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No. 10

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, January 20, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2025

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

LAKEN RILEY ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 5, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune (for Ernst/Grassley) amendment No. 8, to include crimes resulting in death or serious bodily injury to the list of offenses that, if committed by an inadmissible alien, require mandatory detention.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I will speak for a couple minutes in morning business.

I am an advocate, through the farm program, of having an absolute limit on the amount of money that one farmer can get from the farm program so that we target toward medium- and small-sized farmers so we don't subsidize very big farmers to get bigger. I got such a legislation through the House and the Senate in previous Congresses, and, would you believe it, even though it was exactly the same language in both Houses and that isn't supposed to be touched by the conferees, the conferees diluted it to not a very meaningful limit.

Well, I am still concerned about limits. So today, I come to the floor to say, as one of its last official acts, the Biden Department of Agriculture de-

cided to disregard the wishes of Congress by using its authority under section 5 of the Commodity Credit Corporation's charter to increase payment limits for specialty crop farmers from \$125,000 to \$900,000 under the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops Program.

This increase cost American taxpayers over \$650 million without a vote of the Congress. Had this been the desire of Congress, it would have been included in the continuing resolution passed just weeks before.

Article I of the Constitution is very clear. Congress has the power of the purse. It is time that we stop the abuse of that power by the executive branch, whether that is Republican or Democrat.

So getting back to what I said when I opened my remarks. I am going to be pursuing in the 5-year farm bill, this year, that same cap on what one family farmer can get, and we are going to take additional action to make sure that we reform the Commodity Credit Corporation's law to make sure that the executive branch Secretary of Agriculture does not have the authority to just willy-nilly put out money at the drop of a hat.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, our shelter in the time of storm, teach our Senators to live as You would have them live. Give them the wisdom to serve others as You desire, providing an example worthy of the high calling they have received from You.

Lord, inspire them to be kind to one another, ever seeking for truth in all their endeavors. Keep them totally dependent on You for guidance and strength, freeing them from anxiety and fear. May Your blessing and benediction enable them to work together in harmony and peace.

We pray in Your sacred 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. KENNEDY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

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



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S237

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER
The majority leader is recognized.

S. 5

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the first bill that a new majority considers is an indication of its priorities. The American people are rightly concerned about the illegal immigration crisis in this country, and they sent a clear message in November that they want to see it addressed. That is why the Republican majorities in the House and the Senate have made it our first order of business to take up the Laken Riley Act. This bill is a small but critical step for resolving the Biden border crisis—the first of many, I might add.

The Laken Riley Act is not a complicated bill. It says that an illegal immigrant involved in a theft-related crime must be detained. That means, if someone who is in the country illegally—in other words, who has already broken our laws—commits a robbery, he or she will be detained.

If this bill had already been law, the illegal immigrant who killed Laken Riley would not have been on the streets the day that he murdered her. When he was cited for shoplifting, less than 5 months before that day, he would have been detained, and Laken Riley might still be alive today. That is what we are trying to do here: prevent another tragedy.

Unfortunately, it seems that even a simple and straightforward bill to detain criminal illegal immigrants is too much for some on the left. Some of our Democratic colleagues have spent the week searching for a reason—any reason—to justify voting against this bill.

For starters, we have heard that this bill would cover too many illegal immigrants. The admission that there are too many individuals on our streets who have committed a crime after coming into the country illegally is an argument for this bill, not against it.

We have also heard that Immigration and Customs Enforcement lacks the detention capacity for the number of individuals that this bill will require to be detained. Well, if resources are scarce, the answer is to provide those resources. The answer is not to let criminals continue to walk our streets.

Republicans believe that keeping criminal illegal aliens off our street is a good investment, and we are currently working on a bill that will provide ICE with additional agents and additional capacity.

We have also been told that this bill will overwhelm ICE, such that there won't be enough space to detain violent criminals. Once again, this is not an argument against the bill. It is an argument for giving ICE more resources and for quickly deporting criminals.

These arguments say a lot more about Democrats' unwillingness to crack down on illegal immigration than they say about this bill.

Look at the vote that we took on Wednesday. We adopted Senator CORNYN's amendment to require illegal immigrants who assault a police officer to

be detained. Staggeringly, under current law, this is not the case. But 2 days ago, 25 of our Democratic colleagues could not even bring themselves to support detaining an illegal immigrant who assaults a police officer. That is right. More than half of the Democrats in the U.S. Senate apparently don't believe we should have to detain these individuals.

I think that is out of step with the American people. For sure, it is out of step with the American people.

The American people want to see an end to open borders and the chaos they have brought to communities around the country—communities like Athens, GA, where Laken Riley was murdered last February.

Laken Riley's death was a tragedy, and it was preventable. The bill we are considering today may prevent a similar tragedy from affecting another family.

Laken's loved ones have had to suffer the heartbreak of losing their daughter, their sister, their friend—a bright light in their lives. But her mother and stepfather said of this bill:

There is no greater gift that could be given to her and our country than to continue her legacy by saving lives through this bill.

Saving lives, that is what this is about.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

SALT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, a few words on SALT. A few days ago, the House Freedom Caucus made a ridiculous proposal that Congress should extend the SALT caps after they are set to expire this year by imposing a new cap on New York businesses, large and small, and the businesses in many other States. The proposal by the House Freedom Caucus is ridiculous, and I will come back to the floor at 11 a.m., after the vote, with more to say about it.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, on the Middle East and Israel, this week has been a long time coming for the families of the Israeli hostages, for civilians in Gaza, and for countless people across the world.

A little over an hour ago, Israel's Security Cabinet voted to approve the ceasefire that negotiators announced earlier this week. It will soon go to the full Cabinet for approval.

Fifteen months after Hamas's heinous attack on October 7, it is welcome news that we are now at the brink of a cease-fire agreement that will reduce

violence in Gaza, reduce harm to innocent civilians, and free many of the hostages. This cease-fire marks a hopeful turning point for Israel, for the Palestinian people, and particularly for the families of the hostages who have waited so long in agony. We will not rest until every hostage comes home.

This agreement would not have been possible without months of steadfast diplomacy by the United States and our allies in the region and could not have happened and would not have happened until the threats of Hamas and other Iranian proxies like Hezbollah were radically reduced, which, thankfully, they have been.

I want to thank President Biden and everyone in his administration who persistently negotiated for a year to make this agreement possible. I thank and honor all the families of the hostages, especially those who live in New York, for their courage and perseverance and boundless grace amid so much grief. Among the hostages are many New Yorkers: Omer, Edan, Sagui, Itay, Keith, Gad, and Judi.

Getting to know the families of the hostages, hearing them share stories about their loved ones in captivity, about their hopes and their fears and frustrations and their perseverance will be something I will remember forever. Today, I promise them this: We will keep working to make sure every hostage comes home.

Now, the task is to ensure that this temporary agreement paves the way to a lasting peace. This first phase is critical for bringing home all the hostages and preserving Israel's right to defend itself. We must make sure that the terrorists of Hamas can never again pose a threat to Israel or to the region. We must also do everything we can to deliver immediate and lifesaving relief to civilians in Gaza. For 15 months, they have suffered unimaginable destruction. It will take all parties working together to make sure the Palestinian people can rebuild their lives with dignity, with security, and outside the terrible shadow that Hamas cast over the Gaza Strip, including using so many innocent civilians as human shields.

I urge the Biden administration and incoming Trump administration to work together with all parties at the negotiating table to ensure the deal is implemented and followed through in its entirety.

S. 5

Mr. President, next, this morning, the Senate is scheduled to hold a cloture vote on the Laken Riley Act. A week ago, I joined with the majority of my Democratic colleagues in voting yes to bring this bill to the floor on the motion to proceed. We told Republicans we wanted to have a serious and productive and fruitful debate on this legislation, with the chance to vote on amendments to modify the bill.

Democrats filed many amendments to the bill, but unfortunately our Republican colleagues and the Republican

leader didn't reach an agreement with us. Two nights ago, we voted on two amendments, one from each party, and no more. Unfortunately, without more changes to address deficiencies in the bill, I will be voting no.

We Democrats want to see our broken immigration system fixed. We worked with Republicans last year on the strongest immigration bill in a decade. While I do not support this particular bill, I stand ready to work with both sides to pass smart, effective, tough, and commonsense legislation to secure our borders and reform our immigration system.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on Cabinet nominations, and Mr. Ratcliffe, if one thing is clear from this week's Cabinet hearings, it is that Donald Trump is not building a Cabinet to serve the American people; he is building a Cabinet to serve the special, big, powerful interests. The American people deserve to know if the President-elect's nominees will bring costs down and protect America or cut sweetheart deals for the most well-off Americans while making America less safe.

Yesterday, I met with John Ratcliffe, the President-elect's nominee for CIA Director. I raised my concerns about some of his positions and challenged him to be rock-ribbed when it comes to the integrity of the CIA, a place where facts, not lies, must prevail for the security of America.

I also told Mr. Ratcliffe about my very grave concerns regarding the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard for Director of National Intelligence because I believe her tenure could be colossally disruptive to our intelligence Agencies, where so many thousands work so hard, and many risk their lives to protect us. I told Mr. Ratcliffe that I thought it would be best if he told President-elect Trump that Tulsi Gabbard should not have the job. I also told Mr. Ratcliffe that he needs to be rock-ribbed and strong when she presents falsities about intelligence, which, given her past, she almost will inevitably do. Unfortunately, I found his answers about Ms. Gabbard to be insufficient.

Candidly, Mr. President, the truth is that many of the President-elect's nominees are just not fit for the job, not just Ms. Gabbard. As we continue with hearings next week on important issues like U.N. Ambassador, Secretary of Agriculture, and Secretary of the Army, Democrats will continue to hold the President-elect's nominees' feet to the fire to show the American people who Donald Trump's nominees are really fighting for.

Will Donald Trump's nominees focus on cutting costs or will they be more interested in cutting sweetheart deals for Big Business? Will they protect our communities or will they focus on protecting special interests? Will they serve middle-class and working families or will they serve the swamp? It seems all too likely the wrong answer

on each of these questions might be very, very real.

Should the time come that some of these nominees fail on the job—which, given their lack of qualifications, sadly, seems likely—Democrats will continue to make it clear that there were red flags all along.

TIKTOK

Mr. President, finally, on TikTok, we know a lot of things are up in the air with the TikTok ban scheduled to go into effect this weekend, but everyone—the Biden administration, the incoming Trump administration, even the Supreme Court—should continue working to find a way to find an American buyer for TikTok so we can both free the app from any influence and control from the Chinese Communist Party and keep TikTok going, which will preserve the jobs of millions of creators.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Senator from Alabama.

S. 5

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, over the past week and a half, the world's greatest deliberative body has discussed and debated the Laken Riley Act. I have taken to the Senate floor multiple times, as have several of my Senate colleagues, to impress upon our fellow lawmakers just how important it is to pass this bill to protect American families, to keep criminals off our streets.

The reason we are all here today is to consider the Laken Riley Act. And, really, it is out of a sense of duty, a moral obligation to honor Laken, her life, and her legacy—a life cut far too short at the hands of an illegal alien, who committed the most heinous crime we can possibly imagine, and a legacy that continues and will continue to live on.

Laken Riley, as my colleagues know, was an exceptional 22-year-old. She was a beloved daughter, an extraordinary friend, a shining beacon of light who truly lived out her faith. She was a nursing student who wanted to help people. She had big goals and aspirations. She had hopes and dreams to strive for over the course of her life that will never have an opportunity to become a reality, and that is because of the Biden-Harris open border policies.

Her killer was allowed to roam free in our country despite having been apprehended at the border and committing multiple crimes after being paroled into the U.S. interior. Then he reached the darkest depths of criminality and took Laken from this world 330 days ago.

Last week, on this same floor, I read the words of Allyson and John Phillips, Laken's mother and stepfather. They described in heartbreaking detail the joy Laken brought to everyone fortunate enough to know her in their lives. They said:

Not only did the people who knew and loved Laken lose a beautiful soul. But so did our world.

This didn't have to happen. Jose Ibarra shouldn't have been anywhere

near Laken on February 22, 2024. He should have never been in the United States. And once he had committed a crime on multiple occasions, he should have been detained by ICE until he was removed from our country. If he had, Laken would still be with us today. That is why we need to pass the Laken Riley Act.

As elected representatives, our greatest responsibilities are to listen to the will of the American people and to keep the American people safe and secure. And on November 5 of last year, the American people made their voices heard, and they were very clear. They told all of us in Washington that they would no longer put up with the crimes like the one Jose Ibarra committed, the one that stole Laken from her loved ones.

The American people delivered a verdict, and they deserve results. We have irresponsible, open border, soft-on-crime policies, and that must end. It is our duty to turn their cries into action, to respond to the clear message that they sent, to honor the charge they delivered. That is the purpose of American democracy. And just as the purpose of our democratic Republic is to turn the will of the people from desire to law, the purpose of our government—the most basic function our country has—is to protect its citizens.

That is what the Laken Riley Act does. It will help ensure other families will not have to endure the pain a criminal illegal alien inflicted on Laken and her loved ones. This bill will prevent countless nightmares so daughters like Laken can go on a jog and not have their dreams forever stolen from them.

I am proud to have bipartisan support for this bill, and I am grateful for Senators JOHN FETTERMAN and RUBEN GALLEGOS, who have decided to sign on as cosponsors. I am heartened to see so many of my Democratic colleagues come out in favor of this commonsense, straightforward legislation.

But we can't lose focus now. We are so close to the finish line, so close to delivering results for the American people, for the voters who sent us here, and for Laken and her family.

So now, to my fellow Senators, let's do right by the American people. Let's heed their call, help keep them safe, and pass this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 minutes to speak to this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MERKLEY. We are now entering the vote that is referred to as cloture—or close debate—but we can still consider amendments by unanimous consent.

I came to the floor yesterday to point out that there is a deep flaw related to children in this bill, and both the majority leader and the floor leader have

expressed support for an amendment process. So I am asking to work with me and with my leadership that we might examine this challenge.

The challenge is specifically that children, without being charged, without being convicted, are required to be arrested and imprisoned—or not arrested but imprisoned after an arrest with no chance for appeal.

My colleagues expressed the belief that the Flores agreement somehow provides protection, but the experts on Flores have said that is incorrect because a bill trumps an agreement, it trumps a rule, and Flores was about children coming to the border, not children living in our community.

Furthermore, a family with a parent who is required mandatory imprisonment without appeal is suddenly swept away from their children. Realize we should care about all those children left without a parent at their house, but that is both citizen and noncitizen children. So let's not pretend this flaw only affects folks who are undocumented; it affects our citizen children as well. But, again, we should care about both sets of children thriving.

So I ask help from the majority leader and the floor leader. If we have a dispute on legal interpretation, let's bring those lawyers together and understand if they are ships passing in the night or is there a misunderstanding that we can correct or clarify.

With that appeal for additional amendments by unanimous consent, which I will continue to negotiate for, I thank you, Mr. President.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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 Calendar No. 1, S. 5, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

John Thune, John Barrasso, Steve Daines, Bill Cassidy, Katie Britt, Mike Lee, Kevin Cramer, Ted Budd, Jim Banks, Dave McCormick, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Rick Scott of Florida, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, Ron Johnson, Dan Sullivan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on S. 5, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 5 Leg.]

YEAS—61

Banks	Grassley	Peters
Barrasso	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hassan	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Rosen
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Justice	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Sheehy
Cotton	Lee	Slotkin
Cramer	Lummis	Sullivan
Crapo	Marshall	Thune
Cruz	McCormick	Tillis
Curtis	Moran	Tuberville
Daines	Moreno	Warner
Ernst	Mullin	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Young
Gallego	Ossoff	
Graham	Paul	

NAYS—35

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Sanders
Baldwin	Kaine	Schatz
Bennet	Kim	Schiff
Blumenthal	King	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Klobuchar	Smith
Booker	Lujan	Van Hollen
Cantwell	Markey	Warnock
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Welch
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Padilla	Wyden
Hickenlooper	Reed	

NOT VOTING—3

Coons	Fetterman	McConnell
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 61, the nays are 35.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Texas.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday, I highlighted some of President Biden's final actions as he leaves—parting gifts, if you will. Today, I would like to highlight another of his parting gifts. And I use that in parentheses or with quotations because they really are a slap in the face for the American people and American taxpayers.

This past Monday, the Department of Education canceled student loans for 150,000 borrowers. This is not really a cancellation of those loans. It is just a transfer of the responsibility to taxpayers and wiping the slate clean for people who actually agreed to borrow this money so that they can attend schools.

Then on Wednesday, just 2 days ago, the Biden administration announced an additional cancellation of \$4.5 billion for 261,000 borrowers.

The President's actions this week and the last week of his Presidency brings this total taxpayer bailout to \$183.6 billion.

Now, remember in June of 2023, the Supreme Court ruled in a 6-to-3 decision that the Department of Education lacks the authority—the legal author-

ity—to implement these across-the-board student loan cancellations. But the Biden administration, never to be one that actually obeys the law, has continued to ignore the ruling of the Supreme Court, issuing blank check after blank check to borrowers to let them off the hook from paying bills that they agreed to pay in the first instance.

This policy is not just illegal; it is profoundly unfair. It is unfair to the families who have sacrificed and saved to send their own children to college. It is unfair to the students who worked multiple jobs during college to avoid accruing large amounts of debt. And it is unfair to all the graduates who have worked hard and paid off their loans. Finally, it is unfair to Americans who have forgone a college education because they couldn't afford the cost. And now they have to pick up the tab for those for whom President Biden has canceled their debt.

Any family with a mortgage, a car payment, or credit card debt knows there is really no such thing as canceling the debt. Somebody is going to pay. Every dollar that was borrowed will, eventually, be repaid by somebody. It is just a matter of who that someone is. And, in this case, it is the American taxpayer.

It is really a slap in the face, a kick in the teeth—you choose your metaphor. But it is no surprise that the American taxpayers have rejected the direction in which President Biden and his administration have taken the country. They voted for a new direction on November 5.

But that just makes it even more offensive that a lameduck President would proceed full speed ahead with more student debt cancellation after being told “no” by the Supreme Court and being told “no” again by voters on November 5.

Back in May, along with my colleagues Senator ERNST and Senator CASSIDY, I introduced a congressional resolution of disapproval that would have overturned the Biden administration's reckless and unfair student loan socialism. Of course, the Democratic-controlled Senate did not bring that CRA—the Congressional Review Act—up for a vote. But now with Republicans in the majority, I hope this is something we can and will address.

Student loan socialism would be a great opportunity for the Department of Government Efficiency—headed by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy—to take a look at it because there is nothing less efficient and more wasteful and more unfair than taking billions of dollars from taxpayers who didn't go to college to pay for those who did and who agreed to pay the money back but simply now will not have to do so.

The vast majority of Americans don't benefit from this student loan socialism. And 87 percent of Americans don't have student debt; so the 13 percent who do are now foisting that responsibility on the 87 percent. If you look at

those who do benefit, it becomes even more clear how little sense this makes.

Even the progressive Brookings Institute pointed out that blanket student loan forgiveness benefits those who are better off by income, by education, and by wealth.

Unsurprisingly, those with student loans are more likely to have higher paying jobs. If we look back at the institutions and not just the individuals who are benefiting from these massive taxpayer subsidies, which is what they are, we will also find that this is anything but an efficient use of American taxpayer dollars.

Over 100 colleges and universities in the United States, including Columbia, Cornell, Yale, and Princeton, are currently under investigation from the Department of Education because of their mishandling of incidents of anti-Semitism on their campuses since October 7, 2023.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of ethnicity for institutions that receive Federal funding. So the complaints of anti-Semitism in the wake of the terrorist attacks on Israel have in some cases amounted to violations of Federal law.

Many of these colleges and universities are rushing to enter into settlements with the Biden administration before the Trump administration takes office on Monday, which, of course, is not surprising.

President Trump has made clear that taxpayer support for those universities that failed to end anti-Semitic propaganda that has run rampant over the past few years, that that taxpayer support will end.

Now is not the time to reward these institutions with widespread incentives to continue raising their tuition by canceling student debt.

If we want to address the affordability of college—an important topic—widespread student loan socialism is not the way to do it.

So as I said, for a variety of reasons, this would be a great place for the Department of Government Efficiency to shine the light on and for us to do something about in the coming days.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget pointed out that we could save the taxpayers as much as \$550 billion by reversing all of President Biden's actions on student loan cancellation—\$550 billion. So we have our work cut out for us. But one great place to start would be to end the Biden administration's reckless student loan socialism.

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. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to read into the RECORD a statement from President Joe Biden, issued this morning on the Equal Rights Amendment.

He said as follows:

I have supported the Equal Rights Amendment for more than 50 years, and I have long been clear that no one should be discriminated against based on their sex. We, as a nation, must affirm and protect women's full equality once and for all.

On January 27, 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

The American Bar Association has recognized that the Equal Rights Amendment has cleared all necessary hurdles to be formally added to the Constitution as the 28th Amendment. I agree with the ABA—

President Biden said—

and with leading constitutional scholars that the Equal Rights Amendment has become part of our Constitution.

It is long past time to recognize the will of the American people. In keeping with my oath and duty to Constitution and country, I affirm what I believe and what three-fourths of the States have ratified: the 28th Amendment is the law of the land, guaranteeing all Americans equal rights and protections under the law regardless of their sex.

Mr. President, in response to this, I issue the following statement:

The Equal Rights Amendment is literally a century in the making, and over the years, generations of Americans have done their part to move it forward. They have marched on Washington, they have met with Congressmen and Senators, and as of 2020, they have crossed a crucial threshold—ratification of the ERA in 38 States. That is the exact number of States needed to certify it as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

It is past time to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sex in our Constitution. The President's announcement sends an important, overdue message to women and girls that they are equal under the law.

Mr. President, I believe this is a moment of historic importance, and it is the culmination of a century of effort to bring equality into the American Constitution with the 28th Amendment.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). Will the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. DURBIN. I withhold my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

SALT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last fall, Donald Trump went to Long Island, NY, and claimed he would "get SALT back." That is good news—very good news—because it was precisely Donald Trump and congressional Republicans who created the SALT cap to begin with.

These harmful policies double tax hard-working New Yorkers. They have hurt so many middle-class families—teachers, firefighters, police officers,

construction workers—particularly in higher cost areas like Long Island and the Hudson Valley of New York.

So it is good that Donald Trump and some Republicans have seen the light and that they have heard from vociferous Long Islanders, and now they are changing their minds about SALT. But let's not forget, these costly SALT caps are set to expire at the end of the year.

So to our friends on the other side, if you actually want to lower costs for Long Island, Hudson Valley, and other families across the country, all you have to do is do nothing at all on SALT caps. Let them expire, which they will right at the end of this year, and then they are gone for good, all of them.

Yes, if Congress simply says do nothing about SALT caps, all of it will go away, and that is what we should do. But instead of ensuring that New Yorkers will get SALT back, the House Freedom Caucus wants to impose a whole new round of SALT caps. They want to place new SALT caps on New York businesses small and large and want to push an increase in the SALT tax on New Yorkers.

The House Freedom Caucus is a group of very powerful, hard, hard right Republicans. The House Freedom Caucus's SALT plan will increase costs across Long Island and the Hudson Valley almost immediately.

I have got only one response to the House Freedom's SALT proposal. As we say in Brooklyn, forget about it. Forget about it. There is no scenario under God's green Earth that New York taxpayers will ever accept another unfair SALT cap like the House Freedom Caucus proposes. New York families, from Long Island to the Hudson Valley and across the State, have suffered long enough at the hands of broken Republican tax policies.

I will do everything I can, first, to remove the entire SALT cap tax and, second, to never let a new proposal that for the first time imposes the SALT cap on businesses small and large to be put into effect. I am going to do everything I can to fight this dastardly proposal.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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.