

That is the difference between us and China. In China, the Communist Party uses technology to broaden the scope of its surveillance state. In America, we have an opportunity to show the world that technology and innovation can actually strengthen democracy by giving people the freedom to work the way they want with universal broadband and to move around the way they want with new forms of transportation.

The President's American Jobs Plan will give our kids an honest shot to thrive by eliminating lead pipes and service lines from our drinking water systems and making safe, affordable housing a reality for millions of working families.

I can't help but acknowledge my colleague Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH when it comes to clean water and new lead pipes and service lines for our drinking water systems. I am proud of the initiative and leadership that she has shown, working with other Members of the Senate, to make this a reality.

This is a unifying vision for the future. It is a model for global leadership. So let's not balk at the cost of making it a reality. This is not the time to think small. We are talking about a transformative undertaking, and that is part of what America has always been about.

More than half a century ago, Republican President Dwight Eisenhower launched the Interstate Highway System. It changed America. Today, the program's nearly 50,000 miles of expressway carry about one-fourth of all traffic in the United States. These roads connect our communities, have created communities, and serve as a bedrock for our economy.

In today's numbers, if you tried to rebuild the Interstate Highway System, it would cost half a trillion dollars—probably much more, to be honest. It is not a small sum. But, boy, it is an investment that paid off. The program generated \$6 in economic activity for every dollar spent to build those roads and highways.

And the fact is, today we need to invest in order to build our future. When President Eisenhower launched the Interstate Highway Program, we didn't have e-commerce or same-day shipments. It was more than 10 years before Neil Armstrong stepped foot on the Moon. Now, each of us carries around a pocket-sized device with more than enough computing power to get him to the Moon and back.

The world has changed—in many ways, for the better. Today, it is not sufficient for an infrastructure plan to begin and end with bridges and roads. If we want to support a modern economy and sustain growth for generations to come, we need to invest in the infrastructure for tomorrow.

This isn't to say that we have all the answers on this side of the aisle. But there is one answer we should all get behind: Go big; go bold. We can't penny-pinch America into first place.

And don't take it from me: Americans of all political stripes—Democrats, Independents, and Republicans—support marshaling the resources of the Federal Government to go big and bold on infrastructure. They want us to not only repair our highways and bridges but to rebuild our waterways and airports and make high-speed broadband internet available to everyone.

Americans support a plan that puts us on track to have an American century in the 21st century. That is our plan, and victory is within our reach.

There was an architect and designer in the city of Chicago in the transition from the 19th to the 20th century who helped design the Columbian Exposition, "White City," and a lot of history was made with those decisions. His name was Daniel Burnham. When he was asked about planning something like the White City, the Columbian Exposition, in the city of Chicago, he had a quote that you will turn to almost every day if you follow what is going on in planning in Chicago. Here is what he said: "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood"—and I might add, women—"They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized."

They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will not themselves be realized. I think we understand that.

As President Eisenhower gave America a vision with the Interstate Highway System, a connected nation and a new America, we need to do the same. President Biden has challenged us to do it. We need to do it on a bipartisan basis. I look forward to working with my colleagues to make it a reality.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY WILDCATS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, over the weekend, the University of Kentucky's women's volleyball team made history. The Wildcats hoisted the program's first NCAA volleyball national championship trophy after defeating Texas on Saturday night. The falling confetti in Omaha closed out an incredible 24-win season. The Wildcats' unmatched athleticism and resilience fueled their paths to the title.

Yesterday afternoon at UK's Memorial Coliseum, enthusiastic fans welcomed home their champions, including Madison Lilley, who was named the tournament's "Most Outstanding Player."

So I would like to extend the Senate's congratulations to the players,

Head Coach Craig Skinner, and the entire program. Kentucky and all of Big Blue Nation couldn't be prouder.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, on another matter, it has been nearly a month since the Biden administration rolled out its so-called infrastructure plan. It quickly became clear that their proposal mainly focused on everything but the things normal people call infrastructure.

The day this plan was introduced, the White House messaging document mentioned the words "climate" and "union" more often than "roads" and "bridges." And the numbers back that up. Out of more than \$2 trillion in proposed spending, less than 6 percent would go to roads and bridges. Even when you add in airports, ports, rail, and waterways, the total would still be exceeded by the amount going to electric vehicles alone. Even an Ivy League expert said using "infrastructure" to describe the totality of the bill "does a bit of violence to the English language."

So after a few days of trying to battle the English language, Democrats began to pivot. I understand this is no longer an "infrastructure" plan. Now it is a "jobs" plan. But that turns out to be just as dishonest. This proposal isn't any more focused on creating jobs than it is on fixing roads.

Even by the favorable metrics that the White House likes to use, this plan would cost Americans more than \$800,000 for every new job that would exist 10 years down the road.

Serious, bipartisan legislation to rebuild American infrastructure could have a big impact at a fraction—a fraction—of the cost. This plan is bloated, unfocused. It is not a targeted recipe for better public works.

When America actually puts our mind to things, we can do them. Remember Operation Warp Speed? But this isn't like that. This is a sloppy liberal wish list that would spend a lot and get very little in return.

The far left has been bragging about all the social engineering and welfare spending that is stuffed into these proposals. They have boasted that the DNA of the Green New Deal is all over this administration's agenda.

Roads, bridges, and ports are bipartisan priorities. Water infrastructure and broadband are bipartisan priorities. That is why when the Senate tackles honest-to-goodness infrastructure in a smart way, we almost always have wide bipartisan margins.

Last week, our colleague from West Virginia, Senator CAPITO, got together with the other ranking members of committees that deal with actual infrastructure. These Republicans put forward a smart proposal that would meet pressing needs in actual infrastructure.

So now comes the critical moment. Now is the time we learn whether Democrats really want to jump start

actual public works projects or whether infrastructure was only ever intended as a wrapping paper for unrelated gifts to the far left.

Remember what happened when Republicans went to President Biden, offering a bipartisan compromise path on COVID relief. They were informed the Democrats were not interested in working together. So our country needs the administration to find a smarter approach.

FOREIGN POLICY

Madam President, now, on one final matter, the last few months have given the world a glimpse at what is driving the foreign policy decisions under the Biden administration. First came a rush to rejoin a climate agreement that does not effectively hold our competitors to their own commitments.

Then, just weeks ago, there was the announcement of a total abandonment of Afghanistan that will squander our leverage to promote a diplomatic end to the civil war, put innocent Afghans at risk, roll out a red carpet for the Taliban, and embolden the terrorists.

Even this administration's own intelligence chiefs and our military commanders are concerned about how we will stay a step ahead of terrorists in the region without access provided by our U.S. footprint.

Late last week, we got a further peek at the incredible wishful thinking behind this policy. As reported in the *New York Times*, some Biden officials suggest the Taliban "might govern less harshly . . . in order to win recognition and financial support."

The Secretary of State—America's top diplomat—seems to think it is that simple. He expressed hope that "civilian and economic assistance" could "advance a just and durable peace . . . and a brighter future for the Afghan people."

The Deputy National Security Advisor was more dismissive of the Afghan people's plight, morally equating our Afghan partners and the Taliban as just "two Afghan parties" in a conflict.

I do not believe Afghan women and girls are jumping for joy at the prospect of a Taliban takeover. In fact, as one of the *New York Times* headlines put it, "Afghan Women Fear the Worst"—"Afghan Women Fear the Worst."

I certainly do not believe the Taliban will abandon their brutal fundamentalist ways just to secure recognition from the Western powers that they despise.

Speaking of women's rights, over the weekend, the United Nations chose to further degrade its legitimacy by inviting Iran, of all countries, to join its Commission on the Status of Women. The U.N. chose to further degrade its legitimacy by inviting Iran to join its Commission on the Status of Women.

Yes, you heard that right. The panel claiming principal international authority over the empowerment of women will now include a nation whose police are empowered to beat and as-

sault women for improper veiling—a nation that turns a blind eye to pervasive domestic violence, forced marriage, and rape.

And it is not just the U.N. that seems to be going soft on Tehran. The Biden administration seems willing—if not desperate—to provide sanctions relief up front, squandering leverage, just to reenter President Obama's flawed nuclear deal.

This sanctions relief would benefit a regime that is being run by the extremist Islamic Revolutionary Guards. That is what Iran's own Foreign Minister admitted in leaked documents. That is who is running the show—the same terrorists who were used by Soleimani to spread violence across the region, before the prior administration removed him permanently.

Republicans are not opposed to nuclear diplomacy, but we know that preemptive concessions will not secure a better deal or make America or our allies more secure.

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

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

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, as we finally, finally begin to turn the corner on the coronavirus pandemic, we have the hard work of rebuilding our economy.

One of the core engines of the American economy is intellectual property. From the smallest startup to the largest multinational company, intellectual property is central to creating jobs, boosting economic output, and protecting consumers. So it is appropriate that, today, we celebrate World Intellectual Property Day, which recognizes the important role that intellectual property plays in promoting innovation, creativity, and economic growth.

This year's World IP Day theme celebrates the contributions of small- and medium-sized businesses to the global marketplace. Why? Well, these small enterprises make up 90 percent of the world's businesses. Whether through protecting their brands with trademarks or their inventions with patents, intellectual property allows these small companies to grow and succeed; yet, here at home, far too many Americans with an entrepreneurial spirit find key elements of the intellectual property system out of their reach.

Last week, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Intellectual Property—and I am privileged to chair that—held an important hearing to find ways to boost access in the patent system. We know that women and people of color are chronically underrepresented in the patent system, which results in a serious loss to our economy.

I am particularly proud that this hearing featured testimony from Georgia Grace Edwards, a Middlebury College graduate and entrepreneur, who realized that, after spending a summer in Alaska and 8 to 12 hours at a time on ice, she was at a serious disadvantage when it came to answering nature's call during her treks. Like so many innovators before her, Georgia Grace got to work in designing a new zipper—in sense, it was such a great thing—that could be incorporated into a variety of women's pants.

Now, while she was ultimately able to successfully navigate the patent system and secure protection for her idea, here is the problem. She faced a number of barriers along the way: the high cost of obtaining a patent, particularly from legal fees; a lack of knowledge about how the patent system works; and the lack of representation of women throughout the system.

Ten years ago, Congress enacted the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, which put structures in place to help access the patent system and bring up a far more diverse set of inventors into the innovation economy, and at our hearing, we heard specific ideas for building on the success of the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act.

As the President awaits nominating the next Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, I want him to choose a nominee who shares a commitment to increasing access. It is not just the huge companies that need it; it is the small inventors.

It is important that the next Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office respect the law, including the statutory bounds set by Congress. You know, the last administration took steps to undermine the Leahy-Smith Act. They acted outside those statutory bounds.

I have always sought to curb the potential for poor-quality patents to be abused. That drove much of the work we did 10 years ago. So I look forward to supporting a nominee for PTO Director who shares my view that it is important to weed out poor-quality patents, avoid the potential for abuse, but at the same time reinforce the protection provided to high-quality patents.

We must also work to ensure that hard-working small business owners and creators who rely on copyright protections to make a living are able to protect their works online.

While I appreciate the steps that some online platforms are taking to address the persistent problem of online infringement, much like the issue of diversity in the patent system, more work needs to be done.

Last month, I joined with Senator TLLIS and other members of the IP Subcommittee, and we sent a letter to major online platforms outlining specific voluntary measures they could adapt to crack down on online infringement. I hope that on World IP Day, the leaders of these online platforms will take a moment to consider the plight