

Hoeven  
Hyde-Smith  
Inhofe  
Johnson  
Kennedy  
Lankford  
Lee  
Lummis  
Marshall  
McConnell

Moran  
Murkowski  
Paul  
Portman  
Risch  
Romney  
Rounds  
Rubio  
Sasse  
Scott (FL)

Scott (SC)  
Shelby  
Sullivan  
Thune  
Tillis  
Tuberville  
Wicker  
Young

# NOT VOTING—1

Toomey

The motion was agreed to.

## SETTING FORTH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 5) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2021 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2022 through 2030.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that for the duration of the Senate's consideration of S. Con. Res. 5, the majority and Republican managers of the concurrent resolution, while seated or standing at the managers' desks, be permitted to deliver floor remarks, retrieve, review, and edit documents, and send email and other data communications from text displayed on wireless personal digital assistant devices and tablet devices. I further ask unanimous consent that the use of calculators be permitted on the floor during consideration of the budget resolution; further, that the staff be permitted to make technical and conforming changes to the resolution, if necessary, consistent with the amendments adopted during Senate consideration, including calculating the associated change in the net interest function, and incorporating the effect of such adopted amendments on the budgetary aggregates for Federal revenues, the amount by which the Federal revenues should be changed, new budget authority, budget outlays, deficits, public debt, and debt held by the public.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

### BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of the budget resolution that was introduced today.

Mr. President, let us be clear and let us in the Senate understand what the American people know all too well, and that is that our country is currently experiencing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and the worst public health emergency in over 100 years.

January marked the deadliest month of the pandemic, with over 90,000 Amer-

icans losing their lives as a result of COVID-19—90,000 Americans in 1 month.

In the midst of all of this, over 90 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured and are unable to afford to go to a doctor when they become ill.

The isolation and the anxiety caused by this pandemic have resulted in a horrible increase in mental illness, in depression, in anxiety, and in suicidal ideation.

Today, as we speak, over half of our people are living paycheck-to-paycheck, including millions of essential workers who put their lives on the line each and every day. More than 24 million Americans are unemployed, underemployed, or have given up looking for work, while hunger in this country—hunger in the richest country in the history of the world—is at the highest level that we have seen in decades.

Because of lack of income, over 14 million Americans are behind on their rent, averaging some \$5,800 per family, and many of those families face eviction all across this country. People are worried that when the moratorium on eviction ends, they are going to be thrown out of their homes, put out on the streets. Americans who worry about eviction understand that they must not join the half a million Americans who are already homeless.

That is some of what we are experiencing today. That is what the American people understand.

Meanwhile, in the midst of this devastation to the working class and middle class of our country, the wealthiest people in America are becoming much wealthier, and income and wealth inequality—a longtime problem—is now soaring. Incredibly, while families throughout the country are struggling to put food on the table to feed their kids during this pandemic, 660 billionaires—not a whole lot of people—have increased their wealth by over \$1 trillion.

As a result of this pandemic, education in our country, from childcare to graduate school, is in chaos. The majority of young people in our Nation have seen their education disrupted. Kids are not getting the learning that they need, falling further and further behind. On top of that, it is likely that hundreds of colleges will soon cease to exist.

In this moment of unprecedented crises, the Senate must respond through unprecedented action. The budget resolution we are debating today is simple, and it is straightforward. It will enable us to pass President Biden's \$1.9 trillion emergency COVID relief plan through reconciliation with 51 votes instead of 60.

Now, I have heard from some of my Republican colleagues who tell us: Well, this reconciliation concept, that is a radical idea. Why are you using reconciliation?

They are telling us that it is absolutely imperative that we go forward in a bipartisan way and require 60 votes

for passage. But I must say that when Republicans used this same reconciliation process, I didn't hear much about bipartisanship at that point. In fact, Republicans used the reconciliation process to provide trillions of dollars in tax breaks to the top 1 percent and large, profitable corporations by a simple majority vote. The only people who voted for that bill were Republicans—no bipartisanship in that bill.

My Republican colleagues used reconciliation to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for the drilling of oil—once again by a simple majority. The only people who supported that were Republicans—not one Democrat.

As we all remember, painfully, my Republican colleagues used the reconciliation process to try to repeal the Affordable Care Act and throw up to 32 million Americans off of the healthcare they currently have. As you will recall, that was a 100-percent partisan vote, which fortunately lost by one vote.

Further, weeks—weeks—before a Presidential election, the last election, my Republican colleagues pushed through their nominee for the Supreme Court with 50 votes. That was a few weeks before the election. Not one Democrat supported that nominee—a totally partisan vote.

Well, as the incoming chair of the Senate Budget Committee, this is what I believe: If Republicans can use reconciliation to help the wealthy and the powerful and pass legislation strongly opposed by the American people, we can and must use reconciliation to help Americans recover from the worst economic and public health crisis in the modern history of our country. In other words, now is the time for this Congress to stand with the working class and the middle class of this country and do what the overwhelming majority of the American people want us to do.

It is worth pointing out that poll after poll shows that an overwhelming majority of Americans—over 70 percent—support what President Biden and what we are trying to do. They know we have to act boldly.

So I hope we will not hear much more about bipartisanship, given my Republican colleagues' record on that issue.

Let us be clear. The working class of this country and the middle class are facing more economic desperation than at any time since the Great Depression. I have to tell you that to me, emotionally, it was a painful sight to see in my own city of Burlington, VT, hundreds of cars lined up so that families could get the food they needed to feed their kids. What happened in Burlington is happening in every State of this country. People—many of whom have never had any public assistance at all—are lining up to get emergency supplies of food in order to keep their families alive.

Whether it is the pandemic, which is killing 3,000 people a day; whether it is

the economic collapse, which is leaving millions of our people destitute; whether it is the disruption of education in this country, which means that kids are falling further and further behind, this Congress must act and act boldly.

For too long Congress has responded to the needs of the wealthy and the powerful and big-money campaign contributors. Now is the time, in this unprecedented set of crises, for us to respond to the needs of working families, whether they are Black or White, Latino, Native American, or Asian American.

It is no secret that millions of our fellow Americans are literally giving up on democracy—giving up on democracy. They think that the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Government does not care a whit about the needs of working people. The people who go to work every day, who keep our country going, who put their lives on the line during this pandemic, they look at us, and they say: Does anybody there in Washington—all you rich guys, do you understand what is going on in our lives?

Well, this week, during this debate, we are not only going to begin addressing the health and economic and educational crises we face, but maybe, even more importantly, we are going to begin the process of restoring faith in the U.S. Government. Maybe, just maybe, we can do what Abraham Lincoln talked about in the midst of the terrible Civil War, and that is, be a government and act like a government of the people, by the people, and for the people and not just powerful special interests and their lobbyists.

What will this budget resolution mean for the average American? I know we are throwing out a lot of numbers; \$1.9 trillion is a lot of money. What does it actually mean? How is it going to impact the lives of ordinary people? Let me just say a few words on that.

Everybody is concerned about the pandemic, which has taken so many lives and caused so much illness and suffering. What this legislation is about is an effort to aggressively crush the pandemic and enable the American people to return to their jobs and schools by providing the funding necessary to establish a national emergency program to produce the quantity of vaccines that we need. We need to increase vaccine production, and, equally important, we need to significantly improve the distribution of vaccines so that we get them into the arms of people as quickly as we can.

What this legislation means is that during this severe economic downturn, we must make sure that all Americans—low-income people, working-class people, middle-class people—have the financial resources that they need to live with dignity. This budget resolution will allow us to keep the promises that we made to the American people and increase the \$600 in direct payments for working-class adults and their kids up to \$2,000—another \$1,400.

I want you just to think—whether it is Connecticut or Vermont or South Carolina or anyplace else—think about, during this terrible crisis, what it will mean to an average family to suddenly get a check for \$5,600 for a family of four on top of the \$600 per person that they received a few weeks ago. Think about what that will mean to people who are losing hope right now.

Passing this budget resolution will give us the tools we need to raise the minimum wage to a living wage of \$15 an hour, expand unemployment benefits, expand the child tax credit, and prevent eviction, homelessness, and hunger.

Passing this budget resolution means that during this raging pandemic, we will be able to provide healthcare to millions of Americans who are uninsured and underinsured by expanding Medicaid, improving the Affordable Care Act, and other approaches.

Passing this budget resolution means that we will go a long, long way forward to addressing the long-term problem of childhood poverty in America, and that is that by expanding the child tax credit, we have the opportunity to cut childhood poverty in this country in half and no longer be the major country on Earth which has one of the highest rates of childhood poverty.

Let me very briefly mention a few of the specific provisions in the budget resolution that will enable the Senate to pass this budget under reconciliation.

First, as I just mentioned, the overwhelming majority of the American people have told us very loudly and clearly that the \$600 direct payment that Congress passed in December was a good start but is not enough. In this bill, we are going to increase that \$600 by another \$1,400.

We cannot continue to allow workers in America to work at jobs that pay them a starvation wage. A United States of America job should lift you out of poverty and not keep you in it. So let us be clear: When we increase that minimum wage to \$15 an hour, not only will we be providing a much needed raise for tens of millions of American workers, we will also, by the way, save taxpayers many billions of dollars each and every year.

Moreover, this pandemic has caused tens of millions of American workers to lose their jobs through no fault of their own. For 45 consecutive weeks, unemployment claims have been higher than during the worst week of the great recession in 2008. This budget resolution that we are considering now will provide the funding necessary to provide 18 million Americans with \$400 a week in supplemental unemployment benefits until the end of September.

So, if you are watching us—if you are watching TV now because you are unemployed when you would rather be at work—understand that this bill will extend unemployment \$400 on top of the normal unemployment your State provides until the end of September. We have not forgotten the unemployed.

Further, all of us know that we have a childcare crisis in America. It was severe before the pandemic. It is even worse now. This budget resolution would begin to provide the resources necessary to provide childcare to 875,000 children in America, and it would expand the child tax credit from \$2,000 to \$3,000 and \$3,600 for kids under the age of 6. In other words, we hear what working families are going through, especially those who are struggling and have children. This will be a major, major step in improving lives and easing anxiety for young couples with kids.

In addition, let us not forget this pandemic has had a horrific toll on the finances of State and local governments, many of which are literally on the verge of bankruptcy. Over the past 10 months, State and local governments have laid off some 1.4 million workers, including 50,000 in December alone. These are teachers, firemen, cops, and other municipal and State employees. The budget resolution that we are debating today will provide \$350 billion to prevent mass layoffs of public sector workers in State and local governments. The Congressional Budget Office has said that the best bang for the buck of all the money Congress has passed so far for COVID relief is to aid State and local governments.

Further, if there is one thing this horrific pandemic should have taught all of us, it is that we must no longer consider healthcare as simply an employee benefit. Healthcare must be a human right. It is unacceptable to my mind that over 14 million Americans have lost their employer-provided health benefits over the past 10 months. Over 14 million workers have lost their health coverage, impacting even more people because there are wives and husbands and children involved as well.

This budget resolution, will, among other healthcare provisions, enable the Senate to expand Medicaid. It will allow more Americans to receive the primary care that they need through community health centers. It will address the serious shortage of doctors and nurses in rural areas and inner cities by expanding the National Health Service Corps and will make sure that our veterans receive the healthcare that they have earned and deserve by increasing funding at the VA by \$17 billion.

In addition, in the wealthiest country on Earth, we can no longer tolerate hunger in America, and this budget resolution will enable the Senate to provide nutrition assistance to tens of millions of families struggling to get the food that they need—and that includes the disabled and the elderly—by expanding SNAP, WIC, and the Pandemic EBT Program.

In America today, some 14 million Americans owe an average of \$5,800 in back rent. If we do not get our act together, tens of millions of Americans will soon face the possibility of being

thrown out of their apartments and homes and onto the streets. This budget resolution that we are debating will provide the funding for rent relief, utility assistance, and mortgage relief to millions of tenants and homeowners who are in danger of eviction or foreclosure.

It also deals with the shame of homelessness in America. Today, in the midst of the dead of winter, we cannot have hundreds of thousands of Americans sleeping in homeless shelters, in their cars, or out on the streets. And right here, in walking distance from this Capitol, there are tents located in parks where Americans are sleeping in the middle of the winter.

This resolution provides investments in appropriate housing that will protect the health of our people and help decrease COVID-19 transmissions with safe and socially distant housing.

Further, all of us must acknowledge that there is a pension crisis in America today. As a result of the greed on Wall Street, workers and retirees and multiemployer pension plans are in danger of seeing their retirement benefits cut by as much as 65 percent. That is unacceptable. Promises were made to those workers, and the U.S. Congress cannot renege on those promises.

Not only is this \$1.9 trillion emergency COVID-relief package the right thing to do from a moral perspective and a public policy perspective, it is exactly what the overwhelming majority of the American people want us to do. According to a recent poll from Change Research, nearly 70 percent of the American people support President Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 plan; 83 percent support boosting direct payments from \$600 to \$2,000; 64 percent support raising the Federal minimum wage to 15 bucks an hour; and 62 percent of voters support additional unemployment benefits.

We are living in an unprecedented moment in American history. The last year has been a year the likes of which none of us have experienced in our lifetime. And the American people, who are living in pain, in anxiety, in isolation—they are looking to the U.S. Senate, and they are saying: Are you going to hear and understand what we are going through? Are you going to do something to address the terrible problems in terms of healthcare, the economy, and education that we are experiencing?

It is no great secret that, for many years, the Congress has listened very attentively to the needs of billionaires, to the needs of campaign contributors, and to the needs of lobbyists. Now is the time for us to listen to the needs of working families, the elderly, the children, the sick, the disabled, and the poor. Now is the time to restore confidence that the American Government works for all of us and not just the few.

I urge passage of this important, important piece of legislation.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I will be responding to my good friend Senator SANDERS. Apparently, I will be the ranking member on Budget; he will be the chairman. And I look forward to finding some common ground where we can. Today is not that day, but hope springs eternal. There are things I think we can do on the Budget Committee that will be good for the country.

Here is the other side of the story. About a year ago—a little over a year ago—the pandemic coming out of China was detected, COVID, on the west coast of the United States. It has just done a number on us as a nation. Over 440,000 people have died from COVID-related infections. We finally got vaccines. They are in the pipeline. We need to get them out quicker, but I do believe that the vaccines are going to help us a lot.

To the American people who have been suffering, I think better days lie ahead, but we are not there yet.

But here is what is different. February 2, 2021, things changed. Up until now, we have been able, as a Congress and with the White House, to pass things together regarding COVID. We passed over \$4 trillion of COVID relief in a bipartisan fashion up until today. Now, how was that done?

You had a Republican President—President Trump—working with a Democratic-controlled House and a Republican-controlled Senate beginning of January—I guess, March of last year. Here is what we were able to do together. Phase 1, we approved 96 to 1 the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020. It was \$8 billion. That was early on last year when we really didn't know what we were dealing with.

Then, we did \$355 billion, 90 to 8. Then, the next was \$1.9 trillion. Listen to this: We spent \$1.9 trillion, 96 to nothing. So it is not like we don't see a need to spend money. Ninety-six to nothing, this body agreed to spend \$1.9 trillion last year.

After that, we did the paycheck protection enhancement of \$355 billion by voice vote. It is not like people on this side don't see a need.

We had a continuing resolution where we added another \$8 billion, 84 to 10.

In the omnibus, we did another \$1.04 trillion, 92 to 6.

So when you add all this up, we have appropriated \$4 trillion to deal with the problems associated with COVID—money for people who have been struggling, money for hospitals and doctors, money for vaccine development and distribution, direct payments, the PPP program to keep small businesses from going under that can't operate at full capacity. It has been a great program. It was bipartisan until now.

Here is what I want the American people to know: We have done a lot together, and of the \$4 trillion we have appropriated, to date, we have spent \$2.7 trillion.

Of the Federal Reserve actions we took allowing the Federal Reserve to help business, we had a \$5.7 trillion market cap, for lack of a better term, and we have allocated \$2.6 trillion.

The bottom line is, of the \$900 billion that we passed recently—a little over \$900 billion—we have only spent 20 percent of the money. And here we are being asked for another \$1.9 trillion.

What is different between the first \$1.9 trillion and this request? When it was first offered, the \$1.9 trillion, it was the largest single appropriation, I think, maybe in the history of the country since World War II. And the fact that 96 Senators would come together and pass it 96 to nothing tells you about the way we saw the problem. And we have been adding and adding and adding.

Now we are to a point where the Biden administration is proposing \$1.9 trillion of additional spending. We haven't spent the money we have allocated—nowhere near the money we have allocated. And you have a bipartisan group of Republicans—10—who went to the White House yesterday and said: What about a little over \$600 billion? See if that is enough.

I am afraid the answer is going to be no.

So what has happened here? Democratic colleagues have won the White House. And Biden is President; he won. It is a 50-50 Senate. The Vice President makes it a Democratic-controlled body, to the extent that the Vice President breaks ties. And you have a smaller majority in the House than we have had in the last 20 years. But the consequence of what I have just described is that my Democratic colleagues are now in charge of everything.

When it was divided government—when you had a Republican President, a Republican Senate, and a Democratic House—we were able to come together with overwhelming votes to help the American people. Now we find ourselves at a crossroads. Our Democratic colleagues are using a process called budget reconciliation that begins today that would allow them to pass the \$1.9 trillion basically on a party-line vote—a simple majority, not reaching the 60-vote milestone.

The 60-vote problem was never a problem up until now because Republicans and Democrats were able to work together up until now. What changed? They have got it all. Everything we told you would happen in the election is coming true. You have one party in control of Washington, and they are seizing the moment.

What a \$15-an-hour minimum wage has to do with fighting COVID, I don't know. But I do know this, now is the worst possible time to increase the cost on small businesses in South Carolina in the restaurant-hospitality industry. You are about to hit them with two government mandates that are going to put them out of business. They are all struggling.

A lot of States have reduced capability in terms of indoor dining. DC, I

think last week, for the first time, you could dine indoors at 25-percent capacity. States all over the country have different rules about how small business operates.

The tourist industry is just about squashed. So people in the hospitality industry, in the restaurant business, and in the service industry, if this bill passes the way it has been proposed, are going to have a \$15-per-hour per-employee mandate. That is going to sink them. They are going to have to lay a lot of people off because they are barely making it as it is.

Here is what we are doing to those businesses. State and local governments are mandating a reduction in revenue. Why? Because you reduce the capability to earn money by reducing seating capacity and the other things associated with fighting COVID. So what does the Congress do? Do we relieve that burden by having more PPP? No. We increase your cost of doing business.

This \$15-an-hour minimum wage increase will dramatically increase the cost of doing business to small businesses at a time they can afford it the least. There are people out there working today that will be out of work tomorrow if this bill passes.

My Democratic colleagues have taken the energy sector head-on. They stopped the Keystone Pipeline. I don't know how many thousands of jobs would be affected by that. But all of these mandates and all of these changes in policies are making it really hard right now to employ people.

So count me in for more COVID relief once I understand how the money we have previously allocated has been spent.

I think continuing to spend at this level, without understanding what the money in the past has done, is not very responsible. We have only spent 20 percent of the \$900 billion we passed just a few weeks ago. Now we are going to do \$1.9 trillion more?

Of the \$4 trillion we did together, \$2.7 trillion has been spent. Over \$1 trillion is sitting there not spent yet.

So I guess the point I am trying to make, and my Republican colleagues, is that this \$1.9 trillion package, there has been no effort to make it bipartisan. We are spending a lot more money before we understand how the money we spent actually works. And some of the policy provisions in this package, I think, are going to do more damage to the economy that is struggling to get back on its feet than good. But they have the power, and they are using it.

He is right, Senator SANDERS. When we had this authority, we cut your taxes through budget reconciliation. That is what we did, so it is not like Republicans haven't used this process. Democrats used it pretty much to pass ObamaCare. But this is one area where there has been pretty much a common view of things.

Taxes are different between Republicans and Democrats. Who decides

what healthcare you get—there are some people like my good friend from Vermont who wants single-payer healthcare. That is one way of doing it. I just disagree. Everything is about trying to help people. I don't doubt the motives; I just doubt where we are headed is a good outcome for the American people.

So the bottom line is, up until now, we have had bipartisanship when it comes to COVID relief. The reason that bipartisanship has stopped is because we have one party in control of the U.S. Senate, the House, and the White House.

Here is what I think: That is going to end not well because it is not like we don't want to help people; we just have a different view of how to help. And we would like to let some of the money we have already appropriated go to work and see how well it works and fill in gaps where you need to fill in gaps.

Count me in for more payments, direct payments, beyond \$600. Count me out for giving \$2,000 payments to people who make almost \$200,000 a year. I think it needs to be more targeted. I don't mind having more direct payments; I would like to make it more targeted. And I don't mind discussing raising the minimum wage when the COVID problem passes and we get back on our feet; I do mind doubling it in the middle of a pandemic.

And I do believe that this \$1.9 trillion package is going to do more harm than good to the American economy.

The reason we are having this debate the way we are having this debate is because they have unlimited power, my Democratic colleagues.

You have chosen to do this. The 10 Republicans who went down to the White House—I appreciate their effort. Maybe some good will come from that. But this process we are engaged in today makes me wonder if it was worth their time. Maybe we can pull a rabbit out of the hat and find a bipartisan compromise consistent with what we have done over the last year. If not, we are going to march down the reconciliation road. We are going to take \$1.9 trillion of spending and let one party spend it. We are going to have one point of view about this money. We are going to let people spend \$1.9 trillion without any input from the other side of the aisle, in a 50-50 divided Senate.

I don't know what you got from the last election. Here is what I got: We did better in the House than I thought we would do; President Trump lost, but it was still a close election from an electoral college point of view; and the Senate is 50-50. I don't think the message from the last election was "We want Democrats to spend \$1.9 trillion and deal Republicans out." That is exactly what you are doing.

It would be different if we had had a history over here of trying not to help. We were able, 96 to 0, to spend \$1.9 trillion less than a year ago. And now we want to spend \$1.9 trillion again—after the money previously allocated hasn't been spent?

All I am suggesting to my Democratic colleagues is, we are going to have a different view on taxes, and we are going to have a different view on healthcare, but this is the one area where I really do believe there is a bipartisan middle ground to be had.

To Senator SANDERS, there may come a time where I will work with you to raise the minimum wage.

The PPP program has been highly successful. The \$600 billion proposal by Republicans has more money for that. It has more direct payments, but it is more targeted.

Senator MANCHIN said that he wants more direct payments, but he wants it targeted to people on the lower economic end.

MIKE ROUNDS—one of our colleagues from South Dakota—got a check.

The bottom line is, I don't mind helping people, but there has to be some sense that we can't just constantly write checks and hope one day that doesn't come back to bite us.

One thing about a \$15-an-hour minimum wage now—I think what it does is put pressure on businesses that can't stand any more pressure. It is going to cost people jobs that have a job. It is going to do more harm than good in this environment.

When you combine the mandate of increasing wages where the \$15 an hour is the least wage and add what we are doing in terms of restricting income generation, that is a formula for disaster for small businesses.

This is it. If this bill passes the way it is written, there are going to be thousands of people out of work who were previously working in a small business that is going to fold. How does that help COVID?

If you don't believe that, you are not really walking and talking to the people out there on the frontlines of this economy. The tourism industry in Myrtle Beach, SC, has been decimated. You can't fly from one State to the other without a 2-week quarantine. Hopefully, that will begin to pass when we get vaccine distribution at a higher level. But people along the coast of South Carolina in the hospitality tourism business are hanging by a thread.

The PPP program has been a lifeline. The last \$900 billion package had a new round of PPP money. If we need more money, count me in. Again, I would like to have a higher direct payment but not to people who make \$150,000, \$200,000 in combined income.

This package is going to be devastating to the hospitality service industry. It is going to take us down a path we haven't gone before, which is a partisan approach to COVID. And I do believe—and maybe I am wrong—that with some effort on our part, we can reconcile the difference between what our Republican colleagues proposed and what President Biden has proposed and find some middle ground like we have in the past, but there doesn't seem to be a real effort to do that.

All I can say is that the American people want us to work together for

their benefit, and this will be the first time that I can recall where we have spent \$1.9 trillion based on one party's view of things. That is not good. That is a lot of money—and it is so unnecessary.

I would encourage Senator SANDERS and my colleagues on the other side to give a chance to this negotiation and see if we can get there. I hope we can, but this is not the right way. What we are doing today is going to set into motion partisanship where there was previous bipartisanship.

President Biden said he wanted to unify the Nation. You have picked the one topic that we have been pretty unified on, and you are going to disrupt that unification.

The first COVID package had a \$600 Federal supplement to State unemployment benefits, and I looked at that. My family was in the restaurant business. Senator SANDERS gave statistics about support of the public. You are literally paying people more not to work than work.

I want to help people because they are out of work—no fault of their own because of COVID—but when we went to \$600, we were paying people \$23 an hour, I think, in South Carolina not to work. That did not go over well with the public at large. We are trying to reduce that Federal supplement down to \$300, not \$600, to help people who are out of work but not to incentivize people not to go back to work when the economy is beginning to open.

In this package, we go back to \$400, and it goes all the way to September, which means it is going to be harder to hire people back when the economy does show signs of reopening. And it is beginning to show signs of coming back. The faster the vaccine is distributed, the more people who get inoculated, the sooner we can go back to business.

I would just say to my Democratic colleagues: You have chosen this path. All of us are going to vote no to \$1.9 trillion in spending—not because we don't care; it is because we would like to see what the money we spent in the past is doing before we add another \$1.9 trillion.

A lot of the provisions in your proposal, we think, have very little, if anything, to do with COVID, and it would be unfortunate if we go down this road. But we are not in charge.

Now, 2022 will be here before you know it. Hopefully, by 2022, we will have the American people build up immunity to COVID, and our economy will come back the way it was before the COVID pandemic. Before the pandemic, the economy was doing well for all sectors of the American people. I think one of the things that helped was that tax cut that Senator SANDERS opposed. But we can have political debates about that.

The point I am trying to make is, up until this moment in time, we have been able to achieve overwhelming bipartisan support dealing with the

COVID problem that we all face. It really is disappointing and disheartening that we are going to abandon that model when I don't think we have to. But that will be up to my Democratic colleagues. That will be up to President Biden.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

And finally, a message to President Biden: You won; we lost. You are the legitimate President of the United States. I want to help you where I can. I just got a briefing about what you are proposing in Afghanistan. I think it is darned good.

There are plenty of things we can do around here together—on foreign policy and domestic policy. It doesn't have to be a fight to the death all the time.

The infrastructure bill is there for the taking. I think most Americans realize our roads and our bridges and our ports need upgrading, and count me in for that. There are things that we can do.

President Biden, you can do something too. You can say: Slow down in the Senate. Slow down in the House. I am going to see if I can find middle ground.

I am telling you right now that \$1.9 trillion being spent the way this bill envisions is not responsible. We haven't spent the money we have previously allocated. There is a lot in this bill that will cost jobs at a time we need jobs, and you are not going to help the COVID crisis by putting somebody out of work because of a government mandate that business can't afford to fulfill because they are hanging by a thread.

We will have some time in the next couple of days to talk about what is in the package, what is not, our view of how this thing should all unfold. I will yield back here with a sense of optimism.

To my Republican colleagues who went to talk to the White House, count me in. If you can work something out, I would like to be able to help. It is not like there is not some more money that can be spent, but this approach—the way you are spending the money, the amount of money in this approach, I think, is going to make this place less unified. If you are looking for unity, this is a lousy way to get it.

With that, I yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, we have already begun to hear a little revisionist history with respect to this crucial issue. There was exactly one amendment on the CARES Act, and that amendment, supported by almost every Senator on the other side of the aisle, basically would have blown up the law that I put special focus on because it was deemed the only way to get expanded unemployment benefits out to folks in a timely way.

We were told that there was all this bipartisanship. Yet on the crucial issue, that wasn't the case because that

benefit, in particular, is what helped scores and scores of communities all across the country stay afloat because that money was spent locally. It was spent on rent. It was spent on groceries. And most of all, it was weekly. Yet there was exactly one amendment on the original legislation, and that one amendment was to blow up the only way to get checks out to folks relatively quickly—point No. 1.

Point No. 2, these were not folks who didn't want to work. They were told by their government—told by their government—that they really needed to be at home to deal with the virus. These folks want to work; there is no question about it.

We are going to talk about this, I imagine, in this debate, but study after study has shown that the expanded unemployment during this period was not a disincentive to work. There is just no evidence of that. In fact, when we look at crucial periods of time when people might have stayed home, they were rushing to get back to work.

We are going to discuss this, and I am going to start the debate now on where we are at this moment because I think this discussion comes down to a simple proposition; that is, whether millions of workers and their families should have to spend years and years living in the wreckage of the COVID economy. The jobs recovery for millions is going in reverse.

Millions of Americans have lost jobs through no fault of their own. Maybe they were working at the airport. Maybe they were tending bar. Maybe they were teaching our kids when the worst pandemic—the worst pandemic in a century—swept the United States. They didn't do anything wrong.

The question now is whether the U.S. Senate is going to step in with big policies to actually be of help to them or whether it is going to quit on those workers when they need a modest amount of assistance until everybody gets vaccinated.

President Biden has a strong, focused plan that is going to meet the moment, get relief to workers in the middle class, and kick-start the jobs recovery. The plan that was brought forward yesterday by 10 Republican Senators doesn't come close to meeting that bar.

The debate isn't a whole lot more complicated than that. I am glad that there is some agreement on both sides for funding vaccines. Yet the economic divide in this debate is very clear.

Here are the key facts as we start this discussion. The independent experts at the Congressional Budget Office released a new report yesterday that shows how long-lasting this jobs crisis is really going to be. According to the Budget Office, it could be more than 5 years before the unemployment rate even begins to approach where it was a year ago.

Millions of workers could stay stuck on an economic tightrope, worried about eviction, worried about going hungry, wages to flatline for the better part of the decade.

Americans know what happens when Congress takes its foot off the gas, slows down the recovery, because that is what happened a little bit over a decade ago—12 years exactly. The great recession hit, but in early 2009, the Senate decided, we are going to go small. I was around. Everybody was told: You know, not so bad if you go small because the Senate will get a second bite at the apple. Nobody ever got a second bite at the apple, and workers suffered and suffered some more. In my home State, it took 7½ years in Oregon for the unemployment rate to fall back to where it was before the recession.

Recent history tells us you have to go big. We are hearing from economic experts telling the Senate to go big. Treasury Secretary Yellen, fresh off her unanimous, 26-to-0 vote in the Finance Committee, and Fed Chair Powell are saying: Go small and you make a big mistake.

That is why the outline that a group of my Republican colleagues brought forward this week just does not get the job done. It is the same playbook as 2009, and it leaves too many workers on the economic tightrope for years to come.

The budget resolution before the Senate has some big solutions on the economy and for our workers. Right off the top, it makes investments in vaccines and care that is needed to end the pandemic as quickly as possible. This is the No. 1 way to get the lives of Americans back to normal. It is not going to happen overnight.

In the meantime, our economy needs another rescue package. That is what the resolution, the budget resolution, essentially sets up. It is hard to figure, when you are at home, all of the legalese and lingo, but now we are really dealing with the lives and the well-being of the American people, and this is what starts us in the right direction.

Here are three examples of why this resolution is so important.

First, it sends big financial support to jobless Americans. There is not going to be a full jobs recovery as long as it is unsafe to go to restaurants indoors or go to conventions or pack fans in the basketball arenas. Those workers need help.

As I mentioned when we heard a little revisionist history on the expanded unemployment earlier, as the ranking Democrat on the Finance Committee, I negotiated the \$600-per-week boost and expansion of unemployment insurance last year in the CARES Act. It was an economic lifesaver for workers who used that money to pay rent, to buy groceries, and to cover the cost of medicine. I still have those workers come up to me and say: RON, I heard about what was going on in the Senate. You all gave me the money to pay for my car insurance, because if I didn't have that car insurance, life in our family would just fall apart.

So contrary to what we heard earlier—and during the course of this debate, I am going to put several studies

into the RECORD. There has never been hard evidence that enhanced, expanded unemployment benefits in any way held back the recovery. In fact, when enhanced unemployment benefits expired last summer, the job recovery actually slowed down.

In December, our colleagues on the other side extended unemployment insurance just to mid-March, and they cut the additional benefit in half. I believe that was also a big mistake. Between the worst economy since World War II and the pandemic entering its second year in America, you couldn't find a worse time for Senators to start nickel-and-diming workers—hard-hit workers—out of the relief they so desperately need.

As I noted, there was just one vote, only one vote in the original CARES package, and that vote was led by my colleagues who would have blown up the only way to get benefits in a relatively quick way out to millions of workers.

In my hometown, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,750. Traditional unemployment insurance benefits don't come anywhere near paying that rent. If you are a single parent trying to raise one or two kids, even with the expanded benefit, you are barely making ends meet. If you are a two-income household, it can also be a big struggle. Nobody is going out buying boats with their unemployment insurance benefits. They are spending it at corner stores, local markets, going to the pharmacy, paying for medicine for kids who aren't feeling well.

The budget resolution before the Senate calls for a 6-month extension with an extra boost of \$400 per week. It is a proposal that I support. In later packages, I want colleagues to know, I am going to keep pushing for the full \$600. And I believe that Congress ought to tie the extension of unemployment benefits to economic conditions in our communities, to economic conditions on the ground. It is just common sense.

Unemployment insurance works best when it covers all workers, when it pays an adequate benefit, and when Members of the U.S. Senate can't politicize it by setting arbitrary dates and setting up cliffs when people are going to get cut off of those benefits.

Second, the budget resolution helps bring back jobs. The RESTAURANTS Act is a vital jobs program. It will save a lot of jobs in one of the industries hardest hit by the pandemic, and it is particularly important because a lot of restaurants weren't able to take advantage of the PPP, the Paycheck Protection Program.

Another key jobs proposal that is part of this resolution is help for States and localities. I want to make something clear for the record about State and local funding because this has been attacked by our colleagues on the other side since last March. I would bet my last dollar that somebody will come down to the Senate floor this

week and rail about the so-called blue State bailout and say it is all waste. That is nonsense.

State and local funding is first and foremost about jobs that are a lifeline. It is about firefighters. It is about road crews. It is about sanitation workers. It is about public health employees. It is about teachers. It has nothing to do with red States or blue States; it is about saving people's jobs in communities across the country, and those are jobs where they are out saving people's lives. Nearly 1.5 million of these essential workers have already lost their jobs since the pandemic began, and unless Congress provides funding to States and localities, even more will be laid off this year.

Third, the budget resolution is going to put money into the pockets of working families and the middle class. The fact is, tens of millions of American families are literally one financial setback away from devastation. That should have been clear before the pandemic. There is certainly no denying it today.

Increasing relief checks to \$2,000 is going to help, especially because so many workers have lost hours or taken lower paying jobs than they had a year ago. But the budget resolution also includes fresh ideas from President Biden and colleagues on this side to increase family incomes—first and foremost, expanding the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit. In my view, this is long overdue.

People always ask, well, what is it really going to do? What is it going to do that is meaningful to our country? What we are told is that effort is going to cut child poverty in half. Just try to put your arms around that.

When you go home to talk to folks and they ask, hey, what is going on there, you can say, I am part of an effort—a sensible effort which for many years had some real Republican support—I am supportive of an effort to cut child poverty in half, give millions and millions of families a chance to get ahead. It sure sounds to me that a policy like that is a no-brainer.

I am going to close by briefly addressing arguments I have heard coming from the other side.

First, I heard a number of Members say that the price tag is too high. Well, I will tell you, if you voted for Donald Trump's deficit-financed handouts to multinational corporations and billionaires, you cannot credibly argue that the relief for workers is fiscally reckless. And the fact is, the deficit isn't going to get better until unemployment comes down and the economy gets back to strong and consistent growth.

Second, I have heard some Senators suggest that the budget resolution is bad for unity. My answer to that is, the only place where big, bold economic relief is a divisive proposition is within the four walls of the U.S. Senate. We have seen the polls—overwhelming support for these key positions, the key



policies that are part of this budget resolution. I would submit to my colleagues, the only place where there is really a strong division on the value of this budget resolution is within the four walls of the Senate.

The last point is a little bit personal. The President of the Senate and I have known each other a lot of years. We worked very closely in the other body and here. I, over time, have gotten a fair amount of flak for sometimes being too bipartisan, doing too much to try to bring both sides together. I always will say—always—it is better if you can find common ground.

But calls for unity aren't supposed to be a political baseball bat where you club somebody. They are supposed to be real. They are supposed to be about finding common ground, not about stalling for the sole purpose of stalling.

What you see in this budget resolution is exactly the kind of plan that Americans voted for and the overwhelming majority of Americans support. That is why I am strongly behind this resolution.

As a senior member of our party on the Finance Committee, I am looking forward to a lot of debate on this issue. That is why I felt it was important to step in when we heard some revisionist history from the other side that there hadn't been any partisanship. There sure was on that very first vote on the CARES Act.

This is an important debate. What is really most important is that while we continue to listen to our colleagues on the other side, while we continue to reach out, which I am committed to do, the U.S. Senate get this job done because there is too much economic hurt in America to do otherwise.

We have another unemployment cliff coming in just a few weeks. Technically, the date is March 14. That is when the next round of unemployment expires. I really think we have to get this done by the beginning of March. There is no time to waste.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution, as I will.

I yield the floor.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER** (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Iowa.

PROTESTS

**Mr. GRASSLEY.** Mr. President, I come to the floor to bring up the point that there must be equal attention to the dangers of extremism, whether it is extremism of the right or extremism of the left.

We have all been horrified by the senseless criminal acts that occurred at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 of this year. A violent mob was able to overrun Capitol Police and quickly gain access to the area where a joint session of Congress was being held. Five people, including a Capitol Police officer, died as a result of this attack.

I hope that together, Republicans and Democrats, we can get to the bottom of what occurred on that day and ensure that it never happens again.

In the spirit of collaboration, I must direct everyone's attention to some-

thing that has occurred to me, and that is the need to condemn all political violence regardless of ideology. Like many Americans, I have been deeply troubled by the rioting, looting, anti-police attacks, and deaths that have occurred this summer.

While many very legitimately protested the death of George Floyd in a peaceful manner, consistent with their rights under the First Amendment, thousands of others did not do it in a peaceful manner and probably did it for a lot of other reasons than just George Floyd's death. One of the most upsetting aspects of the violence of this summer has been how it has targeted innocent law enforcement officers. Over 700 officers were injured between May 27 and June 8, 2020. This number is likely underreported as nearly 300 of those injuries occurred only in New York City.

Acting Deputy Homeland Security Secretary Ken Cuccinelli testified at a hearing in front of the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution that there had been 277 Federal officer injuries at the Federal courthouse in Portland, adding further to that total previously given to you. Officers were assaulted nightly there for months—slashed, hard objects thrown at them, struck with objects like hammers and baseball bats, even blinded by lasers.

In another offensive, 60 Secret Service officers were injured during a sustained attack on the White House, which caused then-President Trump to be taken to a secure bunker. The church across the street from the White House was lit on fire as part of that continued assault. Over 300 people were charged federally for their roles in these weeks and months of violence. Eighty of those charges related to the use of arson and explosives. Others involved assaults on officers and the destruction of government property.

However, the nationwide riots, which broke out in nearly every major city in the country, were predominantly State offenses. At least 14,000 people were arrested in 49 cities. At least 25 people died in violence related to the riots. Property Claim Services—a company that tracks insurance claims relating to riots and civil disorders—estimates that the insurance losses from the summer's civil unrest “far outstrip” all previous records to possibly exceed \$2 billion.

It has been a relatively frequent sight at the summer's violent events to see individuals acting in coordination in all black bloc, holding the “A” symbol of antifa. An admitted antifa adherent in Portland murdered a conservative protester. Antifa supporters have been charged federally for promoting riots and using Molotov cocktails. While that violence has slackened now since President Biden's electoral victory was declared, it has far from abated. Antifa rioters attacked the Oregon Democratic Party's headquarters on inauguration day itself. The far left of this country continues to believe vi-

olence will get more attention for their causes even after a Democratic victory win for the White House.

Much of the violence of the summer was specifically investigated by the FBI as domestic terrorism. FBI Director Chris Wray provides statistics on domestic terrorism in his annual threats testimony. He has previously testified that 900 to 1,000 domestic terrorism investigations exist at any given time. There are also about 1,000—what they call—homegrown violent extremism investigations. These are cases in which an entirely U.S.-based person without direct contact with a foreign terrorist organization is motivated by the global jihadist movement, and, of course, there are thousands more international terrorism investigations.

Former U.S. Attorney Erin Nealy Cox testified in a subcommittee hearing that over 300 domestic terrorism cases were opened due to the violence just this past summer. This is a significant increase in the ordinary amount of domestic terrorism in the United States. That this violence occurred—and the facts and the figures that surround it—should not be news to anyone. However, I must admit that I have been extremely surprised by the responses of Democratic Members to this violence.

For weeks and months, the most consistent response seemed to be to deny the violence was occurring at all. I saw JERROLD NADLER on TV—the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee—deny that antifa itself was real. In a nationally televised debate with then-President Trump, then-Candidate Joe Biden wrongly stated that antifa was only an “idea.” This is even after FBI Director Wray had already testified to Congress that antifa was absolutely a “real thing” and that the FBI had cases and investigations against those calling themselves “antifa.”

It seems that some Democrats are living in a different world than those who have seen businesses boarded up, if not burned out, images of violence in the streets, and terrifying attacks on police officers. When the violence was admitted by those same people, it seemed to have been condoned rather than condemned.

Now, Vice President HARRIS previously said:

They're not going to stop, and everyone, beware. [ . . . ] And they should not, and we should not.

You have seen that quote many times on various TV channels. Our new Vice President did not disclaim the rioting and unrest and direct her followers only to lawful action.

Congresswoman PRESSLEY stated: “There needs to be unrest in the streets for as long as there is unrest in our lives.”

Speaker PELOSI famously said this on the widespread property damage. As you saw, when asked about it, she was quoted as saying: “People will do what they do.” That is a direct quote from

her, and you have seen that many times on television.

Now, that indifference that seems to be expressed in those and in a lot of other quotations we could give to the violence that our constituents were enduring was dramatically shattered when a violent riot came to this building itself. After that event, many Members of Congress asked why a more militarized force had not protected them from a group of then-President Trump supporters who had turned violent. Police officers were again considered heroes and protectors unlike last summer when they were attacked. The presence of National Guard members was all of a sudden welcomed rather than decried unlike last summer, in cities like Portland and Seattle, when mayors condemned, maybe, the President or the Federal Government, generally, for interfering and trying to bring peace to those cities.

Many of the people of this country would like to have such resources available to them to ensure their safety, like every weekend in Chicago when there are dozens of people hurt by shootings and a lot of people killed in that same weekend.

Since the day of the attack on the Capitol, I have heard much of a renewed focus among my Democratic colleagues on combating domestic terrorism and political violence, and there is nothing wrong with combating domestic terrorism and political violence. That is why my first words today were that there needs to be equal attention to the danger of terrorism, whether it is of the left or of the right. As I indicated in my words just stated, this is very much welcomed—any attention we can give to domestic terrorism and political violence—and I hope that we will be able to work together to keep Americans safe.

However, any work that we do in this area must be focused on preventing violence no matter what ideology is given to justify that violence. In fact, in a recent Department of Homeland Security bulletin, that bulletin noted the breadth of potential threats we may be facing after the Capitol riot, including domestic violent extremists “motivated by a range of issues, including anger over COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020 election results, and police use of force” as well as “racial and ethnic tension” and homegrown violent extremists “inspired by foreign terrorist groups.”

The response that I have seen to the Capitol riot here in Congress has not given me hope that we are in agreement about combating this broad range of threats in the spirit of giving equal attention to the dangers of domestic terrorism or any kind of violation of law, whether it comes from the right or the left. I have seen that many Democratic Members of Congress seem to be discussing the need to combat White supremacism with reference to the Capitol riot. I am not going to find fault with anybody who talks about

any race of any kind thinking they are supreme to anybody else because we are all individuals that God loves, and if we were to return that love, we wouldn't have a lot of problems in this country.

We must absolutely combat White supremacism, wherever it occurs, and we have a responsibility to understand the true factors that led to the attack on this building. I hope to learn more from law enforcement over the coming weeks and months about what the involvement of White supremacists or any other extremist was in this attack.

However, I am concerned that the use of the term may have a different purpose: to try to portray any supporters of former President Trump, who garnered over 74 million votes in the most recent election, as White supremacists.

Congresswoman CORI BUSH stated on the House floor that former President Trump was a “white supremacist president who incited a white supremacist insurrection.” I hope everyone can agree that such rhetorical and inaccurate characterizations are dangerous.

More concerning seems to be the idea that violence committed by the far left or for left-leaning ideologies is in some way tolerable because of the left's assessment that the purpose of all that violence is somehow noble. However, right-leaning thought, whether accompanied by violence or not, is considered terroristic.

Former CIA Director John Brennan, whose credibility has been questioned, praised incoming President Biden's inaugural reference to defeating “white supremacy” and likened libertarians to “religious extremists, authoritarians, fascists, bigots, racists, nativists.”

It is hard to see how libertarian political philosophy, a mainstream conservative political ideology which is scarcely in any way associated with violence, is related to the other terms that Mr. Brennan lists, unless, of course, Mr. Brennan is simply referring to religious Americans as religious extremists, or those who believe in the rule of law rather than antifa rioting as “authoritarians” and “fascists,” or those who believe in having a functioning immigration system as somehow they seem to be bigots or racists or nativists.

In short, these are all terms that are applied regularly and unfairly to conservative Americans using peaceful means to argue for their ideas of religious freedom, law and order, and secure borders, and probably a lot of other things that they argue for. Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER was even more direct in a tweet, suggesting that all Republicans be labeled terrorists.

As a body, we may begin looking into domestic terrorism more generally. I look forward to so doing. I am sure all Members will share my commitment that the focus of our inquiry should be on all of the politically motivated violence we have seen in this country and not somehow just a subset of that po-

litically motivated violence. The men and women of this Nation who have been affected by antifa and other left-wing extremists are entitled to much more than a cursory acknowledgment of that fact. Likewise, I hope no part of our effort will focus on demonizing the peaceful expression of ideas with which Democratic Members disagree.

I will be sharing the ideas that I have on this subject and these concerns that I have stated today directly with my friend, the incoming Senate Judiciary chairman, Senator DURBIN. He will get a letter from me, and I look forward to working with Senator DURBIN on the path forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

#### GUN VIOLENCE SURVIVORS WEEK

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, rightfully, when we talk about the issue of gun violence in this country, we think about it through the prism of those lives that have been lost because the numbers are just stunning. They are hard to get your head wrapped around.

Here are the rough numbers in front of me. On an average year, we have 39,000 people who lose their lives through a gunshot wound. That is a suicide, a homicide, an accidental shooting, domestic violence crimes. If you break it down, that is around 100 people a day, and there is no other high-income nation in the world that comes anywhere close.

We talk about the issue of gun violence through the prism of people whose lives have been lost because it is so morally disrupting, cataclysmic, when you have a loved one—normally, a young loved one, a brother or sister, a child—who is there one instant and then gone the next because of a random shooting.

I always get drawn back to the people whom I have been lucky enough to have had access to and friendships with in Connecticut. One of them is Janet Rice.

Janet lost her son Shane, who was 20 at the time, to a gunshot wound back in 2012. It was actually only a month and a half before the Sandy Hook shooting.

Shane was just selling a car to some acquaintances, and the conversation went off the rails. There was some pushing and shoving. There was a gun fired, and Shane was dead.

It is really hard for Janet to describe how her life changed. She talks a lot about in those early months and years really not being able to even leave the house. She would drive a couple of blocks to the corner grocery store because she just didn't want to walk down the street and encounter friends and have to talk about what happened.

She had this habit of waking up in the middle of the night and driving her car down to where Shane was shot, which is only about two blocks from where I live in Hartford. She would arrive there in the middle of the night, she would pull up in the parking lot,



and she would turn on her high beams, half expecting that Shane was going to show up.

Her life is fundamentally different today than it was when Shane was in her life. And I have no idea what it is like to lose a child. I have no idea what it is like to lose a loved one to gun violence. But we talk about it in these terms because it is absolutely catastrophic when you lose somebody that way.

This week, though, is Gun Violence Survivors Week. This week we focus on those who survived gunshot wounds, and I think I hate to tell you this, but the numbers are much worse. More people survive gunshot wounds than are killed by gunshot wounds, and that would can change your life as well.

It can inflict you with physical pain that you can never get over, render you unable to walk, and in our colleague Gabby Giffords' case, almost unable to speak. But it can also inflict you with an ongoing, cascading trauma from which you may never recover.

James Harris was shot in Hartford in 2018. He was shot while he and another friend were just hanging out in the hallway of the friend's apartment building, when a man showed up and shot James and his friend. The man was charged with a whole bunch of things, including possession of an illegal firearm. But they were just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

His friend lost his life. James survived and, to this day, he experiences post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic pain, and mental health challenges that I don't think anybody in this Chamber can get their head wrapped around.

Tyrek Marquez was shot in the head a decade earlier, in Hartford, when Tyrek was 7 years old, following a West Indian Day parade in Hartford in the summer of 2008.

Guess what. The three shooters who were arrested were all found to have illegal firearms. One of the guns they found in the perpetuation of that crime had been used in 14 other crimes.

It is a decade later, and Tyrek remains partially paralyzed on the left side of his body. But he is part of the anti-gun violence movement. He survived, and he wants to make sure that this never happens to anybody ever again. "You've got to overcome obstacles and that's what I have been" able to do, he says.

There are 100 people a day who die from guns, but there are just as many who survive gunshot wounds, and they are now demanding that something change.

Right now, as we debate a COVID relief package, our focus, rightfully, is squarely on trying to reverse the disturbing trend of this virus expanding all across this country and righting the economic ship of this country. But not coincidental to the pandemic and the economic meltdown, we saw a dramatic increase in homicides. Some cities reported 40, 50 percent increases in homi-

cides in 2020 versus 2019. You saw record numbers of gun sales. Those two things are not coincidental. And those are just the reportable gun sales. Likely, we saw a dramatic spike in illegal gun transfers as well. More weapons equals more gun crimes in this country.

And so knowing that 20, 30 percent of guns get transferred outside of the legal system, knowing that, as in the case of Tyrek and James, it was illegal guns that ended up being used to shoot them, as it was for Shane Oliver in Hartford—that mother I talked about, Janet Rice; Shane was killed with an illegal gun—to honor Gun Violence Survivors Week, we have to make a plan this year. We have to make a plan to work on an issue that can bring us all together.

I hope that Republicans join us in voting for COVID relief funding. The things in President Biden's package are supported by 70 percent of the American public. That is impressive. It is really hard to get the American public to agree on anything at a 70-percent rate. They have actually done polling on things like kittens and baseball and grandmas, and it is hard to get 70 percent support for that stuff. So on Joe Biden's agenda, boy, it must be pretty popular to get 70 percent of the American public supporting it.

Universal background checks, requiring that everybody have to prove you are not a criminal or seriously mentally ill before you buy a gun—that has 90 to 95 percent support. Think about that. That means that the vast majority of gun owners, of NRA members, of Republicans, Democrats, Independents, all support universal background checks. It is something that this body can come together on.

And just like in Tyrek and James's case, every single day we are presented with evidence of what happens when we let these illegal guns flow on to our streets. In Pennsylvania, a man purchased two handguns advertised in a classified ad. He used those guns to kill a person and wound seven others inside a psychiatric institute. He had failed a background check at a gun store just a few months prior.

In Illinois, a man killed a Chicago police commander with a gun he purchased online. He was prohibited from buying a gun because he had a restraining order.

Wisconsin, a man killed his wife and two other women and wounded four others with a gun that he purchased outside the background system. Why? Because he was prohibited from purchasing a gun because of a domestic violence restraining order.

In Texas, a man killed 7 people and injured 22 others after being fired from his job. He had failed a background check but was able to find an unlicensed seller.

I can go on. Over and over and over again, the victims of gun violence are very often put at risk and put in harm's way because there are so many

guns being sold illegally or so many guns being sold legally to people who shouldn't have them, like people with serious, violent criminal records and people who have been arrested for things like domestic violence.

So, right now, our priority has to be COVID relief, but as we take part this week in Gun Violence Survivors Week, we have to recognize that the status quo is not acceptable and that there is something fundamentally wrong with democracy if a public policy measure can enjoy 90 percent support amongst the American public, and it can't get passed through the representative bodies that are assembled in the Nation's Capitol.

Thirty-nine thousand people die every year. More are injured and survive. And we owe them, in 2021, to pass legislation that finally starts putting these trajectories downward.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Wyoming.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss the urgent need to get our kids back in school. Kids deserve to be back in school.

Last week, the White House Chief of Staff was on television. He was interviewed. The interviewer asked him why so many public schools remain closed. His answer—amazingly, astonishingly—was "money."

If I may, the record is very clear. Republicans supported more money for schools since last summer—a full \$105 billion to get our kids back to school. In fact, the Senate Republicans' targeted coronavirus bill included more money from schools than Speaker PELOSI included in her bloated, liberal wish list.

For months, Senate Democrats obstructed, delayed, and dragged their feet. For months, Democrats played politics with coronavirus relief. In all that time, families across America suffered.

It wasn't until the end of December that Democrats finally agreed to pass legislation to reopen the schools, and it included \$82 billion—less than Republicans had offered the last summer.

Well, the ink is now barely dry on the overall relief bill at the end of last year. It was a \$900 billion relief bill. So here we are, just 1 month later, and the new administration says that there is no money to reopen schools.

The White House Chief of Staff goes on television with a supposedly new idea. The idea is that "we, as a country, should make the investments to make it safe" to get back to school—astonishing, because we did that.

If the Biden administration really wants their schools to reopen, they ought to be talking to the teachers unions. They should talk to the leaders of the teachers unions based in Fairfax County, VA, just a few miles from here. You know, it is one of the largest school districts in America. Fairfax County teachers demanded a vaccine before they would go back to the classroom. Thanks to Operation Warp Speed, they got the vaccine. Yet they still refused to go back to the classroom, which, of course, means that the students aren't in the classroom either.

In Chicago, the teachers union is threatening to go on strike rather than to go back into the classroom, which, of course, means the students don't get to back into the classroom either.

In Washington, DC, the teachers union would rather go to court than to the classroom, which means that students don't get to go back to the classroom either.

Similar stories are taking place all across America. The union bosses might think this is just a big game. The truth is, this is doing terrible things to our children.

Our teachers do incredible work. Many are working harder than ever in the virtual setting. Many want to go back to the classroom. Yet, because of the union bosses who pull the strings, our kids are being denied access to in-person learning by our amazing teachers.

On Wednesday, the New York Times said it was "breaking news" that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention want the kids back in school. That is not breaking news. That is old news. The CDC said it last July.

Experts have been echoing this call for months. One study estimated that because of the lockdown last spring, a typical student entered this school year 35 percent behind schedule in reading and nearly 50 percent behind in math.

The children hurt the most are, of course, the most vulnerable—kids from lower income families, like the millions of kids who receive nutrition assistance, medical care, or counseling in public schools; also, the children of single parents, many of whom—the parents, that is—can't work from home.

According to the National Education Association, a quarter of the families with kids ages 5 to 17 either don't have a computer or don't have wireless internet, so the lockdowns have been especially tough on all of those kids in those settings.

For many children, the lockdown has been far tougher on their health than coronavirus itself would be. That is because serious coronavirus symptoms among healthy children are extremely rare. And Congress has provided funding to prevent kids from spreading the coronavirus. It has done it by improving ventilation, by social distancing, and by disinfecting our classrooms.

So while Democrats were taking their orders from teachers unions, Sen-

ate Republicans listened to the science. It is time for Senate Democrats to decide: Are they going to put our kids first or are they going to continue to put the teachers unions ahead of our kids?

Senate Republicans have done our part to reopen our schools with incredible amounts of funding and support. This is no time for excuses, no time for backtracking. The science supports it. We have provided the funding.

Now I would point out that students in Wyoming have been back in school since September. That is where students belong. Kids deserve to be in school. So let's get our kids back in the classroom. It is what is best for kids; certainly, it is what is best for working families; and it is what is best for our future as a nation.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, relations between the United States and Russia are more precarious today than at any other time since the Cold War. From Russian-backed mercenaries fighting in the Middle East to the Kremlin's attempt to poison Putin's critics like Alexei Navalny using a nerve agent, the actions of Russia are growing more and more aggressive. That is especially true when it comes to actions against the United States and our allies.

We know Russia made a clear attempt to interfere with the 2016 election and delegitimize our democratic processes, like our elections. Through everything from highly coordinated disinformation campaigns to targeted attacks on voting systems, it sought to undermine and potentially change the result of a democratic election.

Of course, it is not just our voting systems that have come under attack. Moscow has launched massive cyber attacks against private companies and government agencies alike, the latest being the SolarWinds hack. Last year, Russia attempted to steal coronavirus vaccine research from the United States and our closest allies.

The Biden administration has responded to these mounting threats in an unlikely way—by giving Russia exactly what it wants. Sure, I know there were some press reports about a conversation between President Biden and President Putin, but then again, that is all it was—words, not action.

This Friday is the expiration date for the New START treaty—the only remaining bilateral strategic nuclear agreement between the United States and Russia. Since New START entered

force a decade ago, there has been no lack of criticism about its shortcomings. For example, here on the Senate floor last week, I outlined some of the main issues with New START, including the fact that it only placed limits on strategic nuclear weapons, leaving room open for an endless arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons, which were particularly of interest to Russia in a potential land war in Europe. The new Senator from Tennessee and former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, BILL HAGERTY, has echoed that concern as well.

But it is not just Republicans who acknowledge the need for a new approach. Victoria Nuland is an experienced and accomplished diplomat with more than three decades of experience, and she has been nominated by President Biden for a high-ranking position in the State Department. In an opinion piece she wrote last year, she wrote that the United States "should not grant Moscow what it wants most: a free rollover of New START without any negotiations to address Russia's recent investments in short- and medium-range nuclear weapons systems and new conventional weapons." In other words, Russia is building new weapons that will not be included in the New START negotiations, but they should be.

The President didn't take the advice of Ambassador Nuland, obviously. He didn't advocate for new limits on tactical weapons or these new weapons systems or impose any other conditions to combat Russian aggression. In a call with President Putin last week, President Biden agreed to a clean 5-year extension—no conditions, no negotiations; in short, a capitulation. He gave him a green light to keep doing what they have been doing.

Well, it didn't take long for Russian leaders to celebrate this win. The Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia declared that the United States had agreed to extend the treaty on Russia's terms, and both houses of Russia's Parliament unanimously voted in favor of the ratification of the extension within hours of the announcement. In other words, the Biden administration is on exactly the same page as the Duma. That ought to give them some pause. It is fair to say there has been no celebration here in the United States, but the truth is, there has hardly been any attention paid to this issue at all, including here in Congress.

The administration has tried to maintain its focus on the President's long list of executive actions. In his first 2 weeks in office, President Biden has used the power of the pen to cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline, rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement, stop drilling on Federal lands and in Federal waters, and so much more. Why did the President focus on this agenda? Well, because he has called climate change—not nuclear weapons—the existential threat of our time.

Don't get me wrong—I think our country can and should do more to reduce emissions and preserve our land and waters for future generations, but those measures shouldn't come at the cost of thousands of jobs, reduced energy independence, and higher prices for consumers, including seniors on fixed incomes.

I have always been a proponent of the “all of the above” energy strategy, which relies on fossil fuels and renewables, as well as innovative technologies to provide our country with reliable, affordable, and lower emissions energy sources. In fact, just about a month ago, I introduced a bill to help spur that innovation, which was signed into law. But based on the emphasis of the Biden administration on climate change and the near silence we are hearing on nuclear treaties, you would think that climate change is a bigger threat to the world than a nuclear war. Only in a fevered imaginary world could that be true.

Our Democratic colleagues in the Senate and many members of the media played along as well, praising the President's efforts to combat one self-proclaimed crisis while ignoring its failure to address a clear and present danger and a threat to the planet.

The fact is, the administration missed a huge opportunity by extending the New START treaty without any other conditions, and it has to do with much more than just the threats posed by Russia. While the United States and Russia are the two biggest nuclear powers in the world, we are not the only ones. There are five non-proliferation treaty states, two of which are Russia and the United States. But there is also the UK and France, both of which provide regular information about the size and makeup of their nuclear arsenals.

The fifth and final power is China, a police state and one of the world's greatest secret keepers, especially when it comes to its nuclear arsenal. China, we think, has quietly been growing its nuclear arsenal for years, and the thick cloak of secrecy surrounding the Chinese Communist Party has made it nearly impossible to verify information about the breadth and depth of its nuclear capabilities. But from the information we have, we know China continues to pursue a nuclear triad, and experts estimate China to have about 300 nuclear weapons. Assuming that figure is correct, it makes China the third most powerful nuclear country in the world, behind the United States and Russia, and we have every reason to believe that the size of its arsenal will continue to grow.

In May of 2019, then-Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Robert Ashley, said China is likely to at least double the size of its nuclear stockpile over the next decade. He referred to this effort as “the most rapid expansion and diversification of its nuclear arsenal in China's history.”

Here we are, a year and a half after that estimate, and there is no reason to believe that China has changed its course. In fact, it appears the announcement of a New START extension received a warm welcome in Beijing, just as it did in Moscow. The story that ran this weekend in the South China Morning Post said this extension “means the gap between China and the two nuclear giants. . . will not widen and Beijing could spend the next five years catching up.” There you have it. That is the real takeaway of a clean extension of New START.

The Biden administration has agreed to leave in place a framework in which the Russians continue to cheat, the Chinese play catch up, and the United States is left to play by the rules of a bygone era.

Rather than enter into a 5-year extension of New START, the administration should have used its leverage to convene multilateral nuclear talks. America should invite the other non-proliferation states—Russia, China, France, and the UK—to the negotiating table and encourage multilateral talks limiting the growth of nuclear arsenals worldwide.

I understand President Biden's desire to focus on the issues he campaigned on—whether it is climate change, immigration reform, or any other policy area—but in doing so, he should not ignore the larger threats to global security or relinquish the leverage we have to secure a deal that improves global security at large.

Nuclear weapons, not climate change, are the greatest existential threat we face, and the United States cannot sit idly by while Moscow and Beijing pass us by.

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

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor today to talk about the way forward for this new Congress and the new Biden administration.

Specifically, this afternoon, we are talking about the budget resolution that the Democratic side has proposed. There was a vote today to begin to proceed on that. My understanding is that by the end of this week, we will have a number of amendments about the budget, and this all goes toward a process called reconciliation. If the two budgets are agreed upon, that would enable us—with 50 votes rather than the normal 60 votes—to take on a really important issue, which is the issue of how we should address the COVID-19 pandemic.

But, to me, this is an even bigger question. It is a question about how we are going to proceed, as a Congress,

working with this new administration. If you recall, the Senate is now a 50-50 split. That is as closely divided as you can possibly be. There are 50 Senators on this side and 50 Senators on that side. The House is more closely divided than it has been in years. And, significantly, the American people are more divided than they have been in years.

I think the American people, as a general matter—not everybody, but I think the American people are looking for us to deal with these divisions here in the country by working together to try to get something done, by working together to help heal the wounds that are out there.

As for me, one Senator, I am very interested in helping President Biden make good on the pledge that he made on the steps of the Capitol. On the west steps, just that way in the U.S. Capitol, on Inauguration Day, January 20, the President said that he wanted to bring our country together. He wanted to help heal those wounds. He wanted us to work across the aisle. He wanted to go back to an era here where we actually sat down, debated things, worked them out together, and, therefore, helped bring our country together.

I hope, with regard to the COVID-19 discussions, that Republicans and Democrats will agree to keep working on charting the Federal response to the ongoing healthcare and economic crisis in a bipartisan way. It is the one area where we have done it.

Yet when you think of all the division in all of the times when we haven't been able to find agreement on things around here, one place we have been able to find agreement has been with regard to COVID-19. Specifically, we have passed five different bills—five bills—with big majorities, bipartisan majorities. One was actually by unanimous consent.

The most recent one was just 5 weeks ago or less, at the end of the year, when Congress passed a \$900 billion COVID-relief package in an entirely bipartisan way. And \$900 billion, by the way, makes that the second most expensive legislative package that Congress has ever passed—\$900 billion. The first one was the CARES Act, which also related to the coronavirus pandemic that we are in. Over \$4 trillion—that is trillion with a “t”—has been spent on this, larger than our typical annual budget for everything in government. And do you know what? It is a crisis, and we needed to step up to the plate.

But now, while the ink is still drying on the bill that we passed at the end of the year, the Biden administration has proposed another \$1.9 trillion to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

My own view is that, again, this is an area where we have been able to come together. Let's do it again.

Is there more need out there? Well, when Congress passed the \$900 billion legislation, we all said: This is a bridge to get us to between now and when the vaccines are readily available, which

we all hope happens sooner rather than later.

But there may be some things we need to do in the interim—I think there are—and maybe some things after the March, April time period that we hadn't thought about for the vaccine availability. The vaccines are moving out more slowly than expected.

So I, for one, am willing to sit down with Republicans and Democrats alike, as we have done, again, five different times, to work on how we can come together to provide that bridge to a better time when the economy will improve because the COVID-19 issue will have been addressed.

My concern is that, again, today, we started down a track, by starting on the budget, to end up with budget reconciliation, which would mean a 50-vote rather than a 60-vote margin because the other side of the aisle—Democrats—think it would be better not to try to work out something on a bipartisan basis but to simply use their majority to get something through here that they would like to do that is consistent with where President Biden's \$1.9 trillion package is.

We will see. Maybe they could be successful at that, maybe not, because it would require every Member on that side of the aisle to agree with the \$1.9 trillion package, which is a comprehensive, complicated package, which includes a number of things addressed to COVID-19 but another number of things that are unrelated to COVID-19, some of which are popular on the other side of the aisle in particular, like changes in tax law that have nothing to do with COVID-19, changes to the Federal minimum wage that have nothing to do with COVID-19. But we will see.

But even if they could pass it by the barest majority, given that it is a 50-50 Senate, it is not the right way to go for our country. I don't think anybody truly believes it is the best thing for our country.

Again, if we can't come together as Republicans and Democrats, as we have proven that we can time and again over the last year, what can we come together on? And wouldn't that poison the well? Wouldn't it make it harder for us, then, to find that common ground on things like infrastructure investments, on things like retirement security? I think it is going to be harder if we start off on the wrong foot, if we start off in a purely partisan way.

I was part of the group of five Democrats and five Republicans who sat down—we call ourselves the 908 Coalition because we put together a bipartisan framework, actual legislation, on COVID-19. This was over the last few months before Christmas. Then, at the end of the year, Congress passed the \$900 billion bill. Our framework provided a basis for that. It wasn't exactly the same, but it provided a basis for that.

Frankly, because Republicans and Democrats alike—five and five—were

able to agree, it helped get our leadership more focused on how to find a bipartisan result, as we had done previously, because things weren't going very well. They weren't talking to each other. They weren't making the progress that we had hoped. That group has shown that we can, indeed, come together and make tough choices. Not one thing in that legislative effort was not bipartisan.

By the way, there were five of us on the Republican side, five on the Democratic side. None of us agreed with all of it. It was a matter of compromise—a word that maybe isn't too popular anymore, but that is how you get things done around here. You have to figure out: What is that common ground? What is the way in which you can make progress without having everything your way?

We have shown we can do it. The 908 Coalition is ready to go again.

I will say that what we were able to do with that coalition was to help move the process forward in a bipartisan way. And, in the end, we got \$69 billion in funding for vaccine development and distribution, \$82 billion to support our students in school, \$325 billion to restart the highly successful small business program called the Paycheck Protection Program.

At unprecedented deficit times, where we want to be sure every dollar is wisely spent, that \$900 billion was about one-seventh of the size of the Democratic proposal that was originally out there and was supported by a lot of Democrats here in the Senate—not one Republican, by the way. That was a \$3.5 trillion bill called the Heroes Act. We ended up doing something that was smaller but more targeted and more effective in dealing with the immediate problems with no extraneous provisions that had nothing to do with COVID-19, which was the case of the Heroes Act.

So we have done it time and time again—five different times. Let's do it again.

If we are going to continue responding to this crisis in a smart way that meets the needs of our constituents, it is going to require us having that kind of a good-faith, bipartisan negotiation.

Again, in his inaugural address, President Biden said: "This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward."

I don't think he meant just unity with one party or another. Clearly, the context of that speech and his other comments were about outreach to Republicans and Democrats alike to get back to an era where we worked together.

Unfortunately, since that address, the President's team and his party appear to have chosen a different path, introducing this new COVID-19 package I talked about without any input, any consultation with any Republican or, for that matter, I think it is fair to say, any Democrat in this Chamber. I may be wrong. But I know the Demo-

crats who are on the 908 Coalition were not consulted, period.

That is not the way forward. Why would we do that? Why wouldn't we, once again, do what we have proven we can do, particularly following what I thought was an excellent speech, talking about how we can work together.

The \$1.9 trillion package that was sent up does have extraneous matters that have nothing to do with COVID-19, as the Heroes Act did. I understand that these are popular proposals, particularly on the Democratic side. We can debate those, and we can have a vote on those, but let's do it outside of the COVID-19 context.

We should have a debate about minimum wage. We should have a debate on changing the child tax credit, the earned-income tax credit, which would not affect COVID-19 at all because no one believes that a year from now that we are going to be in this position, which is when people could take advantage of those tax credits. But they are in the legislation, as an example.

There are provisions in there for clean energy. That is a good debate for us to have but not in the context of this. There are provisions in there for cyber security—\$10 billion for improving our cyber security in the Federal Government. The Presiding Officer and I actually like that idea, to have cyber security funds and to set up a new way to push back against these terrible cyber attacks that we have had, particularly recently—a massive one. But that is not appropriate for the COVID-19 bill. As much as I would like to have that debate, let's do it separately. By the way, that can be bipartisan as well.

The \$1.9 trillion proposal also has a new round of stimulus checks that are written so that a family with three kids making \$290,000 a year can end up getting a check from the Federal Government, even if they have had no negative impact from COVID-19. That seems, to us, to be wrongheaded. And, I think, frankly, a lot of Democrats agree to that, too, and believe it ought to be more targeted toward those who need it the most.

The economic analysis in this is clear, which is that these higher income individuals who have received earlier stimulus checks have ended up not spending them, meaning they don't stimulate the economy, which is the whole idea of the stimulus checks.

There is some recent data out by an economist named Chetty, who is well respected, that says, of the \$1,400 that the proposal that the President has laid out going to these families—of that \$1,400, if someone makes over \$78,000 a year, likely they only spend about \$105 of that money. The rest they will save, put in the stock market, do something else with it but not spend.

So let's target it. We are not against stimulus checks, but we are against sending stimulus checks to people who are wealthy, who don't need it. That seems like not an effective use of taxpayer dollars at a time of these unprecedented deficits and debts, with our

debt being the highest it has been, as a percent of our economy, since World War II.

We also have to realize that the \$900 billion that was in the package that just passed 5 weeks ago or less has not been fully spent. In fact, most analyses show that less than half of that \$900 billion has gone out the door. So we can't know what the impact has been of what we just spent—again, the second largest expenditure of funds ever in the history of this Congress because half of it has not even got out the door, or more. Let's do an analysis there.

Apparently, without taking the time to see if there are 60 Senators willing to move forward with this new idea of a new bipartisan package, this reconciliation approach I talked about earlier is the one that Democrats seem to want to take. It is a rare process. You have to have a budget passed by both sides. It only happens every few years. The reconciliation is in the underlying budget we are voting on over the next couple of days here. It is something that can be used—reconciliation—only for budget-related issues, only for mandatory spending and for revenue, for taxes, and for reducing the debt. So it has to be budget related.

Actually, some of the things in the \$1.9 trillion dollar package can't even be done by reconciliation, which would mean we would have to be changing the rules of this body in order to include them in reconciliation. That is another bad idea. First bad idea, not to work on a bipartisan basis. At least try. At least try. The second one is, using reconciliation, which is a mere 50-vote margin for something that is not directly related to the budget that has a direct impact. It can't be merely incidental to the budget, as an example.

There are a number of provisions in there that fit that category. And there is at least discussion, I am told—and we have heard it openly from my colleagues on the other side of saying: Well, we are just going to overrule the Chair—essentially nuke—going the nuclear option, as they say. The nuclear option means that you overrule the Chair—and by a mere 50 votes, change the rules of the Senate.

Please don't do that. That would be, again, setting us down a path of partisanship we don't need to do. It would be poisoning the well. It would be saying—just as getting rid of the filibuster would—we are going to change the rules now that we are in charge.

The rules are there for a reason. And that is to ensure that, to the extent possible, the Senate is a body where you find at least some modicum of bipartisanship to move forward because you have to get those 60 votes, not just 50 votes or 51.

By trying to jam through this \$1.9 trillion legislation, it sets exactly the wrong tone for the country and also for the administration. I think President Biden has a real opportunity to help heal our country—I really do. By the way, I think he sincerely wants to.

That is why I don't understand this process.

Our 908 Coalition—this bipartisan group, which is now 20 Members, 10 Republicans and 10 Democrats—and we took it up to 10 Republicans because we wanted to show that you can get to 60 votes. If you had 50 Democrats, you would have 10 Republicans willing to work with them. And I am sure there are many, many more than those 10. I know there are. This group is now being tested.

This group was bipartisan under President Trump. I hope it will be bipartisan under President Biden. I hope that that bipartisanship shows up quickly before we go down this path.

We had a meeting last week of our 908 Coalition, and our Democratic colleagues asked us: What can we support? If it is not \$1.9 trillion, what is it? Fair question. Again, many of us think we ought to find out what happened to the \$900 billion first, hard-earned tax money that hasn't been spent yet. But we said: OK. We will put together a proposal that we could support—not that we support all elements of it but we could support in order to respond to the President's \$1.9 trillion package in addressing all of the major issues that he addressed.

Over the weekend, we outlined a \$600 billion package that does just that. It addresses the most urgent needs of our country. It does not include any of the unrelated provisions in the Democrats' package that have nothing to do with COVID-19. What it does contain is the same \$160 billion that is in the \$1.9 trillion package as it relates to healthcare.

What does that mean? It means that if we are going to get out of this crisis we find ourselves in, we have to address the COVID-19 issue, right? We are not just going to have an economy improve immediately to the extent we would like to see it without dealing with the healthcare crisis. That is what is driving the fact that restaurants are closed down, the fact that people are losing jobs through no fault of their own, the fact that we have these economic issues related to COVID. So the sensible thing to do is to be sure we are dealing with the vaccine, development and distribution, dealing with testing, dealing with tracing, making sure we have proper PPE. All of that is in the \$160 billion that is in the Biden proposal. It is also in the proposal that we Republicans on the Coalition put forward—\$160 billion, the same.

For those issues, we are consistent with President Biden's plan on additional healthcare support. Our proposal also prioritizes getting kids back to the classroom, which we think is really important. Specifically, we have \$20 billion toward getting children safely back into classrooms, which is on top of the \$82 billion we just spent on schools at the end of year. As a parent, I couldn't feel more strongly about this; we need to get our children back to school, and we need to make sure we it is safe—and we can do both.

We also provide an additional \$12 billion for nutrition programs to combat food insecurity and ensure that families, kids have food on the table. This is consistent, again, with the Biden administration plan. These are ones that we agree on.

Our proposal also includes \$20 billion for the childcare and development block grants so our childcare facilities across the country can stay open, so the parents can go back to work. Childcare is incredibly expensive. Again, this is where we agree.

We have a new round of \$50 billion in financial support for small businesses, but we use it in a program we know works rather than setting up a new program, which would take a long time to put in place.

We help the hardest hit families and individuals through expanding unemployment insurance for those who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. We expand it from where it currently ends now, in mid-March, to the end of June, so June 30.

We extend it at \$300 per week, which is the Federal supplement now in place. There, the Biden administration wants \$400 rather than \$300 and wants to extend it into September, to September 30. There is no economic data that says that that will be necessary. If it is, we can take it up again. So there we have a proposal that is similar but more targeted to meet the real needs of our economy.

Our proposal also provides direct stimulus checks to Americans who really need that extra amount of money to pay their rent or put food on the table or pay their mortgage. By the way, we do it by lowering these limits. Instead of going to families that make 300,000 bucks a year or more—if they have got three or four kids, we say let's cap it at \$50,000 for individuals, \$100,000 for families, an additional \$500 per child.

Again, all the economists say that is what makes sense because those are the folks who are really going to spend it and need it. Let's target this to those who really need the help.

We accomplish all these things at one-third of the cost of the Biden proposal. Much of the difference between our proposal and the Biden administration's is we don't include the extraneous matters, but also it is how we address these two crises: the healthcare crisis to defeat the underlying disease and the work we are trying to do to ensure the economy can recover. Both proposals rightly provide the resources needed to address the healthcare crisis, as I said.

But with regard to the economic crisis, we take a little different approach. Our focus is on getting targeted aid to those who need it the most. In contrast, a large portion of the administration's \$1.9 trillion package is about spending taxpayer dollars to stimulate the economy that, based on all the data, is already beginning to recover. And that is something that, frankly, is not an effective use of taxpayer dollars.

Just yesterday, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, or CBO, reported that the economy is growing quite well right now. They project a 3.7-percent real economic growth in this year we are in, in 2021. That is significant economic growth. That takes into account inflation, real economic growth at 3.7 percent. That just came out yesterday.

By the way, the Wall Street Journal does a survey of a bunch of economists—60 economists—and their consensus for the economic growth in this year is not 3.7 percent, it is 4.3 percent. Even better. So the economy is projected to grow quite well this year.

Importantly, the CBO also said that the economy is expected to recover to prepandemic levels by the middle of the year. They say that by June 30, the economy will be back to where it was before the pandemic, which was a very strong economy. In fact, a year ago February, this month, we had 19 straight months of wage growth of over 3 percent. We had the lowest poverty rate in the history of our country. There was a lot of good things going on in our economy. And they say we are going to get back to that—this is CBO, not me—by the middle of this year.

Meanwhile, after record-high jobless claims we saw last spring when unemployment hit 14.7 percent, the national unemployment rate has fallen to 6.7 percent, which means Americans are able to find work, for the most part. Is it where I would like it to be? No. But the CBO says the unemployment numbers are going to go down, as does everybody else who has projected this over the next year. They say it is going to drop this year to 5.3 percent. Five percent used to be considered full employment. We would like to see it even better than that. But the point is, the economy is improving. And as we get these virus pandemic issues under control, the economy will improve even more. Having the vaccines readily available is going to make a big difference. And, of course, again, that is why we put so much money into that in our proposal.

CBO is basing these projections, by the way, without factoring any of the new \$1.9 trillion. They don't assume that there will be any more stimulus than what we just passed several weeks ago. In other words, while the Biden Administration says we need \$1.9 trillion in new spending or our economy will tank, CBO says very clearly that is not true.

Instead, we need to help those who are still struggling and cannot find a job because their industry shuttered or their business isn't allowed to reopen, and that is what our targeted proposal will do.

Other respected sources agree with CBO's optimism. I mentioned these 68 economists indicating 4.3 percent economic growth. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget said yesterday that the CBO data underscores the need for a targeted package, say-

ing: "It shouldn't take \$1.9 trillion to fill a \$400 billion or \$800 billion hole" in our economy.

We have more data to suggest that the economy is on a path to recovery. For example, we know that household incomes rose slightly—but they rose—in December. This was the first increase in 3 months. The personal savings rate in December rose significantly—13.7 percent—indicating there is a lot of pent-up demand right there for people to get out and start spending money again.

To me, all this points to a pretty clear conclusion that in the immediate aftermath of the \$900 billion bipartisan package just passed at year end, there is simply not a strong argument to spend an additional \$1.9 trillion on stimulus. Instead, we need to use this next COVID-19 package to focus on the ongoing healthcare challenges of the pandemic—that is the key thing—and on getting targeted economic relief to the hardest hit Americans, which is what our \$600 billion proposal does.

I appreciate that, in the last few days, President Biden has expressed more willingness to work with bipartisan Members of Congress on this critical challenge. After we wrote to President Biden on Sunday requesting a meeting to discuss our targeted COVID-19 relief proposal, he quickly accepted, and, yesterday, we had a lengthy and, I thought, very productive discussion at the White House. While we didn't come to an agreement on a proposal—and as you can see today on the floor, Democrats are moving forward with this budget process, regardless—it was a productive discussion and gives me hope that we can follow the bipartisan approach we have taken from the previous five COVID bills. The meeting reaffirmed that there is a lot of common ground for us to build another bill upon and that we share the belief that we need to ensure the hardest hit individuals and families and small businesses get more support they need during this crisis.

My hope is that we can use these two proposals as a starting point for negotiations on a COVID-19 response package that Congress can pass, as we have before, consistently, with bipartisan support, not through partisan parliamentary maneuvers.

This pandemic gives us an opportunity to come together as Republicans and Democrats and show the American people we can put aside the partisanship and the divisions that have become the norm around here and get things done.

If we can't do it on COVID-19, as we have five times already, where can we do it?

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and with President Biden to follow his desire to make good on his pledge in the inaugural address to work together to respond to this crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to compliment my good friend and colleague Senator PORTMAN, the great Senator from the State of Ohio, who has done so much in this Chamber on so many issues—COVID-19 relief is just one—to help our great Nation.

Some of you may have heard the news that Senator PORTMAN—I am still very distraught about it—has announced that he is not going to be running for reelection in 2 years, and I think that is going to be a huge loss, not just to the State of Ohio but to our great Nation.

I want to commend Senator PORTMAN for all his phenomenal work. He is proving, again, his leadership and his statesmanship here as we are trying to attack and take on big challenges for our Nation.

CHINA

Mr. President, I also want to talk about another big challenge for our Nation, something that I have come down on the floor since I was elected 6 years ago to the Senate to talk about, and that is the challenge that we have with regard to the rise of China. As a matter of fact, this is an area I talk frequently about because there is a lot more bipartisan progress on this incredibly important issue—the most important geostrategic challenge facing our Nation right now, probably the challenge that will be facing us for the next 50 to 100 years—that is with us today.

But there has been progress. I want to talk about this progress, and I want to talk about something, another development that I think is very important.

There has been an awakening. When I started to come down and talk about the rise of China, not a lot of people were talking about it, but there has been huge progress in that now everybody is talking about it—the Biden administration, and the Trump administration had been. I think President Trump and his team, with their national security strategy, their national defense strategy, deserve a lot of credit from reorienting our focus, which was the appropriate focus post-9/11 on violent extremist organizations, like al-Qaida and ISIS, to the new challenge of great power competition with China as the pacing threat that we have with regard to our Nation.

Again, this is something that has been very bipartisan. When you look at Members of this body, particularly those who focus on foreign policy and national security, they all agree that this reorientation on this challenge is something that we need to be doing as a country in a bipartisan way—dealing with the rise of China.

I think, when we talk about this challenge, we are at a place in history that, in many ways, is analogous to the period right after World War II. I want to talk briefly about that in my remarks.

In 1946, we had what at the time was a recognition that, post World War II, we had a new challenge—similar to the



challenge we are seeing right now, the recognition that we have this challenge with China. In 1946, we started to recognize that we have a challenge with our old World War II ally, the Soviet Union. There was a big focus on this challenge, but not necessarily in organizing foreign policy principles that could help us get through it.

Then, in the 1946–1947 period, an American diplomat named George Kennan wrote an article. It was an anonymous article—he signed it the “X Article”—in *Foreign Affairs*, and it was called “The Sources of Soviet Conduct.” What Kennan did, really, for the country, for elected officials, for the Senate, for the executive branch, is that he laid out what he saw as the challenge that we are facing with regard to the Soviet Union—the internal weaknesses that the Soviets actually had—with incredible insights in that regard, and, then, what our long-term strategy should be.

Here is what he said in this article. He said that American policymakers need to enact a policy of “firm containment” with regard to the Soviet Union, a country that always was trying to expand. He said, if we, as a nation, with our allies, try to contain this expansion, it would “increase enormously the strains under which the Soviet [Union and its] policy must operate . . . and in this way promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.”

Think about that. That was the strategy of containment laid out by George Kennan, followed for decades by American administrations, by this body, Republicans and Democrats—the strategy of containment. And we all know what happened.

George Kennan’s fundamental insights into this policy—that the Soviet Union would either mellow or completely break down and collapse because we were putting containment pressure on them—ended up happening. The Berlin Wall came down just as Kennan predicted. The Soviet Union broke up peacefully, and this was a remarkable triumph of American democracy and strategy that our Nation should be proud of. That is what happened then.

A lot of us have been saying that we are at a new point with regard to China. There is an awakening. What should that strategy be? I want to talk about a strategy document that just came out.

Kennan’s document was called the “Long Telegram.” Just this past weekend, the Atlantic Council—which is a think tank here in DC and has been around for decades and is very well respected on the Republican side and the Democrat side—put out a strategy that they called the “Longer Telegram,” literally in kind of the analogous situation that George Kennan had done this in 1946 and 1947.

This strategy, also, coincidentally, does not identify the author. So it is

similar to that “X Article” in 1946 and 1947. The author is anonymous and put out a strategy with insights on how we, as a nation, should deal with the rise of China. The Atlantic Council, as I said, has been around for decades. They published this, and they said this is probably the most impressive strategy document that they have ever published.

Now, is it perfect? Is this the answer? Is this the containment strategy from 1946 and 1947 that was the triumph of American diplomacy over the last 50 years with the Soviet Union?

We shall see. We don’t know. But I looked through it, and I do think it is quite a remarkable document, and it is a great important development that we all need to come together on and this new administration—the Biden administration—needs to take a hard look at.

The focus of this strategy document says, which we all believe now, that “the single most important challenge facing the United States in the twenty-first century is the rise of an increasingly authoritarian China under President General Secretary Xi Jinping.”

I think a lot of us know that. A lot of us have been talking about that. That is the awakening that I believe has happened here in the United States and certainly here in the U.S. Senate.

But like the Kennan article, this one has some very perceptive insights. One is that it focuses on what it sees as one of the biggest weaknesses in China right now, and that is the fracturing of the Communist Party leadership. I am going to talk about that because it emphasizes—“anonymous” here emphasizes—that should be our focus.

The piece begins by setting the stage of where we are right now.

The strategy article published by the Atlantic Council is titled “The Longer Telegram: Toward a New American China Strategy” and can be found at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/the-longer-telegram/>.

It talks about the scale of the economy of China and its military and the speed of its technical advancement and its radically different world view than that of the United States. It notes that China now profoundly impacts every major U.S. national interest. This is our challenge, one that is gradually emerged over two decades and has accelerated greatly under the leadership of Xi Jinping.

How has Xi Jinping ruled during this rise? He has eliminated his political opponents. He has stalled market reforms, used ethno-nationalism to unite his country, and his treatment of ethnic minorities has bordered on genocide. In doing so, he has fostered a quasi-Maoist personality cult and a new form of totalitarian, high-tech police state.

Anonymous writes:

In what is a fundamental departure from his risk-averse post-Mao predecessors, Xi [Jinping] has demonstrated that he intends to project China’s authoritarian system, coercive foreign policy, and military presence

well beyond his country’s own borders to the world at large. China, under Xi, unlike under Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao—[three previous Chinese leaders]—is no longer a status quo power. It has become a revisionist power.

That is very troubling for the United States, and this is the situation as laid out by the author of the “Long Telegram.”

What has the U.S. response been so far? It has been good, but it needs to improve.

The author gives credit to the Trump administration for sounding the alarm in its national security strategy and national defense strategy with regard to the “strategic competition,” the “central challenge” to our foreign policy, and great power competition that all have resulted from the rise of China.

Anonymous writes that a simple, Kennan-like strategy of containment won’t be effective with regard to China because China has studied what happened to the USSR, learned from its mistakes, and understood that the inherent structural weakness with regard to the Soviet model itself was something that caused it to collapse, so China has focused on that.

Yet, as I mentioned, the author emphasizes another central vulnerability of the Chinese system, one which he or she, the author, thinks we need to take advantage of.

Here is what Anonymous writes:

The political reality is that the [Chinese Communist Party] is significantly divided on Xi’s leadership and his vast ambitions. Senior party members have been greatly troubled by Xi’s policy directions and angered by his endless demands for absolute loyalty. They fear for their own lives and the future livelihoods of their families.

Of particular political toxicity in this mix are the reports unearthed by the international media of the wealth amassed by Xi’s family and members of his political inner circle, like so many other authoritarians who amass wealth through corruption, despite the vigor with which Xi has conducted his own anti-corruption campaign, which has destroyed many of his rivals.

So what do we do with this information? As Anonymous writes here—the author of the “Long Telegram”—we need to focus on Xi Jinping himself.

U.S. strategy must remain laser-focused on Xi, his inner circle, and the Chinese political context in which they rule. Changing their decision-making will require understanding, operating within, and changing their political and strategic paradigm. All U.S. policy aimed at altering China’s behavior should revolve around this fact, or it is likely to prove ineffectual.

This, Anonymous writes, has been the missing piece of the puzzle for our China strategy so far.

While U.S. leaders often differentiate between China’s Communist Party government and the Chinese people [correctly], Washington [leaders] must achieve the sophistication necessary to go even further. U.S. leaders also must differentiate between the government and the party elite, as well as between the party elite and Xi [Jinping himself].

That is critical.

According to Anonymous, we must work to drive a wedge between these groups and to frustrate Xi's ambitions in order to "cause China's elite leadership to collectively conclude that it is in the country's best interests to continue operating within the existing U.S.-led liberal international order rather than build a rival [authoritarian] order [throughout the world], and that it is in the party's best interests . . . not to attempt to expand China's borders or to export its political [authoritarian] model beyond China's shores."

That is the juxtaposition of the significant challenge we have right now with the current strategy in what Anonymous writes in this document that we should be building on.

In building on these insights, the author emphasizes that U.S. strategy should comprise seven integrated components. Many of us have come down to the floor to talk about some of these, but let me touch on a few: rebuilding the economic, military, technological, and human capital underpinnings of long-term U.S. national power, and I think we can all agree on that; agreeing on a set of limited, enforceable policy "red lines" that China should be deterred from crossing under any circumstances, such as forcibly invading Taiwan; agreeing on a larger number of "major national security interests" which are neither vital nor existential in nature but which require a range of retaliatory actions to inform Chinese strategic behavior; defining those areas where continued strategic cooperation with China remains in U.S. interests; and prosecuting a full-fledged global ideological battle in defense of our political and economic models in contrast with China's authoritarian state capitalist models around the world. Finally, all of this needs to be done in conjunction with and closely coordinating with all of our allies in Europe, in North America, and, of course, in the Asia-Pacific.

This last point is critical. Our allies are critical. We need to remember we are an ally-rich nation. China is an ally-poor nation. That is one of our huge comparative advantages in the geostrategic challenge that we have with China over the next decades.

At the end of the day, as Anonymous writes, ideas matter. Ultimately, this is going to be the contest of ideas—China's authoritarian model, which it wants to promote and export, versus the U.S. Western model of open economies, just societies, and competitive, free political systems.

Over the long term, the author writes, the Chinese people may well come to question and challenge the party's century-long proposition that China's great, ancient civilization—thousands of years old—is forever destined to an authoritarian future over which the people have no choice. That decision, however, must come from the Chinese people themselves. We can

only provide a model, and we can only show the way. We need to do so with confidence and with our allies.

As Anonymous concludes, there is a subtle, yet corrosive, force that has been at work in the United States for some time, raising doubt about our Nation's future, and some who are encouraging a sense that, as a country, America's best days may now be in the past. Well, I, for one, certainly and fully disagree with this, as does the author of the "Long Telegram." We are a young country. We are a resilient country. Our innovation is beyond compare. We are a free country, and as a result of the long twilight struggle with the Soviet Union, we also know what works: maintaining peace through strength, promoting free markets and free people at home, and having the confidence in George Kennan's insights from 1946 and 1947 that the Chinese Communist Party, like the Soviet Communist Party, likely "bears within it the seeds of its own decay."

While democracies are resilient, adaptive, and self-renewing, there are many vulnerabilities embedded in China's perceived strengths. One-man rule creates acute political risks, as Anonymous has described, that we need to take advantage of. Historical grievance can breed violent nationalism. State-directed economic growth can produce massive overcapacity and mountains of debt.

The gradual and, in some ways, abrupt snuffing out of freedom in places like Hong Kong is creating spontaneous protests of tens of thousands of young people that we have been seeing now for months. China's budding military power and historical view of itself as a nation and culture superior to many others is alarming its neighboring states, inspiring them to step up their security cooperation with the United States. Nearly half of wealthy Chinese want to emigrate, and these are the winners from China's four decades of heavy economic growth.

As we have in the past, Americans can prevail in this long-term geopolitical and ideological contest, but doing so will require a new level of strategic initiative, organization, and confidence in who we are and what we stand for. This also means we must redouble our efforts in making the strategic case not just to Americans but to others around the world, particularly our allies.

Let me conclude by saying that the "Long Telegram," while not perfect, sets out what I believe is certainly one of the best strategies I have read to date about how the United States needs to address the significant challenge that we will be facing for decades.

I hope my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, all have the opportunity to read this and analyze it, for, like Kennan's strategy of containment, our China policy, to be successful, also needs to be very bipartisan and ready to be operationalized for decades.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. HICKENLOOPER assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The majority leader.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF HENRY LOUIS AARON

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 23.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 23) honoring the life and legacy of Henry Louis Aaron.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 23) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of January 28, 2021, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 25, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 25) designating the week of January 24 through January 30, 2021, as "National School Choice Week".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 25) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the provisions of 20 U.S.C., sections 42 and 43, appoints the following Senators as Members of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, respectively: the Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY of Vermont (re-appointment) and the Honorable CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO of Nevada.