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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our God and King, we come in thankfulness because You have loved us through all the seasons of our lives. We find peace in the knowledge that You know and accept us as we are. Thank You for enabling us to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. Lord, keep us always in Your care.

Bless our Senators. Keep them steadfast in their defense of freedom. Give them knowledge, compassion, kindness, and forbearance as they interact with one another.

God, bless our Nation. Drive back the forces of evil, and release the power of goodness throughout our land.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 19, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FIRE GRANTS AND SAFETY ACT— Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 870, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 870) to amend the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 to authorize appropriations for the United States Fire Administration and firefighter assistance grant programs.

Pending:

Schumer amendment No. 58, to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, let me begin with a quote:

I can't imagine anybody ever even thinking of using the debt ceiling as a negotiating wedge.

These words are not mine. They are not even the words of a Democrat.

They come from former President Donald Trump.

For all of his terrible flaws—in this case, I would say a broken clock is right twice a day—even Donald Trump understood what House Republicans today do not: The full faith and credit of the United States must never be taken hostage.

Again, to quote former President Trump:

I can't imagine anybody ever even thinking of using the debt ceiling as a negotiating wedge.

Time is ticking before the United States enters into a first-ever default on the national debt if things don't change.

Yesterday, Speaker MCCARTHY met with House Republicans in the hopes of uniting his party around a single framework of cuts, albeit one that will never become law. Speaker MCCARTHY's meeting, from all reports, did not go well, to put it lightly.

One GOP Member said yesterday:

I am still a no.

Another from Florida:

I think that they should go further. . . . I am in favor of very aggressive cuts.

Another from South Carolina:

I'm not there yet.

We could go on and on with these quotes.

Even now, Speaker MCCARTHY—this is months and months after he proposed making deep cuts as a condition, as brinksmanship, as hostage-taking, to just simply make sure that we avoid default—even now, he is still very short of the support he needs to pass a debt ceiling bill because the chasm is too big between moderates and the hard-right extremists who are glad to see the economy taken hostage in exchange for their priorities.

As the Washington Post wrote this weekend:

Many GOP lawmakers and aides admit it is not even clear whether their emerging plan can actually attract 218 votes.

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



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And now the clock is ticking. We are getting closer and closer to when we have to act to avoid default.

So for all the speeches, for all the letters, for all the wish lists and meetings with this family or that family, the underlying facts haven't changed: At this point, Speaker MCCARTHY does not have a plan for avoiding a catastrophic default on the debt.

I quoted one former Republican President, let me quote another, Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan said:

[Debt ceiling] brinksmanship threatens the holders of government bonds and those who rely on Social Security and veterans benefits.

And:

The United States has a special responsibility to itself and to the world to meet its obligations.

When Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump say that the Republican strategy led by Speaker MCCARTHY is folly, you know how far right the whole MAGA Republican House has gone. Things that were accepted a few years ago, by very conservative Republican Presidents—Reagan, Trump—now seem to be discarded in a headlong rush to make the kind of deep cuts that Americans will never support and to tie it to the debt ceiling, which could head us crashing into default.

The solution to this entire mess is staring Republicans right in the face: Do what we did three times under Donald Trump and twice under President Biden and work with Democrats to avoid default without brinksmanship, without blackmail, and without hostage-taking. If Republicans drop their hostage-taking and approach Democrats in good faith, the default crisis could be resolved. But if Speaker MCCARTHY does not change course, he—will be leading America into default of not paying our debts for the first time.

FOX NEWS

Mr. President, on FOX News, yesterday, FOX News agreed to pay nearly \$800 million to end a defamation suit brought by Dominion Voting Systems after FOX spent months lying about the 2020 election. It is one of the largest settlements ever in a defamation case.

Trial or no trial, the world sees that FOX News knowingly and intentionally lied to the country about the 2020 election. The amazing thing is that FOX knew that these were lies, and they still put that propaganda on the air. And it is not just trivial lies; it is lies that go to the essence of our democracy. To think that the leaders of FOX News, Rupert Murdoch, don't give a hoot about democracy and still would put these lies on for political or mercenary purposes is just galling, appalling, and, frankly, downright against what America stands for and has stood for for hundreds of years.

FOX commentators spread conspiracy theories and passed them off as news. They spread distrust in our democracy and claimed it was a legiti-

mate concern. So FOX News's legacy and Rupert Murdoch's legacy is forever sealed as the network that sought to undermine American democracy one prime-time segment at a time. FOX News's legacy is sealed as the network that has minuscule reward for the truth and would knowingly lie to achieve political and mercenary goals.

Even without a single witness taking the stand, what we do know about this case is shocking. Under oath, Rupert Murdoch the owners of FOX News, admitted his hosts were spreading the narrative of the Big Lie. We are not just throwing rhetoric around here; these are facts. Here is what Murdoch said: "Maybe Sean [Hannity] and Laura [Ingraham] went too far," he admitted in one email. That is certainly a way to put it.

Asked if he could have stopped the lies, Mr. Murdoch admitted:

I could have . . . but I didn't.

Amazing. Amazing.

So settlement or not, there is no question that FOX News lied. Sadly, too much damage has already been done. A significant segment of voters—by some measures as much as 30 percent of the electorate—still do not believe the 2020 election was legitimate. And when people start doubting that elections are legitimate, that is the beginning of the end of a democracy. It is just galling.

Again, this is not lying about some trivial thing; this is lying that undermines the essence of what America has been all about.

And 2 years after the Presidential election, FOX News still lies about what happened in 2020. Not 2 months ago, Tucker Carlson claimed January 6 was not an insurrection, using manipulated security footage provided to him exclusively by Speaker MCCARTHY. FOX News has not shown any remorse—any remorse—for undermining our democracy and blatantly lying.

Again, Rupert Murdoch's legacy and FOX News's legacy is sealed. They will forever be remembered as the ones who sought to break American democracy from within by lying about it.

For their own sake—even more importantly, for the sake of our great country—Mr. Murdoch and FOX News leadership should put a halt to the spread of the Big Lie on their network because when enough people believe elections are not on the level, that is the beginning death knell of a democracy.

ABORTION

Mr. President, now on the abortion issue and military holds, for the last 10 months, the American people have made clear they reject the hard right's war on women. After many ballot initiatives, special elections, and one disastrous midterm for the GOP, there is no denying that the MAGA obsession with attacking women's freedom of choice has been a disaster. And yet, the more Americans reject MAGA extremism, particularly on the issue of

choice, the more MAGA Republicans double down. Now, through the actions of one Senator, even military families have been taken hostage by the hard right.

We are talking about women veterans. We are talking about women who volunteer and risk their lives oftentimes for us. And now this hard-right group is telling them they don't have the right to decide what to do when it comes to their bodies and their healthcare—it is outrageous. The same people on the other side who praise our military and our soldiers are treating women as second-class citizens. That is outrageous.

It is outrageous when they do it to all women, but particularly outrageous when they do it to women veterans, women who serve because they, again, are our heroes and risk their lives for us.

And now, through the actions of one Senator, even military families have been taken hostage by the hard right. Today, the Senator from Alabama will push legislation that would take away reproductive care for hundreds of thousands of veterans and their families. It is the extreme kind of proposal millions of Americans strongly oppose and one which, if passed, would gravely harm the health of women, particularly our veterans.

Senator TUBERVILLE's legislation is bad on its own, but he has made it even worse because he continues threatening our national security by blocking over 180 military promotions. The Secretary of Defense himself and so many of our leading military figures, past and present, have warned us that this delay is dangerous to the security of America.

What is equally disappointing as the Senator from Alabama's reckless action, it is disappointing to see that more of my colleagues on the other side have not yet called out the Senator's reckless stunts. I thank those who, indeed, have raised their voice, but we need more.

Republicans who claim to be such supporters of our military all of a sudden have gone mum, silent, when the Senator from Alabama risks military security because he believes passionately in something. Every one of us could do this. No one has chosen to do it the way the Senator has.

It is a new chapter, a sad chapter. We hope it will end soon, that, whether publicly or privately, our Republican colleagues go to him and say this is just dead wrong, no matter how passionately he feels.

And why is Senator TUBERVILLE doing this? Because he wants to make the healthcare decisions for the women of our military. He wants to decide that. The military shouldn't decide it. The country shouldn't decide it. The women shouldn't decide it. He wants to make that decision. What arrogance.

He is threatening to permanently inject politics into the confirmation of routine military promotions so he can

push the MAGA hardline on blocking women's choice.

This is the MAGA hard right in a nutshell: Eliminate women's choice at all costs, even at the cost of our national defense.

I urge my colleagues sincerely, passionately, as passionately as he is, maybe even more so, to drop his hold, and I will certainly oppose this measure later today.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we are 2 years into the latest chapter of Washington Democrats' war against our own domestic energy. America spent decades working toward affordable, reliable energy independence, and Democrats have tried to reverse it all, turned it all around: less exploration for American oil and gas, more dependence on immoral Chinese supply chains. Even as the left wants Big Government to gamble our whole grid on less reliable new technologies, they don't even want to let us mine here in America on our own soil for the rare earth minerals those technologies actually require.

The Democrats have fundamentally misunderstood both the economics and the geopolitics of American energy. So the result is going to be fewer jobs for our workers, bigger bills for our families, less security for our country, and more vulnerability to foreign actors who don't like us.

Just last week, the Biden EPA announced it will try to slap a radical and unprecedented new mandate on our country regarding electric vehicles. The same people who can't handle inflation and can't secure our border want to stick their noses into Americans' garages and our driveways. The administration's radical plan would cut down the marketplace of affordable and reliable vehicles that most Americans actually want to drive. It would massively increase demand on already highly taxed electrical grids with no workable plan to grow capacity, and it would force rich liberals' lifestyle choices onto the whole country.

Good luck—good luck farmers, ranchers, rural Americans. California wants to dictate what you drive. See, California is the proving ground for these bad ideas. They have already set their own punitive targets for electric vehicle sales, and—surprise—the math actually doesn't work. At the same time Governor Newsom is mandating his citizens buy electric vehicles, he is telling people not to plug them in—don't plug them in—for fear of blackouts.

California expects to see 15 times more electric vehicles on the roads and on their electrical grid by 2035—the same California that already had to spend last summer begging citizens to turn down their air-conditioning be-

cause their grid can barely survive as it is right now.

Democrats want less American energy, less production, and, of course, less reliability. Republicans want more, more, and more—more production, more independence, more affordability, and more security.

The House Republican majority's landmark H.R. 1 goes right at this very issue. It would be a huge shot in the arm for American energy. But here in the Senate, the Democratic leader controls the floor, and he has declared the bill "dead on arrival"—dead on arrival here in the Senate.

It is the clearest possible contrast. Republicans are fighting for cheaper and more reliable power, stronger supply chains, and a stronger America on the world stage; and Democrats, they are actually fighting us.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

28-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we remember, at 9:02 a.m. on April 19, 1995, 168 people were tragically murdered in the worst act of homegrown domestic violence and terrorism in our Nation's history. That was in Oklahoma City.

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City destroyed nine floors, where they collapsed in on each other. The physical impact to the building and of the bombing itself was felt 55 miles away, and the force of the blast damaged 324 surrounding buildings.

The emotional impact was felt around the world as, literally, the world stopped and stared at their televisions 28 years ago today, and the Nation felt the pain of those who were killed and of the survivors and of the family members who remained.

The victims included 19 children, many who attended the daycare in the building called America's Kids. A total of 219 children lost a parent that day, and 30 children were orphaned that day. It is estimated that 360,000 Oklahomans knew someone personally who worked in the Murrah Building.

The 16-day rescue-and-recovery effort took a toll on our first responders and our family members who held onto hope that their loved one was still alive. The events of April 19, 1995, changed my State and changed our country forever. There are incredible stories about survivors of the bombings who helped their coworkers escape the rubble and exit the building to safety.

In the midst of immense grief, we introduced what we now know as the Oklahoma Standard: the way Oklahomans immediately stepped forward to

offer help, showed compassion to their neighbors in pain, donated blood, donated even their shoes that day to rescue workers and other individuals who needed help. Out of the terrible tragedy was demonstrated tremendous love.

By 3:30 p.m. on April 19, 1995, a family assistance center called the Compassion Center was set up at the First Christian Church in downtown Oklahoma City. The center was supported by the American Red Cross, hundreds of local clergy, chaplains, and mental health professionals.

Donations for victims and rescue workers poured in from fellow Oklahomans and Americans. Fourteen million dollars was donated to the Oklahoma City Disaster Relief Fund, and the Oklahoma Legislature created the Murrah Fund that pooled public and private dollars to assist victims with lost wages, grief counseling, funerals, and burial costs.

There is a lot to be said about the aftermath of the Alfred P. Murrah bombing. One notable piece that is often overlooked is the remarkable work of law enforcement that day.

See, law enforcement was called in from all over to able to assist, but one State trooper who was responding to it was actually turned around and was told to "stay in your area. We do need to keep coverage across the State." So this State trooper, Charlie Hanger, stayed in his area way north of Oklahoma City on I-35.

On that day, in his normal duties that he was doing, he saw a yellow Mercury that had no license tag on it, and he pulled them over. He was just doing his job. The person he pulled over was the person who had actually committed the murders. Just a great cop doing his job.

The FBI came in from all over the country to come help. U.S. attorneys came to be able to help. Employees helped the FBI put together a drawing of the person. When they found out the truck that was actually used for the bombing was rented, they helped develop this, as the FBI worked, and they figured out that the person Charlie Hanger had pulled over was actually the person they were looking for at the same time and were able to speedily make an arrest.

My city and my State are very grateful to the FBI for the work they did that day, local law enforcement, U.S. attorneys, first responders, everyday Oklahomans who literally ran toward that moment, some staying literally for weeks and months going through the debris. You can't imagine the pain and the difficulty of digging through rubble and identifying people. What those first responders did and what those individuals who stayed on the pile did will never be forgotten by our State.

One resounding message from the survivors of the Oklahoma City bombing is that life can be forever altered in a single moment. Oklahomans who lost their lives that day simply woke up,

went to work, dropped off their child at America's Kids daycare, thinking they would all come home that night.

There is a lot we can learn from those events. It reminds us that time with our family and loved ones is precious and should never be taken for granted. But we should also remember that the Oklahoma City bombing was driven by anti-American hatred. Single individuals with misguided government beliefs and hatred for people in government literally drove a truck bomb in front of a building full of people serving their Nation that day in a Federal building and chose to kill them just because of their hatred for government.

We can never allow our Nation to rise up with that kind of anger and hatred against fellow Americans. We are a nation that has disagreements, and we solve those by talking to each other as fellow Americans.

The Oklahoma City bombing memorial museum, which sits next to the memorial itself, continues to tell the story every single day, as they are today, of what it means to be able to have one person talking to another person to solve our problems and to work out our differences.

On the 28th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, we still feel the sharp pain and loss in Oklahoma. While some in the Nation look back on it and think that was a long time ago, we remember.

We thank the first responders and the law enforcement officers for their invaluable service. We remember the lives of the victims lost, and we continue to pray for their families and for the survivors who are still gathering together just to check on each other as families. Most importantly, we will continue to tell the story of what happens when rage and hatred for fellow Americans spill over into the destruction of life. We remember.

And I would ask this body to do what we are doing in Oklahoma City today. We are pausing for 168 seconds to remember the 168 victims whom we lost that day. So would this body pause with me for 168 seconds?

(Moment of silence.)

Today, we honor those who were killed, those who survived, and those who were changed forever.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, late on the night of November 2, 2012, Theodore Wafer was woken up by a loud sound. Somebody was knocking on his door—pounding on his door. He looked for his phone to call the police but couldn't find it. So, instead, he picked up his shotgun and went to the door. He saw on the other side a figure. He thought the person, maybe, was trying to break into his house, and so he fired a shotgun blast through the screen door to his porch.

A couple of hours before that, Renisha McBride had gotten into a car

accident not far away from Theodore Wafer's house. She was intoxicated. She was disoriented after the crash. She wandered around the neighborhood, late at night, looking for help. She couldn't find any, and she found herself knocking on the door of Mr. Wafer's home, looking for assistance. The shotgun blast hit her in the face, and she died.

Jordan Davis was in Jacksonville, FL, a teenager out with his friends. They pulled into a gas station. As a lot of teenagers do, they were playing loud music. Michael Dunn was at the gas station as well. He didn't like the fact that the teenagers were playing their music too loud. He asked them to turn it down. There was an argument that took place. Michael Dunn said: I am not going to let anybody talk to me like that. And he pulled a handgun out of the glove compartment of his car, and he started shooting at Jordan Davis and his friends. Jordan Davis died as his friends sped away, trying to get away from the killing scene. Michael Dunn continued to shoot at the fleeing car.

His girlfriend came out of the convenience store. She didn't know what had happened. Michael Dunn didn't tell her. They went to the hotel they were staying in, and they ordered a pizza. That happened 1 year before the death of Renisha McBride.

This week, this country is convulsed by a series of horrific shootings where mistakes and minor slights are being met by gunfire. You know these stories by now. Ralph Yarl, 16 years old, went to go pick up his siblings, went to the wrong house, and Andrew Lester fired at him. Ralph Yarl is now clinging for life right now.

Kaylin Gillis, 20 years old, and her friend pulled into the wrong driveway—just pulled into the wrong driveway—and Kevin Monahan fired his gun at them, killing Kaylin Gillis.

And, just this morning, we are hearing news of another stunningly similar incident in Austin, TX, where a cheerleader, by accident, got into the wrong car after cheerleading practice and apparently that slight was so serious that the man in the car fired a gun at this cheerleader and her friend. One of those young women is critically injured.

My friends, there is a toxic mixture in this country today of hate, of anger, and a population that is increasingly armed to the teeth with deadly weapons, many of them with no training, many of them with criminal records. This mixture is leading to our neighborhoods becoming a killing field. Minor slights and indiscretions, small arguments, even simple wrong turns are becoming potentially deadly.

We are becoming a heavily armed nation, so fearful and angry and hair-trigger anxious that gun murders are now just the way in which we work out our frustrations.

This is a dystopia. I am here to tell you that it is a dystopia that we have chosen for ourselves.

And before I challenge my colleagues to do better, I just want to tell you a quick short story of how we got here, because this combination of anger and fear and guns is actually not new. It is worse now. Our rage is bigger. The number of guns on the street today is dizzying compared to just a few decades ago. But I have to be honest with you. The underlying problem of this combination is actually not new.

In our early years, after our founding, America actually wasn't a fundamentally more violent place than our European neighbors. But a few things happened, about 50 years into the American story, that set America on a very different course—a course that, beginning in about 1840, made America an outlier of global violence, and we have never come back down to Earth.

I think it is just interesting to sort of talk for a minute about those three things because they are relevant to today's discussion.

First is the creation of America as a true melting pot. Waves of immigrants came to America beginning in the early to mid-1800s, looking for jobs and living space and partners. The competition amongst those groups, combined with demagogues and provocateurs who would pry on this friction, became explosive. People began to think that they needed to be suspicious of people who were different from them—a different race or ethnicity or religion. And, over time, if you look at American history, it is when these big waves of new immigration come to this country that we tend to have spikes in violence because those demagogues or those provocateurs tell us that we should be fearful of each other, and, all of a sudden, violence increases.

The second thing that happens in that period of time is the invention of the cotton gin. Why is that important? America was a slave nation at our founding. In 1800, we only had about 850,000 slaves. The cotton gin explodes the need for slaves. In 40 years, we go from 850,000 slaves to 2.4 million slaves, and the amount of violence that is necessary to keep that number of people in bondage is extraordinary. And the country—you can imagine this—just becomes anesthetized to violence. So, all of a sudden, violence rates go up amongst all Americans—not just White-on-Black violence, but White-on-White violence goes up, because violence is part of how we keep our economy running.

Then, third, in the same period of time, the early to mid-1800s, we see the invention of the modern mass-produced handgun. The cotton gin is a Connecticut invention, and so is the modern mass-produced handgun.

Now, other nations figured out how dangerous this was—the ability to slip into your coat pocket the means of lethal violence. Other nations decided to regulate the access that their citizens had to this instrument, but not in the United States.

So, quickly, shortly after the explosion of access to the handgun, violence rates began to increase. And given this history I talked about prior—our history of racial and ethnic violence—the decision not to regulate handgun access in any meaningful form was kind of like throwing gasoline on this raging fire.

I am saying all of this because we have known for 200 years that this combination of violence between ethnic groups, violence as a means of subjugation, all supercharged by unlimited access to guns, is a uniquely American problem.

Throughout our history—and this is the most important part—we have assiduously and purposefully, as a nation, tried to turn the dials of laws and norms and customs to have less hatred; to have less animosity toward each other; to have less oppression and less access to guns, at least for people who shouldn't have them.

It is not a coincidence that the rates of violence in this Nation spike when we have waves of new immigrants, but then it settles out; it flattens. It often decreases as time goes on, and we learn how to live with each other. We change our norms and our customs. It is also not a coincidence that the biggest drops in lethal violence in this country tend to happen right after we make major adjustments to our Nation's firearms laws.

What I am saying is that America is definitely set up to be a place more violent than other nations. We shouldn't expect that we are going to, with any set of changes, become as violent as European or Asian countries.

But it doesn't have to be like this. Cheerleaders don't need to be shot when they walk into the wrong car. Teenagers don't need to be murdered because their music is too loud. Kids shouldn't fear for their life when they go to school or when they pick up their siblings from a house in the neighborhood. We can do better. We can adjust the dials in order to decide not to live in this dystopia.

Everybody here knows what I feel about American gun laws. I am not going to litigate that question again here today. I think we can do better. I think we can just make it a little bit harder for irresponsible people, people with criminal records, people with serious mental illness to get their hands on deadly weapons.

I want universal background checks. I want bans on the weapons that were designed for the military. But we also need to have a more apolitical discussion about the level of fear and hatred and mistrust in our society today that puts so many people on the edge, ready to fire a gun at somebody over the smallest threat or insult. There is just a collective anxiety in this country that we need to deal with and, frankly, doesn't require us to have debates that fall on easy political or partisan lines.

Everybody in this body has an obligation to take steps so that today's

demagogues and provocateurs—the same ones that convinced people in the 1840s that they should be fearful of new immigrants—have less air time and less influence. We shouldn't elevate political leaders who lead with messages of hate and division. That is part of what is driving America to fear everybody, to fear their neighbors.

But we should also pass laws that incentivize our national dialogue to just be kinder and less hateful. Social media companies are making money off of hate and polarization, and we don't need to accept this. Holding them accountable for the ways that they have pit us against each other, that is not an impossible task and, frankly, not one we necessarily need to fight about along partisan lines.

I will leave you with this. We also just need to ask some deeper questions about why people in America are just so unhappy and so alone that they would resort to violence this regularly and this casually.

A detective in Bridgeport, CT, told me the other day he barely ever responds to fistfights any longer. Everything, every beef ends up in gunfire.

We have lost so many pathways in this country to positive meaning and positive identity and fulfilling connection to each other. People have less opportunity today to build healthy, economically secure, and personally fulfilling lives. We need to talk about why this is and what government can do to spiritually jump-start this Nation. It is not all about the gun laws. I think the gun laws should change, but there is also an anxiety of fearfulness in this Nation that we can have a collective conversation about.

I get it. It is a big, huge, weighty conversation, but something stinks out there right now. We shouldn't accept this shoot-first culture—at kids, at cheerleaders, at students, at people shopping at grocery stores—as our new reality. It is a choice.

America has always been a more violent place. That is true. But the degree of that violence has always been up to us. We have always had dials that we can turn. We should realize this, and we should do something about it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Republican whip.

TIKTOK

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, there has been a lot of discussion lately, here in Congress, about the national security concerns posed by TikTok, whose parent company is Chinese-owned ByteDance.

Chinese law requires social media technology companies to provide information, including individually identifiable personal information, to the Chinese Government, when asked.

This obviously has implications for Americans' personal security and privacy and raises troubling questions about how the Chinese Communist Party could use TikTok for its own ends, whether that is using personal

data to develop sources for espionage or manipulating content to advance the Communist Party's agenda. The Director of the CIA, the FBI Director, and the Director of National Intelligence have all outlined national security concerns with TikTok, and Members of Congress are currently discussing various ways of addressing these concerns.

In March, Senator MARK WARNER, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and I introduced bipartisan legislation called the Restricting the Emergence of Security Threats that Risk Information and Communications Technology Act—or the RESTRICT Act, the acronym—to address the national security concerns posed not just by TikTok but by other technologies from foreign adversary countries.

I am pleased that our bill, which is cosponsored by a full quarter of the U.S. Senate, has received a lot of attention in the media, attention that I hope will ensure our legislation receives a full hearing in the Commerce Committee and a vote on the Senate floor, but along with the attention our bill has received has come a lot of misrepresentation about the bill's content. And I want to take just a moment today to set the record straight on some misconceptions about the RESTRICT Act.

First of all, many critics of the bill seem to be unaware of the fact that the bill is closely modeled after a 2019 Executive order by President Trump as well as a subsequent rule by the Trump Commerce Department. So I wanted to underscore that the RESTRICT Act seeks to codify a policy that was put in place by President Trump. Unlike some of the other TikTok bills out there, our bill is not exclusively focused on TikTok and would instead create a framework for reviewing not only TikTok but any technology from a foreign adversary nation that poses an undue national security risk.

This has led to some claims that our bill is too broad or gives the Federal Government too much power, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Our bill is, in fact, narrowly tailored, and it is designed not to expand the Federal Government's power but to update authorities the Federal Government already has to account for the digital age.

Both Democrat and Republican administrations have taken Executive action to counter the threat posed by technology from foreign adversary countries, but they have been limited by the fact that current law was written before the age of the internet and is not always easily applied to digital threats.

Our legislation, which, again, codifies an Executive order issued by President Trump as well as a subsequent rule by the Trump Commerce Department, would fill in the gaps in current law and ensure that it is possible to address not just traditional risks from foreign-owned companies but the specific

threats posed by foreign-owned digital technology.

I imagine some claims that our bill is too broad have arisen because our bill is not limited to TikTok, but there is a reason for that. First, there is reason to believe that legislation targeted solely at TikTok would be overturned by the courts because of the Constitution's prohibition on bills of attainder. Second, our bill would apply a way to address more than just TikTok because this is not the first time technology from a hostile nation has posed a serious national security concern, and it probably won't be the last.

Before there was TikTok, we had to engage in a protracted effort to remove technology from Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE from our telecommunications networks—after U.S. security officials raised concerns that much of Huawei and ZTE's equipment was built with backdoors, giving the Chinese Communist Party access to global communications networks.

And before Huawei and ZTE, there was Russia's Kaspersky, which threatened the security of government-owned digital devices, and that is just looking backward in time.

Looking forward, we are also confronting risky platforms like WeChat, a Chinese app that has 19 million users in the United States. By many accounts, WeChat is even worse than TikTok in terms of the Chinese Communist Party being able to steal data, censor information, and propagandize Americans.

No other bipartisan bill introduced in Congress does anything to address the risks posed by this platform or other dangerous apps or technologies. Only the RESTRICT Act contains the necessary authorities for the Federal Government to do something about not only TikTok but other technologies that present a potential national security risk.

Instead of trying to play catchup and find a way to individually address each threat after it emerges, as has happened in the past, we need a process in place to provide for an orderly and transparent review of technologies from foreign adversary countries, and that is what our bill would provide.

Under our bill, the Department of Commerce, in both Republican and Democrat administrations, would review any information and communications technology product from a foreign adversary company that is deemed to present a potential security threat, with an emphasis on products used in critical telecommunications infrastructure or with serious national security implications.

And the Secretary of Commerce would be required to develop a range of measures to mitigate the danger posed by these products, up to and including a ban on the product in question.

Importantly, our bill would ensure transparency by requiring the Commerce Secretary to coordinate with the Director of National Intelligence to

provide declassified information on why any measure against technology products from foreign adversary countries were taken.

I have mentioned that our bill is narrowly tailored. That is true about the process created by the bill, which is designed not to expand government but to fill a hole in current law. But it is true about the countries whose technology is targeted for review by this bill.

The RESTRICT Act would provide for the review of technology from just six foreign adversary countries: China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba. The Secretary of Commerce would be allowed to add countries to this list if it became necessary, but Congress would have the authority to reject any addition.

And contrary to claims that the act would exclude judicial review, the RESTRICT Act specifically provides that any challenges to the act be considered at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Other charges that have been leveled against the RESTRICT Act are about the impact the bill would supposedly have on individual Americans. Opponents of the bill have suggested that the RESTRICT Act would somehow infringe on Americans' First Amendment rights or target individual Americans. Again, nothing could be further from the truth.

The RESTRICT Act would do nothing—nothing—to restrict the content Americans can post online. Now, let me just repeat that because this is very important: The RESTRICT Act would do nothing to restrict the content Americans can post online.

If the RESTRICT Act becomes law, Americans will be free to post exactly the same online content that they are posting right now. Nothing in the bill would in any way censor what Americans can put on the internet. And the bill would not allow the Federal Government to surveil Americans' online content or give the government authority to access any American's personal communications device.

Nor would the bill target individual Americans in any way. No individual user would be prosecuted for using something like a private VPN network to get around a potential ban on an entity like TikTok. This legislation would simply allow for the possibility of banning certain technologies from foreign adversary countries that pose a threat to national security.

And the only entities that would possibly be subject to prosecution under this legislation would be companies that deliberately violated a prohibition on technologies that had been determined to be dangerous enough to trigger a ban.

The digital age has provided us with enormous benefits, but inevitably it has also come with its own unique risks and threats—not least the risk of a hostile foreign government exploiting communications technology for nefarious purposes.

And those threats increase substantially when we are talking about technology produced by companies in hostile nations and affiliated with hostile governments.

We need a process to address those threats, a narrowly targeted way to mitigate the dangers of digital technologies from foreign adversary countries while protecting the rights and liberties of American citizens.

That is exactly what the RESTRICT Act would provide. I am proud of the legislation that we have developed, and I look forward to working with colleagues of both parties to further improve this legislation and advance it here in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I am here to talk about the Fire Grants and Safety Act.

I do appreciate the words of my colleague. It was good to hear his concerns, and I think we all share concerns about Americans being spied on and their data.

I also note that as we look at dealing with platforms and social media and the like at the same time we pursue this, we must pursue the bills that have been out there for well over a year now and passed through the Judiciary Committee last year and will do so again. And those are bills related to monopoly power; bills related to the incredible imbalance in power with two of the platforms, Google and Facebook, when it comes to dealing with small newspapers and radio stations and TV and their content, a bill that was nearly passed at the end of last year; another bill that Senator GRASSLEY and I have that speaks to the fact that other countries in the world are now putting forth regulations and rules about self-preferencing and the unfairness to our small businesses; and then, of course, other bills, some of which are in the Commerce Committee, on privacy and children's issues and the like.

All of these bills must be considered on this floor because, as noted by my colleague, we have not passed any rules when it comes to not only the issues he was addressing but also when it comes to a competition tech policy since the advent of the internet.

I think we know a lot more than we knew when Facebook was in a garage. We know a lot more, and it is time for us to get up to speed and to actually pass some rules and stop talking about it.

S. 870

So I rise today in support of the Fire Grants and Safety Act. I would like to thank Senators PETERS, COLLINS, CARPER, and MURKOWSKI for their leadership. Our communities are strongest and safest when local fire departments have the funding that they need to hire firefighters and pay for equipment.

We all know that firefighters do lifesaving work. They are there for us during house fires, car crashes, medical

emergencies, and so much more, and I am committed to being there for them.

Over the past several months, I have visited fire halls across my State. I have heard from local departments in both cities and rural communities about how important the Assistance for Firefighters Grant and the SAFER Grant Programs are to them.

That is why we must pass the bipartisan Fire Grants and Safety Act to ensure that we continue providing Federal funding for these critical programs.

Local fire departments in Minnesota and across the country rely on these programs to invest in training and purchasing critically needed equipment. I have seen some of these firetrucks in small communities, like in Houston, MN, firetrucks that are outdated, things that need to be changed. Fires burn just as strong and are just as dangerous in small rural communities as they are in a big city. Yet they don't have the equipment that some of the larger communities have.

We also must support fire departments' efforts to hire and retain trained firefighters so they can keep our communities safe. Because of a SAFER grant, for instance, the Minneapolis Fire Department was able to hire 15 additional firefighters, which means an additional 5 firefighters on every shift, and it helped the department to reduce reliance on overtime shifts, which in the end saves money.

Thanks to another of these grants, Bloomington, MN—the home of the Mall of America for those listening today who are looking for a great place to visit—which has been facing a serious shortage of staff in the fire department there, was able to add 18 full-time firefighters and will now have firetrucks available 24 hours a day. That is one of the biggest cities in my State.

As a result of an assistance for firefighters grant, the Duluth Fire Department sent 40 firefighters to a training program to reduce emergency response time and increase safety for firefighters. And let me tell you, in Duluth, they don't just fight fires; they have people stranded on icefloes in the middle of Lake Superior.

They have all kinds of disasters that maybe some of our warmer States do not experience that they must respond to each and every day, including how to get to fire hydrants when they are surrounded by six feet of snow. In the town of Proctor, which has a population of just over 3,100, because of one of these grants, the local fire department there was able to purchase 20 air packs, including five with thermal imaging cameras, and get a new set of cutting-edge rescue tools. I think many of my colleagues have similar stories about how important these resources are to fire departments.

One of the things that I learned in my last few years of visiting with our firefighters and chiefs is that, in fact, one of the major problems facing them

is not always discussed. And that is similar to what so many of our veterans have faced when they were stationed next to burn pits, and that is what is happening with a number of our firefighters getting cancer and, sadly, perishing from cancer at very young ages.

Cancer is the leading cause of death among firefighters. Firefighters can be exposed to hundreds of potential carcinogens when responding to fires. It is only right that we treat cancer caused by on-the-job exposure the same way we treat other physical injuries.

Two solutions here: One is, with these fire grants, helping, especially, smaller departments that didn't have them to get up-to-date washing machines, up-to-date dryers that do a much better job and quicker job in terms of cleaning off this equipment, because the stuff that is burning in these buildings—just as what has happened with our veterans—that wasn't being burnt 20, 30, 50, 100 years ago. We know that is what part of the problem is.

The second is to make sure we take care of them, not just in our words as well as speaking from the Senate floor, but in what we actually do to have the backs of their families. To truly do right by our firefighters, we have to look out for those who tragically get cancer as a result of their service. That is why Senator KEVIN CRAMER of North Dakota and I have joined forces and introduced a bill to do just that. This, for me, goes back to 2018, when I championed the bill to create a national firefighter cancer registry, along with Senator MENENDEZ and others.

Senator CRAMER's and my bill is called Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act, and it would make sure that firefighters who become disabled or die from cancer as a result of their service get the benefits that they deserve.

We must make sure that our firefighters have everything they need to do their job. It is the least we can do for our heroes who sacrifice so much to keep us safe.

I am excited to support this bill, and I see Senator PETERS is here and has been such a great leader on this issue.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall vote on my amendment No. 79.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 79

Mr. PAUL. Firefighting and emergency medical services are some of the most important and most inherently local services that people rely on. The men and women who show up when the call for help goes out are everyday heroes in communities across America.

City governments have predominantly decided to provide fire services at taxpayer expense with local taxes,

while in rural areas, volunteer fire departments are still prevalent. Many localities have decided to provide medical services as well. Although hospitals still are the primary EMS providers in a lot of locations, private companies are playing an increasing role in this space as well. But no matter who provides the services—government employees, volunteers, or private entities, these are local needs best met by local providers and best paid for with local taxes.

For the first 225 years of our country's history, this is just what happened, until 2000, when the Federal Government had its first budget surplus in almost 50 years—a surplus that disappeared the very next year, by the way. Congress, in the year 2000, decided to spend a bit of that surplus to create a new subsidy for local firefighters.

This first year, the program was authorized at a total of \$110 million for government and volunteer fire departments; however, the bill before us today now authorizes \$2.3 billion per year for these subsidies. That's right, in the 30 years for this program, Federal subsidies for these important, but inherently local, programs have increased 18-fold.

In that same time, our government has gone from an annual surplus of about \$86 billion to perpetual deficits of over \$1 trillion a year. The national debt has grown from less than \$6 trillion to over \$32 trillion.

Despite the reality of our fiscal condition, this bill makes no reforms. It doesn't limit the grants to departments that can't raise money on their own. It doesn't ask local governments to invest more of their own funds. The only thing this bill accomplishes, really, is to increase spending by 25 percent.

The unsustainable increases in spending with no attempt to rein-in future costs or make offsetting cuts elsewhere in the budget is concerning. I am glad to see we have an amendment, though, to pay for the bill by reallocating unspent COVID funds that are still in existence and haven't already been allocated and could be used for this program. So we will have an amendment to pay for this program. We will see if anyone on the other side is actually interested in paying for a program.

The other major problem with this bill is it rewards governments—local governments that chose to trample on the freedom of firefighters and medics to speak their own minds and make their own medical decisions. One purpose of the grant in this bill is to increase staffing for fire departments. Over the last few years, even as these grants were awarded, firefighters around the country found themselves with a choice: submit to COVID vaccine mandates or lose your livelihood.

This was no idle threat. In New York, L.A., and Seattle, among other places, firefighters lost their jobs simply because they insisted upon living according to their own conscience.

One of those firefighters who was terminated is Joseph Kimball, who served in Salt River, AZ, and has six children. His wife is a stay-at-home mom, but this didn't stop local officials from firing him for not getting a COVID vaccine.

It seems bizarre and contradictory to provide financial support to increase fire department staffing to departments that are firing people for not being vaccinated—firefighters that were trained and effective and there was no good reason to fire them, particularly when we had shortages of firefighters as reported throughout the country.

Firefighters tend to be young and fit. They are the very people who have the least to worry about with COVID-19. They also tend to be male, and young males are the group most likely to suffer from the vaccine-related injury of myocarditis. Firemen and EMTs who chose not to be vaccinated were never a threat to anyone, never a threat to their communities. On the contrary, these firefighters served their communities bravely and made their neighbors safe. They served throughout an entire year when there was no vaccine. Many of these firefighters contracted COVID and have naturally acquired immunity.

What was being done to them? What was done to them through firing them for making their own medical decisions, what was done to the police and to doctors and to nurses, what was done to first responders was shameful. And we should stand together to make sure it never happens again.

To that end, I offer an amendment that will restore sanity and compassion to this government program. My amendment would make grants provided for by this bill unavailable to fire departments that dismissed firefighters for not getting a vaccine. This would bring some sense of justice to this program. And fire departments would only be eligible for these grants if they reinstated the firefighters. So this amendment would actually serve to allow some of the firefighters that were unfairly dismissed to get their jobs back.

It turns out—and we all know this now—the vaccine didn't protect anybody from getting infected. It showed some efficacy of increasing your immunity to resist infection, but there was never any medical reason to mandate people to be vaccinated. And no one ever offered to these firefighters: Well, you can be tested. If you have had COVID and we know you have immunity, you don't have to be vaccinated. There was never any alternatives. Many of them weren't even given religious or philosophical or medical alternatives to being forced to be vaccinated.

So if you want to support firefighters, if you want to support your communities, if you want to support safety, you should support my amendment that says that fire departments

are eligible only if they reinstate the firefighters they unfairly dismissed.

Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 79 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. PAUL] proposes an amendment numbered 79.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ PROHIBITION ON AWARD OF FEDERAL FUNDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A fire service shall be ineligible to receive any Federal funds made available under this Act and the amendments made by this Act if the fire service dismissed or discharged from employment any individual based solely on—

(1) the failure of the individual to obey an order to receive a vaccine for COVID-19; or

(2) the exercise by the individual of any rights protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States to speak against the implementation of any mandate to receive a vaccine for COVID-19.

(b) EXCEPTION.—The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply if the fire service has offered reinstatement to all individuals dismissed or discharged based solely on a reason described in paragraph (1) or (2) of that subsection to the position and rank held by the individual on the date of the dismissal or discharge with full back pay calculated from the date of the dismissal or discharge.

(c) FIRE SERVICE DEFINED.—The term "fire service" has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2203).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, firefighters are on the front lines of safeguarding our communities, often providing emergency care and interacting with high-risk populations. Firefighters themselves may also be at risk of COVID-19 infections. Vaccines are the safest and most effective way to make sure an individual doesn't get severely ill or spread COVID-19 to others.

This amendment would interfere with State and local governments' ability to determine health policies for their own employees and how to best keep their communities safe. This amendment would also require FEMA to evaluate local and State government vaccination policies—something well beyond the scope and responsibility to determine eligibility for grants.

I would urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment to ensure that local communities can continue counting on these resources that these programs provide.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. There is a longstanding tradition in our country when we disperse Federal money to localities to have rules. We don't let you discriminate based on your sex or race or ethnicity. We also should not let localities discriminate against people who refuse to be vaccinated, particularly people who have already had COVID.

There is no science behind saying you need to be vaccinated if you already had it. In fact, the studies show this: They show that if had you had the disease you are 57 times less likely to contract it again, whereas the vaccine makes you about 19 times less. So infection does work and it should be part of the criteria, and we should restrict funds to any agency that fired people unfairly for not getting a vaccine.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 79

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN, is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 88 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Barrasso	Fischer	Mullin
Blackburn	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Ricketts
Braun	Hagerty	Risch
Britt	Hawley	Rubio
Budd	Hoeven	Schmitt
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Cramer	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Vance
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young

NAYS—54

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Romney
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rounds
Booker	Kelly	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Lujan	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Sinema
Casey	Markey	Smith
Collins	Menendez	Stabenow
Coons	Merkley	Tester
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warnock
Fetterman	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Welch
Hassan	Peters	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Reed	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Feinstein

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 45 and the nays are 54.

The amendment (No. 79) is rejected.

The Senator from Tennessee.

AMENDMENT NO. 72, AS MODIFIED

Mr. HAGERTY. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 72, as modified, and ask that it be reported by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Tennessee [Mr. HAGERTY] proposes an amendment numbered 72, as modified.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER PROGRAM REORGANIZATION.

(a) EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER PROGRAM NATIONAL BOARD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 301 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11331) is amended—

(A) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) MEMBERS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The National Board shall consist of—

“(A) the Director;

“(B) 2 members appointed by the Director in accordance with paragraph (2);

“(C) 1 member appointed by the Secretary of Homeland Security;

“(D) 1 member appointed by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;

“(E) 1 member appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture; and

“(F) 1 member appointed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

“(2) APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—In appointing the members described in paragraph (1)(B), the Director shall select from applications of individuals seeking to serve as a member on the National Board.

“(B) CRITERIA.—In selecting applications of individuals under subparagraph (A), the Director shall select the 2 most qualified individuals who—

“(i) have not less than 10 years of experience working on public policy relating to housing and homelessness; and

“(ii) are not from the same geographic region of the United States.

“(3) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—An individual may not serve as a member of the National Board if, during the 5-year period preceding the first day of service on the National Board, the individual was an employee of an organization, or an affiliate of an organization, that, during the preceding 5 fiscal years, received funding under this title.

“(4) REVOLVING DOOR.—During the 2-year period following the final day of service of an individual as a member of the National Board, the individual may not serve as an employee of an organization, or an affiliate of an organization, that, during a fiscal year during which the individual served as a member of the National Board, received funding under this title.

“(5) TERM LIMIT.—An individual may not serve as a member of the National Board for a period of more than 2 years.”; and

(B) by striking subsection (e).

(2) CURRENT NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS.—With respect to an individual serving as a member of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program National Board established under section 301 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11331) as of the date of enactment of this Act, for the purpose of section 301(b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of that Act, as amended by this Act, the individual shall be deemed to have begun service on the Board on the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) LOCAL BOARDS.—Section 302 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11332) is amended by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each locality designated by the National Board shall constitute a local board for the purpose of determining how program funds allotted to the locality will be distributed. The local board shall consist, to the extent practicable, of—

“(A) agencies of State and local governments that serve functions similar to the functions of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agri-

culture, and the Office of Management and Budget;

“(B) the mayor or other appropriate heads of government; and

“(C) representatives of nonprofit organizations that aid individuals and families who are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, hunger or homelessness.

“(2) PROGRAM FUNDS FOR RESERVATIONS.—Each local board administering program funds for a locality within which is located a reservation (as such term is defined in section 3 of the Indian Financing Act of 1974 (25 U.S.C. 1452), or a portion thereof, shall include a board member who is a member of an Indian tribe (as such term is defined in section 102(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302(a)). The chairperson of the local board shall be elected by a majority of the members of the local board. Local boards are encouraged to expand participation of other private nonprofit organizations on the local board.”.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are now 2 minutes of debate, equally divided.

Mr. HAGERTY. Mr. President, in the last fiscal year alone, appropriations to FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program have increased by more than 5 times, totaling approximately \$1 billion in the last 2 years alone. Currently, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars appropriated to this program are doled out annually by a national board comprised of the very same organizations that receive those funds. This amendment in no way impugns the integrity of the organizations involved. Rather, it helps them avoid the reputational risks that can occur when the pitcher is also the umpire.

My amendment is simple and common sense. It will restructure the Emergency Food and Shelter Program to ensure that the individuals sitting on that board do not have this obvious conflict of interest. Instead, the national board composition would be shifted to include qualified individuals who do not work for the organizations that seek funding from the board.

At a minimum, Congress must resolve this blatant conflict of interest within the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, especially given its dramatic increase in funding in recent years. That is what this amendment does.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, this amendment is intended to make changes to an entirely unrelated program that is completely outside of the scope of this bill. The Emergency Food and Shelter Program is an important resource that provides aid to those who are at risk of experiencing hunger. And any changes certainly must be thoroughly considered. And I look forward to having an opportunity to work with a sponsor on this amendment in some other manner. However, the bill before us extends programs that firefighters are counting on to purchase lifesaving equipment or receive important cancer screenings. We should not jeopardize

the enactment of this incredibly important bill by putting in completely unrelated matters.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 72, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. HAGERTY. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 89 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Graham	Ricketts
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Braun	Hagerty	Romney
Britt	Hoeben	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Vance
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Young

NAYS—54

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rounds
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Lujan	Sinema
Casey	Manchin	Smith
Collins	Markey	Stabenow
Coons	Menendez	Tester
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hawley	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Feinstein

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). On this vote, the yeas are 45, the nays are 54.

Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this amendment, the amendment is not agreed to.

The amendment (No. 72) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RELATING TO “REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES”—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 35, S.J. Res. 10.