

The Communist Party of China, being as aggressive as it is, has for a number of years reached out to our colleges and universities to establish what the Communist Party of China calls "Confucius Institutes." And this was the pitch made by the government of China to our universities: "We will give you bucket loads of money if you"—our American universities—"will allow us to establish Confucius Institutes where we can explain our culture to the young people of America, where we can have a free exchange of ideas, and where we can help young Americans learn the Chinese language if they would like."

That sounds great. You know, I will take a dozen of those. But the Communist Party of China being the Communist Party of China, that is not how our Confucius Institutes have worked out.

These institutes, run by the authoritarian Government of China, will not allow the free exchange of ideas. They will not allow anyone to talk about the Uighurs or the people of Tibet or Hong Kong or what happened at Tiananmen Square. They basically—"they" meaning the Communist Party of China—have used these Confucius Institutes as propaganda arms of their government.

Many of our universities have done the right thing. They have said: No, we stand for the free exchange of ideas, and if you are going to come on our campus and tell our people that there are things they can't talk about, then, respectfully, you need—you, the Confucius Institutes—to leave our campus.

But some of the universities haven't done the right thing. I am not suggesting that—I am not cynical enough to suggest that it is all about the money, but you can't ignore the fact that I think the Communist Party of China has given our universities, through the years—don't hold me to this figure exactly—but about \$150 million to set up these Confucius Institutes. Universities, you know, they build that money into their budget, so they are reluctant to see the Confucius Institutes leave—not all of our universities but some of them. I recognize the economic reality.

I have a bill that would say to—we wouldn't get rid of Confucius Institutes. It will just tell our universities: You have to properly manage them. You can't allow the Confucius Institutes to stay on your campus if the Confucius Institutes will not allow for the free exchange of ideas.

If kids—I shouldn't call them kids. If young people in our universities want to talk about Tibet, they get to talk about Tibet. And the bill would say that the universities have to take back control of these Confucius Institutes from the Communist Party of China; otherwise, they are not going to be eligible for Federal funds.

My bill, once again, doesn't kick anybody off campus. It just says you have to—you, the Communist Party of China, have to do what you originally told us you were going to do.

My bill has—our bill, because the Senate passed it twice. Twice this bill has passed the U.S. Senate, the last time with bipartisan support. We put the bill on the NDAA, and, Mr. President, you know how conference committees work with the NDAA. Sometimes it is a ferret fire drill, and there is a lot of confusion, and somehow the Confucius Institute bill got watered down to do nothing in the conference negotiations on the NDAA. I am not criticizing anybody, but it happened.

So I am going to ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass the Confucius Institute Act for a third time, and I hope, in our new Congress, we can keep teeth in it in working with our colleagues, not only in the Senate but in the House.

Toward that end, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 590, introduced earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 590) to establish limitations regarding Confucius Institutes, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 590) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 590

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Concerns Over Nations Funding University Campus Institutes in the United States Act" or the "CONFUCIUS Act".

SEC. 2. RESTRICTIONS ON CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term "Confucius Institute" means a cultural institute directly or indirectly funded by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

(b) RESTRICTIONS ON CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES.—An institution of higher education or other postsecondary educational institution (referred to in this section as an "institution") shall not be eligible to receive Federal funds from the Department of Education (except funds under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) or other Department of Education funds that are provided directly to students) unless the institution ensures that any contract or agreement between the institution and a Confucius Institute includes clear provisions that—

- (1) protect academic freedom at the institution;
- (2) prohibit the application of any foreign law on any campus of the institution; and
- (3) grant full managerial authority of the Confucius Institute to the institution, including full control over what is being

taught, the activities carried out, the research grants that are made, and who is employed at the Confucius Institute.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, since we have a few minutes here—I think Senator SANDERS is supposed to be next—I just thought I would take a few minutes to talk about President Biden's coronavirus bill.

Let me see if I can explain why so many of my Republican colleagues—and I am a part of that—are disappointed in the bill. This bill will be our sixth coronavirus bill. I don't think anybody, any fair-minded person, can accuse the U.S. Senate, both Democrats and Republicans, of not trying to respond to this devastating virus and the economic problems it has created.

I have been very proud, within the first five bills, that we did it on a bipartisan basis. We spent a lot of money, about \$4 trillion. That is 4-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0 taxpayer dollars. And, of course, we don't even have 5 percent of that. We borrowed every bit of it. It is a staggering sum. But we did it because we had a crisis. We had to deal with it. That is what we were sent up here to do. We did it on a bipartisan basis. But this, the last bill, President Biden's most recent bill—we call it the \$1.9 trillion bill—we haven't done it on a bipartisan basis. I am disappointed in that.

I understand politics. The Presiding Officer does too. But I listened very carefully to President Biden throughout the campaign and in his 6 weeks of this administration, and he said very clearly and repeatedly: You know, I want to work with everybody. What I heard him say to the Republicans was: You know, I want to meet you halfway.

I don't mean any disrespect, but if that is the case, either he or the people around him are not very good judges of distance.

It has been made very clear to us that there would be no negotiations on this bill and that President Biden decided to proceed to reconciliation, which only requires a majority. And I think we both expect there to be 50 Democratic votes in favor of this bill and 50 Republican votes against it, and Vice President HARRIS will break the tie. That is not a bipartisan bill, and I regret that, and I think it could have been different.

You know, we can debate about whether we need \$1.9 trillion, and I understand there are good arguments on both sides. I have heard the arguments, and I have listened carefully to my Democratic friends explain why they think we need it. There is another side of the story, and that is that, thank the Lord, we enjoyed 4 percent GDP growth last quarter. Most economists reckon that we will have about 6 percent GDP growth this year. The American people have about \$1.6 trillion in excess savings. We have all this liquidity that, as soon as it is allowed to be

released, is going to stimulate our economy substantially, in my judgment.

Everyone involved is doing a wonderful job on the vaccines. President Trump's team did a wonderful job. President Biden's team is doing a good job. The Governors seem to be doing a great job. People are getting vaccinated. We know that we have a lot of people in America who had the virus and didn't even know it. We are rapidly approaching the point where, either through vaccination or people who had the virus and therefore have the antibodies, we are going to have way over the majority of American people protected.

So one point of view is that we don't need to spend \$1.9 trillion, but there was a middle ground here, and I am disappointed that the President took the position that, look, we need to spend \$2 trillion right now, even though there is \$1 trillion at least in previously appropriated funds that we haven't spent yet.

Now, a reasonable approach would have been to say: Do we really need to spend \$2 trillion? Maybe we ought to spend the other \$1 trillion and see if that will do it. Another reasonable approach would have been to say: Maybe we ought to reprogram some of the \$1 trillion that hasn't been spent. For example, we appropriated I think about \$70 billion to our elementary and secondary schools. They have only spent \$4 billion, so why are we giving them another \$160 billion in President Biden's bill? Maybe—I am not saying it is the case, but we ought to explore it—maybe the schools didn't need the full \$70 billion we gave them if they have only spent \$4 billion or \$5 billion. So maybe we can reprogram some of that money.

Now, if we had this money sitting in a checking account, I would still think—because it represents a scarce resource, I would still think that we need to take a look at the money we have already sent and either spend it, if it is well placed, or reprogram it before we go out and spend \$2 trillion. But we don't have the money in a checking account. We will borrow every penny of this money, \$2 trillion. That is going to bring debt up to 27, 28, 29 trillion dollars, and we know that right behind it is going to come a green infrastructure bill. I am hearing that could be \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion more. At some point, we are going to run out of digits. I mean, at some point, we are going to have to change the name of the Department of Treasury to the "Department of Debt" because there is no treasury left. It is all debt.

The other thing that bothers me about the bill is President Biden—and, again, I understand politics. He has marketed this bill as an emergency. It is an emergency. We have to do it now. Right now, we need \$1.9 trillion to deal with the economic crisis caused by the lockdown. And I understand that argument and that there currently are

some Americans who need help, but if what the President is saying is accurate, then why is so much of the money not even going to be spent until a year from now?

I look at the bill, and I say, if all that is true to deal with an immediate crisis, why are we giving money to States and local governments that have actually seen their revenues go up? Why? There is no crisis. And I look at the bill and I ask myself, you know, why are we giving money to bail out pension plans? Can we talk about this? And I look at the bill and I say, why, as I just alluded to, why are we giving \$160 billion—I think that is the figure—\$160 billion to our elementary and secondary education institutions when we have given them \$70 billion in the past and they have only spent \$4 billion? Where is the fire? They have \$65 billion or so left. This is real money. There is no money fairy.

I look at the bill—I mean, I want to help the American people. Gosh, many of them do need help. But should we really be sending stimulus checks to people who have never missed a paycheck out there? Do they really need the money if they haven't been laid off and if they have been paid the entire time of the lockdown? Why are we doing this?

Couldn't that money—first of all, one option is not to spend it if there is not a need. We can pay down our debt or at least not increase our debt. Another option would be to spend it on something that we really need.

I come to the conclusion—I am not trying to be mean-spirited, but that is why I say calling this a coronavirus bill, you know, it is like calling Harvey Weinstein a feminist. This isn't a coronavirus bill, not the way it has been portrayed.

Now, the American people still have needs. We still have some folks, primarily in the leisure industry and in the travel industry, who need our help. They do need help.

We have a lot of folks who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. They are on unemployment that is about to run out. They need our help, and we ought to help. But the right way to do this is to sit down as a body—Democrats and Republicans—and go through our needs, not our wants, because that is another problem with this bill; it is more "wanty" than needy. Let's go through our needs, and let's discuss how much money we should appropriate to those needs in light of the facts that we have already spent \$4 trillion and we have a bunch of money left over. And that is not the way this is being done.

This is just being rammed down our throats. This is just raw gut politics, which I understand. I have been around it. You have, too, Mr. President. We have both been around the block a few times. But that is not how you allocate scarce resources.

The final point I will make is, I know when we did the Tax Cuts and Jobs

Act—"we," meaning the Republicans—we went through reconciliation. We did. And so a fairminded person might be thinking, well, KENNEDY, you know, how can you criticize your Democratic colleagues for using reconciliation if you did it? And that is fair, except when we did the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, we asked our Democratic friends in leadership: Can we sit down and see what we can put together? And we were told: No, we don't want to reduce taxes.

That is not what happened this time. Ten of my colleagues—I wasn't invited, and that is OK. But 10 of my colleagues went to the White House and visited with President Biden for 2 hours and came back and said: You know, I think he may want to put a bill together. And we were excited. We were going: Yay, that is great. Wonderful.

Then, the next thing we knew, the White House issued a statement and said: Our idea of unity is to do what we say and don't ask questions.

Both of us know that is not unity.

So all of this could have been avoided. It all could have been avoided. And I think we are going to end up spending money that doesn't need to be spent right now. I think we are going to end up spending money where we don't need to spend it.

I am so glad that Senator SCHUMER withdrew his bridge project and that Speaker PELOSI withdrew her Silicon Valley subway. That is just spending porn as far as I am concerned.

But, in any event, I wanted to get that off my chest. We are going to go through a vote-arama, where we all offer amendments. Maybe together we can make this bill better and get rid of some of the spending porn, as I call it, and do the job that the American people sent us here to do.

Thank you.

I don't see Senator SANDERS. I'm sorry.

With that, I yield to my good friend Senator PETERS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, as we near the 1-year anniversary of the coronavirus pandemic ripping our country, there is no question that Michiganders and people all across our country are still hurting.

While we are making important progress in the fight to combat this virus, this public health and economic crisis continues to take a significant toll on families, workers who are out of a job, educators, students, small businesses, hospitals, and communities all across our country.

We passed targeted, temporary relief in December, but we knew at that time that that was not going to be enough. We need more robust, meaningful relief. We must act quickly to meet the urgency of this moment by swiftly passing the American Rescue Plan.