

say we are friends and we like to work together. Our staffs, most days, like to work together, hopefully. But I want to thank his staff.

I want to thank all the Senators. He and I pleaded with our colleagues from all 50 States to give us their ideas of what should go into this bill, and a bunch of our colleagues—a majority of them—did that. So it is not just something we dreamed up in our committee, but had great input from a whole bunch of our colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, and we were able to put together a bill that passed our committee unanimously.

I just want to mention the names of a couple of people on both sides of the aisle, and they include Richard Russell, Brian Clifford, Andy Harding, Lizzie Olsen, Susan Lucas, Craig Thomas, Beth Lange, Christina Rabuse, Matt Leggett, who worked for Senator BARRASSO; and on my team, Mary Frances Repko, our staff director, Mark Mendenhall, Annie D'Amato, and John Kane, who works harder than just about any person I have ever had the privilege of working with.

Lastly, Senator BARRASSO introduced me last year or so to a fellow from Wyoming who had been nominated to be a very senior official at the Commerce Department, and he had been nominated for a position where he would be Assistant Secretary of the Interior to handle, among other things, national parks, national wildlife refuges, fish and wildlife—big job, important job for all of our States—certainly mine and certainly Wyoming.

During his testimony, Rob Wallace testified, I thought, so well, and it is hard not to like the guy. I liked him almost immediately, but he said these words to our committee. He said: Bipartisan solutions are lasting solutions. That is what he said: Bipartisan solutions are lasting solutions.

I sat there that day thinking: Boy, he nailed it. I have stolen that line—sometimes, I give him credit for it; sometimes, I don't—but think about that. Bipartisan solutions are lasting solutions.

We need the lasting solutions. We especially need them with respect to making sure those words in the Declaration of Independence—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—aren't just words on a sheet of paper or old words on a piece of parchment, but they are real words today, and we have renewed our commitment to them, and we have done that with the legislation we reported out of our committee.

We still have some work to do. Harbor maintenance, we need to try and resolve that—people have strong views, not always in sync with one another—and the legislation on forever chemicals and how do we deal with that in ways that are smart and respect science and enable us to make sure that we better protect people's health.

So these bills, in closing, are a win, win, win, for our Nation's economy, for our public health, and for our environ-

ment at a time we desperately need it. As we face down the COVID-19 crisis before us, I hope that these two pieces of legislation will serve as a model for how we can continue to work together, which is what I intend to do with our chairman.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, before my friend and colleague, Senator CARPER from Delaware, leaves the floor, I will tell you what a privilege it is to work with him, and we have worked together as partners on the Environment and Public Works Committee. As you know, every chair works with a ranking member, and I couldn't have a better partner than I have in TOM CARPER. He has been magnificent in times, always trying to find a right solution that is a bipartisan solution, and we have done it again today on the Environment and Public Works Committee as we passed two major pieces of water infrastructure legislation.

Last year, we passed highway legislation, and he is focused, as am I, on rebuilding for America the highways, the bridges, repairing as well the tunnels, all of the areas—roads, bridges, ports, riverways, reservoirs. I could not find a better partner.

You know, it is interesting he mentioned Matthew 25, and if you read Matthew 25, it was Ben Franklin's favorite Bible verse. What Ben Franklin would say is, if someone chose to live their life by one Bible verse, if they chose Matthew 25, he said, the world would be a better place. TOM CARPER is one who leads his life every day consistent with the teaching and the readings and the writings of the Gospel of Matthew 25.

He mentioned my good friend Rob Wallace from Wyoming, who is now the Assistant Secretary of the Interior overseeing parks, as well as fish and wildlife for the country. Rob always said, as was so quoted by our Ranking Member CARPER, that bipartisan solutions are the best solutions. He is somebody who knows. He worked on the Hill. He worked as a staffer for former Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming and then on the Energy Committee when Senator Wallop was so actively involved in those days in the 1980s and '90s.

But the other thing that Rob Wallace talked about, to which Senator CARPER and I agree as well, is there are lands in this great country that need to be protected and preserved and passed on because, as Rob pointed out that day, he said whether it was John Muir, who carried a stick, whether it was Ansel Adams, who carried a camera, or Teddy Roosevelt, who carried a gun all into these vast areas of our country, they all recognized, no matter what they were carrying, the value that these wonderful lands meant for the people of our country, and we needed to make sure that they were there for generations to come.

I know that the work that Senator CARPER is doing on this committee is meant for generations to come, and it is a privilege to work with him.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come for an additional reason, and that is to tell you that in my home State of Wyoming, we have reopened. We did that starting last Friday. Many States across the country are continuing to do so, and people all across my home State are ready, willing, able, and needing to get back to work. We are doing it safely, we are doing it smartly, and we are following the guidelines set out by the White House.

States all across the country are doing it. Governors and local leaders are reopening, and they are doing it in a responsible way. As of today, over 30 States have reopened. On Thursday, Michigan will reopen. On Friday, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, as well as California will begin to reopen. By this time next week, nearly 40 States will have opened again.

Now, we do hear, on the other side of the aisle, Democrats complaining about wanting to do significant amounts of additional spending. Americans are busy getting back to work. That is where our focus should be. People are packing their lunches. They are taking proper precautions. They are putting on their work gloves. They are earning their keep. They aren't looking for favors. They are not looking for frills from Washington. They just want to do their jobs, and they want to make sure that we do ours as well.

We have spent close to \$3 trillion in this country over the last 2 months, and we have a duty to make sure that money is spent properly and that we got it right. We need to make sure we are here and focused on work-friendly policies, and this doesn't necessarily mean additional spending. It means making it easier for the 30 million people who currently are out of work and who have lost their jobs to get back to work sooner.

Our priorities are America's priorities: rebuilding the economy and jobs, addressing the coronavirus, and helping our health systems. Plenty of dollars have started to go out the door. Many more dollars, already approved, are still slated to go to the American people, to small businesses, to States, and to our healthcare system. The \$3 trillion doesn't get spent overnight. The support we have provided is finding its way through the economy, through the healthcare systems, and through the States to the men and women of America. States are looking at the dollars coming in, and they are figuring out how best to use the resources. They are asking for more flexibility, and I believe they need to have more flexibility in how the money is spent.

Senators and committees are here to make sure that we get this right. We

need to do that through hearings, through oversight, and through confirmations. Just this week, the Senate will be having COVID-19-related hearings in the Banking Committee, in the Homeland Security Committee, in the Commerce Committee, and in the Health and Education Committee. We are just getting started.

Importantly, this is not the time to reshape America along some liberal wish list of ideas that the Democrats have suggested. It is not time to legislate from either Brooklyn or San Francisco. It is not time to veer to the left. It is time to stay focused. The Senate Republicans are here, and we are going to stay focused on the future of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I so agree with the comments that the Senator from Wyoming was just making, and I hear them repeated every day in Tennessee by my constituents.

I thank my colleagues who have asked me this week how Tennessee is doing. You know, we had another terrible storm. It was our third this year. We have had two tornadoes, and we had lots of power outages and damaged trees that were down in Middle Tennessee. The tornadoes, the storms on Sunday evening, and COVID are a lot for anybody to handle, but I think the Senator's point is so well taken.

Wyoming and Tennessee—these are States that are saying: We can do this. We are going to use the resources that are there for us because, yes, we want to get back to work, and we want to get back to normal.

What is normal is a question and the right question for people to be asking because what is it going to look like and how is that daily routine going to be reshaped? How do we give up these worries that we have about health and wellness and safety and protection for ourselves and our families, our employers, our employees, and healthcare workers? All of this goes into the shape of a new routine for the day—the things you worry about, the things you are focused on, about your jobs, about businesses, about the future.

Another point that comes up regularly from Tennesseans was well made by a Wall Street Journal article that ran on Monday, and it was discussing that the U.S. Government would borrow \$4½ trillion this year for this fiscal year. Now, that is something that I think legitimately could be added to the worry list for those of us who are fiscal conservatives, and we are looking at \$25 trillion in debt. We are looking at this debt load and thinking about that in relation to our GDP and thinking about the importance of federalism. We are very concerned about this. We are going to have—CBO says our annual deficit is going to be the highest it has been since World War II.

When we think about that, we have to think about the fact that the

“greatest generation” looked at that, and they said: Let's get in behind this, and let's get that debt down. They were good about that. I think about the parents and relatives and grandparents, and what did they say? If there is a task to be done, let's go do it. That is why they lined up and they fought in World War II, and they reshaped the way our communities worked. They planted victory gardens. They changed their daily routines, and they went to work. They said: Let's get in here, and let's get this job done. They then put their focus on economic growth when they came out of the war, and look at what they accomplished.

So while we think about the economy shrinking and jobless numbers growing and our vulnerable citizens, we have to think about the high price that is being paid there. We also have to think about what it does to our children and our grandchildren because our forebears certainly thought about that for us, and our children and grandchildren deserve no less.

When I am talking with Tennesseans who are stuck at home, and they are watching the news every night and they are listening to what we are saying—they are in on Zoom meetings, and we are communicating with them daily—they have a tendency to say: How did we get here with a situation that is this bad that occurred this quickly? Should we not have seen this coming?

In February, we had some of the best numbers we have ever had economically, and now you look at what has happened in this short transition. And what they will ask is, what kind of breakdown took place in our international order that could have allowed COVID-19 to spread beyond China's borders and into our neighborhoods and our communities?

I have to tell you, they are upset about this. They are angry that lives have been disrupted.

I had a call from a lady who has high school children, and she said: You know, Marsha, I have to tell you, I went to the grocery store, and I looked at where every product was made before I put it in my cart.

The reason she is checking where products are made—she said: I am so angry with China. I am angry with the lies, the deceit, and the lack of information. I am angry that lives have been lost and livelihoods have been lost, and I am angry that my children have missed class days, field days, school sports, graduation, prom, summer camp, and summer jobs. It is a season of their lives that they are not going to recover. It is a loss of life and livelihood.

The order that we had is the reason that Tennesseans are turning to us and they are saying: We expect you to investigate what happened, to review it, to oversee it, and to make certain that our preparation is better and that more forethought is given to how we are going to address this—addressing all of

these Federal agencies and making certain that the bureaucracy doesn't get in the way of the decisionmaking.

At this point, we do know that there are a lot of unknowns, but what we do know is this: The Chinese Government—the Chinese Communist Party—the Chinese Government spent the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak destroying testing samples, intimidating doctors, expelling journalists, hiding information, and lying to the world. You know, it is so interesting that they still have not let the scientists from the CDC into that Wuhan virology lab. They still don't want anybody in there. They lied to everybody about how dangerous this was, and they did that on purpose. Think about it—an intentional act of deception, repeated acts by the Chinese Communist Party to hide something that was an outbreak and try to keep it from the world.

This seems inconceivable, that a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council and a former and likely future member of the Human Rights Council would be so careless with the lives and livelihoods of billions of people, but they did it. If you consider their track record, it does start to make sense because China is not a new problem; it is just a newly recognized problem.

I fear America has forgotten the lessons we learned as we watched the Communist dogma burn its way through Eastern Europe, Russia, and Asia, twisting the minds of ambitious men who leveraged political mass murder as a messaging tool, killing tens of millions of innocent people in the process.

During the Cold War, the divide between the Soviet bloc and the West was pretty clear. We could see that alignment with the Soviets would derail our global fight for democracy. We also caught glimpses of Mao's China, where upwards of 30 million people died of starvation and disease directly at the hands of party officials—not an appreciation for the sanctity of life—one of our first principles and tenets.

Today, the Chinese Communist Party is still following that Soviet playbook, and it is time for the world to remember what that means before time runs out. Although Xi Jinping and the CCP have modernized their methods—they are all about cyber, and they are all about technology—here is what we have to remember: Their philosophy and their goals are exactly the same. They want to dominate the world militarily, economically, and politically. They are wanting domination, and they will step over and run over whatever gets in their way.

What we have to do is to remember that China is capable of funneling mass amounts of cash, equipment, and physical support to developing countries. They are doing it all in exchange for loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party's agenda. For example, debt diplomacy schemes—that is their new thing—debt diplomacy schemes have

ensnared Sri Lanka and Djibouti and other countries in Africa and Asia. Those countries have in turn opened doors to strategically important ports and waterways and granted access to valuable natural resources. To be clear, these are not aid programs; they are tools of manipulation offered to nations in desperate circumstances.

For nations not in desperate circumstances, Beijing has to work a little harder, but they still are working to get the job done. They count on the promise of cheap labor and production and low cost products to open doors with nations that normally are not going to work with somebody with such an abysmal human rights record as China has.

The world is recalling some very hard lessons right now, but there is a path forward. We must secure our supply chains, and we must begin to return these critical infrastructure supply chains to the United States to make certain that we can bolster ourselves and that we are not completely dependent on China for some items that are essential for us.

The pharmaceutical supply chain is one on which I have focused, with Senator MENENDEZ, with our SAM-C legislation. This week, Senator MCSALLY, Senator DAINES, and I introduced the Stop COVID Act to hold China legally liable for the damage caused by the spread of the novel coronavirus. Our colleagues have other pieces of legislation that have the same focused accountability for China and making certain this doesn't happen to us again. I encourage all of my colleagues to look at those.

I also encourage my colleagues to accept that our relationship with China is broken right now and that it was never that great to begin with. But right now, it is broken. It is time for us to realize that we have to treat China as an adversary and we have to protect ourselves as we move forward.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Mr. President, my first priority during the COVID-19 pandemic has been to do all I can to keep Georgians and all Americans safe and healthy. But while at home in Georgia these last few weeks, I have seen that the measures we needed to take to fight this unprecedented health crisis have created dramatic economic and societal impacts.

One in five Georgians is unemployed. In the last 6 weeks, the Georgia Department of Labor has issued more unemployment payments than in the previous 4 years combined.

Hotels in the Golden Isles were seeing 80 to 90 percent occupancy rates at the beginning of March, the start of beach season for our beach communities. As the number of tourists plummeted, the president of our visitors' center described the economic impact as "absolutely devastating."

School districts, like Forsyth County schools, are organizing meal pickups

and food delivery for students who typically rely on eating breakfast and lunch at school.

Then there is the emotional toll combating the virus has taken. A local law enforcement officer told me that his department has seen a dramatic spike in domestic abuse calls. An emergency hotline run by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration saw a 1000-percent increase in calls last month compared to last April.

The full cost of this pandemic remains to be seen, but it is clear we need to look ahead and plan for a future that protects Americans' lives and livelihoods.

As a member of the President's Opening Up America Again Congressional Group, I am putting to work my nearly three decades of experience building companies and creating jobs.

Over the last few weeks, I have held more than 100 calls to hear directly from Georgia hospitals, State officials, first responders, food banks, small businesses, farmers, large employers, nonprofits, chambers of commerce, as well as the President and his administration, to address the needs of Georgians.

With my experience and the feedback I have heard from Georgians, I have developed the USA Restoring & Igniting the Strength of our Economy Plan—USA RISE. This is a plan to bring back our thriving economy. It offers a four-pillared framework for investing in America, growing jobs, and helping families without expanding the grip of the Federal Government. It builds on the success of President Trump's America First agenda.

The USA RISE Plan calls on all of us in Congress to ensure that the more than \$2 trillion of relief already passed in the CARES Act and in phase 3.5 is targeted to the areas of the economy that need it most while providing prudent oversight.

The first pillar, Made in the USA, addresses the fact that for too long, our manufacturing has moved overseas. Now more than ever, we are reminded of how dangerous it is to rely on other countries, especially competitors like China.

The USA RISE Plan calls for incentivizing companies to return to the United States, investing in infrastructure to spur economic development, and having a competitive tax and intellectual property framework to promote hiring and capital expenditures. We need to ensure that America remains the best country in the world to do business.

The second pillar, Grown in the USA, is aimed at supporting our farmers and helping Americans who are seeing empty grocery shelves or local food banks that are depleted.

I grew up working in the fields as the fourth generation working on my family's farm, and I know firsthand the challenges that farmers face even in the best of times. Today, fruit and veg-

etable prices are down about 50 to 60 percent, and cattle and pork producers have been affected by meat processing plant closures and limitations. At the same time, the Georgia Food Bank Association told me they have seen roughly a 40-percent increase in demand for their services. We need to ensure that the relief in the CARES Act is making its way to our farmers and agriculture businesses.

Any future trade deals with China must hold the Chinese Communist Party accountable for their role in spreading the coronavirus and should focus on shifting supply chains back to the United States.

Farmers account for just 2 percent of America's population, but 100 percent of us eat. It is time to harness our agriculture advantage to support our farmers who put their businesses on the line every single day to feed Americans and the world.

The third component of my plan, Hiring in the USA, proposes removing regulatory barriers and cutting taxes to help small businesses keep employees on the payroll and to create jobs. Half of all Americans are employed by small businesses, and these are the small businesses that have been particularly hurt by COVID-19.

Congress has already taken extensive action to provide loans and grants to small businesses like Globalus, a small trucking company in Fulton County, and Jan's Family Daycare in Dalton. I recently talked to daycare owners Bill and Jan Whetstone, who received a PPP loan. This will allow them to keep their doors open and to serve working families. Our economy cannot recover without our small businesses.

My plan also calls for reducing the temptation for trial lawyers to use COVID-19 lawsuits to drain profits from employers at the expense of productive jobs. Local shops and restaurants are the lifeblood of our communities, and there is more we can do to help them.

Finally, we must support families in building strong futures. Right now, too many families have lost their incomes and are struggling to afford their rent and to put food on the table.

The fourth component of my plan is "Families in the USA." It aims to provide targeted relief for families and for children. Among other things, it supports churches that are helping families during this difficult time and other organizations, like YMCAs across our State, which are the largest providers of childcare in Georgia, and they are providing thousands of meals each day to families across our State.

In the last several weeks, we have made great strides in expanding testing for COVID-19. This is a crucial tool for getting back to work. Over 7 million Americans had been testing through Monday. As President Trump noted, no one else, no other country in the world has even come close to this level of testing. This is something we are proud to build on. In fact, the President has

also announced the Testing Blueprint, which is a partnership to help States build out their testing capabilities.

In my State of Georgia, Governor Kemp has partnered with our universities and private companies to expand testing capabilities, and that is now at record levels. Anyone who thinks they may have the virus can use an app developed by Augusta University to screen their symptoms and schedule a test at one of the 66 testing centers in our State.

Testing is a key component to restarting our economy safely, but we must start to adapt to this new reality now. Before this pandemic hit, we saw job creation and opportunity that lifted up all Americans. The four pillars I have outlined are critical to reigniting our economic engine. The USA Rise Plan offers solutions to grow our economy without unnecessarily growing the Federal Government or our deficits.

Americans want to get back to work and back to their lives but safely. While we continue to fight COVID-19 on the health front, we also must look ahead and make plans to rebuild now. I am confident we will because I know that when Americans unite, we rise to meet any challenge.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, it is good to be back in session. After 6 weeks away from this place, it is good that we are all together working on some very important things.

In the past 6 weeks, since we haven't been here in session working together, a lot has changed. America has been overtaken, really, not just by the coronavirus but by the economic damage it has caused.

More than 30 million Americans have now filed for unemployment, and most believe we are approaching the highest unemployment we have had in this country since the Great Depression. It is a concern and particularly troubling because, if you think about it, just a few months ago, back in February, we hit a 50-year low in terms of unemployment in this country. So we have gone from a strong and growing economy to one where many people are out of work and many businesses have been shuttered. Some of these businesses tell me they may have shuttered permanently. I hope not, but it has been a tough time. At the same time, churches and schools have been closed.

Some States have begun to reopen their economies, which is fantastic, but a majority of Americans are still living by very strict social distancing guidelines.

I hear constantly from Ohioans about how much this has upended their lives. Sometimes small business owners will tell me a heartbreaking story of how they spent 30 or 40 years building a business, and now they have seen it

devastated. They are in a situation where they have no cash flow and can't keep the business open.

At the same time, a lot of Americans have been teleworking. They have still been working, but they haven't been going to the office or going to the factory. They have been working from home and figuring it out.

Just like everything else, here in the Senate, we have been affected by this pandemic. As I said, we have been shut down for 6 weeks. This started back in March. One of our colleagues actually came down with the virus, but it was really on the advice of health officials and public health experts that we decided not to reconvene. It was probably the safe thing to do at the time.

Again, it is good we are back now. We are back now with the recommendation of the attending physician and other top medical experts. We have been wearing our masks dutifully and when appropriate. We have been keeping our social distance.

My desk is actually over there, but there was another Senator over there, so they put me here, which is good. We have been doing this successfully this week, and that is great because we need to be here representing the voice of the American people.

However, I will tell you, during these 6 weeks when we weren't convening, there was a lot of work to be done too. Yet Congress was unable to do it. Why? Because, unlike probably the majority of the people whom I represent, we don't telework. We work, yes. We were home working hard. But we weren't involved in debates here. We weren't involved in hearings. We weren't involved in debates on the floor. We weren't involved in voting.

During that time period of 6 weeks, by the way, over half a trillion was appropriated. In other words, this body chose to spend over half a trillion dollars—that used to be a lot of money—of taxpayers' money without people being here to weigh in, to vote, to have amendments, or to have debate. And that legislation had to be done because it had to do with helping small businesses in particular but also healthcare providers around the country and getting more testing, which was very important. But wouldn't it have been good had Congress been able to weigh in? But we couldn't. Why? We don't have the ability to remotely vote, much less engage in debate or much less have hearings.

I think we should be able to do that. I think we should be able to meet and discuss things even when we can't physically be here in the Capitol.

REMOTE VOTING

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, a couple of months ago, I introduced legislation here on the floor of the Senate with my colleague DICK DURBIN from Illinois. He is on the other side of the aisle. In a bipartisan way, we said: Let's let Congress vote remotely. Let's

use safe and secure means to do that. The technology is out there to do that. It has to be safe, but let's let Congress weigh in and vote remotely when we can't meet.

These last 6 weeks are an example of that, but it is not just about this pandemic. I have actually been talking about this for 25 years because I believe it is important for Congress to be able to meet when there is any reason we can't come together or shouldn't come together.

After 9/11, a lot of people were more focused on this because a terrorist act—particularly a bioterrorist act—could have the same effect, of course.

There have been periods of time where Congress has not been able to meet here, and there have been other periods of time like during the Cold War, when there was actually a bunker set up in the hills of West Virginia somewhere for us to convene for fear that there could be a nuclear attack. So Congress has thought about this before, but Congress has never been able to put in place the ability for us to vote remotely, for us to have debate remotely, and for us to have hearings remotely. I think that is too bad because we are the voice of the people. We represent individual congressional districts on the other side of the Capitol. We represent individual States here. The Constitution set it up so that we are out here listening to people we represent, and we come here to represent that voice.

The executive branch has its own role, and it is a very important one, but it shouldn't take over the legislative branch role because they are different, and the Founders intended it that way, to have this separation of powers.

By the way, other countries have done this. The United Kingdom has begun to conduct its proceedings remotely. The EU has started to vote remotely—the European Union. There are several other countries that have come up with one way or another to work remotely—to telework, in essence.

By the way, about 14 States have also figured this out so that they can convene meetings and so on, and some of them even vote remotely. So I think it is time to do it.

Last week, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which I chair, had the first remote hearing in the history of the Congress, and it worked really well. We had three witnesses. We had several Members of the Senate participate. The witnesses were all around the country, so we didn't have to call them here to Washington. We didn't have to gather as a group and therefore risk one of us infecting another or exposing us to the coronavirus.

The witnesses were testifying from their homes, from a living room in one case. One of the witnesses actually testified from the cab of a pickup truck because she was at her sister's place