

forces us to decide which one of these two rights wins out in those circumstances.

I personally, for one, and those who march tomorrow have chosen life—not because it is an easy choice but because, to me, it is a clear one because the right to live is the one right upon which all the other rights we claim depend. Without life, there is no speech to protect, and there is no religion to practice. Without life, frankly, nothing else matters.

I would point out that being pro-life is not just about the right to be born; it also means the right to live and to thrive. Once a child is born, that child depends on their parents or whoever their guardians are who are raising them, and they have a moral and legal duty to care for them—not just to feed them, not just to clothe them, not just to house them, but also to promote a safe and stable home and the chance at a good education and a better future.

That is why I deeply believe that pro-life must also mean being pro-parent. Being a parent is the most influential role anyone will ever have. It is the most important job any of us will ever have. That is why I worked to and we were successful in expanding the child tax credit 2 years ago. That is why I stand ready now to work with President Biden to expand it even further.

I am concerned about some of the details of the policies he has outlined. For example, his proposal appears to unfairly benefit parents who send their children to commercial childcare over stay-at-home parents or grandparents or other caregivers. But this is an area where we have a common goal and one where I believe we can find a way to work together.

It is also why I support creating the opportunity for every parent in America to have access to paid family leave, because no one should be thrown into welfare or debt or bankruptcy because they got pregnant, because they had a child.

It is also, by the way, why I support school choice. In America, rich parents can afford to send their kids to any school they want, and they do. Upper middle class parents can move to neighborhoods with good public schools. But it is unfair that the only parents in America who are forced to send their children to the school the government tells them—even if that school is failing their children—are the parents who don't make enough money to have another option.

For 21st-century America to move closer to fulfilling our founding principle of equality, of freedom, of fairness, every child deserves the right not just to be born but also the right to live and to thrive, the right not just to exist but the right to pursue and fulfill their potential.

I believe that what is at stake is nothing less than our identity as a nation. If we become a place where your right to be born and your ability to succeed is determined by who your par-

ents are or by the circumstances of your conception, then we may remain, indeed, a rich and a powerful and an important country, but we will no longer be a special one.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, it is nice to see you in the Chair, Mr. President. I haven't seen that for a while. Congratulations to you.

I feel like yesterday I was in the movie "Back to the Future." I rise today to voice my deep concern with the lengthy Executive order that President Biden issued yesterday pertaining to climate, and my larger concerns about where the Biden administration is moving with regard to their energy and environment agenda.

President Biden, very passionately, as we sat out on the steps, called for unity in his January 20 inauguration speech. But as his first actions, President Biden managed to kill thousands of jobs and paralyze America's industry—the energy industry.

His order yesterday put a moratorium on new oil and gas leases on Federal lands. This is an economic, energy, and national security disaster, in my view. This order moves America from energy independence back to relying on foreign sources for fuel—and a lot of times these are the countries that have much more lax environmental policies than we have right here in the United States.

The order also usurps our States' rights—the States' rights which are to manage their own energy industries.

As you know, I come from an energy-producing State. We have a proud heritage of that. So what about the States that rely on tax revenues from the energy industry to fund education? We see what has happened with education now under the pandemic. More headwinds into how do we deliver a great education product is a question we are going to be answering over the next several months and years. So any ideas?

I wonder if President Biden actually talked to any of the Governors of these States to see what the impact of what he was doing might have.

But what we saw yesterday in the press conference was President Biden and Gina McCarthy and John Kerry's ultimate goal, which is to ban fossil fuels. They were pretty upfront about that.

So my skepticism, when I hear that the administration is going to give industry time to transition and give workers a clean energy job—that is

where I found myself thinking: I am in "Back to the Future." I have heard this before because I vividly remember the empty promises of the past.

This is a deeply personal issue for me because I have lived through this. I have seen this playbook before. So we are back to the future.

The Obama administration said the very same things to West Virginians. In fact, I remember the same people saying the same things, and I remember the utterly unachievable regulatory requirements that Gina McCarthy created in her position as head of the EPA that decimated my State.

I remember the thousands of jobs lost—and still lost—and the hopelessness and then the succeeding opioid epidemic that followed.

I remember begging the Obama EPA to come to West Virginia to see how the regulations, with no time to transition, were destroying more of our State's economy. They were destroying our families. They really didn't seem to care. The only response I got in one of my hearings was, well, they will come to Pittsburgh. Well, that is not coming to West Virginia.

Look, I am not here to just put down the Biden administration. I want to work with the administration, and I am going to be in a position to do that as ranking member on EPW. I want to be a part of the solution. I am not a climate denier. We all need to take care of our planet. We must be good stewards of our Earth, of our water. We know it is the right thing to do.

The free market is already moving in that direction, which was part of the presentation yesterday. Private companies are cutting their emissions. That is awesome. And as we see the emission figures, they have gone way down over the last 15 years.

Consumers moving toward greener products? That is great. I find myself doing that in my everyday living, and it is great. I feel like, in some ways, I am doing my small part at home.

But a national energy transition really needs time, and the Biden administration needs to be very clear about what their timetables really are.

They also need to be very clear about who is really in charge here. This is another one of my concerns. President Biden's nominees—Michael Regan; Jennifer Granholm; Brenda Mallory, at CEQ, Janet McCabe; and even Pete Buttigieg—have all been tasked with addressing climate. They are going to be tripping all over each other, before you even consider those avoiding Senate confirmation, process all of this together—McCarthy, Kerry, and a whole host of other czars who aren't accountable to Congress. So who is really going to be making the decisions? I think, from yesterday's press conference, it is pretty clear what the answer to that question could probably be.

Will this Cabinet actually wield any power or will the decisions be made in the White House in an effort to avoid public and congressional scrutiny?

The American people really need to know. West Virginians need to know. New Jerseyans need to know. I will definitely be asking those questions in the upcoming hearing.

In closing, I would just like to say that America is a great and very proud energy producer. West Virginia has powered the country for decades, and we are incredibly proud of that fact. Coal, natural gas, oil, solar, wind, nuclear, biomass—our country has been incredibly blessed with energy resources, and using all of them keeps Americans safe and keeps our country running.

Eliminating fossil fuels from our energy mix will lead to higher utility costs and less reliability. So whom does that really hurt? It hurts those in the lower and mid-income category—the ones that are hurting right now because of this pandemic. And you can just ask California about the rising cost and the rise in unreliability of the grid.

Renewables can't power our country at 100 percent all the time right now. Maybe in the future, but right now they can't, and battery technology hasn't been able to fill that gap.

But we can address climate change together through innovation and technology. We already have new markets for coal and carbon products. We know investing in carbon capture and utilization and storage is critical. For a lot of reasons it is a win-win on both sides. We know new technologies are progressing every single day, and we have been working on this issue in a bipartisan way. Senator WHITEHOUSE and I were the main proponents of the 45Q credit for capturing carbon and reusing it.

But I am very concerned that President Biden's Executive order yesterday really alienated some of the key players in the conversation, and I don't think that is the way to build unity. Here we go—back to the future, picking winners and losers. That is pitting American jobs against one and the other, and that can create and will create resentment across the country.

So I urge the President—let's tackle these climate challenges together, not through overreaching Presidential orders and Federal regulations. This country has risen to every single challenge that we have had. This climate challenge is no different. I understand the urgency. I understand the issue. But with our American ingenuity, we can find these solutions together.

So let's make our future one that we build together.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it has been more than a year now since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed here in the United States. As the war against this virus has been fought, it has evolved over the last 12 months, and our country has been challenged like never before in my memory.

Healthcare workers across the country have heroically battled this cruel virus, often with insufficient equipment and personnel. Frontline workers in delivery trucks, grocery stores, and other essential businesses have kept the cogs of society running.

As a whole, we have hunkered down and tried to stop the spread of the virus until enough Americans could get vaccinated. We all have come to realize that is really the gold standard in defeating this virus. The Trump administration launched Operation Warp Speed to accelerate the research and development of therapeutics and vaccines to move us toward that goal as soon as possible.

Just last summer, when President Trump predicted we would have an effective vaccine by the end of the year, there was some serious skepticism—and you might even call it blowback—from some of the critics. One media outlet published a fact check saying it would require nothing short of a “medical miracle” to have a vaccine by the end of last year.

Thanks to the leadership on a bipartisan basis here and the marvels of science and human ingenuity, that so-called miracle came true not once but twice, and we are expecting more vaccines to eventually be approved in the near term. The world's brightest scientific minds used the foundation built by decades of vaccine research to craft lifesaving and, in fact, world-changing vaccines.

Less than 11 months after the first COVID-19 case was discovered in the United States, the very first vaccine was administered after it was approved—11 months. The number of Americans who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 is growing every day, and so far, more than 24.5 million doses have been administered nationwide.

Nearly 2 million of those doses have gone into the arms of my fellow Texans. Texas became the first State to administer 1 million doses—an accomplishment that underscores the hard work of our State and local leaders and our public health officials, our private partners and healthcare workers.

Every day, our public health experts are evaluating the current distribution process to make improvements and speed up the vaccination process. The State has now set up mass vaccination hubs to expedite distribution and administer as many doses as they can as quickly as they can.

While these sites are an efficient way to administer vaccines to Texans, we need to do more in rural parts of the country. I was glad to see in my State Governor Abbott's announcement that

the State is launching a mobile vaccine pilot program to ramp up vaccination efforts in rural parts of the State. Those vaccinations kick off today, and with the support of our incredible Texas National Guardsmen, more at-risk Texans will be vaccinated against this virus.

With currently two approved vaccines and potentially more on the way, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel, and it is getting bigger and brighter every day. But we can't take our foot off the gas—we all know that. Just as we led an aggressive effort to develop vaccines, it is time to redouble our efforts to distribute those vaccines.

I worry we are not starting off on a strong footing. In December, President-Elect Biden announced his administration's goals to get 100 million shots in the arms of Americans within the first 100 days of his Presidency. That announcement came about a week before the first doses of the vaccine were distributed—before we had a real-world test of the processes that had been in planning for months.

We are now several weeks into this nationwide vaccination campaign, and the Biden administration has stuck by this initial benchmark. The President has repeatedly described this as an “ambitious goal”—a statement that has led to a fair amount of head-scratching, not because it is too aggressive, as some people thought President Trump's proposed vaccine delivery date was, but because it is too modest.

One physician and public health expert described this as “a disappointingly low bar.” An Associated Press headline evaluated the situation pretty well when it said: “Biden's early approach to virus: Underpromise, over-deliver.”

The truth is, we were largely on track to meet President Biden's ambitious goal even before he took the oath of office. On Inauguration Day, more than 1.6 million doses had been administered, and over the last week, the average number of vaccinations has exceeded 1.5 million a day. It is hard to really frame this as a goal when in reality you could throw the entire operation on cruise control and surpass it.

On Monday evening, President Biden appeared to up the target to 150 million doses in the first 100 days, which would track with the 1.5 million doses we are currently seeing administered. But the White House Press Secretary walked back that claim the following day.

One hundred million doses in 100 days is certainly catchy, and I have no doubt the administration has tried to underpromise so it can be seen as over-delivering. That is not altogether a bad strategy. But the goal here is not to set a target you are almost certain to meet. After all, we didn't see the previous administration set a target of a successful vaccine by the summer of 2021, which is what many experts believed to be the most feasible. So I