

worked hard to get these funds and resources where they are most needed, especially in a year like this one. But due to delays, critically needed resources to combat the opioid epidemic have had to wait; investments to improve broadband have had to wait; research dollars into Alzheimer's have had to wait; and the list goes on. This is so frustrating to me, as it should be to every American, and I know they are frustrated because they tell us they are.

But here now, we were able to include funds for things that are important to me in my State of West Virginia, such as fossil energy research, our universities, and the many Federal facilities that call West Virginia home.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation that reflects our Nation's priorities and funds the government, which is our responsibility as Members of Congress.

Within the Omnibus appropriations act is the fiscal year 2021 Homeland Security appropriations bill. I chair that subcommittee, and it is with great pride that I can report to the American people and to West Virginians that this title invests billions of dollars to protect our homeland.

We maintain our commitment to border security through a border wall system to include physical barriers and enhanced technologies.

We avoided a drastic cut to our cyber security capabilities that we see we need now more than ever after all of the reports and the vicious cyber attack that we uncovered that has been launched against many of those in our country, not just the government but the private sector as well.

We continue our commitment to use every resource at our disposal in the effort to prevent those opioids that are killing our people. We see overdoses going up and deaths from overdoses going up during this pandemic. We tried to get the resources to our Homeland Security folks to prevent those drugs from entering into this country at all.

The men and women at the Department of Homeland Security work constantly against threats both old and new, traditional and emerging, and deserve the support this legislation gives them.

So while this is great news in the end, I will repeat what I said earlier, and that is, Congress can do better. We could have done this earlier, and it should have been done earlier. So there is no reason we should be standing here several days before Christmas discussing the items that were ready to go several months ago, but we are where we are. As we turn the page gleefully into 2021, I think we should all pledge to one another and to the country that we will do better, that we will work better with each other and prevent politics from infecting every decision that could positively impact so many people in this country.

Lastly, I give a hat tip to my friend, whom I will miss seeing and who was a

great friend to our family, a longtime friend of our family. Godspeed. I know she is dancing up there with her mom and dad because they loved to dance.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, Republicans like to mock modern monetary theory—the idea that government can print money with impunity and that government can spend whatever it wants without the need to tax. Modern monetary theory is basically the Dick Cheney “deficits don't matter” crowd, trussed up with a new fancy title.

Most Republicans rightly lampoon this quackery; that is, when they are not practicing the quackery themselves. Today, many of these same Republicans will vote for a bill that makes modern monetary theory look like child's play in comparison. The monster spending bill presented today is not just a “deficits don't matter” disaster, it is everything Republicans say they don't believe in.

This bill is free money for everyone. Proponents don't care if you are fully employed or own your own house or own your own business. “Free money for everyone,” they cry. And yet, if free money were the answer and if money really grew on trees, why not give more free money? Why not give it out all the time? Why stop at \$600 a person? Why not \$1,000? Why not \$2,000? Maybe these new free-money Republicans should join the “everybody gets a guaranteed income” caucus. Why not \$20,000 a year for everybody? Why not \$30,000? If we can print up money with impunity, why not do it?

The Treasury could just keep printing the money; that is, until someone points out that the Emperor has no clothes and that the dollar no longer has value. To so-called conservatives who are quick to identify the socialism of Democrats, if you vote for this spending monstrosity, you are no better. When you vote to pass out free money, you lose your soul, and you abandon forever any semblance of moral or fiscal integrity.

So the next time you see Republicans in high moral dudgeon, claiming and complaining about spending of Democrats and socialism, remind them—remind them if they supported this monstrous bill, that really the difference between the parties is less Adam Smith versus Marx and more Marx versus Engels.

How bad is our fiscal situation? Well, the Federal Government brought in \$3.3 trillion last year and spent \$6.6 trillion. The deficit last year, a record-busting \$3.3 trillion. If you are looking for more COVID bailout money, we don't have any. The coffers are bare. We have no rainy day fund. We have no savings account. Congress has spent all the money long ago.

The economic damage from this pandemic is not the reason for this run-

away spending. This spending has been going on for decades. Every year, even before we get to all the extra COVID-free money, we have been spending \$1 trillion we don't have.

Today's money is gone, so Congress is spending tomorrow's money. The spending chart is a red line of red ink that goes on forever. When we talk about spending tomorrow's money, it is not just the money that we need next month. It is the money we might need in a decade. It is the money we will need in one, two, three generations from now—for national defense and for infrastructure. This is the money that your children and your grandchildren will pay back with interest.

The deficit doubling and tripling—under George Bush, it went from \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion. Under President Obama, it went from \$10 trillion to \$20 trillion. We are now at \$27 trillion, but we are adding it at \$1 trillion a year before we get to this COVID budget-busting bailout.

Every tax-paying American already owes over \$136,000, and they are staring at projections into the future that show no end. We are \$27 trillion in debt today. How do we expect a child to have the economic opportunity when this crushing debt is their inheritance from Congress? The numbers are mind-boggling. It is hard to conceive of what \$1 billion is, much less \$1 trillion.

How big is \$1 billion? Well, a billion seconds ago was 1988 and Reagan was President. A billion minutes ago, Jesus walked the shore of the Sea of Galilee. A billion hours ago, man still lived in caves. But \$1 billion ago, was just 80 minutes ago—\$1 billion ago, at the rate Congress spends money, was just 80 minutes ago.

All of this should be setting off alarm bells. But the only alarm bells in Congress are sounding the alarm for more spending and more debt. No cuts, no offsets, no pay-fors, and no prioritization. Just print it up. Print up more money and give it out to everybody because it is free money. Come and get yours while the getting is good. But it leads to a mountain of debt. Spend all this money and leave the future to figure itself out.

John Maynard Keynes was once asked: What about the long run?

He said: In the short run, you can make a stimulus. You can print money, and you can give it to everybody.

And Maynard Keynes, his response was: In the long run, we will all be dead; no concern for the future, only for the immediate.

Our budget deficit for 2020 was \$3.3 trillion, but this new spending package will also give us another \$2 trillion in the next fiscal year. By refusing to acknowledge the debt crisis, we are only hastening the day of economic reckoning.

Total debt was 55 percent of GDP just 20 years ago. Today, it is 128 percent of GDP. So our annual or our total debt is more than our GDP—128 percent of our GDP. The World Bank estimates there

is a tipping point of debt to GDP at about 77 percent. Every percentage point costs another 10th or so of economic growth. So every year, we are giving out somewhere between 5 to 8 percent of growth every year because of this burden of debt. This is thousands of jobs, every year—tens of thousands of jobs that we lose because of this burden of debt.

We are borrowing and worsening this debt crisis in part because too many Governors and mayors have imposed heavyhanded restrictions that crush business. It isn't the pandemic that is killing the economy; it is the government's overzealous response that is killing the economy. The pandemic itself was disruptive, but Congress is being asked to help to perpetuate these lockdowns. The more money we give to the States, the more they keep us in lockdown.

Every bailout dollar printed and passed out to the Governors only allows these tin-pot dictators to perpetuate the lockdowns. Their rules are arbitrary and unscientific. Governors and mayors across the country are picking winners and losers.

Businesses, some that have been in families for generations, are being wiped out because they are not allowed to open. Restaurants have to close their doors for indoor dining, but then they are told they can open at limited capacity, but then they are told they have to close again. Then they are told they can open outside, and then they are told they can't open outside. Confusing doesn't even explain the half of it.

Bars are told they can only serve alcohol if people are sitting and not standing and only if they have heavy foods on their menus.

Restaurants are told they can serve outdoors, and then they have their permission revoked after they have sunk time and money converting their restaurant to outdoor services, but a caterer is told they can still serve outside.

Businesses are told they have to close at an arbitrary time determined by government officials, as though the virus only comes out late at night. A business in one ZIP Code can open, but one in an adjoining ZIP Code across the street has to close, as if the virus can't cross an imaginary line.

Airlines are allowed to fly, but hotels have to limit their occupancy, so you may not have anywhere to stay when you get there.

Mom-and-pop stores and specialty stores are forced to close, but big-box store competitors are allowed to stay open.

How is any business expected to survive with this kind of arbitrary regulation that changes from day to day? Meanwhile, many schools remain closed—despite overwhelming evidence showing kids can learn safely in person—which means parents can't go to work, which forces parents to leave their jobs and take care of homebound

kids. Now they have no income because the government forced them to leave their jobs to take care of their kids. And many kids are struggling with this improvised virtual school.

The need for help is real. I hear it every day from Kentuckians and across the country. But it is clear that government has worsened the economic damage and acted as the biggest obstacle to economic recovery.

There is no free money that can get us out of this situation. The only thing that can save us is to open the economy. If we give these tin-pot dictators—these Governors—more money, they are less likely to open the economy.

The answer is not printing up and distributing "free money"; it is opening the economy. We are not even debating the real answer to this. We are like, just print up the money and shovel it out the door, the deficit be damned, the threat of the destruction of our currency be damned.

We can choose to let our economies open with guidance and precautions but not obstruction. Let people rebuild their livelihoods. Reopen our schools so our kids can return and parents can go back to work.

Congress should do away with automatic spending increases and scrutinize where in the budget we can find savings to pay for the pressing needs arising from the pandemic, but we shouldn't simply print up money and pass it out to everyone. Or Congress can follow the status quo. Congress can continue to borrow from our kids—the same children we have locked out of our schools. Congress can keep enabling and shutting down businesses by force, spend all of today's money and all of tomorrow's money, and then good luck. Good luck figuring out how to pay for all of this massive debt.

It doesn't have to be this way. There is another alternative that won't be debated, and that alternative is to open the economy. It is not too late to change our course. Cut unnecessary spending. Eliminate waste. Stop fighting a \$50-billion-a-year war in Afghanistan that hasn't had a military mission in at least a decade.

Make the hard decisions now. We can't keep pretending that more debt is a sustainable policy course. "Leadership" is not passing on the problem to someone who can't protest; "leadership" is making the hard choices now. This is what we have to do.

I will oppose this new debt, and I will continue to sound the alarm until we change our course. Our country can be saved. We can survive this if we pull together. But adding more debt is a mistake. It is not the solution, and we should resist it.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I was going to speak in a few minutes, but things have been filed now appropriately.

Let me speak in my role not only as the Senator from Vermont but as the vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. We have had months of delay and painstaking negotiations. Sometimes those negotiations have gone all weekend long, until midnight, 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. But this afternoon, we will have before us a spending package. It includes all 12 appropriations bills for fiscal year 2021. It also includes a vitally important COVID relief package. Those are the numbers and figures, but let's talk about what it means.

It provides funding for programs that are critically important to the American people, and I would like to see it swiftly passed and on the President's desk. After all, it is not like we are suddenly rushing things. We are 2 months and 20 days into the fiscal year. It would be absolutely outrageous if we delayed it further.

As vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I worked hard to reach agreement on this Omnibus appropriations bill that will fund the Federal government through the remainder of the fiscal year, without relying on a long-term continuing resolution, as sometimes has been done in the past. That was not an easy task.

The budget caps are very lean this year, and we had to stay within those. They provided a less than 1-percent increase in nondefense discretionary spending, and that is to meet the needs of a nation that is reeling from the worst public health pandemic in a century.

Under normal circumstances, that would be difficult, but it is made even more difficult because of the global health and economic crisis we face. Notwithstanding the tight top line, we have produced a bill that provides important increases in programs that serve the American people and invest in our economy.

I think the bill finally drives a stake through the heart of the administration's effort to substantially diminish the role of government in helping Americans in need and in promoting economic growth.

We all know that President Trump's first budget proposed to substantially diminish the role of government. He wanted to cut nondefense spending by 9 percent in fiscal 2018 and 18 percent by 2021. He wanted to completely eliminate programs millions of Americans rely on every day. For 4 years, in Congress, leading Republicans and Democrats came together and we rejected these ill-conceived, arbitrary, and reckless cuts.

This year, I will say to my colleagues—those who have worked hard with us on the Democratic side and on the Republican side and who came together on this, and, especially, those who worked with us in the Appropriations Committee—we are going to do the same in rejecting these arbitrary cuts.

Now, this agreement is the product of weeks of hard work and compromise.

This is not the bill I would have written on my own. It includes things I support and, I must admit, some things I oppose. But that is often the way legislation is. No one Senator gets everything that he or she wants. But together, we can get things that the country wants, and on balance, passage of this bill is unquestionably in the interest of the American people.

Let me talk about some of those things. The omnibus spending bill includes increases for education and early childhood programs. It provides more funding for substance abuse and mental health services. I think every one of us knows, from what we hear from back home, that these services are of utmost importance in these extremely difficult times. It provides more for food assistance programs both here and abroad—the assistance that is desperately needed as many families struggle to survive during this pandemic. And it includes increases for housing and homelessness services to help those who are the most vulnerable. These are all programs that my fellow Democrats fought hard to include.

I support this agreement. As I said, I appreciate those who have worked with us weekends, holidays, and after midnight on so many nights. But I am deeply disappointed that Congress is so unforgivably late in completing our work. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever why this bill could not have been finished months ago.

I thank Chairman SHELBY, Chairwoman LOWEY, and Ranking Member GRANGER for their cooperation and partnership. We worked through our differences on the Omnibus spending bill. As the Big 4, we realized we had to balance the needs and requests of all of our Members. I urge all Members to support it.

That is for the Omnibus.

Now, before us today is a much delayed COVID relief package. It, too, is the product of bipartisan compromise, and while it falls short in some critical areas, I support the agreement. It is also long overdue. The American people have been waiting for help for far too long, and I am worried our Republican leadership took a wait-and-see approach. We were ready to go on this last summer, but for 270 days Majority Leader MCCONNELL and the Senate Republicans have blocked every reasonable effort to provide desperately needed relief, even as Members of their party said quietly: We wish we could do something.

Now, this package is far from perfect, but time is not on our side. We cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Let's look at what the good things are in here. It provides much needed investments in our economy with support for small businesses—small businesses like those in my State of Vermont or those in the State of the Presiding Officer or anybody else here. It provides relief for unemployed workers by extending unemployment bene-

fits into March. It makes investments in vaccine production and distribution. It supports health providers, educators and farmers and transportation providers. It provides critical investments to expand broadband in rural and low-income areas, access which is vitally important during these difficult times, when many schools and many businesses are operating remotely.

It includes another round of direct payments to millions of Americans who are still struggling to pay their mortgage or their rent and feed their families and heat their homes and meet their monthly obligations. Many can't do all those things. Now they will at least get help.

I urged that this bill also includes \$4 billion in emergency funding for the Gavi Alliance. Let me explain that. And I appreciate those Senators who supported me on that money, the emergency funding for Gavi. This is for the procurement and delivery of vaccines to countries around the world whose rudimentary public health systems are being overwhelmed by COVID-19, whose economies are in free fall due to the virus. We cannot defeat this global pandemic, and international travel and Congress will not recover without fighting the virus overseas.

Just as we did during the Obama administration when we were faced with Ebola, the administration and the Congress came together and said: Sure, we will protect here in the United States, but we will also work at getting rid of it in other countries because if it flourishes in another country, it is an airplane trip away from our country.

I support the package, but I want to be very clear. This COVID bill is only a first step. We have to do more. Vermonters and the American people need more.

The direct payments included in this package are a fraction of what we should have provided, given the dire financial situation of millions of people across this Nation. People are hungry. Unemployment continues to plague our economies. We should have acted months ago, but let's at least act on this today. Families are struggling to pay their rent and put food on their table.

I will continue to fight for more. I made hundreds of phone calls from my own State of Vermont. I talked to people whom I never met, but I know that they are people who are typical of Vermonters, but they are typical of people in any one of the States we represent. I hear the fear in their voice. I hear the concern they have. In the middle of winter, as snow is coming down, do we heat or do we eat? How many meals should we, as parents, go without so we can make sure our children are fed? How are children going to do school if they are hungry?

Look at State and local governments. Around the country, they have laid off over 1.3 million teachers, first responders, and other employees since March. They need our help. Sometimes

there are things that we don't talk about. Rates of spousal abuse and child abuse have increased during the crisis. We should be providing funds for the Violence Against Women Act and child abuse prevention grants, just as Republicans and Democrats joined me a few years ago when I greatly expanded—with the help of Senator MIKE CRAPO in a bipartisan fashion—the Violence Against Women Act and the things we did. None of us, even at that time, could have conceived of the crisis we are facing now in the country.

In my State, Vermonters are facing the coldest, darkest months of winter. They are struggling to heat their homes. And families need help paying their utility bills through the LIHEAP program, and we will help that program. When it is 20 degrees below zero and you have had 15 inches of snow overnight, you can't really look at this as an abstract thing and say: Golly, maybe we should have a program to heat our home. You are going to die if you don't.

And we are finally making progress in delivering a vaccine to the American people, but the pandemic is far from over. We know that, notwithstanding a lot of the things said about this is on its way and everybody is going to get one, there are huge gaps in all parts of our country and getting the vaccine to them.

I will be the first at the negotiating table to work with President Biden and the 117th Congress to address the many needs that remain unmet in this bill.

The House will send this bill over to us. I would urge all Members to vote on it when it comes here.

Again, I have to look back at the history of this body. I have to look at the people who have worked so hard on so many things over the years. I know that we have people in both parties who are trying to address the needs of our country.

I don't say this with pleasure but with sadness, I am the dean of the United States Senate. Next year, I will start my 47th year in this body. I have seen us come together at a time when it is needed, but then I see one of the greatest needs I have seen in my years in the Senate that we ignored for month after month after month. All of this could have been done in July or August or September or October or November, not at the very last minute.

And why didn't we? We had to take time. We had to take time breaking long tradition—all of the promises that have been given by the other side. We had to take time to move one special interest-supported judge after another to lifetime jobs, but they will be paid well. They don't have to worry about paying their bills.

In all 50 of our States, we had people being tossed out of their homes, tossed out of their apartments, lost their jobs, unable to feed their children, or the fear and anxiety a parent has in telling a child: No, I don't know what tomorrow will be like. I don't know what

next month will be like. We will pray, and we will hope, but I don't know.

We could have stopped that anxiety in June, when the House bill came over here, or in July or in August or September and October and November. We are doing some of it now.

But I ask every Senator to search their conscience. Wouldn't it have been better if all of us from both sides did something and said: Put everything else aside, put aside all the special interest nominations. Put that aside, and let's care for the one special interest we should have and that is the American people—care for those men and women who elected us from either party, who rely on us.

I have never seen this country so split apart or having such fear except for a privileged few, and maybe that includes us. I am not here to represent me. I am here to represent over 600,000 Vermonters and fulfill my oath to the whole country, 320 million Americans. What we should be doing is saying that never again will we let these kind of partisan politics slow us and not allow us to go forward.

We know, and it is easy to say now, we should have taken the bill that came from the House of Representatives last summer and brought it up on the floor. If anybody didn't like it, file an amendment to change it. Vote for it or vote against it. Vote for or against the amendments you might bring up. That is what we usually do. I know how to vote. I voted over 16,000 times. Why don't we just vote? If we had done that this summer, it may not be a perfect bill, but it would be better than where we are. Every Member—Republican and Democratic alike—would have had a chance to bring up their amendment. They could have made their case, either win or lose. We go to the committee conference; we have the bill done.

I say all this not to just be a technocrat of what needs to be done but to say this is how you reflect the needs of the American people.

We faced the threat of Ebola in the last administration. We stood together, both parties. We helped the countries that were suffering from Ebola and, in doing so, we protected the United States of America, and we helped those in this country who might face it. That was a shining moment. That was a moment of America at its best. This is not.

I do hope we can do better next year. I know as senior Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, I will fight to do better. But I also use my voice and what example I might give as dean of the Senate to say to both parties: Here is what we do.

I think of such examples as Bob Dole, one of the best leaders this Senate had, a Republican. He came together with Senator Pat Moynihan, one of the most brilliant Senators I served with, a Democrat. And that Republican and Democrat came together and set aside their philosophical differences, cared

for the country, and saved Social Security.

I could give so many more examples. That was a Senate that acted as a conscience of the Nation, and how did they do that? They appealed to our conscience. I just use that one example because people said that they couldn't possibly do the difficult things necessary to save Social Security. Democrats wouldn't give this; Republicans wouldn't give that. Instead, you had two Senators of conscience who said: We can do it. Let's do it. Let's use our leadership and our conscience to bring others together. And that distinguished the Republican Senator Robert Dole, and that distinguished the Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and they came together and we saved Social Security.

Those of us in the Senate in both parties who voted for the final package knew we were going to have to vote for some things that would be unpopular with constituencies. But instead of worrying about special interests or single-issue constituencies, we worried about the men and women of our States and what they would face if we didn't come together. And that is what we voted for, and we saved it.

I sometimes say that Senators are merely constitutional impediments to their staffs, but we could not do the work we do without the staff.

I want to thank the staff who worked tirelessly to produce the bill. By "tirelessly," I mean until after midnight many nights and weekends and holidays. When the rest the Senate had gone home, they were still working. I know them. Much of the time, I would be on the phone with them. I would be working with them and, finally, I would say: It is so late. Everybody should go to bed. When I woke up in the morning, there would be an email sent to me at 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock in the morning because they kept on working.

So I thank Chuck Kieffer, Chanda Betourney, Jessica Berry, Dianne Nellor, Jean Taol Eisen, Erik Raven, Doug Clapp, Ellen Murray, Scott Nance, Rachael Taylor, Alex Keenan, Michelle Dominguez, Tim Rieser, Dabney Hegg, and all the staff of the Senate Appropriations Committee on both bills. I would thank Chairman SHELBY's staff: Shannon Hines, Jonathan Graffeo, and David Adkins.

Normally, at this time, Senators might just put these names in the RECORD, but I wanted to say them out loud, on the floor, because they should hear their names said out loud and know how much I appreciate what they have done, not just for the U.S. Senate but for the United States of America.

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

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

ENCOURAGING THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES TO "BUY AMERICAN"

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to encourage all Americans to join the fight to support our Nation and our jobs and stand up against the growing threat of Communist China.

I have been saying it for months: Buying American products is the No. 1 thing we can do to support American jobs and stand up to our foreign adversaries.

There is a new Cold War occurring between the United States and Communist China, and we must be crystal clear about the negative impacts of continuing to buy Chinese-made products.

General Secretary Xi is a dictator and human rights violator. He is yet another Communist leader trying to be the dominant world power.

The Communist Party of China is stripping the people of Hong Kong of their freedoms—as the Presiding Officer experienced when he was over there—cracking down on dissidents, militarizing the South China Sea, supporting Maduro's genocide in Venezuela, surveilling its citizens, and imprisoning more than 1 million Uighurs in internment camps simply because of their religion.

Communist China is stealing American jobs and technology and spying on our citizens.

Is this the kind of nation we want to be sending our money to?

Absolutely not.

Washington politicians have been too concerned with short-term political success and have long ignored the long-term threats of Communist China to our way of life but not anymore. It is time to take action.

Now, more than ever, Americans must remember that every time we buy a product made in China, we are putting another dollar into the pocket of the people stealing our jobs and our technology, denying their people basic human rights and propping up dangerous dictators like Maduro in Venezuela.

We cannot continue to rely on countries like Communist China, which lied about the coronavirus and refused to be a partner in solving this crisis, for critical supplies.

This outbreak has shown why we need to end our reliance on foreign supply chains. As a nation, we need to finally take a stand and demand that Communist China is removed from our supply chain.

I am proud to lead my colleagues in a bipartisan resolution calling on Americans to buy products made in the United States whenever possible.

Buying American is not partisan, and I am glad my colleagues from both sides of the aisle are continuing to