

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

would urge the administration and all of us to accede to a truly ambitious vaccination schedule and motivate the newly assembled team at the White House to achieve it and to provide the resources that they may need from Congress in order for them to execute that plan. There is no reason to stick to a goal we were on track to meet before President Biden was even sworn in.

President Biden, of course, ran a campaign criticizing the previous administration's handling of the COVID-19 virus, and he campaigned on the promise to lead us out of that crisis. But this modest goal is not going to get us there fast enough.

Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston say we need to be vaccinating 3 million people a day. That is double the pace we are seeing right now and triple the Biden administration's self-described ambitious plan.

The past year has been full of scientific developments and bold action by Congress and the administration to develop and distribute vaccines to the American people. We simply can't afford to put it in cruise control now. Our only option is to mobilize every resource and to push as hard and as fast as we can to get the American people vaccinated and to finally bring an end to this pandemic.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### YEMEN

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, this is a screen shot from a video taken during a school field trip on August 9, 2018. These are Yemeni schoolchildren going to school in a northern governorate inside the country, and they are on their way either to or back from a picnic that they were having with their classmates.

As you can see, they are schoolchildren of elementary age—around 8, 9, 10 years old. They don't look any different than what school children here in the United States would look like on their way to a fun-filled school field trip. There is a little boy catching a little nap somehow amidst all of the den of the rest of his classmates so excited.

They are excited because there isn't and there wasn't a lot of fun to be had for schoolchildren in Yemen today or in 2018. A civil war still plagues that country and plagues Yemeni children who are too often facing starvation and disease, but on this day, there was fun to be had.

This is that schoolbus hours later. Forty children died when a U.S.-made

bomb dropped from the sky and hit this schoolbus. Not every child on that bus died, miraculously, but 40 children on the bus and around the bus did. It was a war crime.

The Saudis, in the aftermath of the incident, defended it saying that it was a legal action. They were targeting enemy leaders who were responsible for recruiting and training young children.

They hit a schoolbus in the middle of the day, right next to a crowded marketplace. It wasn't on a lonely road. It was in a crowded area. It is why not only people on the bus died, but children and families surrounding the bus died as well.

This was a military strike done, in part, as part of a coalition campaign of which the United States is a member. It is not just that we sold the bomb that hit this bus. We participated and still do participate in this military campaign in a myriad of ways.

For years, we flew planes in the sky that put fuel into the Saudi and Emirati jets that dropped these bombs. We embedded U.S. personnel in the operations center that planned these bombing campaigns, and maybe, most importantly of all, we lent moral authority to the Saudi-led campaign inside Yemen.

But over the course of our time as a coalition partner with Saudi Arabia, the war in Yemen has been a national security apocalypse for the United States. Our bombs and our planes have been used to kill thousands of civilians; 17,000 civilians have died inside Yemen since the beginning of this war.

The war has caused the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe on the ground inside Yemen. Over 100,000 children have died of starvation and disease. Yemen, since 2015, has been the site of the world's worst cholera outbreak anywhere in the world during all of our lifetimes—likely caused by the targeting of water treatment facilities by the coalition, of which the United States is a member.

And inside this country, Yemenis rightfully blame the United States for this cataclysm. They know that it is our equipment, they know that it is our bombs, and they know that it is that moral authority that the United States gives to this war through our decision to continue to take part in it, human rights crime after human rights crime.

It has radicalized a generation of Yemenis against the United States. It has made us part and parcel of repeated human rights violations, and it has created a chaotic environment on the ground in Yemen that has allowed for AQAP, the wing of al-Qaida with the clearest designs to hit the United States, again, room to govern and room to grow. AQAP and ISIS are able to operate and control territory inside Yemen because of the chaos created by this civil war.

Iran has grown stronger. At the beginning, Iran and the Houthis, who are on the other side of this civil war, had

a slightly tenuous connection, but as the war has dragged on, the Houthis have had to become more and more reliant on Iranian assistance and Iranian expertise. Iran has grown stronger and stronger inside Yemen and inside the region as this war persists. In every way, it has been a nightmare, from a security perspective, for the United States.

But with the election and inauguration of President Biden, our participation in this national security cataclysm is coming to an end. I come to the floor today to thank the Biden administration and to thank the incoming Secretary of State, Tony Blinken, for their recognition that it is no longer in our security interest to be a part of this.

The Biden administration has made several very important decisions that they have announced at the outset of their term in office: one, the plan to withdraw from the military coalition; second, a decision to suspend arm sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who are the primary participants in this coalition. UAE has dramatically scaled back their involvement—to their credit. The Saudis continue to fight this war on the ground and in the air.

And lastly—and, perhaps, most immediately importantly—the Trump administration announced that they were reserving an eleventh-hour decision by the Trump administration naming the Houthis a terrorist group.

Now, the Houthis are incredibly bad actors. The Houthis are also guilty of war crimes in and around this conflict. They recruit child soldiers. They deliberately hold up aid and don't allow it to get to the citizens in areas under which they control. The Houthis have a lot to answer for as well. But by naming them a terrorist group, what the Trump administration effectively did was to stop the international aid community from being able to deliver any aid into Yemen because the Houthis control some of the most important ports, and 80 percent of the aid is commercial food. That would have all stopped if you couldn't run aid through ports controlled by an organization named at the eleventh hour by the Trump administration as a terrorist organization.

The Biden administration has made a decision to suspend that designation to make sure that we are not going to end up with millions of people starving inside Yemen because the United States makes the decision to eliminate the ability of humanitarian groups to get food on the ground in Yemen. They are all incredibly important decisions that the administration has made—decisions supported by a majority of this body.

We have voted here in the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, to end the U.S. participation in the war in Yemen. We didn't have a veto-proof majority. So we couldn't overcome the President's veto. But there is a bipartisan coalition that believes the United States