thing to do.

The second thing he is going to tell the President is that if we don't do it, China is going to get really mad. He is going to say: China is going to get really mad if we don't do this.

The third thing he is going to tell the President is that if we don't do this, the United Nations could cut off the telecommunications for our military base—like the United Nations is going to all a sudden, out of the blue, cut off the spectrum and the telecommunications for an American military base. They have no jurisdiction to do that, and they also don't have the oranges to do that.

There is one other thing I want to mention. I didn't mean to go on this long, but this is an important meeting the President is having. Remember I told you about the Prime Minister who started all this, Prime Minister Jugnauth? He got beat—you will recall me saying it—in 2024.

A few weeks ago, former Prime Minister Jugnauth was arrested. He was arrested for money laundering. The Mauritius authorities searched his house and the home of one of his closest associates, and do you know what they found? They found \$25 million in cash in various currencies. They found Rolex watches, they found Cartier watches, and they found United Kingdom visas. I am not saying that they are connected, but it is mighty interesting.

Here is what one of the generals who formerly worked for President Trump has said about this deal that stinks to high heavens—GEN Herbert McMaster:

Mr. President, it would put us, the United States, at a significant strategic disadvantage, especially at a time when China is trying to gain control of critical terrain and chokepoints around the world in this effort to create new spheres of influence.

So to President Trump, my President, tonight I say: Don't do it, Mr. President. Please don't do it. I don't care what Prime Minister Starmer promises you. The only reason he is doing this is because he feels guilty because the United Nations has said that the United Kingdom should be ashamed of its history and ashamed that it at one time owned Colonies.

People of the United Kingdom can feel what they want. That is none of my business. But we have an American military base there, and it is very important to defend the Indian Ocean against China.

Please, Mr. President—please, President Trump—don't let Prime Minister Starmer talk you into giving away an American military base that we need to combat China to another country that never owned it just because Prime Minister Starmer feels guilty.

I am sorry he feels guilty. He needs to go buy an emotional support pony. But he doesn't need to give away an American military base.

Mr. Trump, President Trump, please don't agree to this.

That is it. I am out of gas. My work here is done. This is important, this meeting with Prime Minister Starmer tomorrow. I don't want to lose a military base we need. So I appreciate your indulgence.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, 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 RULES AND ADMINISTRATION RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Committee on Rules and Administration 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 Senator PADILLA, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### RULES OF PROCEDURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 1. The regular meeting dates of the Committee shall be the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, at 10:00 a.m., in room SR-301, Russell Senate Office Building. Additional meetings of the Committee may be called by the Chair as he or she may deem necessary or pursuant to the provision of paragraph 3 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Rule 2. Meetings of the Committee, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the Committee on the same subject for a period of no more than 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 in subparagraphs (a) through (f) would require the meeting to be closed followed immediately by a recorded vote in open session by a majority of the Members of the Committee 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 the Committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(c) will tend to charge an individual with 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 the provisions of law or Government regulations. (Paragraph 5(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

Rule 3. Written notices of Committee meetings will normally be sent by the Committees staff director to all Members of the Committee at least a week in advance. In addition, the Committee staff will telephone or e-mail reminders of Committee meetings to all Members of the Committee or to the appropriate assistants in their offices.

Rule 4. A copy of the Committees intended agenda enumerating separate items of legislative business and Committee business will normally be sent to all Members of the Committee and released to the public at least one day in advance of all meetings. This does not preclude any Member of the Committee from discussing appropriate non-agenda topics.

Rule 5. After the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member, speaking order shall be based on order of arrival, alternating between Majority and Minority Members, unless otherwise directed by the Chair.

Rule 6. Any witness who is to appear before the Committee in any hearing shall file with the clerk of the Committee at least three business days before the date of his or her appearance, a written statement of his or her proposed testimony and an executive summary thereof, in such form as the Chair may direct, unless the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member waive such requirement for good cause.

Rule 7. In general, testimony will be restricted to five minutes for each witness. The time may be extended by the Chair, upon the Chairs own direction or at the request of a Member. Each round of questions by Members will also be limited to five minutes.

#### QUORUMS

Rule 8. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, a majority of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the reporting of legislative measures.

Rule 9. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, one-third of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, including action on amendments to measures prior to voting to report the measure to the Senate.

Rule 10. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(2) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, two Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony under oath and one Member of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony not under oath; provided, however, that in either instance,

once a quorum is established, any one Member can continue to take such testimony.

Rule 11. Under no circumstances may proxies be considered for the establishment of a quorum.

#### VOTING

Rule 12. Voting in the Committee on any issue will normally be by voice vote.

Rule 13. If a third of the Members present so demand a roll call vote instead of a voice vote, a record vote will be taken on any question by roll call.

Rule 14. The results of roll call votes taken in any meeting upon any measure, or any amendment thereto, shall be stated in the Committee report on that measure unless previously announced by the Committee, and such report or announcement shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor of and the votes cast in opposition to each such measure and amendment by each Member of the Committee. (Paragraph 7(b) and (c) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

Rule 15. Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures and matters before the Committee. However, the vote of the Committee to report a measure or matter shall require the concurrence of a majority of the Members of the Committee who are physically present at the time of the vote. Proxies will be allowed in such cases solely for the purpose of recording a Members position on the question and then only in those instances when the absentee Committee Member has been informed of the question and has affirmatively requested that he or she be recorded. (Paragraph 7(a)(3) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

#### AMENDMENTS

Rule 16. Provided at least five business days notice of the agenda is given, and the text of the proposed bill or resolution has been made available at least five business days in advance, 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 such amendment has been delivered to the office of the Committee and by at least 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled start of the meeting and circulated to each of the offices by at least 6:00 p.m.

Rule 17. In the event the Chair introduces a substitute amendment or a Chairs mark, the requirements set forth in Rule 16 shall be considered waived unless such substitute amendment or Chairs mark has been made available at least five business days in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Rule 18. It shall be in order, without prior notice, for a Member to offer a motion to strike a single section of any bill, resolution, or amendment under consideration.

Rule 19. This section of the rule may be waived by agreement of the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member.

#### DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO COMMITTEE CHAIR

Rule 20. The Chair is authorized to personally sign or sign by delegation all necessary vouchers and routine papers for which the Committees approval is required and to decide on the Committees behalf all routine business.

Rule 21. The Chair is authorized to engage commercial reporters for the preparation of transcripts of Committee meetings and hearings.

Rule 22. The Chair is authorized to issue, on behalf of the Committee, regulations normally promulgated by the Committee at the beginning of each session.

#### DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO COMMITTEE CHAIR AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

Rule 23. The Chair and Ranking Minority Member, acting jointly, are authorized to ap-

prove on behalf of the Committee any rule or regulation for which the Committees approval is required, provided advance notice of their intention to do so is given to Members of the Committee.

Rule 24. The Chair, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, is authorized to subpoena the attendance of witnesses and the production of correspondence, books, papers, documents, and other materials. 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 a subpoena is authorized, either by a vote of the Committee or by the Chair with the concurrence of the Ranking Member, the subpoena may be issued upon the signature of the Chair or of any other Member of the Committee designated by the Chair.

#### ARMS SALES NOTIFICATIONS

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY  
COOPERATION AGENCY,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,  
*Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 24-OM. This transmittal notifies a cost increase in excess of the total value previously described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 13-56 of May 12, 2014.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,  
*Director.*

Enclosure.

#### TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-OM

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (Sec. 36(b)(5)(C), AECA)

(i) Purchaser: Republic of Türkiye.  
(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1), AECA Transmittal No.: 13-56; Date: May 12, 2014; Implementing Agency: Navy.

Funding Source: National Funds.

(iii) Description: On May 12, 2014, Congress was notified by congressional certification transmittal number 13-56, of the possible sale under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act of up to 48 MK 48 Mod 6 Advanced Technology All-Up-Round (AUR) Warshot Torpedoes, containers, fleet exer-

cise sections, exercise fuel tanks, surface recovery cage and tools, exercise hardware, maintenance facility upgrades, support and test equipment, spare and repair parts, personnel training and training equipment, publications and technical documentation, U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services, and other related elements of technical support. The total estimated value was \$170 million. Major Defense Equipment (MDE) constituted \$126 million of this total.

This transmittal notifies an increase in MDE value by \$100 million, due to recent cost increases. There are no additional MDE or non-MDE items being reported with this notification. The total case value will increase by \$100 million to \$270 million. MDE will constitute \$226 million of this total.

(iv) Significance: Recent cost increases have brought about the need to add value to the original notification. The proposed sale will improve Türkiye's naval power and its capability to meet current and future threats.

(v) Justification: This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security of the United States by improving the naval capabilities and interoperability of a NATO Ally that is a force for political and economic stability in Europe.

(vi) Sensitivity of Technology: The Sensitivity of Technology Statement contained in the original notification applies to items reported here.

(vii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: February 21, 2025.

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, this morning I attended the funeral of former Maryland Congresswoman Beverly Byron, an extraordinary public servant who represented the people of western Maryland and expanded the rights of women in the military as the first woman to chair a subcommittee on the Armed Services Committee and author of the Byron amendment that allowed women to fly combat missions. She was a mentor and friend, and I was grateful to pay my respects to her this morning among her many friends and family.

Due to this conflict, I missed rollcall vote No. 90, confirmation of the nomination of Daniel Driscoll to be Secretary of the Army. Had I been present, I would have voted no.

Due to this conflict, I also missed rollcall vote No. 91, the motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 11, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to "Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources." Had I been present, I would have voted no.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING EDGEWOOD LOCKER

● Ms. ERNST. Mr. 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 Edgewood Locker of Edgewood, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1966, Tom and Joan Kerns founded Edgewood Locker as a family-run operation in a rented building in downtown Edgewood. After experience on their family farm, the young couple decided to take the risk of opening a meat processing plant. Initially, the business focused solely on custom meat processing and locker storage services. Four years later, the Kerns family expanded operations by purchasing an old creamery on the north edge of town and remodeling it themselves. The business steadily grew with the involvement of their sons Terry and Jim, and by 1980, they established a generational family partnership. This enabled Edgewood Locker to expand its service offerings, as well as launch a retail store serving cuts, cured meats, and more. Over the years, the business undertook six major remodels to accommodate its increasing customer base and expanding range of services. In 1997, this ultimately led to Edgewood Locker's relocation into a new, state-of-the-art facility on the west edge of town. In 2022, the business nearly doubled its space, adding another 19,000 square feet to its facility.

Today, Terry and Jim continue to run Edgewood Locker along with the family's third generation Katie, Baili, Payson, and Luke. Under their leadership, Edgewood Locker expanded to employ 60 full-time employees from the local community while serving customers throughout Iowa. Edgewood Locker built a reputation for its high-quality meat products and award-winning processing services. The company provides full-service custom processing of cattle, hogs, lambs, goats, and deer, catering to both individual customers and wholesalers. Edgewood Locker prepares award-winning sausages, meat sticks, bacon, and more with their family recipes and works with over 140 retail partners across the State. Last year, the business produced over 1 million pounds of sausage and almost 500,000 pounds of venison products.

Edgewood Locker is deeply committed to community service. The company is a member of the Edgewood Chamber, the American Association of Meat Processors, and the Iowa Meat Processors Association, with over 200 industry awards hanging on its walls. The company also supports local schools, civic groups, and churches through charitable donations and sponsorships. Additionally, Edgewood Locker sponsors the annual Edgewood Rodeo. The business is committed to investing in the next generation by running a butcher apprenticeship program for high school and college students. The program covers the students' tuition at Hawkeye Community College and allows them to learn the skills of the trade by working at Edgewood Locker. Edgewood Locker will celebrate its 58th anniversary in Iowa later this year.

Edgewood Locker's entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to excellence are clear. I want to congratulate the Kerns family and the entire team for their hard work and dedication to providing exceptional products and services to families across Iowa. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success.●

#### VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST JUDGES

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, since 2010, I have sponsored a State of the Union essay contest for Vermont high school students. This contest gives students in my State the opportunity to articulate what issues they would prioritize if they were President of the United States.

This is the contest's 15th year, and I would like to congratulate the nine volunteer judges who helped choose the contest winners and finalists. The contest relies on its committed team of judges. The judges take time to review each essay and evaluate the diversity in writing that engages students and will benefit them for years to come. The judges' willingness to participate in this project reflects their dedication to both the students and our State, and for that, I graciously thank them.

The judges include:

Andrew Chobanian of Oxbow High School—participant for 3 years

Jason Gorczyk of Milton High School—participant for 12 years

Krista Huling of South Burlington High School—participant for 12 years

Robert Jackson Randolph Technical Career Center—participant for their first year

Krystal Melendez of North Country Union High School—participant for their first year

Mary Schell of White River Valley School—participant for 3 years

Terri Vest of Twinfield Union School—participant for 15 years

Robert Walls-Thumma of North Country Union High School—participant for their first year

Caroline Zeilenga of Randolph Technical Career Center—participant for their first year

I am very proud to enter the State of the Union Essay Contest judges into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to recognize their contributions.●

#### VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY WINNERS

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, since 2010, I have sponsored a State of the Union essay contest for Vermont high school students. This contest gives students in my State the opportunity to articulate what issues they would prioritize if they were President of the United States.

This is the contest's 15th year, and I would like to congratulate the 475 students who participated. It is truly heartening to see so many young people engaged in finding solutions for the problems that face our country. To my mind, this is what democracy is all about.

A volunteer panel of Vermont educators reviewed the essays and chose Justason Lahue as this year's winner. Justason, a junior at Burr and Burton Academy, wrote about the impact of social media on youth mental health. Ari Glasser, a junior at Essex High School, was the second-place winner. Ari wrote about the influence of billionaires on American politics. Ely White, a senior at Leland & Gray Union Middle and High School, was the third-place winner, with an essay on political polarization.

I am very proud to enter into the Congressional Record the essays submitted by Justason, Ari and Ely.

The material follows:

WINNER, JUSTASON LAHUE, BURR AND BURTON ACADEMY, JUNIOR

Social media is deteriorating adolescent mental health, yet the United States' government is treating the situation like a social experiment; our government is waiting to see what will happen despite the mounting evidence that social media has dangerous effects. Until we apply evidence-based regulations to limit social media use, adolescent well-being is in jeopardy.

The current evidence of harm is compelling. A 2023 Gallup survey found that teenagers spend an average of 4.8 hours on social media daily. Alarmingly, a longitudinal study involving 6,595 adolescents revealed that spending over 3 hours daily on social media doubled the risk of poor mental health outcomes, such as anxiety and depression. These are not studies in isolation: a systematic review of 13 studies also found that unhealthy engagement of social media was correlated with depression, anxiety, and psychological distress.

While these studies demonstrate correlation, there are also indicators of causality. Numerous studies highlight how limiting social media use can improve mental health. A randomized controlled trial reported that reducing social media use by just 30 minutes daily lessened depressive symptoms in college students. Another study involving adolescents showed that ceasing social media use for 4 weeks resulted in a 25-40% improvement in subjective well-being (e.g., life satisfaction, depression, and anxiety) when compared to psychological interventions such as therapy.

Social media use can worsen adolescent mental health, while lessening use demonstrates the opposite effect. Adolescent brain development is most active from ages 10 to 14. However, the arbitrary and rarely enforced 'internet age' currently set at 13 exposes immature brains to a world of entertainment, inappropriate content, and harassment. Given these biological factors and the evidence of potential harm, a more appropriate age for adolescents to access the internet is 16 years of age.

I propose a bill called the Youth Mental Health Protection Act. This act would target a root cause of social media-related youth mental health issues by changing the legal age of 'internet adulthood' (i.e., when one can sign up for most online platforms, consent to terms of service, and share personal data). This act would make 16 the legally required age to access social media, similar to obtaining a driver's license in most states, another privilege requiring complex thinking and decision-making. Finally, the Youth Mental Health Protection Act would hold social media companies liable by requiring age verification prior to account creation.

Requiring age checks would likely lessen the negative effects of social media on adolescent mental health, however, this is just



one step the United States government needs to take to solve this crisis. To counteract the harms introduced by this ongoing social experiment, policy-makers need to act now. Enacting the Youth Mental Health Protection Act and prioritizing further research on the effects of social media is imperative to safeguard the mental health of our nation's youth.

SECOND PLACE, ARI GLASSER, ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

President-elect Donald Trump has so far nominated over a dozen billionaires to his cabinet, with a combined net worth of over \$400 billion—more than ten times the GDP of the state of Vermont. In addition, Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, was one of Trump's strongest supporters during the election campaign: He donated a staggering \$277 million to Trump and other Republican candidates, according to CBS News. It is clear that the ultra-wealthy control a growing share of both political and economic power in the United States, holding disproportionate sway that erodes the power of the American people. The expanding influence of the billionaire class is one of the greatest challenges facing America today.

The recent trend of billionaire influence is reminiscent of the Gilded Age, a time when an incredibly wealthy group of industrialists such as John D. Rockefeller presided over vast monopolies while the government struggled to break them up. Meanwhile, the urban masses worked long hours with deplorable conditions and little pay. It was a kind of oligarchic society, one where these "Captains of Industry" wielded immense political and economic influence. Today, America is in a sort of Second Gilded Age—complete with drastic wealth inequality and a dangerous level of influence by the ultra-wealthy that is becoming ever nearer to oligarchy. Just 735 billionaires hold more wealth than the bottom half of all American households.

In order to reduce the concerning level of billionaire influence, many reforms must be enacted, but perhaps most important is a wealth tax. This could raise trillions of dollars for the government while also reducing the wealth and influence of billionaires over time. One such proposal would be Senator Bernie Sanders' plan, which would implement a progressive wealth tax, starting at one percent on net worth over \$32 million, up to eight percent on net worth over \$10 billion. According to Sanders, this plan would cut in half the wealth of billionaires over just 15 years, greatly reducing wealth inequality and the power of the top 0.1 percent.

In addition to reducing the economic power of billionaires, their political influence must be reduced through the use of campaign finance reform—most importantly, overturning the 2010 Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*. This case eviscerated campaign finance regulations and essentially allowed unlimited contributions to political groups known as super PACs, such as the one Elon Musk donated to. While it may be difficult, passing a proposal such as the We the People Amendment would reverse the *Citizens United* decision by putting an end to the antidemocratic concepts that money equals political speech, and that corporations are people.

While there is no simple solution to ending the dangerous influence of billionaires in American politics and the economy, through important legislative action such as a wealth tax and campaign finance reform, America can stop the encroachment of oligarchy on its society.

THIRD PLACE, ELY WHITE, LELAND AND GRAY UNION MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL

Abraham Lincoln once said, "a house divided against itself cannot stand." Speaking

solemnly of the dire state of division in the United States leading up to the Civil War, it is now over a century later that his words resonate once more.

Political polarization has grown in the past decade in the United States, transforming healthy debates of ideas into an endless battle of "us" against "them." Division has infiltrated into all facets of American life, a political landscape where compromise is rare and partisan loyalty is prioritized. This deepening division threatens the ideals of our democracy, making it nearly impossible to address the critical issues that face our country today.

A 2022 NBC News survey revealed that 80% of Americans believe the opposing party "poses a threat that, if not stopped, will destroy America." This growing divide is evident in the 2018–19 government shutdown, when a standoff between Democrats and Republicans over border wall funding caused a 35-day gridlock. With neither side willing to compromise, 800,000 government workers went unpaid, and federal services became disrupted. Heightened polarization has normalized the prioritization of party loyalty over national needs, a theme of officials refusing to seek bi-partisan solutions even with critical federal services, workers, and decisions at stake.

Beyond our boardrooms and capitals, division based on political views has become synonymous with what it means to be American. Pew Research Center's 2022 report on polarization shows that 72% of Republicans view Democrats as more immoral than other Americans, and 62% of Democrats say the same about Republicans. Political identity has become tribal in nature, a defining characteristic of one's morality and values. Political polarization strains relationships in families, communities, and workplaces, the American Psychological Association reporting that 38% of adults avoided conversations with people of opposing political views.

Addressing solutions to America's political division is complex. Specific systemic reforms, however, can help reduce polarization by shifting the incentives that drive division. Ranked-choice voting (RCV) is a system that allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, the votes for the lowest-ranking candidate then redistributed to voters' next choice until a majority is achieved. RCV would encourage candidates to appeal to broader ranges of voters rather than just their base, incentivizing politicians to take moderate stances rather than extreme party-driven positions. Reforming the closed primary system by adopting open or top-two systems would force candidates to appeal to a broader electorate, reducing the influence of extreme partisanship and encouraging more moderation. Integrating civic education and media literacy into our schools and communities could also work as a grassroots solution in helping individuals evaluate information and recognize bias in misinformation and ideological chambers.

The future of our democracy depends on our ability to bridge divides and prioritize unity over partisanship. We must rebuild trust, restore faith in our institutions, and create a government that serves all Americans. Change begins with us—and we call and act for a system that brings us together, not tears us apart.●

#### VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

●Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask to have entered into the RECORD some of the finalists' essays written by Vermont High School students as part

of the 15th Annual State of the Union Essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

#### FINALISTS

AMY VAUGHAN, OXBOW HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

Climate change is at the forefront of issues in the nation; however, its effect on farming and food systems is often overlooked. Climate change poses a growing threat to agriculture through fluctuating weather patterns that cause crop losses and increase production costs (EPA). These disruptions jeopardize food security and threaten farmers' livelihoods. While the challenges are significant, an effective, sustainable solution is to support outreach and educational initiatives, particularly through university extension services. By increasing funding for these programs, farmers and other individuals can be equipped with the knowledge needed to adopt climate-resilient techniques, strategies, and practices (University of New Hampshire Extension). This approach will strengthen the agricultural industry's ability to navigate a changing climate.

In recent years, farmers have faced increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, including severe droughts, flooding, and fluctuating temperatures (NOAA Research). These changes contribute to soil degradation, water shortages, and crop failure (Chicago EPA). A study from the United States Department of Agriculture found that "Increased temperatures can also lead to issues like crop sunburn from extreme heat, which can reduce annual yields for farms by as much as 40%" (USDA Climate Hub). This, in combination with other climate issues, results in decreased farm revenue adding to farmers' struggles with financial instability (USDA ERS). Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis states that "agriculture and related industries contributed roughly \$1.537 trillion to the U.S. GDP in 2023". Given the importance of agriculture to U.S. food security and the economy, we can not ignore the effects decreased farm revenue would have on our society as a whole.

One step towards a solution is strengthening educational outreach efforts which can support farmers in understanding how to deal with this rising challenge. Land-grant universities have historically played a vital role in broadcasting research-based agricultural knowledge to the farming community (Association of Public Land Grant Universities). These programs offer valuable resources on crop management, pest control, irrigation techniques, and more (UW-Madison Extension). Many extension services include these topics in their program objectives. However, despite the acceleration of climate change, many extension services are underfunded and ill-equipped to meet the growing demand for climate-specific information.

Increased investment in these programs will provide farmers with timely, actionable climate advice. University-led outreach programs can teach farmers about climate-resilient practices such as regenerative farming, crop diversification, and soil health improvement techniques (University of New Hampshire Extension). Furthermore, extension services can introduce precision agriculture technologies to optimize crop monitoring and resource use. Addressing the impact of climate change on agriculture requires more than just technological innovation or policy reform. It requires empowering farmers with the knowledge and tools to adapt. By investing in outreach and education through university extension programs, the United States can build a more resilient agricultural system capable of weathering the challenges of a changing climate, ensuring long-

term food security and sustainable farming practices for future generations.

OWEN STYGLES, BELLOW'S FREE ACADEMY  
FAIRFAX, SENIOR

The 1990 Children's Television Act sought to empower the FCC to regulate children's media, requiring that it hold a certain level of educational value, and that the advertisements aired during children's shows meet specific guidelines. This bill came to be as a result of the growing television entertainment industry, and the worries surrounding how it affected children's minds and development. It was also deemed important due to the nature of advertising towards children, as they are largely unable to distinguish advertisements from tv programs, and are easily influenced.

I mention this bill because it lays a strong foundation: children's media needs to support development, and highly suggestible children need to be protected from advertisers. I especially highlight this second point, as there would be far fewer issues if children were not such an easily targeted demographic, furthermore, broadcasters would be less likely to fund shallow, attention-grabbing shows in the first place if they weren't as profitable, allowing higher quality programs to make way on their own.

This all brings us to today, where children are switching away from television, and towards digital media, such as YouTube videos. This new media, of course, is largely unregulated in comparison to broadcast television, and advertisers are now at liberty to exploit children's unawareness to commercials once again. Not only this, but the nature of what kids view, outside of the ads, is also less valuable, as it is being made only to hold their attention until the next ad. Cocomelon, one of the largest channels on YouTube, is a notable example of this. They feature a near-endless supply of videos geared towards children that aim simply to hold their attention for as long as possible. Using bright colors, songs, and sound effects, this content manipulates children into viewing for extensive periods of time.

The exploitation of children's attention is an undervalued and often missed issue related with the rise of digital media. This does not mean, however, that healthy content is not present. Many educational programs, such as Sesame Street, have created an online presence that is far more constructive for children, and, most importantly, isn't structured around making kids watch as many advertisements as possible. Because of this, I think the center of the problem lies in how high quality content is easily bogged down by the onslaught of this lower quality content, as it is far easier and faster to create.

Akin to how you find organic food by looking for the USDA stamp of approval, I think children's content online should be tested and labeled for its quality. This would give educational and developmentally useful content a way to stand out among the rapidly uploaded, low quality content. It would also provide a kind of "guide" for parents, which would make their job of overseeing what their children watch far simpler. While this solution isn't perfect, I believe it to be the best way to end this highly underappreciated issue that is actively impacting millions of children's development.

HANNAH SMILEY, MILTON HIGH SCHOOL, SENIOR

For nearly two centuries, Church Street in Burlington, Vermont has been the heart of the state and the nucleus of the city—a lively community marketplace, bustling with shops and restaurants. In recent years, however, it has become a common controversial topic at gatherings or in any conversation; an issue that cannot be ignored. What was

once a charming, safe city has become a dismal and even daunting area for Vermonters. What caused this change? The homelessness crisis that is plaguing the entire nation.

Let's be clear; the issue isn't panhandling or encampments, rather it is the government's alarming lack of moral accountability and commitment to its citizens. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that over 653,000 Americans—a population greater than Wyoming and the same as Vermont—were unhoused this past year, yet societal stigmas or the ideal of American individualism have led this issue to be disregarded as a competition for mere existence, or survival of the fittest. Rather than focus on the root causes of inflation, low wages, and lack of government support, people place blame on the victims. Unhoused people are villainized for their attempts at survival. The housing crisis is complex, however, there are concrete solutions.

The US government has the moral responsibility to fulfill its Constitutional promise: "to promote the general welfare" of all Americans. This includes addressing the homelessness crisis which directly affects the welfare of citizens. The most comprehensive solution must include immediate relief for unhoused communities and a means of addressing the root causes of this crisis. According to this formula, the best solution to solving this epidemic is "Housing First" initiatives. This approach to the homelessness crisis, developed in

New York City has a form of publicly-funded permanent housing that includes additional support to aid unhoused people. In short, the "housing first" model is designed to move long-term unhoused individuals—"the majority of whom are living with mental illness, substance abuse disorders, and other serious health problems," adds the Coalition for the Homeless—into subsidized housing with the addition of community support services. This type of housing support allows unhoused people to see health improvements and is proven to be less costly than forms of temporary care such as emergency shelters and correctional facilities. In addition, prevention programs, such as discharge plans for youth in the foster care system and policy change regarding a living wage, are vital to America's future.

Many argue that providing adequate aid to fix the housing crisis is too expensive to sustain. This has led to temporary "fixes" such as wiping out encampments, leaving unhoused people with limited options. This may be successful in easing the guilt for citizens as they won't see unhoused people in their communities, however, ignorance is not a solution. Unethical practices are extremely harmful to unhoused people and an ineffective use of funding.

The US government must recognize the severity of this crisis and enact permanent policy to create long-term change.

WINSLOW SOLOMON, VERMONT COMMONS  
SCHOOL, SENIOR

Three-fourths of adults in the United States are overweight or obese, according to a new study in *The Lancet*, making the U.S. the most obese high-income country. The obesity epidemic is a national emergency threatening our health and economy, and Congress must act quickly to understand and address it.

Obesity and overweight in American adults has risen quickly from just over half of adults in 1990 to three-quarters today. Increased consumption of energy and flavor-dense ultra processed foods engineered for irresistibility, limited access to expensive fresh produce, and normalization of sedentary lifestyles are all contributing to

weight gain. New studies on the role of food-processing and genetics in weight gain show that more than calories and nutrients are involved in a healthy diet. The *Lancet* study predicts that the number of overweight people will reach nearly 260 million by 2050, growth that will put extreme strain on our society.

The effects of overweight and obesity are numerous and extreme. According to the CDC, overweight and obesity lead to health issues from type 2 diabetes to sleep apnea, stroke to osteoarthritis. Adults with a BMI of over 25 (overweight) or 30 (obese) are more likely to develop cancer and high blood pressure and experience worse mental health and early death. If we allow the obesity epidemic to continue, we will cause great harm not just to those suffering from obesity-caused diseases, but also to the economy and the healthcare system. A Joint Economic Committee Republicans report in 2024 estimated that obesity will result in \$9.1 trillion extra medical cost to the country over the next ten years.

It is time for Congress to pass legislation making healthy lifestyles more economical for Americans. Addressing the obesity epidemic requires a multi-faceted approach, combining lifestyle change with medication and surgery. While new medications like Wegovy and Zepbound can offer quick changes in weight, their high costs are prohibitive on an individual and nation-wide scale. Weight loss from such drugs is quickly reversed after medication stops. The most effective, long-term means of battling obesity is change in diet and exercise. As recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Heart Association, the government must consider subsidies for healthier foods, taxes on ultra processed foods and sugary drinks, limits on food advertising, and warning labels on obesity-causing foods. It is important to encourage healthy diet and exercise in schools, where habits start. Public discussion must avoid causing weight bias or fatphobia which cause mental harm to people suffering from obesity and make it harder for them to become healthier.

Congress has been successful in improving Americans' health in the past: CDC data shows a drop over 30% in adult smoking since 1965 after acts banning advertisements and placing warnings on tobacco products were passed. Taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages in Chile and Mexico resulted in significant decreases in purchasing of 21.6% and 6.1% respectively. If we act now, we can offer a happier and healthier country to the next generation.

ALEKSANDRA CIROVIC, WOODSTOCK UNION HIGH  
SCHOOL, JUNIOR

The impacts of fossil fuel-driven climate warming were more evident and catastrophic than ever in 2024. Globally, 26 of 29 warming-induced weather events caused over 3,700 fatalities and displaced millions. Hurricane Helene left 230 dead in the U.S., with rising ocean temperatures exacerbating the devastation. Climate change is among the most urgent crises we face. At the heart of climate change lies consumerism, where our insatiable desire for more products depletes resources and heightens carbon emissions. To address this, we must incentivize eco-friendly products, implement green taxes on high-footprint goods, and enforce stricter industry regulations to minimize waste.

With a growing global population, the demand for resources has surged. Currently, the structure of our food systems enables significant food loss, contributing to global waste. According to National Geographic, over 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted each year. The pattern of waste extends to plastic

and other recyclables. The massive amounts of plastic waste that companies generate, from food packaging to clothing, is severely detrimental to our environment. The levels of plastic in the ocean are expected to quadruple over the coming years, highlighting the growing severity of the issue, according to the World Wildlife Fund. This culture of consumerism, driven by our unappeasable demand for products, produces overwhelming waste, accelerating climate change and threatening biodiversity.

Our demand for goods releases toxic gases during production and delivery as well. We are consuming our planet's resources 1.7 times faster than it can regenerate, as reported by The Guardian. The World Wildlife Fund's warning that, without a significant change in consumption rates, Earth "will expire by 2050" underscores the urgency of the situation. The rise in overconsumption has led to a higher demand for goods, and consequently, a greater reliance on processes that utilize fossil fuels. Overconsumption culture leads to higher reliance on dirty energy, directly threatening the climate by exhausting resources and increasing emissions.

As a Youth Representative on the Vermont Climate Council, I witness how the effects of climate change are becoming ever more evident. From rising temperatures to unpredictable weather patterns and their impact, the need for action is undeniable. In my meetings and climate conversations, the urgency for transformative change grows stronger with each discussion. There is no doubt that climate change is the most unavoidable issue we face.

We have the power to redefine the future. Our government can subsidize manufacturers meeting sustainability standards to reduce production costs and make eco-friendly products more competitive. It can also implement policies to incentivize green innovation and support sustainable technologies. Individuals purchasing energy-efficient appliances, electric vehicles, or sustainable products could receive tax credits. Green taxes on carbon usage and plastics can fund renewable energy, public transit, and sustainable development. Strict waste limits should be set for industries, with penalties for exceeding them. The government can enforce regulations to minimize pollution and promote responsible resource use. For the health of the world and its people, the time to act is now.

ALLIE HAMILTON, MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION  
HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

In Shakespeare's iconic play *\*Hamlet\**, the protagonist declares, "These words like daggers enter in mine ears." This allusion to a weapon of death serves as a powerful lens through which to explore the contentious topic of gun control in contemporary society. Gun violence, much like daggers, leaves wounds that resonate across families, communities, and nations. Gun control has been a subject of intense debate, particularly in the United States, where the Second Amendment enshrines the right to bear arms. In 2023, over 43,180 deaths in the U.S. were attributed to firearm incidents—more than the toll of war. These numbers are not just statistics; they represent lives lost, families devastated, and communities torn apart. As Hamlet struggled with violence, so too must we confront the deadly repercussions of gun violence. This ongoing conversation centers on regulating firearms—how to prevent crimes, reduce gun violence, and ensure public safety, all while respecting the rights of individuals to own firearms.

The gun possession debate centers on the belief that citizens should have firearms for self-defense and protection against government tyranny. However, safety is essential

for freedom to thrive. Research shows that countries with stricter gun laws have fewer gun-related deaths. For instance, after Australia enacted strict gun laws in 1996, firearm-related deaths, including mass shootings, significantly dropped. In contrast, the U.S. sees over 43,180 firearm deaths annually, underscoring the need for stronger regulations. Stricter laws aim to balance individual rights and public safety, ensuring both liberty and life can prosper.

Mental health must be part of the gun control discussion, as nearly 60% of U.S. gun-related deaths are suicides, many involving legally obtained firearms. The 2012 Sandy Hook tragedy, where the shooter had a history of mental health issues but easily acquired firearms, highlights the need for mental health evaluations in the gun purchasing process. By addressing both gun access and mental health, we can prevent tragedies, reduce violence, and save lives.

The issue of gun control is undeniably complex. However, it is clear that balancing individual rights with the need for public safety is critical. Stricter regulations, greater mental health support, and public education on responsible gun ownership are necessary steps to reduce gun violence and ensure a safer society. The cost of inaction is too high—each preventable death is a tragedy, and every missed opportunity for reform prolongs the crisis. Freedom without responsibility leads to chaos; safety without liberty breeds oppression. We must find a balance between these forces. This issue is not just about policy—it's about human lives. The right to bear arms must be paired with the responsibility to protect others, ensuring that both safety and liberty are preserved. This is an urgent call to action—an intersection of gun ownership, public safety, and mental health that demands thoughtful, evidence-based change. The future of our communities depends on it.

LEO BEEBE, WINOOSKI HIGH SCHOOL, SENIOR

This December, America's debt reached an all-time high of 36 trillion dollars, and the deficit climbed yet again to two trillion dollars. This massive burden will have devastating effects on the economy and has already wreaked havoc on the federal budget. We are currently spending more money on the interest on the debt than on the military, and interest payments will only increase if nothing is done. At this very important moment for America, an honest and mature position on the budget is a necessity in our government. As such, an idea as costly as repealing the State and Local Tax (SALT) Deduction Cap should be viewed with caution at best, and outright disgust at worst.

The SALT cap is a tax deduction that allows Americans to deduct certain state and local taxes from their federal tax receipt in order to avoid this money being taxed twice, once at the local level and once at the federal level. President Trump's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act instituted a cap on this deduction, limiting the deductible income to ten thousand dollars. It has been estimated by the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center that lifting the cap would cost the United States government 1.2 trillion dollars over ten years. This is a truly staggering sum, and would represent a massive drain on resources at a time when all federal expenditures need to be closely examined.

Lifting the cap would also mean approving a massive giveaway to America's wealthiest citizens. The Tax Policy Center estimates that Americans making over 430,000 dollars a year would see three-quarters of the benefits of a lifted SALT cap. Considering the drastic cost-of-living crisis in this country, it is simply absurd to consider putting the needs of these wealthy Americans over the much

more pressing needs of poor and middle-class Americans. All Americans would be better off if their government was able to pay down its debt after twenty years of financial mismanagement.

If the government really wanted to help everyday Americans, they would take the steps that are necessary to balance the budget and pay down our debt. Raising taxes on wealthy and middle-class Americans would be unpopular, but are necessary actions to restore fiscal health. Instituting far-reaching cost-containment measures for federal healthcare costs would save billions, as would a responsibly run single-payer healthcare program. While these proposals may seem unrealistic, they are much more sensible than lifting the SALT cap.

This issue is not a partisan one. It is a moral one. When President Trump and many Democrats state their wishes to spend billions of our dollars annually on a giveaway to the wealthy, we should be as clear as possible in our denunciation of such ridiculousness. The deficit is not a state issue or a local issue, but a national issue. Therefore, we should reject out of hand unnecessary political giveaways that only benefit a small fraction of Americans.

EMILEE BROWNELL, ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR  
SAVING OURSELVES

My dad, Seth Brownell, was a lineman for years. Growing up, he would consistently tell my sister and me about the importance of electricity and how our phones, iPads, and computers all use it to function. I never really gave it any thought until I got older and realized the effects of that power. Today, data farms require a tremendously high amount of energy; 1,000 terawatt hours is predicted to be the annual requirement for data farms by 2026. That is approximately identical to Japan's electric consumption. These farms require a significantly high amount of energy and are the main contributor for the carbon dioxide polluting our air.

Because data farms require so much power, that means that more has to be made. The fastest way to do so is by burning fossil fuels which is responsible for 74% of the carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S. Generating power is the greatest factor in global warming. According to Landgate, one wind turbine takes up 80 acres of land and can affect the local wildlife. Solar farms require an excessive amount of space as well. Pivot Energy highlights that the average solar farm requires 10-20 acres of land; for every direct megawatt, five acres of buildable land is essential for success. Turbines and solar farms are an unreliable source that evidently depend on weather and don't work as quickly as burning fossil fuels.

New nuclear energy can be key to counteracting this problem. The word nuclear often brings up difficult topics: Three Mile Island, the Chernobyl disasters, or the radioactive waste produced. However, since today's nuclear technology is more modern, it can be placed in rural areas, and society has a better understanding of it. Not only is less land required for new nuclear power, it's also always accessible and can produce much more power with minimal nuclear fuel because it has a higher energy density than fossil fuels. While many worry about the disposal of nuclear waste, only about 3% of it is the long lived, greatly radioactive form of waste. With that, isolation is required, but with the new high tech safe disposals that combine containment and geological deposits, waste is isolated for thousands of years protecting us and our environment. Though it does come with some risks, new nuclear power is a safe, low profit, efficient fuel source. It produces no emission, ultimately cleaning our air. Using new nuclear power prevents

carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. The amount of carbon dioxide prevented is equivalent to removing a third of all cars around the world. The demand for a safe, low profit power source is rapidly growing, and new nuclear power meets all these requirements.

Though nuclear power may seem like a scary, dangerous solution to the extensively high amount of energy data farms consume, ultimately it's the most reliable, safest solution. Not only does it save money, it also reduces the amount of carbon dioxide being emitted into the atmosphere, into the air that we breathe.

SOFIA BUSH, MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

With the patchwork of health insurance and care we call a system, many Americans are left in crippling medical debt. This makes the United States an outlier among industrialized nations, both in the systems we use and the startling incompetence within them. Every single industrialized country, except the United States of America provides universal health care (Vladeck). For affordable and efficient healthcare, Medicare in the US should be expanded into universal National Health Insurance.

The way in which Americans receive and pay for health care today is deeply flawed compared to other countries, it is highly ineffective and significantly more expensive. Industrialized countries follow three main health insurance models, the Beveridge model, Bismarck model, and National Health Insurance model.

Equitable access to care is a good indicator of the effectiveness of health care in a country. Compared to similar countries, the US has very inequitable access to healthcare. The Commonwealth Fund found that the US had the highest income related discrepancies in care, as well as the most "instances of unfair treatment or feelings that health concerns were not taken seriously by health care professionals because of their racial or ethnic background" (Blumenthal et al.). This indicates inequitable access to care as unfair treatment leads to patients not receiving the care they need, as well as breaking trust between the patient and provider. These discrepancies reinforce the idea that this system is ineffective because it shows that it prioritizes some patients over others.

Though healthcare in America is so ineffective, it's remarkably overpriced. Americans spent more than 16% of GDP on healthcare in 2023 (Blumenthal et al.). For context, that's about 1.5 times more than many countries with universal healthcare. This indicates that Americans are pouring money into a poorly performing healthcare and insurance industry.

To make healthcare more affordable and effective, we should turn to the National Health Insurance model by expanding Medicare into mandatory universal healthcare. This would decrease inequalities and administrative challenges, and lay a foundation for a healthier nation, as treatment and preventative care will be more accessible. One estimate says that switching "increases life expectancy by almost 2 years, grows the population size by 3 percent, and increases worker productivity through improved health" ("Medicare for All: Comparison of Financing Options"). To fund this, there should be an income based tax increase, which would be cheaper than what most Americans pay for healthcare now.

So, our healthcare system is more expensive with worse performance compared to other similar countries. Making Medicare universal would result in more effective and affordable care, which would build a foundation for a healthier nation. Healthcare is an

issue that touches every one of our lives, though some more than others. But overall, to build a strong, healthy, productive nation, we must start with an effective and accessible health care system.

HAZEL O'BRIEN, TWINFIELD UNION SCHOOL, SENIOR

On November 5th, 2024, California held elections to determine the representation of their state in the U.S. House of Representatives. Fifteen million voters across 52 congressional districts pledged their ballots, and when the results became clear, the Democratic Party won 60% of the popular vote while the Republican Party won 40%. Despite this result, the seat share of the Californian delegation will be 43 Democrats to 9 Republicans, approximately 83% to 17%. This is the plurality voting system in action, a process that left 6,000,000 Californian Republican voters grossly underrepresented.

Most elections in the U.S. use a plurality voting system, which drives political polarization as the party duopoly becomes entrenched, and demonization becomes a tactic to prevent spillage of voters between the parties. Though this system is deeply embedded in contemporary American democracy, there are paths to improvement. For one, we can look to the proportional systems that successful democracies implement abroad. A great example of a proportional election system is the use of multi-member districts. This method takes the idea of a congressional district and essentially lowers the threshold of popularity a party must receive to earn representation by increasing the number of seats held in the district; this way an accurate reflection of the entire voting public can be achieved as opposed to just the plurality opinion.

Multi-member districts were once permitted in the U.S., but due to threats of misuse by segregationists in response to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, it was banned in 1967 under the Uniform Congressional District Act (UCDA). The UCDA had the aim of eradicating bloc voting, a system that utilizes multi-member districts to neglect minority representation. It unfortunately also set single-member districts as the only legal means to host elections for the House of Representatives, a major cause of our plurality system. The solution here is relatively uncomplicated on its face, the process by which laws are passed mirrors very closely the way in which they are repealed. With a simple bill intended to counteract and nullify the UCDA, a breakthrough is possible. If that bill included clauses detailing how to mandate standards of proportionality and representation, such as specifically banning abusive practices like bloc voting, then we could see significant changes with the successful installment of multi-member districts.

Many in Congress will likely be resistant to the idea of an alteration considering it is directly tied to their positions of power. However, we can already see the movement necessary to make progress. Maine passed Measure 5, an act to establish ranked choice voting on the federal level, via citizen initiative in 2016. Alaska in 2020 also passed a similar measure through referendum. This demonstrates electoral reform is something the voting public considers a priority and by harvesting this momentum we can demand Congress to finally take action.

MACKENZIE RUSSELL, HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

Public education is crucial to the development of society. School prepares students with the knowledge and skills needed for civic engagement, and also provides a space where students can discover their interests and explore the pathways available to

them—and teachers are the backbone of this whole system. However, schools struggle to achieve this purpose when staff inconsistencies arise. The teacher shortage—an issue that Senator Bernie Sanders has raised before—is a national problem currently affecting 86% of public schools across the nation (NCES). Though Sanders has advocated for something to be done about this, there hasn't been the support needed to put a solution into action. To make progress on this issue, solutions must address the multiple perspectives that many feel Sanders' proposal overlooks.

Staff shortages are increasingly prevalent in our schools today. Public schools have trouble filling not only teaching positions but also bus drivers, substitutes, and food workers. As of October 2024, 35% of public schools were operating with at least one open position (NCES). Even with just one vacancy, class sizes and courses offered are often impacted. With fewer teachers available, many schools have to combine classes, which increases average class sizes. Not only does this provide less personalized and one-on-one learning for the students, but it places more pressure on teachers to accommodate more students.

Compared to a decade ago, the number of people pursuing teaching has decreased by 20-30% (Aldeman), showing that college-age students' interest in teaching is declining. The main reasons are apprehensions about salaries and working conditions. Teaching positions earn less money than other jobs earned by a college degree, giving the job a huge downside for people choosing a profession. And furthermore, even if schools fill their teaching positions it's likely they won't be able to keep a steady staff team. In 2022, 55% of teachers decided to leave their job earlier than expected (Walker), often with stress or work overload factoring in this decision.

The Pay Teachers Act was introduced to the Senate in March of 2023 (Stanford). The Act proposes a minimum wage of \$60,000 for all full-time teachers—a number that could increase with promotions and experience like usual. A set minimum wage would address the disinterest in being a teacher due to the salary, but some argue that wouldn't solve the issue. Salary isn't the only downside many find in teaching, as in addition lots of teachers report difficult working conditions within their jobs. A solution to this national teacher shortage would need to recognize the concern with salaries as well as the work environment.

To bring the suggested solution to fruition, and garner more support from opposing lawmakers, more importance should be placed on creating a more manageable and less stressful environment for teachers. In addition to offering a minimum salary of \$60,000, benefits like sabbaticals or retention bonuses could incentivize new teachers to commit to the career. They ultimately would also allow teachers to de-stress, helping to renew their enthusiasm for teaching.

MIA KONEFAL, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, FRESHMAN

The health of our citizens is the most rudimentary, yet fundamental part of what allows our nation to thrive. The skyrocketing prices of prescription medication, hospital trips, and doctor appointments, which are all necessary to ensure the safety and comfort of American citizens, is an issue that needs to be immediately addressed. With prices that just keep rising, I fear for the 16.9% of Americans who, according to the National Library of Medicine, report difficulty affording healthcare; I fear for the millions of people who struggle with or ignore pain and other health issues because they cannot afford treatment.

During recent years, the United States has experienced soaring prices of treatments, medication, and health insurance on levels not previously seen. Despite healthcare being undeniably necessary for our citizens, and therefore our country, to succeed and prosper, millions of Americans are unable to afford the treatment they need. According to the Centers for Medicare Services, in 2022, “the healthcare spending in the United States reached \$4.9 trillion,” which means on average, each person in America spends \$14,570 per year on healthcare. While these rising and unpayable costs are an issue across the globe, the rising costs are especially apparent in the United States. In fact, according to the National Institutes of Health, “The United States spent approximately twice as much as other high-income countries on medical care.”

Although several acts exist that attempt to combat the inflating prices of healthcare services, such as the “Lower Costs, More Transparency Act,” which passed the House of Representatives, and advocates for more price transparency in the healthcare sector, I believe that a large part of the issue lies in the simple fact that the United States remains an outlier in terms of per capita health care spending. The simple yet undeniable fact is that our citizens pay more for healthcare than citizens of any other country.

To combat the skyrocketing prices of the healthcare sector in the United States: I would propose a multi-tiered plan. Firstly, the large, private pharmaceutical companies should no longer be permitted to put their own profits over the health of Americans. For decades these huge insurance and pharmaceutical companies have been able to rip off American people with high prices for medication and treatments that are necessities. A cap for what each individual can pay for medication per year should be implemented. Secondly, a national healthcare system, similar to Medicaid, which is guaranteed for those 65 and older, that guarantees healthcare for all, not just those who can afford it, should be introduced. Healthcare should become a constitutional right, not just a privilege for those who can pay.

The unreasonable prices of prescription medication, insurance, and doctor's visits are actively working against our citizens, preventing our country from flourishing. If nothing is done, prices will only continue to increase and the percentage of Americans who are uninsured or cannot afford healthcare will likewise grow. Steps need to be taken to ensure the health of our citizens.●

### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives delivered by Mrs. Alli, 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. 754. An act to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to increase the amount that may be invested in small business investment companies.

H.R. 818. An act to amend the Small Business Act to include requirements relating to new small business entrants in the scorecard program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 825. An act to prohibit individuals convicted of defrauding the Government from receiving any assistance from the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 828. An act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to report on the veterans interagency task

force, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to report on access to credit for small business concerns owned and controlled by covered individuals, and for other purposes.

H.R. 832. An act to clarify the primary functions and duties of the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 754. An act to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to increase the amount that may be invested in small business investment companies; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 818. An act to amend the Small Business Act to include requirements relating to new small business entrants in the scorecard program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 825. An act to prohibit individuals convicted of defrauding the Government from receiving any assistance from the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 828. An act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to report on the veterans interagency task force, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to report on access to credit for small business concerns owned and controlled by covered individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 832. An act to clarify the primary functions and duties of the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-442. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Privacy Act; Implementation at 45 CFR Part 5b” (RIN0925-AA69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 19, 2025; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-443. A communication from the Chairman, Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the requirements of the Federal Managers’ Financial Integrity Act; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-444. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 26-5, “Rent Stabilized Housing Inflation Protection Continuation Temporary Amendment Act of 2025”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-445. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-719, “Restoration of Covenanted Roads and Alleys by the District

Government Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-446. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-717, “Harmonious Living Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-447. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-718, “Downtown Arena Revitalization Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-448. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-720, “Recidivism Reduction at DYRS Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-449. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department of Defense’s Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-450. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Secretary of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 18, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-451. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Secretary, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 18, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-452. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Amendment of Class E Airspace; Marion, NC” ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2023-2255)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-453. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Modification of Class D and Class E Airspace; Abbotsford Airport, Abbotsford, BC” ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2023-2440)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-454. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Amendment and Revocation of Domestic Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Range Federal Airways; Eastern United States” ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2023-1848)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-455. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes;

Amendment 39-22954" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2145)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-456. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22955" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2138)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-457. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22937" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2323)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-458. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22956" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2025-0198)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-459. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22958" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2408)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-460. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22932" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2137)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-461. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22940" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2023-1993)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-462. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22946" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2023-1488)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-463. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Air-

planes; Amendment 39-22935" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-1467)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-464. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Costruzioni Aeronautiche Tecnam S.P.A. Airplanes; Amendment 39-22957" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2025-0202)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-465. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Canada Limited Partnership (Type Certificate Previously Held by C Series Aircraft Limited Partnership (CSALP); Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22953" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-1893)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-466. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; FS 2001 Corp, FS 2002 Corporation, FS 2003 Corporation, Piper, and Piper Aircraft, Inc. Airplanes; Amendment 39-22957" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2025-0202)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-467. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; DAHER AEROSPACE (Type Certificate Previously Held by SOCATA) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22941" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2413)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-468. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; ATR - GIE Avions de Transport Regional Airplanes; Amendment 39-22943" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2418)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-469. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Saab AB Airplanes; Amendment 39-22948" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2016)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-470. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Yabora Industria Aeronautica S.A.; Embraer S.A) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22942" ((RIN2120-AA64)

(Docket No. FAA-2024-2140)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-471. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes; Amendment 39-22934" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2023)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-472. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Yabora Industria Aeronautica S.A.; Embraer S.A) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22929" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-1887)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-473. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; MHI R/J Aviation ULC (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22936" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2024-2012)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. McCONNELL, from the Committee on Rules and Administration, without amendment:

S. Res. 94. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, and October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

## 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. KELLY (for himself and Mr. GALLEGOS):

S. 700. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to convey the Pleasant Valley Ranger District Administrative Site to Gila County, Arizona; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. WELCH):

S. 701. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the Veteran Family Resource Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BENNET, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 702. A bill to require a study on the quality of care difference between mental health



and addiction therapy care provided by health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs compared to non-Department providers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. KELLY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MORENO, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 703. A bill to establish a pilot program to assess the use of technology to speed up and enhance the cargo inspection process at land ports of entry along the border; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. BENNETT, and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 704. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to reauthorize the voluntary public access and habitat incentive program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 705. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to molecularly targeted pediatric cancer investigations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. SCHIFF):

S. 706. A bill to amend the Justice for United States Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Act to clarify and supplement the funding sources for United States victims of state-sponsored terrorism to ensure consistent and meaningful distributions from the United States Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. DAINES, Mr. LEE, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. BANKS, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH):

S. 707. A bill to provide that sanctuary jurisdictions that provide benefits to aliens who are present in the United States without lawful status under the immigration laws are ineligible for Federal funds intended to benefit such aliens; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. COTTON):

S. 708. A bill to amend title 35, United States Code, to establish a rebuttable presumption that a permanent injunction should be granted in certain circumstances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 709. A bill to provide incentives to physicians to practice in rural and medically underserved communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. REED, and Mr. WELCH):

S. 710. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to prevent fraudulent transactions at virtual currency kiosks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MORENO (for himself, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. BANKS, and Mr. JUSTICE):

S. 711. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish an enhanced deduction for wages paid to automobile manufacturing workers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 712. A bill to require agencies to repeal ten existing regulations before issuing a new

regulation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 713. A bill to apply the Freedom of Information Act to actions and decisions of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information in carrying out the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. KELLY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CURTIS, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 714. A bill to amend the Energy Act of 2020 to include critical materials in the definition of critical mineral, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. LUMMIS (for herself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 715. A bill to prohibit certain businesses and persons from purchasing real estate adjacent to covered Federal land in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 716. A bill for the relief of Vichai Sae Tung (also known as Chai Chaowasaree); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 717. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand and expedite access to cardiac rehabilitation programs and pulmonary rehabilitation programs under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. RICKETTS):

S. 718. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require the impaneling of a new jury if a jury fails to recommend by unanimous vote a sentence for conviction of a crime punishable by death; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 719. A bill to amend the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 to improve that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 720. A bill to establish an Office of Environmental Justice within the Department of Justice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 721. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to establish a demonstration project to improve outpatient clinical care for individuals with sickle cell disease; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 722. A bill to streamline the oil and gas permitting process and to recognize fee ownership for certain oil and gas drilling or spacing units, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 723. A bill to require the Bureau of Indian Affairs to process and complete all mortgage packages associated with residential and business mortgages on Indian land

by certain deadlines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. BOOKER:

S. 724. A bill to extend the temporary scheduling order for fentanyl-related substances for 6 months; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. LUJAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BUDD, Mr. KING, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. KELLY):

S. 725. A bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to issue reports after activation of the Disaster Information Reporting System and to make improvements to network outage reporting, to categorize public safety telecommunications as a protective service occupation under the Standard Occupational Classification system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LUJAN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. COONS, Ms. ROSEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. REED, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. KELLY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. KING, Mr. FETTERMAN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. KAINE, Mr. WELCH, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 726. A bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to require the safe storage of firearms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 727. A bill to correct the inequitable denial of enhanced retirement and annuity benefits to certain U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 728. A bill to establish the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center in New York, New York, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 729. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to enhance compliance with hospital price transparency requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 730. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center at the African Burial Ground National Monument, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 731. A bill to prohibit conflicts of interest among consulting firms that simultaneously contract with China or other covered foreign entities and the United States Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MARSHALL (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 732. A bill to amend the Defense Production Act of 1950 with respect to foreign investments in United States agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. SCHATZ):



S. 733. A bill to improve the cooperation between the United States and the authorities of Taiwan with respect to travel and tourism; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, and Mr. KING):

S. 734. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Edward J. Dwight, Jr., the first African America astronaut candidate in the United States; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mr. SHEEHY):

S.J. Res. 24. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Rubber Tire Manufacturing"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S.J. Res. 25. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to Israel of certain defense articles and services; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S.J. Res. 26. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to Israel of certain defense articles and services; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S.J. Res. 27. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to Israel of certain defense articles and services; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

## SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. WELCH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KING, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. REED):

S. Res. 93. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the operations of the National Institutes of Health should not experience any interruption, delay, or funding disruption in violation of the law and that the workforce of the National Institutes of Health is essential to sustaining medical progress; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. McCONNELL:

S. Res. 94. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, and October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027; from the Committee on Rules and Administration; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mr. JUSTICE):

S. Res. 95. A resolution expressing support for the designation of February 23, 2025, to March 1, 2025, as "National Fentanyl Awareness Week" and raising awareness of the negative impacts of fentanyl in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KING, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WELCH, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. PETERS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. Res. 96. A resolution designating the week of February 24 through February 28, 2025, as "Public Schools Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. RICKETTS (for himself and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. Res. 97. A resolution honoring the life of Nebraska community leader Howard L. Hawks; considered and agreed to.

## ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 127

At the request of Mr. FETTERMAN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. McCORMICK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 127, a bill to establish a whole-home repairs program for eligible homeowners and eligible landlords, and for other purposes.

S. 151

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 151, a bill to exclude the authority to impose duties and tariff-rate quotas from the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

S. 199

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 199, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide special rules for the taxation of certain residents of Taiwan with income from sources within the United States.

S. 204

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BANKS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 204, a bill to protect the right of parents to direct the upbringing of their children as a fundamental right.

S. 292

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. MORENO) 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. 297

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) and the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 297, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to require group health plans and health insurance issuers offering group or individual health insurance coverage to provide coverage for

prostate cancer screenings without the imposition of cost-sharing requirements, and for other purposes.

S. 315

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 315, a bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in passenger motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) 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. 356

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 356, a bill to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

S. 366

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Muhammad Ali, in recognition of his contributions to the United States.

S. 517

At the request of Mr. OSSOFF, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 517, a bill to amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 to modify the forest inventory and analysis program.

S. 567

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 567, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 645

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 645, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the individuals and communities who volunteered or donated items to the North Platte Canteen in North Platte, Nebraska, during World War II from December 25, 1941, to April 1, 1946.

S. 673

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 673, a bill to amend the Miccosukee Reserved Area Act to authorize the expansion of the Miccosukee Reserved Area and to carry out activities to protect structures within the Osceola Camp from flooding, and for other purposes.

S. 680

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 680, a bill to prohibit funding for the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change until China is no longer defined as a developing country.

S. 685

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BANKS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 685, a bill to ensure State and local law enforcement officers are permitted to cooperate with Federal officials to protect our communities from violent criminals and suspected terrorists who are illegally present in the United States.

S. 691

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to improve the administration of antidumping and countervailing duty laws, and for other purposes.

S. 696

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 696, a bill to provide temporary Ukrainian guest status for eligible aliens, and for other purposes.

S. 697

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 697, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide for air traffic control training improvements, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 12

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 12, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Waste Emissions Charge for Petroleum and Natural Gas Systems: Procedures for Facilitating Compliance, Including Netting and Exemptions".

S. RES. 52

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 52, a resolution recognizing religious freedom as a fundamental right, expressing support for international religious freedom as a cornerstone of United States foreign policy, and expressing concern over increased threats to and attacks on religious freedom around the world.

S. RES. 81

At the request of Mr. RICKETTS, the name of the Senator from North Caro-

lina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 81, a resolution calling on the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (E3) to initiate the snapback of sanctions on Iran under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015).

S. RES. 91

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 91, a resolution acknowledging the third anniversary of Russia's further invasion of Ukraine and expressing support for the people of Ukraine.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 705. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to molecularly targeted pediatric cancer investigations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today, I am joining Senator CAPITO to introduce the Innovation in Pediatric Drugs Act of 2025 in order to improve access to needed therapies for children.

Children are not just small adults. Drugs affect their developing bodies differently, so new treatments need to be studied carefully to ensure that they are appropriately prescribed and that dosages are properly adjusted. Additionally, drugs that are designed to treat a specific condition in adults may have enormous benefits in treating completely different illnesses in kids. But research is needed to unlock these potentially lifesaving possibilities.

Unfortunately, drug development still leaves children behind. The legislation we are introducing today would help speed therapies to children who need them by making needed changes to the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act, BPCA, and the Pediatric Research Equity Act, PREA—two laws that encourage and require the study of drugs in children.

Data resulting from BPCA and PREA studies are added to drug labels to give parents and providers essential information on the safety and efficacy of drugs used in children. I was proud to have helped author these laws when I was a member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. While we have made tremendous progress in advancing treatments for children because of these laws, there are gaps. For example, there is a loophole in PREA that exempts drug companies from pediatric study requirements when the treatment would only be used for a rare pediatric condition.

There are close to 7,000 rare diseases without appropriate treatments, and the vast majority of these diseases affect children as well as adults. But in developing new drugs also known as orphan drugs to treat rare diseases, phar-

maceutical developers focus their research on adult patients only since they are not required to study their impact on children.

Since the majority of new drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration, FDA, are orphan drugs, this means that the majority of newly approved drugs have not been studied for their impacts on kids. This leaves doctors, parents, and sick kids in the dark about the best possible treatments. Our bill closes this loophole to require studies for children so that that they, too, can benefit from new and innovative treatments for rare diseases.

In addition to this change, the Innovation in Pediatric Drugs Act would invest in pediatric studies of older, off-patent drugs. The FDA incentives and requirements under BPCA and PREA work for many newer drugs, but unfortunately cannot help encourage studies of older drugs. For this reason, in 2002, Congress authorized a program which funds the National Institutes of Health to conduct studies of off-patent drugs used in children that would never be completed otherwise. Drug studies are expensive, and costs have only increased since then, but the program has been flat-funded at \$25 million since it was created more than 20 years ago. Our legislation would increase the authorization for the BPCA NIH program to ensure we have better data about older drugs to treat diseases in children.

Lastly, the Innovation in Pediatric Drugs Act would give FDA the authority it needs to ensure that legally required pediatric studies are completed in a timely manner. Due dates for studies required by PREA are typically deferred by FDA until after the approval of the drug for adults, but FDA has no effective enforcement tools to ensure that these studies are completed on time—or at all.

I am pleased to be working with my colleague Senator CAPITO again on pediatric health issues. We have worked closely for many years on pediatric cancer, first authoring the Childhood Cancer Survivorship, Treatment, Access, and Research, STAR, Act in 2015. That bill was signed into law in 2018, and we worked to fully fund the law every year since.

I look forward to working with her to move the Innovation in Pediatric Drugs Act forward, to give children and their families more options for treatments.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. REED, and Mr. WELCH):

S. 710. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to prevent fraudulent transactions at virtual currency kiosks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, now on a totally different subject, I would like to tell you about one of my constituents. He is a man from New Lenox, IL, in the suburbs of Chicago.

Late last year, he received an urgent phone call from someone claiming to be a deputy in the Will County Sheriff's Office. This self-proclaimed deputy informed my constituent that he had missed jury duty. As a result, the deputy said, there is a warrant out for your arrest.

The man was stunned. Don't worry, the deputy further explained. The man could avoid arrest, put the whole matter behind him. All he had to do was pay the fine. But he couldn't pay it by check or credit card. The deputy directed the man to a local cryptocurrency ATM machine and told him to deposit \$15,000 into the machine, pay the fine, and all would be forgiven.

If you have been following the news, you might have guessed by now that the man on the phone wasn't a sheriff's deputy at all; he was a scammer. Once my constituent deposited his money into the crypto-ATM, it was gone—gone. There was no way to trace the transaction to the scammer and no way to get the money back.

This is just one example of a growing and alarming trend of crypto-ATM fraud. There are now more than 30,000 crypto-ATMs in this country, and they are being used by criminals to cheat Americans out of their hard-earned savings, to the tune of \$114 million in 2023 alone. Most of the victims are senior citizens.

While these scams aren't all identical, they generally play out just like the one I described. A stranger calls and pretends to be from the government or the victim's bank. They make claims of unpaid fines, a frozen bank account, a credit card in default, or even threaten arrest.

The scammer then tells their victim that they must immediately go to a crypto-ATM at a nearby grocery store, gas station, or convenience store. Often, the scammer will try to stay on the phone with the victim throughout the scam, warning of dire consequences if they don't make the payments immediately. It is a way of preventing their victim from getting a moment to take a breath and just maybe realize what is going on.

Once the victim arrives at the crypto-ATM, the scammer will walk them through the process of depositing real money—cash—into the machine, buying Bitcoin or other cryptocurrency, and sending it to the scammer's digital wallet.

Last summer, a small business owner in my hometown of Springfield, IL, removed a crypto-ATM from the store after witnessing senior after senior walk in, talking on their phones, looking stressed, and depositing huge sums of cash into the machine. He said:

One hundred percent of the time that we saw somebody at the machine they were being scammed.

This is in a small store in Springfield, IL.

It wasn't just happening there. There are tragic stories of seniors losing their

savings through these machines in every State in America.

A South Carolina retired couple lost \$390,000 over the course of several months through a scam involving crypto-ATMs. Just this month, a sheriff's office in Walton County, FL, reported a resident that was cheated out of \$129,000 through a crypto-ATM.

It is past time that we put some commonsense guardrails in place to stop fraud in this largely unregulated industry. That is why, today, I am joining with Senators BLUMENTHAL, REED, and WELCH to introduce the Crypto ATM Fraud Prevention Act. This bill will require crypto-ATM operators to warn consumers about scams and take reasonable steps to prevent fraud at their machines.

It will also put in place measures to limit the amount that consumers lose when they do fall victim to scams and would give law enforcement new tools to track down and fight back against criminals.

I want to share a few key measures in this bill with you. First, the bill will provide special protection for consumers during the 2 weeks after they make their first transaction at a crypto-ATM, the period when a consumer is most likely to be a victim of fraud. During this time, customers will be limited to deposits of \$2,000 per day and \$10,000 total. While this is still a lot of money, it ensures people's entire life savings are not put at risk.

The bill will also require crypto-ATM operators to obtain verbal confirmation via a live phone call for any transaction with a new customer over \$500. Do you remember when I told you scammers often stay on the phone with victims until the money has been deposited in their digital wallet? Well, this requirement will break that communication, give victims a chance to think, perhaps reach out to another member of the family, and make sure crypto-ATM operators can assess whether the customer is being scammed.

Next, the bill requires crypto-ATM operators to give prominent, clear warnings about the risk of fraud and tell consumers about common types of scams. While warnings alone are not enough, they are part of the key to preventing fraud.

Operators also will be required to issue paper receipts to customers after each transaction. The receipt will include, among other things, the date, time, and amount of the transaction and the transaction hash, which will allow law enforcement to more easily trace the transaction, collect evidence of the crime, and maybe even recover the stolen funds.

Next, operators will be required to use the analytics to screen for suspicious, illicit transactions. Some companies are effectively using this technology already. It should be used across the board.

Finally, crypto-ATM operators will be required to issue refunds to con-

sumers who are victims of fraud. As long as victims make a sworn report to law enforcement and notify the operator within 30 days of the transaction, they will be entitled to a full refund. New customers will get full refunds. All other customers will be entitled to a refund of, at minimum, any fees associated with the transaction.

These measures are commonsense guardrails that will prevent countless Americans, particularly senior citizens, from losing thousands of dollars of their hard-earned savings to criminal scams. I urge all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me to pass this bill into law. We don't have any time to waste.

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. 710

*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 "Crypto ATM Fraud Prevention Act of 2025".

#### SEC. 2. REGISTRATION WITH THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

Section 5330 of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting ", any person who owns, operates, or manages a virtual currency kiosk in the United States or its territories," after "similar instruments"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(3) VIRTUAL CURRENCY; VIRTUAL CURRENCY ADDRESS; VIRTUAL CURRENCY KIOSK; VIRTUAL CURRENCY KIOSK OPERATOR.—The terms 'virtual currency', 'virtual currency address', 'virtual currency kiosk', and 'virtual currency kiosk operator' have the meanings given those terms, respectively, in section 5337."; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(f) REGISTRATION OF VIRTUAL CURRENCY KIOSK LOCATIONS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the effective date of this subsection, and not less than once every 90 days thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall require virtual currency kiosk operators to submit an updated list containing the physical address of each virtual currency kiosk owned or operated by the virtual currency kiosk operator.

"(2) FORM AND MANNER OF REGISTRATION.—Each submission by a virtual currency kiosk operator pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include—

"(A) the legal name of the virtual currency kiosk operator;

"(B) any fictitious or trade name of the virtual currency kiosk operator;

"(C) the physical address of each virtual currency kiosk owned, operated, or managed by the virtual currency kiosk operator that is located in the United States or the territories of the United States;

"(D) the start date of operation of each virtual currency kiosk;

"(E) the end date of operation of each virtual currency kiosk, if applicable; and

"(F) each virtual currency address used by the virtual currency kiosk operator.

"(3) FALSE AND INCOMPLETE INFORMATION.—The filing of false or materially incomplete information in a submission required under

paragraph (1) shall be deemed a failure to comply with the requirements of this subsection.”.

### SEC. 3. PREVENTING FRAUDULENT TRANSACTIONS AT VIRTUAL CURRENCY KIOSKS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of Chapter 53 of Title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

#### “§ 5337. Virtual currency kiosk fraud prevention

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) BLOCKCHAIN ANALYTICS.—The term ‘blockchain analytics’ means the analysis of data from blockchains or public distributed ledgers, and associated transaction information, to provide risk-specific information about virtual currency transactions and virtual currency addresses.

“(2) CUSTOMER.—The term ‘customer’ means any person that purchases or sells virtual currency through a virtual currency kiosk.

“(3) EXISTING CUSTOMER.—The term ‘existing customer’ means a customer other than a new customer.

“(4) FINCEN.—The term ‘FinCEN’ means the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network of the Department of the Treasury.

“(5) NEW CUSTOMER.—The term ‘new customer’, with respect to a virtual currency kiosk operator, means a customer during the 14-day period beginning on the date of the first virtual currency kiosk transaction of the customer with the virtual currency kiosk operator.

“(6) TRANSACTION HASH.—The term ‘transaction hash’ means a unique identifier made up of a string of characters that act as a record of and provide proof that a transaction was verified and added to the blockchain.

“(7) VIRTUAL CURRENCY.—The term ‘virtual currency’ means any digital representation of value that is recorded on a cryptographically secured distributed ledger or any similar technology or another implementation, which was designed and built as part of a system to leverage or replace blockchain, distributed ledger technology, or their derivatives.

“(8) VIRTUAL CURRENCY ADDRESS.—The term ‘virtual currency address’ means an alphanumeric identifier associated with a virtual currency wallet identifying the location to which virtual currency purchased through a virtual currency kiosk can be sent or from which virtual currency sold through a virtual currency kiosk can be accessed.

“(9) VIRTUAL CURRENCY KIOSK.—The term ‘virtual currency kiosk’ means a stand-alone machine that is capable of accepting or dispensing legal tender in exchange for virtual currency.

“(10) VIRTUAL CURRENCY KIOSK OPERATOR.—The term ‘virtual currency kiosk operator’ means a person who owns, operates, or manages a virtual currency kiosk located in the United States or its territories.

“(11) VIRTUAL CURRENCY KIOSK TRANSACTION.—The term ‘virtual currency kiosk transaction’ means the purchase or sale of virtual currency via a virtual currency kiosk.

“(12) VIRTUAL CURRENCY WALLET.—The term ‘virtual currency wallet’ means a software application or other mechanism providing a means for holding, storing, and transferring virtual currency.

“(b) DISCLOSURES.—Before entering into a virtual currency transaction with a customer, a virtual currency kiosk operator shall disclose in a clear, conspicuous, and easily readable manner—

“(1) all relevant terms and conditions of the virtual currency kiosk transaction, including—

“(A) the amount of the virtual currency kiosk transaction;

“(B) the type and nature of the virtual currency kiosk transaction;

“(C) a warning that the virtual currency kiosk transaction is final, is not refundable, and may not be reversed; and

“(D) the type and amount of any fees or other expenses paid by the customer;

“(2) a warning relating to consumer fraud including—

“(A) a warning that consumer fraud often starts with contact from a stranger, and that the customer should never send money to someone they do not know;

“(B) a warning about the most common types of fraudulent schemes involving virtual currency kiosks, such as—

“(i) impersonation of a government official or a bank representative;

“(ii) threats of jail time or financial penalties;

“(iii) offers of a job or reward in exchange for payment, or offers of deals that seem too good to be true;

“(iv) claims of a frozen bank account or credit card; or

“(v) requests for donations to charity or disaster relief; and

“(C) a statement that the customer should contact the virtual currency kiosk operator’s customer service helpline or State or local law enforcement if they suspect fraudulent activity.

“(c) ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DISCLOSURES.—Each time a customer uses a virtual currency kiosk, the virtual currency kiosk operator shall ensure acknowledgment of all disclosures required under subsection (b) via confirmation of consent of the customer at the virtual currency kiosk.

“(d) RECEIPTS.—Upon completion of each virtual currency kiosk transaction, the virtual currency kiosk operator shall provide the customer with a receipt, which shall include the following information:

“(1) The name and contact information of the virtual currency kiosk operator, including a telephone number for a customer service helpline.

“(2) The name of the customer.

“(3) The type, value, date, and precise time of the virtual currency kiosk transaction, transaction hash, and each applicable virtual currency address.

“(4) The amount of the virtual currency kiosk transaction expressed in United States dollars.

“(5) All fees charged.

“(6) A statement that the customer may be entitled by law to a refund if the customer reports fraudulent activity in conjunction with the virtual currency kiosk transaction not later than 30 days after the date of the virtual currency kiosk transaction.

“(7) The refund policy of the virtual currency kiosk operator or a Uniform Resource Locator where the refund policy of the virtual currency kiosk operator can be found.

“(8) A statement that the customer should contact law enforcement if they suspect fraudulent activity, such as scams, including contact information for a relevant law enforcement or government agency.

“(9) Any additional information the virtual currency kiosk operator determines appropriate.

“(e) PHYSICAL RECEIPTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year after the effective date of this section, each receipt required under subsection (d) shall be issued to the customer as a physical receipt at the virtual currency kiosk at the time of the virtual currency kiosk transaction, but such receipt may also be provided in additional forms or communications.

“(f) ANTI-FRAUD POLICY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each virtual currency kiosk operator shall take reasonable steps to detect and prevent fraud, including establishing and maintaining a written anti-fraud policy that includes—

“(A) the identification and assessment of fraud-related risk areas;

“(B) procedures and controls to protect against risks identified under subparagraph (A);

“(C) allocation of responsibility for monitoring the risks identified under subparagraph (A); and

“(D) procedures for the periodic evaluation and revision of the anti-fraud procedures, controls, and monitoring mechanisms under subparagraphs (B) and (C).

“(2) SUBMISSION OF ANTI-FRAUD POLICY TO FINCEN.—Each virtual currency kiosk operator shall submit to FinCEN the anti-fraud policy required under paragraph (1) not later than 90 days after the later of—

“(A) the effective date of this section; or

“(B) the date on which the virtual currency kiosk operator begins operating.

“(g) APPOINTMENT OF COMPLIANCE OFFICER.—Each virtual currency kiosk operator shall designate and employ a compliance officer who—

“(1) is qualified to coordinate and monitor compliance with this section and all other applicable Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations;

“(2) is employed full-time by the virtual currency kiosk operator;

“(3) is not the chief executive officer of the virtual currency kiosk operator; and

“(4) does not own or control more than 20 percent of any interest in the virtual currency kiosk operator.

“(h) USE OF BLOCKCHAIN ANALYTICS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each virtual currency kiosk operator shall use blockchain analytics to prevent sending virtual currency to a virtual currency wallet known to be affiliated with fraudulent activity at the time of a virtual currency kiosk transaction and to detect transaction patterns indicative of fraud or other illicit activities.

“(2) COMPLIANCE.—The Director of FinCEN may request evidence from any virtual currency kiosk operator to confirm compliance with this subsection.

“(i) VERBAL CONFIRMATION REQUIRED BEFORE NEW CUSTOMER TRANSACTIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Before entering into a virtual currency kiosk transaction valued at 500 dollars or more with a new customer, a virtual currency kiosk operator shall obtain verbal confirmation from the new customer that—

“(A) the new customer wishes to proceed with the virtual currency kiosk transaction;

“(B) the new customer understands the nature of the virtual currency kiosk transaction; and

“(C) the new customer is not being fraudulently induced to engage in the transaction.

“(2) REASONABLE EFFORT.—A virtual currency kiosk operator shall make a reasonable effort to determine whether the customer is being fraudulently induced to engage in the virtual currency kiosk transaction.

“(3) METHOD OF CONFIRMATION.—Each verbal confirmation required under paragraph (1) shall be given by way of a live telephone or video call to a person employed by, or on behalf of, the virtual currency kiosk operator.

“(j) REFUNDS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—

“(A) NEW CUSTOMERS.—Not later than 30 days after receiving an application under paragraph (2), a virtual currency kiosk operator shall issue a refund to a customer for the full amount of each virtual currency kiosk transaction, including the dollar value

of virtual currency exchanged and all transaction fees, made during the period in which the customer was a new customer and for which the customer was fraudulently induced to engage in the virtual currency kiosk transaction.

“(B) EXISTING CUSTOMERS.—Not later than 30 days after receiving an application under paragraph (2), a virtual currency kiosk operator shall issue a refund to a customer for the full amount of all transaction fees associated with each virtual currency kiosk transaction made during the period in which the customer was an existing customer and for which the customer was fraudulently induced to engage in the virtual currency kiosk transaction.

“(2) APPLICATION.—A customer seeking a refund under paragraph (1) shall, not later than 30 days after the date of the virtual currency kiosk transaction, submit an application to the virtual currency kiosk operator that includes the following:

“(A) The name, address, and phone number of the customer.

“(B) The transaction hash of the virtual currency kiosk transaction or information sufficient to determine the type, value, date, and time of the virtual currency kiosk transaction.

“(C) A copy of a report to a State or local law enforcement or government agency, made not later than 30 days after the virtual currency kiosk transaction, that includes a sworn affidavit attesting that the customer was fraudulently induced to engage in the virtual currency kiosk transaction.

“(3) ENHANCED DAMAGES.—Any person who willfully denies a refund to a customer in violation of paragraph (1) shall be liable to the customer for 3 times the amount of the refund owed under that paragraph or \$10,000, whichever is greater. A penalty under this paragraph shall be in addition to any penalty under subsection (n).

“(k) TRANSACTION LIMITS WITH RESPECT TO NEW CUSTOMERS.—

“(1) IN A 24-HOUR PERIOD.—A virtual currency kiosk operator shall not accept more than \$2,000, or the equivalent amount in virtual currency, from any new customer during any 24-hour period.

“(2) TOTAL.—A virtual currency kiosk operator shall not accept a total of more than \$10,000, or the equivalent amount in virtual currency, from any new customer.

“(l) CUSTOMER SERVICE HELPLINE.—Each virtual currency kiosk operator shall provide live customer service during all hours that the virtual currency kiosk operator accepts virtual currency kiosk transactions, the phone number for which is regularly monitored and displayed in a clear, conspicuous, and easily readable manner upon each virtual currency kiosk.

“(m) COMMUNICATIONS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each virtual currency kiosk operator shall provide a dedicated and frequently monitored phone number and email address for relevant law enforcement and government agencies to facilitate communication with the virtual currency kiosk operator in the event of reported or suspected fraudulent activity.

“(2) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 90 days after the effective date of this section, each virtual currency kiosk operator shall submit the phone number and email address described in paragraph (1) to FinCEN and all other relevant law enforcement and government agencies.

“(n) CIVIL PENALTIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Any person who fails to comply with any requirement of this section, or any regulation prescribed under this section, shall be liable to the United States for

a civil monetary penalty of \$10,000 for each such violation.

“(2) CONTINUING VIOLATION.—Each day that a violation described in paragraph (1) continues shall constitute a separate violation for purposes of such paragraph.

“(3) ASSESSMENTS.—Any penalty imposed under this section shall be assessed and collected by the Secretary of the Treasury as provided in section 5321 and any such assessment shall be subject to the provisions of that section.

“(o) RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAWS.—The provisions of this section shall preempt any State law, rule, or regulation only to the extent that such State law, rule, or regulation conflicts with a provision of this section. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a State from enacting a law, rule, or regulation that provides greater protection to customers than the protection provided by the provisions of this section.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 53 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5336 the following:

“5337. Virtual currency kiosk fraud prevention.”

#### SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 720. A bill to establish an Office of Environmental Justice within the Department of Justice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Empowering and Enforcing Environmental Justice Act of 2025. This bill would establish in statute the Office of Environmental Justice within the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice.

The principles of environmental justice call for environmental fairness, regardless of race, color, national origin or income, and the meaningful involvement of communities in the development of laws and regulations that affect every community's natural surroundings and the places people live, work, play, and learn. California was one of the first States in the Nation to codify a definition of “environmental justice” in statute, understanding the disproportionate impact that frontline communities face.

This reality could not be more relevant today in light of the recent firings of environmental justice and ENRD employees at the Department of Justice. During the 117th Congress, I was proud to work with my colleague Representative BARRAGÁN on a bill that called for the creation of an Environmental Justice Office at the DOJ, and we were pleased that the Department moved forward to establish this office in May 2022.

However, on her first day as Attorney General, Pam Bondi eliminated all en-

vironmental justice efforts at the DOJ, in line with President Trump's orders to eliminate all DEI initiatives at Federal Agencies. Her order effectively terminated the office and halted all programs designed to fight pollution and enforce environmental laws.

I therefore urge my colleagues to join me in working to codify this office so that environmental enforcement does not fall victim to political agendas. The work that this office did made a real impact, making progress in ensuring that all people can breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live in healthy, resilient environments.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 723. A bill to require the Bureau of Indian Affairs to process and complete all mortgage packages associated with residential and business mortgages on Indian land by certain deadlines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

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. 723

*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 “Tribal Trust Land Homeownership Act of 2025”.

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPLICABLE BUREAU OFFICE.—The term “applicable Bureau office” means—  
(A) a Regional office of the Bureau;  
(B) an Agency office of the Bureau; or  
(C) a Land Titles and Records Office of the Bureau.

(2) BUREAU.—The term “Bureau” means the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(3) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means the Director of the Bureau.

(4) FIRST CERTIFIED TITLE STATUS REPORT.—The term “first certified title status report” means the title status report needed to verify title status on Indian land.

(5) INDIAN LAND.—The term “Indian land” has the meaning given the term in section 162.003 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act).

(6) LAND MORTGAGE.—The term “land mortgage” means a mortgage obtained by an individual Indian who owns a tract of trust land for the purpose of—

- (A) home acquisition;
- (B) home construction;
- (C) home improvements; or
- (D) economic development.

(7) LEASEHOLD MORTGAGE.—The term “leasehold mortgage” means a mortgage, deed of trust, or other instrument that pledges the leasehold interest of a lessee as security for a debt or other obligation owed by the lessee to a lender or other mortgagee.

(8) MORTGAGE PACKAGE.—The term “mortgage package” means a proposed residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, land mortgage, or right-of-way document submitted to an applicable Bureau office under section 3(a)(1).

(9) RELEVANT FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “relevant Federal agency” means any of the following Federal agencies that guarantee or make direct mortgage loans on Indian land:

(A) The Department of Agriculture.

(B) The Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(C) The Department of Veterans Affairs.

(10) **RIGHT-OF-WAY DOCUMENT.**—The term “right-of-way document” has the meaning given the term in section 169.2 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act).

(11) **SUBSEQUENT CERTIFIED TITLE STATUS REPORT.**—The term “subsequent certified title status report” means the title status report needed to identify any liens against a residential, business, or land lease on Indian land.

### SEC. 3. MORTGAGE REVIEW AND PROCESSING.

#### (a) REVIEW AND PROCESSING DEADLINES.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—As soon as practicable after receiving a proposed residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, land mortgage, or right-of-way document, the applicable Bureau office shall notify the lender that the proposed residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, or right-of-way document has been received.

#### (2) PRELIMINARY REVIEW.—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 10 calendar days after receipt of a proposed residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, land mortgage, or right-of-way document, the applicable Bureau office shall conduct and complete a preliminary review of the residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, land mortgage, or right-of-way document to verify that all required documents are included.

(B) **INCOMPLETE DOCUMENTS.**—As soon as practicable, but not more than 2 calendar days, after finding that any required documents are missing under subparagraph (A), the applicable Bureau office shall notify the lender of the missing documents.

#### (3) APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL.—

(A) **LEASEHOLD MORTGAGES.**—Not later than 20 calendar days after receipt of a complete executed residential leasehold mortgage or business leasehold mortgage, proof of required consents, and other required documentation, the applicable Bureau office shall approve or disapprove the residential leasehold mortgage or business leasehold mortgage.

(B) **RIGHT-OF-WAY DOCUMENTS.**—Not later than 30 calendar days after receipt of a complete executed right-of-way document, proof of required consents, and other required documentation, the applicable Bureau office shall approve or disapprove the right-of-way document.

(C) **LAND MORTGAGES.**—Not later than 30 calendar days after receipt of a complete executed land mortgage, proof of required consents, and other required documentation, the applicable Bureau office shall approve or disapprove the land mortgage.

(D) **REQUIREMENTS.**—The determination of whether to approve or disapprove a residential leasehold mortgage or business leasehold mortgage under subparagraph (A), a right-of-way document under subparagraph (B), or a land mortgage under subparagraph (C)—

(i) shall be in writing; and

(ii) in the case of a determination to disapprove a residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, right-of-way document, or land mortgage shall, state the basis for the determination.

(E) **APPLICATION.**—This paragraph shall not apply to a residential leasehold mortgage or business leasehold mortgage with respect to Indian land in cases in which the applicant for the residential leasehold mortgage or business leasehold mortgage is an Indian tribe (as defined in subsection (d) of the first section of the Act of 1955 (69 Stat. 539, chapter 615; 126 Stat. 1150; 25 U.S.C. 415(d))) that has been approved for leasing under sub-

section (h) of that section (69 Stat. 539, chapter 615; 126 Stat. 1151; 25 U.S.C. 415(h)).

#### (4) CERTIFIED TITLE STATUS REPORTS.—

##### (A) COMPLETION OF REPORTS.—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 10 calendar days after the applicable Bureau office approves a residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, land mortgage, or right-of-way document under paragraph (3), the applicable Bureau office shall complete the processing of, as applicable—

(I) a first certified title status report, if a first certified title status report was not completed prior to the approval of the residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, land mortgage, or right-of-way document; and

(II) a subsequent certified title status report.

(ii) **REQUESTS FOR FIRST CERTIFIED TITLE STATUS REPORTS.**—Notwithstanding clause (i), not later than 14 calendar days after the applicable Bureau office receives a request for a first certified title status report from an applicant for a residential leasehold mortgage, business leasehold mortgage, land mortgage, or right-of-way document under paragraph (1), the applicable Bureau office shall complete the processing of the first certified title status report.

##### (B) NOTICE.—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—As soon as practicable after completion of the processing of, as applicable, a first certified title status report or a subsequent certified title status report under subparagraph (A), but by not later than the applicable deadline described in that subparagraph, the applicable Bureau office shall give notice of the completion to the lender.

(ii) **FORM OF NOTICE.**—The applicable Bureau office shall give notice under clause (i)—

(I) electronically through secure, encryption software; and

(II) through the United States mail.

(iii) **OPTION TO OPT OUT.**—The lender may opt out of receiving notice electronically under clause (ii)(I).

##### (b) NOTICES.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—If the applicable Bureau office does not complete the review and processing of mortgage packages under subsection (a) (including any corresponding first certified title status report or subsequent certified title status report under paragraph (4) of that subsection) by the applicable deadline described in that subsection, immediately after missing the deadline, the applicable Bureau office shall provide notice of the delay in review and processing to—

(A) the party that submitted the mortgage package or requested the first certified title status report; and

(B) the lender for which the mortgage package (including any corresponding first certified title status report or subsequent certified title status report) is being requested.

(2) **REQUESTS FOR UPDATES.**—In addition to providing the notices required under paragraph (1), not later than 2 calendar days after receiving a relevant inquiry with respect to a submitted mortgage package from the party that submitted the mortgage package or the lender for which the mortgage package (including any corresponding first certified title status report or subsequent certified title status report) is being requested or an inquiry with respect to a requested first certified title status report from the party that requested the first certified title status report, the applicable Bureau office shall respond to the inquiry.

(c) **DELIVERY OF FIRST AND SUBSEQUENT CERTIFIED TITLE STATUS REPORTS.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any first certified title status report and any

subsequent certified title status report, as applicable, shall be delivered directly to—

(1) the lender;

(2) any local or regional agency office of the Bureau that requests the first certified title status report or subsequent certified title status report;

(3) in the case of a proposed residential leasehold mortgage or land mortgage, the relevant Federal agency that insures or guarantees the loan; and

(4) if requested, any individual or entity described in section 150.303 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act).

(d) **ACCESS TO TRUST ASSET AND ACCOUNTING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TAAMS).**—Beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the relevant Federal agencies and Indian Tribes shall have read-only access to portals containing the relevant land documents from the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (commonly known as “TAAMS”) maintained by the Bureau.

##### (e) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than March 1 of each calendar year, the Director shall submit to the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing—

(A) for the most recent calendar year, the number of requests received to complete residential leasehold mortgage packages, business leasehold mortgage packages, land mortgage packages, and right-of-way document packages (including any requests for corresponding first certified title status reports and subsequent certified title status reports), including a detailed description of—

(i) requests that were and were not successfully completed by the applicable deadline described in subsection (a) by each applicable Bureau office; and

(ii) the reasons for each applicable Bureau office not meeting any applicable deadlines; and

(B) the length of time needed by each applicable Bureau office during the most recent calendar year to provide the notices required under subsection (b)(1).

(2) **REQUIREMENT.**—In submitting the report required under paragraph (1), the Director shall maintain the confidentiality of personally identifiable information of the parties involved in requesting the completion of residential leasehold mortgage packages, business leasehold mortgage packages, land mortgage packages, and right-of-way document packages (including any corresponding first certified title status reports and subsequent certified title status reports).

(f) **GAO STUDY.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

(1) an evaluation of the need for residential leasehold mortgage packages, business leasehold mortgage packages, land mortgage packages, and right-of-way document packages of each Indian Tribe to be digitized for the purpose of streamlining and expediting the completion of mortgage packages for residential mortgages on Indian land (including the corresponding first certified title status reports and subsequent certified title status reports); and

(2) an estimate of the time and total cost necessary for Indian Tribes to digitize the records described in paragraph (1), in conjunction with assistance in that digitization from the Bureau.



#### SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF REALTY OMBUDSMAN POSITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall establish within the Division of Real Estate Services of the Bureau the position of Realty Ombudsman, who shall report directly to the Secretary of the Interior.

(b) FUNCTIONS.—The Realty Ombudsman shall—

(1) ensure that the applicable Bureau offices are meeting the mortgage review and processing deadlines established by section 3(a);

(2) ensure that the applicable Bureau offices comply with the notices required under subsections (a) and (b) of section 3;

(3) serve as a liaison to other Federal agencies, including by—

(A) ensuring the Bureau is responsive to all of the inquiries from the relevant Federal agencies; and

(B) helping to facilitate communications between the relevant Federal agencies and the Bureau on matters relating to mortgages on Indian land;

(4) receive inquiries, questions, and complaints directly from Indian Tribes, members of Indian Tribes, and lenders in regard to executed residential leasehold mortgages, business leasehold mortgages, land mortgages, or right-of-way documents; and

(5) serve as the intermediary between the Indian Tribes, members of Indian Tribes, and lenders and the Bureau in responding to inquiries and questions and resolving complaints.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 93—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE OPERATIONS OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH SHOULD NOT EXPERIENCE ANY INTERRUPTION, DELAY, OR FUNDING DISRUPTION IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW AND THAT THE WORKFORCE OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL TO SUSTAINING MEDICAL PROGRESS

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. WELCH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KING, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 93

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) to protect the health, economic vitality, and national security of the people of the United States, the operations of the National Institutes of Health, including funding research on childhood cancers, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, heart disease, infectious disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and other diseases and conditions, should not be subject to any interruption, delay, or funding disruption in violation of the law; and

(2) the workforce of the National Institutes of Health, comprised of scientists, researchers, and medical professionals, is essential to sustaining medical progress, and any inter-

ference with its work undermines efforts to develop life-saving treatments, weakens the biomedical research enterprise, and threatens the Nation's ability to respond to public health challenges.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 94—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE FOR THE PERIODS MARCH 1, 2025, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2025, OCTOBER 1, 2025, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2026, AND OCTOBER 1, 2026, THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2027

Mr. MCCONNELL submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Rules and Administration which was placed on the calendar:

S. RES. 94

*Resolved*,

#### SECTION 1. AGGREGATE AUTHORIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of carrying out the powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, and under the appropriate authorizing resolutions of the Senate, there is authorized for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, in the aggregate of \$90,988,230, for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, in the aggregate of \$155,979,823, and for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, in the aggregate of \$64,991,593, in accordance with the provisions of this resolution, for standing committees of the Senate, the Special Committee on Aging, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Indian Affairs.

(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 committees for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, and for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

(c) EXPENSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of each standing committee of the Senate, the Special Committee on Aging, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Indian Affairs under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the applicable 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.

#### SEC. 2. COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY.

(a) 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 Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry 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.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$4,464,935, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$7,654,174, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$3,189,239, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### SEC. 3. COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES.

(a) 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 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.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through



September 30, 2025, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### **SEC. 4. COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS.**

(a) **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 Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$5,141,314, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$11,666 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 \$875 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$8,813,681, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of indi-

vidual 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 \$1,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$3,672,367, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$8,334 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 \$625 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### **SEC. 5. COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.**

(a) **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 the Budget 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$4,630,478, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$23,333 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 \$17,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$7,937,962, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$40,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$3,307,484, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$16,667 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 \$12,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of

such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### **SEC. 6. COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION.**

(a) **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 Commerce, Science, and Transportation 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$6,259,693, 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 \$100,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$10,730,903, 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 \$100,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$4,471,210, 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 \$100,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### **SEC. 7. COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.**

(a) **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 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.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### SEC. 8. COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS.

(a) 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 Environment and Public Works 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.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$4,107,247, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$4,666 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 \$1,166 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such

committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$7,040,996, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$8,000 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 \$2,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$2,933,748, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$3,334 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 \$834 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### SEC. 9. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

(a) 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 Finance 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.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$7,638,723, 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 \$5,833 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$13,094,954, 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 \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February

28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$5,456,231, 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 \$4,166 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### SEC. 10. COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS.

(a) 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 Foreign Relations 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.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$6,068,289, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$250,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$10,402,781, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$250,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$4,334,492, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$250,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### SEC. 11. COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS.

(a) 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 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$7,767,027, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 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 \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$13,314,904, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 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 \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$5,547,877, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 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 \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### **SEC. 12. COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS.**

(a) **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 and Senate Resolution 445 (108th Congress), agreed to October 9, 2004, 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 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs 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.

(b) **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 section shall not exceed \$8,380,388, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$400,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$14,366,379, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$400,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$5,985,991, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$400,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(e) **INVESTIGATIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The committee, or any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee, is authorized to study or investigate—

(A) the efficiency and economy of operations of all branches of the Government including the possible existence of fraud, misfeasance, malfeasance, collusion, mismanagement, incompetence, corruption or unethical practices, waste, extravagance, conflicts of interest, and the improper expenditure of Government funds in transactions, contracts, and activities of the Government or of Government officials and employees and any and all such improper practices between Government personnel and corporations, individuals, companies, or persons affiliated therewith, doing business with the Government, and the compliance or noncompliance of such corporations, companies, or individuals or other entities with the rules, regulations, and laws governing the various governmental agencies and the Government's relationships with the public;

(B) the extent to which criminal or other improper practices or activities are, or have been, engaged in the field of labor-management relations or in groups or organizations of employees or employers, to the detriment of interests of the public, employers, or employees, and to determine whether any changes are required in the laws of the United States in order to protect such interests against the occurrence of such practices or activities;

(C) organized criminal activity which may operate in or otherwise utilize the facilities of interstate or international commerce in furtherance of any transactions and the manner and extent to which, and the identity of the persons, firms, or corporations, or other entities by whom such utilization is being made, and further, to study and investigate the manner in which and the extent to

which persons engaged in organized criminal activity have infiltrated lawful business enterprise, and to study the adequacy of Federal laws to prevent the operations of organized crime in interstate or international commerce, and to determine whether any changes are required in the laws of the United States in order to protect the public against such practices or activities;

(D) all other aspects of crime and lawlessness within the United States which have an impact upon or affect the national health, welfare, and safety, including investment fraud schemes, commodity and security fraud, computer fraud, and the use of offshore banking and corporate facilities to carry out criminal objectives;

(E) the efficiency and economy of operations of all branches and functions of the Government with particular reference to—

(i) the effectiveness of present national security methods, staffing, and processes as tested against the requirements imposed by the rapidly mounting complexity of national security problems;

(ii) the capacity of present national security staffing, methods, and processes to make full use of the Nation's resources of knowledge and talents;

(iii) the adequacy of present intergovernmental relations between the United States and international organizations principally concerned with national security of which the United States is a member; and

(iv) legislative and other proposals to improve these methods, processes, and relationships;

(F) the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of all agencies and departments of the Government involved in the control and management of energy shortages including their performance with respect to—

(i) the collection and dissemination of accurate statistics on fuel demand and supply;

(ii) the implementation of effective energy conservation measures;

(iii) the pricing of energy in all forms;

(iv) coordination of energy programs with State and local government;

(v) control of exports of scarce fuels;

(vi) the management of tax, import, pricing, and other policies affecting energy supplies;

(vii) maintenance of the independent sector of the petroleum industry as a strong competitive force;

(viii) the allocation of fuels in short supply by public and private entities;

(ix) the management of energy supplies owned or controlled by the Government;

(x) relations with other oil producing and consuming countries;

(xi) the monitoring of compliance by governments, corporations, or individuals with the laws and regulations governing the allocation, conservation, or pricing of energy supplies; and

(xii) research into the discovery and development of alternative energy supplies; and

(G) the efficiency and economy of all branches and functions of Government with particular references to the operations and management of Federal regulatory policies and programs.

(2) **EXTENT OF INQUIRIES.**—In carrying out the duties provided in paragraph (1), the inquiries of this committee or any subcommittee of the committee shall not be construed to be limited to the records, functions, and operations of any particular branch of the Government and may extend to the records and activities of any persons, corporation, or other entity.

(3) **SPECIAL COMMITTEE AUTHORITY.**—For the purposes of this subsection, the committee, or any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee, or its chairman, or any other member of the committee

or subcommittee designated by the chairman is authorized, in its, his, her, or their discretion—

(A) to require by subpoena or otherwise the attendance of witnesses and production of correspondence, books, papers, and documents;

(B) to hold hearings;

(C) to sit and act at any time or place during the sessions, recess, and adjournment periods of the Senate;

(D) to administer oaths; and

(E) to take testimony, either orally or by sworn statement, or, in the case of staff members of the committee and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, by deposition in accordance with the committee Rules of Procedure.

(4) **AUTHORITY OF OTHER COMMITTEES.**—Nothing contained in this subsection shall affect or impair the exercise of any other standing committee of the Senate of any power, or the discharge by such committee of any duty, conferred or imposed upon it by the Standing Rules of the Senate or by the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946.

(5) **SUBPOENA AUTHORITY.**—All subpoenas and related legal processes of the committee and any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee authorized under Senate Resolution 59 (118th Congress), agreed to February 15, 2023, are authorized to continue.

### SEC. 13. COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.

(a) **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 the Judiciary 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$9,064,180, 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 \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$15,538,595, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$125,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February

28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$6,474,414, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$80,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(e) **ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE AUTHORITY.**—For the purposes of carrying out its investigative powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate and in accordance with Committee Rules of Procedure, the committee is authorized to require by subpoena the attendance of witnesses at depositions of the committee, which may be conducted by designated staff.

### SEC. 14. COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION.

(a) **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 Rules and Administration 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$2,354,135, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$4,035,660, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$1,618,525, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

### SEC. 15. COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

(a) **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 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

### SEC. 16. COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS.

(a) **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 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section 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 such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### **SEC. 17. SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING.**

(a) **GENERAL AUTHORITY.**—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions imposed by section 104 of Senate Resolution 4 (95th Congress), agreed to February 4, 1977, and in exercising the authority conferred on it by such section, the Special Committee on Aging 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$2,060,695, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$1,500 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 \$1,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$3,532,620, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$1,500 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 \$1,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$1,471,925, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$1,500 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 \$1,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### **SEC. 18. SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE.**

(a) **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 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$5,261,497, of which 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))).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$9,019,709, of which 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))).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$3,758,212, of which 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. 19. COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS.**

(a) **GENERAL AUTHORITY.**—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions imposed by section 105 of Senate Resolution 4 (95th Congress), agreed to February 4, 1977, and in exercising the authority conferred on it by that section, the Committee on Indian Affairs 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.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this section shall not exceed \$1,858,378, 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 \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this section shall not exceed \$3,185,791, 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 \$20,000 may be expended for training consultants of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this section shall not exceed \$1,327,413, 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 \$20,000 may be expended for training consultants of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

#### **SEC. 20. SPECIAL RESERVE.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Within the funds in the account “Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations”, there is authorized to be established a special reserve to be available to any committee funded by this resolution as provided in subsection (b) of which amount—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 7.6 percent of the amount equal to  $\frac{1}{12}$ th of the appropriations for the account that are available for the period October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 7.9 percent of the appropriations for the account that are available for that period; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 6.9 percent of the amount equal to  $\frac{1}{12}$ th of the appropriations for the account that are available for the period October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027.

(b) **AVAILABILITY.**—The special reserve authorized in subsection (a) shall be available to any committee—

(1) on the basis of special need to meet unpaid obligations incurred by that committee during the periods referred to in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subsection (a); and

(2) at the request of a Chairman and Ranking Member of that committee subject to the

approval of the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Rules and Administration.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 95—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF FEBRUARY 23, 2025, TO MARCH 1, 2025, AS “NATIONAL FENTANYL AWARENESS WEEK” AND RAISING AWARENESS OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF FENTANYL IN THE UNITED STATES**

Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mr. JUSTICE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 95

Whereas, as of August 2024, drug overdoses during the previous 12 months claimed a reported 86,678 lives in the United States;

Whereas countless families in the United States are now facing the unimaginable pain of losing a child, mother, father, sibling or loved one taken by deadly, illegal fentanyl;

Whereas the life expectancy in the United States remains impacted by the opioid crisis, with people born in 2023 estimated to live 78.4 years;

Whereas social isolation and poor support systems contribute to increased overdose risk among older adults;

Whereas, from 2022 to 2023, adults aged 65 and older experienced the largest percentage increase in the rate of drug overdose deaths, with an increase of 11.4 percent;

Whereas fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroin, and is considered the deadliest drug threat in the United States;

Whereas drug traffickers use illicit fentanyl to produce fake or counterfeit pills; Whereas drug traffickers are using fentanyl-laced fake or counterfeit pills to exploit the opioid crisis in the United States;

Whereas, without laboratory testing, there is no safe way to know how much fentanyl is concentrated in a pill or powder;

Whereas those illicit drugs are primarily made in secret factories in Mexico with chemicals mostly from China;

Whereas the Drug Enforcement Agency has issued warnings about brightly-colored fentanyl-laced pills being used to target young individuals in the United States;

Whereas less than 2 milligrams is considered a deadly dose of fentanyl;

Whereas the Drug Enforcement Agency announced that in 2024 alone, the Drug Enforcement Agency seized over 367,000,000 doses of potentially deadly fentanyl, enough to kill every individual in the United States, which included—

(1) more than 55,000,000 fentanyl-laced pills; and

(2) 7,800 pounds of fentanyl powder;

Whereas U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized more than 21,889 pounds of fentanyl in fiscal year 2024;

Whereas fentanyl has also been found in street drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine; and

Whereas, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fentanyl-related poisonings are currently the leading cause of death for individuals in the United States ages 18 to 45: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) applauds the work of Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies for their work in combating the fentanyl crisis;

(2) applauds the work of treatment and recovery organizations that help individuals with substance use disorder;

(3) encourages all individuals to only use medication prescribed through their physician;

(4) encourages anyone suffering from substance use disorder to seek assistance; and

(5) designates February 23, 2025, through March 1, 2025, as “National Fentanyl Awareness Week”.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 96—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 24 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2025, AS “PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK”**

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KING, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WELCH, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. PETERS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. PADILLA) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 96

Whereas public education is a significant institution in a 21st-century democracy;

Whereas public schools in the United States educate students about the values and beliefs that hold the individuals of the United States together as a nation;

Whereas public schools prepare young individuals of the United States to contribute to the society, economy, and citizenry of the country;

Whereas 87 percent of children in the United States attend public schools;

Whereas Federal, State, and local lawmakers should—

(1) prioritize support for strengthening the public schools of the United States;

(2) empower superintendents, principals, and other school leaders to implement, manage, and lead school districts and schools in partnership with educators, parents, and other local education stakeholders; and

(3) support services and programs that are critical to helping students engage in learning, including counseling, extracurricular activities, and mental health support;

Whereas public schools should foster inclusive, safe, and high-quality environments in which children can learn to think critically, problem solve, and build relationships;

Whereas public schools should provide environments in which all students have the opportunity to succeed beginning in their earliest years, regardless of who a student is or where a student lives;

Whereas Congress should support—

(1) efforts to advance equal opportunity and excellence in public education;

(2) efforts to implement evidence-based practices in public education; and

(3) continuous improvements to public education;

Whereas every child should—

(1) receive an education that helps the child reach the full potential of the child; and

(2) attend a school that offers a high-quality educational experience;

Whereas Federal funding, in addition to State and local funds, supports the access of students to inviting classrooms, well-prepared educators, and services to support healthy students, including nutrition and afterschool programs;

Whereas teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals should provide students with a well-rounded education and strive to create joy in learning;

Whereas superintendents, principals, other school leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals,

and parents make public schools vital components of communities and are working hard to improve educational outcomes for children across the country; and

Whereas the week of February 24 through February 28, 2025, is an appropriate period to designate as “Public Schools Week”: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate designates the week of February 24 through February 28, 2025 as “Public Schools Week”.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 97—HONORING THE LIFE OF NEBRASKA COMMUNITY LEADER HOWARD L. HAWKS**

Mr. RICKETTS (for himself and Mrs. FISCHER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 97

Whereas, in 1935, Howard L. Hawks (referred to in this preamble as “Hawks”) was born in Carleton, Nebraska;

Whereas, in 1987, Hawks co-founded Tenaska Energy, where Hawks served as—

(1) Chairman and CEO until 2010; and

(2) Chairman until 2022;

Whereas Hawks grew Tenaska Energy from a small business out of Omaha, Nebraska, to 1 of the largest private companies in the United States;

Whereas Hawks remained active in Tenaska Energy even after transitioning to Chairman Emeritus in 2022;

Whereas, through his dedication to the community around him, Hawks served as—

(1) a Regent at the University of Nebraska for 18 years; and

(2) a Board Member of Creighton University for 12 years;

Whereas, among his many philanthropic efforts, Hawks transformed the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in both athletics and academics and, in 2023, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln honored Hawks and his wife with the Regents Medal to recognize their contributions;

Whereas Hawks supported various efforts and projects across the University of Nebraska system, including—

(1) Howard L. Hawks Hall;

(2) a business ethics and leadership chair for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Business;

(3) Kiewit Hall for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Engineering;

(4) the Hawks Championship Center and Hawks Field at Haymarket Park for University of Nebraska-Lincoln athletics;

(5) Baxter Arena and the baseball and softball complex for University of Nebraska-Omaha Athletics;

(6) the renovation to the Durham Science Center for University of Nebraska-Omaha;

(7) the Tim Hawks Chair in Cancer Prevention and Population Science in the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health;

(8) the Rhonda and Howard Hawks Movement Disorders Fellowship in the University of Nebraska Medical Center Department of Neurological Sciences;

(9) the Sharing Clinic, a University of Nebraska Medical Center student-run clinic; and

(10) student scholarships;

Whereas Hawks served on the executive committee for “Campaign for Nebraska: Unlimited Possibilities”, a fundraising campaign conducted from 2005 to 2014 that raised \$1,800,000,000 in private support for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and

Whereas Hawks’ philanthropic commitment extended well beyond the University of



Nebraska system, supporting initiatives addressing homelessness and mental health, and supporting education and the arts: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of Howard L. Hawks;

(2) honors the life and legacy of Howard L. Hawks for his unwavering dedication to Nebraska as a civic leader and philanthropist; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the family of Howard L. Hawks.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I have seven 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 ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

##### COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

##### COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

##### COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 2 p.m., to conduct a business meeting.

##### COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a joint hearing.

##### SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

##### SUBCOMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY

The Subcommittee on Cybersecurity of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet in closed session during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 4 p.m. to receive a briefing.

#### PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following interns in my office be granted floor privileges until February 26, 2025: Jazmine Wildcat and Karli Woodruff.

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to the following member of my staff: Jack K. Uhl for today.

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

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the privileges of the floor be granted to the following members of my staff: Durva Trivedi, during the pendency of her legal fellowship, until September 12, 2025; and Zachary Rosenfeld and Rachelle Domond, during the pendency of their legal clerkships until April 23, 2025.

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

#### APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, and upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, as amended, appoints the following Senator as Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the British-American Interparliamentary Group Conference during the 119th Congress: the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN of Arkansas.

The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, and upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, as amended, appoints the following Senator as Vice Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the British-American Interparliamentary Group Conference during the 119th Congress: the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, 276d-276g, as amended, appoints the following Senator as Vice Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group Conference during the 119th Congress: the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF NEBRASKA COMMUNITY LEADER HOWARD L. HAWKS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 97, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 97) honoring the life of Nebraska community leader Howard L. Hawks.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 97) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 96, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 96) designating the week of February 24 through February 28, 2025, as "Public Schools Week".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KENNEDY. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 96) was agreed to.

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2025

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 26; 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 order of February 18 in relation to S.J. Res. 10 be executed; further, I ask unanimous consent that at 12 noon the Senate proceed to executive session and vote on confirmation of the Greer nomination, as provided under the previous order, and that following disposition of the Greer nomination, the Senate resume consideration of S.J. Res. 10.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, Senators should also expect two votes tomorrow evening: passage of S.J. Res. 10, and No. 2, motion to proceed to Calendar No. 14, S.J. Res. 12, Senator HOEVEN's CRA.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.  
TOMORROW

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:32 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 10 a.m.

## CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate February 25, 2025:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DANIEL DRISCOLL, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY.