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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, October 8, 2021, at 10 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2021

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, Supreme Ruler over all the Earth, Your justice shall prevail. You stand within the shadows as a guardian for our Nation and world. Righteousness and justice provide the foundation of Your throne.

Lord, guide our lawmakers through this day. Inspire them with Your presence as You lead them on the road of wisdom.

May they write Your precepts on their hearts. Shine Your light upon the godly as they put their trust in You. We pray in Your sacred Name.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 7, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. ROSEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, for the information of Members, I have a brief statement.

I have some good news. We have reached an agreement to extend the debt ceiling through early December. It is our hope that we can get this done as soon as today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

DEBT LIMIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, Republican members and Democratic members of staff negotiated through the night in good faith. The Senate is moving toward the plan I laid out yesterday to spare the American people a manufactured crisis. All year, the Democratic government has made unprecedented and repeated use of reconciliation to pass radical policies on party-line votes.

So, back in July, Republicans informed our colleagues they would need to pursue any long-term increase in the debt ceiling through the same process. The President, the Speaker, and the Democratic leader had 3 months' notice to do their jobs, but for 2½ months the Democratic leaders did nothing and then complained that they were actually short on time.

The majority didn't have a plan to prevent default, so we stepped forward. The pathway our Democratic colleagues have accepted will spare the

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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American people any near-term crisis while definitively resolving the majority's excuse that they lacked time to address the debt limit through the 304 reconciliation process. Now there will be no question; they will have plenty of time.

Or, if our colleagues would instead prefer a more traditional bipartisan discussion around basic governance, they can stop trying to ram through yet another reckless taxing-and-spending spree that would hurt families and help China. That would be the path toward that kind of discussion.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now on a related matter, Washington Democrats are behind closed doors trying to hammer out a multitrillion-dollar reckless taxing-and-spending spree, but we already know a lot about this bill.

First and foremost, we know their reckless legislation would hurt American families and actually help China. It is that simple: inflicting pain on American workers and families while putting us at a global disadvantage.

Just look at the radical climate policies Democrats have packed into the spree to satisfy their far-left base. The apples haven't fallen far from the awful Green New Deal. In the name of clean energy performance, Democrats want to force electric utilities to model their grids off of the high-cost, blackout-prone system that liberals have set up in the State of California; move all 50 States' electric grids toward California's.

As one group of major power providers observed, not only would this be logistically unworkable, it would also threaten to send consumers' electricity costs totally out of control. And in the words of a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission who testified before our colleagues just last week, the scheme would be ''H-bomb''—''H-bomb''—for the electricity markets.

At the same time, Democrats are also pushing a brand-new natural gas tax they call a methane fee. It is a natural gas tax is what it is. Just as our friends in Europe are facing soaring natural gas costs and the threat of winter shortages, just as it seems Russia may be willingly supplying less and less gas to the free world, Democrats want our Nation to declare war on natural gas, kill tens of thousands of jobs, drain billions from the economy, and increase costs for our families—at a moment when U.S. natural gas futures just hit a 12-year high.

There is no limit to the harm Democrats will inflict on America to force the heartland to accept elite liberal fashions. Their legislation includes special giveaways for electric cars that are disproportionately the preferred option—you guessed it—of wealthy people, jacking up America's gas bills and utility prices in order to turn 49 other States into California. It is a bad idea at an awful time and just one more way their reckless taxing-and-spending spree would hurt families and help China.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on a related matter, while Americans contend with Democrats' self-created border crisis and inflation crisis, our foreign policy is in crisis as well.

The Biden administration's disastrous retreat from Afghanistan may be over, but the danger to the American citizens and Afghan partners it left behind certainly is not over. Around the world, adversaries and allies alike are drawing new conclusions from President Biden's Afghanistan disaster about America's will to defend our allies and our interests.

Pyongyang is putting on another master class in how despots disdain the so-called rules-based international order. Literally, while a North Korean official was haranguing the U.N. in a speech about the ''consequences it will bring in the future in case it tries to encroach upon [its] sovereignty,'' the Kim regime punctuated the speech with yet another provocative round of U.N. sanctions-violating ballistic missile tests.

Iranian disregard for international norms and the Biden administration's efforts to enforce them continues apace. Tehran is ramping up its nuclear activities, demanding bribes to even return to the negotiating table, as well as stepping up its use of terrorist proxies to threaten its adversaries all across the region.

In light of our retreat from Afghanistan, we should not be surprised if Iranian-backed groups redouble their efforts to inflict U.S. casualties and otherwise pressure the Biden administration to turn tail and run from Syria and Iraq.

When it comes to near-peer competitors like Russia, the Biden campaign's tough talk has been replaced by the Biden administration's desperate rhetoric of diplomacy. Putin is unfazed and undeterred.

Repression at home, manipulation of energy markets abroad, military modernization, cyber mischief—this doesn't exactly scream ready for good-faith engagement.

Most of all, the administration's hollow rhetoric has done nothing to deter the growing threat from communist China. Just this month, Beijing has sent a record number of military aircraft on provocative missions into Taiwan's airspace. As senior Pentagon officials have warned, ''we are witnessing a strategic breakout'' by China, Democrats still refuse to let us adequately fund our own military and defense.

The Biden administration's budget falls woefully short of our requirements for greater competition with China and with Russia—all the more so given the inevitable growing terror threat. And here in Congress, Democrats are doubling down on this reckless misstep. Democrats want to spend trillions of dollars on a socialist wish list at home while leaving the servicemembers who keep us safe overseas in the lurch.

Now, I don't expect Chairman SANDERS or certain radicals in the House to be keen on using reconciliation to fund our military—hardly. But Senate Democrats have left Congress's most fundamental tool for influencing defense policy—the historically bipartisan NDAA—in procedural limbo literally for months.

The Democratic leader's latest public statement on his caucus's spending priorities did not even mention the defense authorization bill. Apparently, he is content to let it languish behind their leftwing wish list.

So, Madam President, America is staring down serious and historic threats. And somehow, with unified control of government, the only actions Democrats have managed to take on foreign policy have made them worse.

The American people deserve a lot better than this. Our servicemembers deserve better. Our allies deserve better. But Washington Democrats are proving they cannot deliver.

TRIBUTE TO MEGAN MERCER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now on one final matter, it is a small group of people who become familiar faces right here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. There are the Senators themselves, the nonpartisan professionals on the dais, the Capitol Police, and doorkeepers.

And then, Madam President, you have the men and women of each party's cloakroom. These small and tightknit teams keep information flowing from the Senate floor to Members' offices and vice versa. They track legislation and amendments. They negotiate procedure across the aisle. And in a thousand other duties, they all add up to tense days, late nights, and a truly front-row seat to Congress.

For the last decade, one of those special few has been a daughter of Kentucky and an alumna of my own office: Megan Mercer.

Megan's Senate story started about 15 years ago, when she spent a summer as a page. Before long, this impressive young woman took an internship in my personal office, serving Kentucky; then an entry-level position in my leadership office here in the Capitol; and then Megan came here to the floor, to the Republican cloakroom.

A decade ago now, she took a seat behind their big desk. She answered phones. She answered questions. She learned the ropes. And over 10 years, she worked her way up to a key role of senior floor assistant.

Pick any important vote, and Megan has been right here in the well, at this table, tallying the count for our side. She has cleared legislation and consent

requests. She has negotiated with Democrat counterparts on a daily basis.

Through it all, Megan's colleagues have come to admire her patience, level-headedness, and the institutional knowledge she has built up; and so have we Senators.

Fortunately, the work has not been thankless. I remember Megan was especially thrilled when Senator Lamar Alexander made sure that Megan's help with the Music Modernization Act yielded a signed ''thank you'' note from Dolly Parton—one of her all-time favorites.

So as we, unfortunately, prepare for Megan's upcoming departure from the Senate, I want to thank her for her fine public service. Megan has made her native Kentucky proud; she has made her parents Dr. Albert and Robin Mercer very proud; and she has made me proud as well.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as if in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ELECTIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate Judiciary Committee released a report after an investigation of the circumstances surrounding Donald Trump's efforts to take over the Justice Department during the closing days of the last calendar year and beginning of this year.

Since January, the Committee has investigated reports that White House officials, including the President himself, pressed the Department of Justice to support President Trump's unsubstantiated bids to overturn the 2020 election results, and that Acting Civil Division Assistant AG Jeffrey Clark aided in that effort.

Today's interim staff report sheds new light on former President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Jeffrey Clark became Donald Trump's Big Lie lawyer, pressuring his colleagues in the Department of Justice to force an overturn of the 2020 election.

Let me put this in perspective. The election was in November. The results were announced. Most of the world accepted it, but the former President, Donald Trump, never did. He filed a succession of lawsuits to prove that the election had been stolen. He failed in every effort in court. That was stage one.

Having failed in court with some of the most outlandish theories imaginable, but considered normal for the likes of Rudy Giuliani, they went into the second phase. The second phase was to coerce the Department of Justice and the Attorney General to intervene in the election results and to reach out directly, as the President did himself personally, to the election officials in States where he thought he should have won but he didn't.

So all that effort was under way when William Barr, President Trump's Attorney General at the time, issued a statement saying there was no evidence of widespread fraud in the election. That was disappointing to the President.

It occurred that in the middle of December of last year, William Barr, the Attorney General, announced that he was going to resign as of December 23. A man was chosen as the Acting Attorney General, Jeffrey Rosen, and Richard Donoghue as Deputy Attorney General.

There was a full court press on at that time by President Trump and his supporters to influence Jeffrey Rosen into intervening into this election contest. When I say ''full court press,'' I am talking about repeated telephone calls and meetings in the White House over a period of 2 weeks.

This report, which we have brought to the attention of the public, as well as members of the Committee, obviously, went into detail as to what happened during that 2-week period of time. It was an incredible moment, which most Americans didn't even know was going on. We were a half step away from a full-blown constitutional crisis because what the President was trying to do was to convince the Attorney General to contact the leaders in the States where he thought—the President thought he had won the election and to tell them to not certify the results and to pick an alternative set of electors in some instances.

In each of these cases, the President was—President Trump—pushing a theory on why he actually won. These theories went from crazy to silly, to outlandish.

Let me give you one of them. It was called Italy-gate. I hope you caught this one because, naturally, Rudy Giuliani was somehow involved with this—some notion that Italian satellites were intercepting the voting machines in America and changing the results against Donald Trump. That is the nature of things.

In the State of Georgia, the President and his supporters were arguing that they have videotapes proving that people brought in suitcases full of ballots, and they showed these videotapes. The election officials in Georgia—which, I might add, all Republican—countered that by saying that those were actual containers of ballots and that was the ordinary process; there was nothing sinister going on there.

State after State, case after case, Trump was making the argument that he was cheated out of the election—which, of course, was false, but he still believes it to this day—and putting the pressure on Acting Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen to be complicit in this plot. He even asked him to consider filing a special case in the Supreme Court across the street to stop the election results from being certified.

Our report shows that Jeffrey Rosen and his Deputy, Richard Donoghue, resisted this from the start. Jeffrey Clark, another Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Division who had nothing, literally, to do with this matter on a legal basis, were in conflict from that point—Clark, on the side of Trump, saying that the letters to the States should be issued, and Rosen and Donoghue arguing that there was no basis in fact, no proof of election fraud that could warrant that kind of unprecedented action.

In the meantime, many other players, like Mark Meadows in the White House, were also pressuring the Department of Justice. The net result of it was a fateful day—I believe it was January 3 of this year—when the President called Rosen, Donoghue, and Clark to the White House to pursue his effort to replace Rosen with Clark, a more complicit person in the process.

At that moment, two things happened that were significant. The White House Counsel, Pat Cipollone, dissented from the President's position and said it was a murder-suicide pact for him to engage in this. Secondly, at that point, the eight leading officials in the Department of Justice all said that they would resign en masse if there was a replacement of the Acting Attorney General by Mr. Clark.

The President hesitated and decided at the very last minute not to pursue that course, not to replace him. That was significant, I will tell you, because had it happened otherwise, there would have been a possibility that there would have been a contest on the election results.

What did the President do next after deciding that? Well, just for good measure, he ended up forcing the resignation of the U.S. attorney in Georgia who refused to buy his outlandish claims. It was the President's way of protesting that particular U.S. attorney's—Mr. Cox—independence in the situation.

What followed? We know what followed. In a matter of 3 days, this President, former President, desperate in his situation, having failed in every court case, having failed to take over the Department of Justice, decided to take his cause to the streets. We saw it in the U.S. Capitol 3 days later on January 6. The President turned loose a mob—a mob that was supposed to stop us from counting the electoral votes and electoral ballots.

Most people say: Well, we heard most of this story before, so what is the point of it? The point of it is that we were so close to a constitutional crisis at that moment that it bears continued investigation and disclosure so the

American people know that we should never be complacent when it comes to our rights as citizens and to our responsibilities to our Constitution.

This President, former President Donald Trump, would have shredded the Constitution to keep his office in the Presidency. There is no doubt in my mind.

To think that we reached that stage in history is certainly worth reflection for a moment. What more should we do going forward to make certain that we protect this democracy from the likes of Donald Trump or any of his successors in interest? That, I think, is a major responsibility that we face.

I hope this report from the Senate Judiciary Committee will reopen the conversation. I hope as well that the select committee of the House on the January 6 occurrence, the mob insurrection here at the Capitol—we submitted this evidence to them. I hope it is a benefit to them as they move forward.

I certainly hope that, on a bipartisan basis, we can decide that the ordinary course of action with a valid, legal election deciding the future of this country is always the best route in a democracy.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT RELIEF

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there has been a controversy going on the last several years which has really been to the detriment of many good people.

In 2007, Congress made a promise to college students. Here is what we said 14 years ago: If you will give us 10 years of life in public service and you make your student loan payments during that 10-year period of time, at the end of it, America will forgive the remainder of your student debt.

We said that, and more than a million people took us up on the promise. They passed up perhaps higher salaries in more lucrative professions in order to serve the country. Then they discovered at the end of the 10-year period that the loan forgiveness they were promised wasn't coming. Nearly 99 percent of those who applied under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program were denied relief, often for superficial clerical errors, loan servicing mistakes, or other matters beyond their control.

Well, good news: Those days of broken promises are over. Yesterday, the Biden administration announced important changes to this program to help hundreds of thousands of borrowers finally get the relief we promised over 10 years ago. The Education Department estimates the changes will immediately erase the debt of 22,000 borrowers, more than the total number of loans that have been forgiven so far under the program. All told, more than 550,000 borrowers could see a reduction in the amount of additional time they make in payments.

Servicemembers whose loans were deferred while they were on Active Duty will have those periods of duty applied towards payments, as they should be. This is good news, and it is long overdue.

Many of my Democratic colleagues and I tried for 4 years during the Trump administration to fix this program. They ignored us. So I want to thank President Biden and Education Secretary Cardona for following through on their commitment to fix this important program and recognize the essential work of these public servants who sacrifice for this country and for the people who live here and should receive what we promised—helping hands on their student loans.

VACCINES

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, on another matter, today, President Biden is traveling to Chicago. He arrives with a simple message: Vaccines work.

In Illinois and across the country, vaccine mandates are saving lives and allowing life to return closer to normal. Over the past month, our State has experienced a nearly 40-percent decrease in new COVID cases. We are seeing similar trends around the country.

In the months since the Biden administration announced its policy requiring the majority of Americans to get vaccinated, the United States has finally begun to turn the corner against the delta variant. Over the past 2 weeks—2 weeks—our Nation has seen a roughly 25-percent decrease in new COVID infections. Hospitalizations have decreased by 20 percent, and deaths are down as well.

In Illinois, we are proud to support the Biden vaccine policy. In fact, some of the biggest employers in our State were ahead of the curve. In early July, Loyola Medicine in Chicago was one of the first health systems in America to implement the vaccine requirement. In August, United Airlines, based in Chicago, announced it would require its employees to get vaccinated.

At the time, skeptics questioned whether this would lead to mass resignations or labor shortages. They predicted chaos. Well, much to the dismay of the doomsayers, as of yesterday, more than 99 percent of United Airlines' employees in America have rolled up their sleeves and gotten vaccinated. Every major airline in the country has followed United's lead and introduced a vaccine requirement. This means safer skies for passengers and crew members. It is another big step back to normal.

Unfortunately, not everyone is on board with this science-driven approach. Earlier this week, one of my colleagues from Wisconsin took the floor and made some unfortunate and irresponsible statements about the safety of coronavirus vaccines. This false information, unfortunately, may mislead some people. Senator JOHNSON decided to bring an argument from a Facebook comment section to the floor of the Senate.

So let me say this: More than 700,000 Americans have now died from coronavirus. That is more than the number of Americans who have died in every war since the Civil War combined.

We have the power to prevent more needless deaths from this disease in the form of three remarkably safe and effective vaccines. Fully vaccinated individuals are 10 times less likely to die from COVID, 10 times less likely to be hospitalized, and far less likely to spread the virus.

The strong majority of Americans agree with President Biden's actions. Importantly, the administration's vaccine mandate is saving lives while also providing commonsense exceptions for those limited numbers of people who have medical or religious reasons.

The fact is, the President's vaccine policy is constitutional, evidence-based, and it is what America needs to once and for all put this pandemic behind us.

Still, some of our colleagues continue to oppose it.

Yesterday, the senior Senator from Utah once again introduced legislation that would do away with the President's vaccine policy. It would also allow anyone to sue the government or their employers for any perceived harm from vaccine requirements. What that harm might be is unclear.

Can you imagine the chaos in our courtrooms if the Senator from Utah has his way? Well, you don't have to imagine too hard because some States have already shown us the deadly cost of taking a stand against public health.

There are several States in our country that both threaten to sue the Biden administration and enact the policies on their own to ban vaccine and mask mandates. They include Texas, Florida, Utah, Arkansas, South Carolina, and Georgia. The leaders in these States have gone to extraordinary lengths to stymie public health efforts to save lives.

How has that worked out for these States? What has this dangerous, deadly policy of opposing vaccines and masks meant in those States?

Take a look at the map here.

This was the deadly cost of resisting science and vaccines between July 1 of this year and October 1. Of the 6 States—Texas, Florida, Utah, Arizona, South Carolina, and Georgia—their infection rates per 100,000 people was 4,441 compared to the rest of the country at 2,548 per 100,000. The death rate, sadly, was 54 per 100,000 in these 6 States, 20 in the rest of the country.

I bring this chart to the floor to make it clear that taking a political position is not about polling and deciding what sounds popular to so many people. It is about the life-and-death reality we face with this virus and this pandemic.

These leaders are arguing for a position against vaccines and against masks, and look who is paying the price: the men and women who live in

their States, who are facing higher infection rates and, sadly, dramatically higher death rates because of it. It is time for them to accept the reality that vaccines are safe and effective and that they work.

These States have reported almost twice as many coronavirus infections as the rest of the country and, tragically, nearly three times as many deaths. Lawmakers in these States have chosen a political course rather than one that makes common sense or cares for the well-being of their people.

Our Nation's healthcare professionals are exhausted. You would be, too, if you had to battle the virus every day for 18 months. Now they are threatened with another deadly public health crisis: COVID disinformation from politicians. Doctors and nurses and healthcare workers are being threatened by the virus, and the patients, sadly, who carry it or those who don't believe COVID even exists.

What makes this all the more troubling is that some of the biggest peddlers of disinformation about vaccines have taken steps to protect themselves from the coronavirus.

Allow me to give you exhibit A.

Nearly every night, Tucker Carlson appears on FOX News and distributes bogus information to hundreds of thousands of households across America. Tucker Carlson is the biggest anti-vax quack in America.

But while Tucker is quick to question the science behind masks and vaccines, what he won't tell you is that, every day, he has to comply with a vaccine policy at FOX News. That is right. FOX News requires every one of its employees to disclose their vaccination status. According to ABC News, more than 90 percent of FOX Network's employees have been vaccinated. The remaining 10 percent are required to get tested every single day.

Sound familiar, the FOX policy? It is the same thing Joe Biden has asked for nationwide that many Republicans come to the floor and scream about every day and then turn on FOX News for their information.

So, while there is little ideological overlap between the heads of FOX News and the officials in the Biden administration, they both recognize one undeniable truth: Vaccine mandates are the key to ending this pandemic.

I thank President Biden for showing the world that Chicago is leading the way in putting the pandemic behind us. If we want to save lives, jump-start the economy, get kids back in school, all I can say is three words: Follow the science; stop villainizing public health officials; and start encouraging every American to do their part in, finally, ending this pandemic.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR AMERICANS ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A House message to accompany S. 1301, an act to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans.

Pending:

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill.

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill, with Schumer amendment No. 3835, to change the enactment date.

Schumer amendment No. 3836 (to amendment No. 3835), of a perfecting nature.

Schumer motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, Schumer amendment No. 3837, to change the enactment date.

Schumer amendment No. 3838 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 3837), of a perfecting nature.

Schumer amendment No. 3839 (to amendment No. 3838), of a perfecting nature.

CLOTURE MOTION WITHDRAWN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the cloture motion with respect to the motion to concur.

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

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to table the motion to refer.

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

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to table the motion to concur with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 3847

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301, with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] moves to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301 with an amendment numbered 3847.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. INCREASE OF PUBLIC DEBT LIMIT.

The limitation under section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, as most recently increased by section 301 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 (31 U.S.C. 3101 note), is increased by $480,000,000,000.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send to the desk a cloture motion on the motion to concur with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301, an act to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans, with amendment No. 3847.

Charles E. Schumer, Ron Wyden, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Tina Smith, Amy Klobuchar, Jacky Rosen, Christopher Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Jeanne Shaheen, Mazie K. Hirono, Tim Kaine, Debbie Stabenow, Angus S. King, Jr., Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jeff Merkley.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send to the desk a cloture motion on the motion to concur.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301, an act to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans.

Charles E. Schumer, Angus S. King, Jr., Gary C. Peters, Tammy Baldwin, Christopher A. Coons, Chris Van Hollen, Elizabeth Warren, Patrick J. Leahy, Michael F. Bennet, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Debbie Stabenow, Tim Kaine, Martin Heinrich, Jacky Rosen.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3848 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3847

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 3848 to amendment No. 3847.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To change the effective date)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect 2 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 3849

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to refer the House message to accompany S. 1301 to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] moves to refer to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 3849.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To change the effective date)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3850 TO THE INSTRUCTIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 3850 to the instructions on the motion to refer S. 1301.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the effective date)

On page 1, line 3, strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3851 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3850

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 3851 to amendment No. 3850.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the effective date)

On page 1, lines 1 and 2, strike ''4 days'' and insert ''1 day''.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider calendar No. 259.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Gustavo A. Gelpi, of Puerto Rico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 259, Gustavo A. Gelpi, of Puerto Rico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Gary C. Peters, Michael F. Bennet, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin, Patty Murray, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, Patrick J. Leahy, Robert Menendez, Bernard Sanders, Mark R. Warner, Tina Smith, Richard J. Durbin, Ben Ray Luján.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, October 7, be waived.

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

MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Pursuant to S. Res. 27, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee being tied on the question of reporting, I move to discharge the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee from further consideration of the nomination of Catherine Elizabeth Lhamon, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of S. Res. 27, there will now be up to 4 hours of debate on the motion equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with no motions, points of order, or amendments in order.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum call be equally divided.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to oppose, of course, the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending bill. I have been coming to the floor to talk about this—the wasted taxes, the spending, all of the sorts of things the Democrats are trying to do.

You know, right now, the Democrats are pushing a Big Government, socialist agenda. There can be no question about it. They want additional, permanent welfare programs. They want to—to me, this bankrupts current programs, like Medicare. It takes—it is very hard to think about this amount of spending without realizing the risk that it proves for Social Security. And, of course, the Democrats are proposing this big green new disaster.

For all this spending, what do they want to do?

Well, they want to raise taxes by trillions and trillions of dollars. But it is still not enough to pay for all of the spending that they want to do.

That is why Democrats are now working and pushing this backdoor tax increase. Democrats want to supersize the least accountable and most powerful Agency of the Federal Government. And that, of course, is the Internal Revenue Service.

Now, what we know about this Agency, the IRS, is that they have, time and time again, proven they can't be even trusted to properly secure data, when we look at the leaks that come out of the IRS.

But they are looking for more data and more information, private information, private business by American taxpayers.

Democrats are asking, in this $3.5 trillion bill, $80 billion of additional funding for the Internal Revenue Service. They want to give the IRS enough money and power to hire a full new army of bureaucrats.

President Biden's Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has been very clear. She knows what she wants to do with some of the money. She wants to force banks to tell the IRS every time anyone writes or deposits a check above a certain amount in their banking account, checking account. And right now, the number that she is talking about is $600—$600 for a check written or deposited. So every time someone pays the rent, deposits a paycheck, Democrats want the IRS to know about it.

Not enough to know that government knows how much people make; they want to know how much they spend. It is Big Brother initiative to squeeze every last penny out of working families.

I mean, why else would they want to go after every hard-working man and woman in America to find out this information?

As Americans find out about that, they are furious. They are smart enough to know that when Joe Biden first says we are only going to tax the billionaires—they are only going to tax the billionaires—why are they looking into the banking accounts and the checking accounts and the deposits and the withdrawals of people all across the country?

Because the tax man is coming for them as well when it comes to trying to pay for this massive tax-and-spending blowout.

So as more and more people find out about it, the more furious they become. I got a report again this morning, 488 more emails and letters into Wyoming Senate—Senator from Wyoming about that from my home State. I have received more calls, more emails, more letters from people from Wyoming on this one topic than on any one topic that I can recall in the time that I have been in the U.S. Senate.

And everyone calling and writing about it has the same position. It is not like, well, half of the people are for it and half of the people are against it. Everybody is against this. Everyone we have heard from—the 488 that I heard from within the last 24 hours—everyone is against this proposal. Thousands and thousands of emails.

I talked to Senator LUMMIS, the other Senator from Wyoming. Her inbox is completely full as well, all related to this topic. It is what I heard about in the grocery store this past weekend at home in Wyoming.

This new scheme will be terrible, and not just for the taxpayers. It is going be a heavy weight around the neck of the community banks and credit unions in Wyoming.

I talked to one of the bankers from Wyoming. She was in the grocery store getting food for the weekend. What did she—it was the only—it was the thing she wanted to talk about, is the fact they would have to hire three new employees to comply with all of the regulations coming out that would relate to trying to get this information from their bank to the IRS.

In addition, this would be quite an attack on our privacy. This Big Brother scheme would make bankers and credit union associates into de facto IRS agents.

And as this bank officer said to me, she said: Look, I don't want—I am not going to be working for the IRS. I work for my customers, my clients, the people of Wyoming. The last thing I want to do is be somebody reporting into the IRS.

This is what I am hearing from bankers all around the State of Wyoming. They don't want to be invading people's privacy. They don't want to become agents of the IRS.

People in Wyoming have a straightforward response to this administration, and it is this: Leave us alone. We don't need you looking over our shoulder, prying into our life and our activities.

If Democrats go forward with this Big Brother plan, the people all across this country will not stand for it. Many people in Wyoming will look for alternatives to traditional banks and credit unions because they don't want the IRS and the government and Big Brother to know their personal activities. They want to protect their privacy. They may find other places to put their money.

Look, that is going to devastate local banks, local credit unions, if people take their money out because they don't want the government boring into their data and their financial transactions.

It is going to happen in every State. Hard to believe the government would want to do that, but yet Secretary Yellen came to Capitol Hill, and that is what she is doing. She is still defending this indefensible idea; and I believe she is doing it because that is what Joe Biden, the President of the United States, is telling her to do as his Treasury Secretary.

So she went on television Tuesday—today is Thursday—2 days ago, essentially said it was no big deal. That is what the Treasury Secretary of the United States believes, that violating the individual privacy of individuals of this country is no big deal.

Last week, Senator LUMMIS from Wyoming questioned Secretary Yellen before the Banking Committee. Secretary Yellen, actually astonishingly, doubled down. She said, ''I think you misunderstand the proposal.'' She said, ''The IRS already has a wealth of information about individuals.''

Well, Madam Secretary, we understand that really well. We know you have a wealth of information about individual taxpayers. You know how much they make. You know how they make it. That is enough. If you have all this, you don't need more, but yet you are asking for more, and you want $80 billion for an army of IRS agents to be able to find it out. That is the problem. The IRS has so much information about us already.

Now, Senator LUMMIS did get Secretary Yellen to admit working families are not the ones skimping out on their taxes. Why else do we have this army of IRS agents looking into our taxes? Secretary Yellen didn't seem to care. She doubled down, still defending this massive invasion of privacy, and that is what it is. It is a huge invasion of privacy, and I contend that they want all this information so they can try to squeeze more money from people who the Secretary even admits are not trying to cheat on their taxes. They are trying to find ways to take more money out of their pocketbooks, when they are already feeling the big bite of Joe Biden's inflation at the gas pump and at the grocery store.

This Big Brother plan is reckless. It treats the American people like criminals. It turns the IRS into the judge, the jury, and the lord high executioner. This scheme shows how desperate Democrats are to get their hands on taxpayer money. Why? So they can spend more. They are so desperate for more spending that they are willing to spy on the American people to try to get more money to spend.

Watch and listen to the Democrats talk. There is a food fight going on, and the food fight is: How much more can we tax and how much more can we spend? It is a food fight between the really big spenders and the extremely big spenders. Look, Democrats think that Washington knows best. Now, the people of Wyoming know differently. We don't need Washington looking over our shoulders. It is time for Democrats to drop the entire plan, mind their own business, and stop demanding more money to spy on the American people.

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

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

FLOOD INSURANCE

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, today is Thursday, October 7, 2021, and Risk Rating 2.0 has officially been in effect for 6 full days.

What is Risk Rating 2.0?

It is a new rating system for the National Flood Insurance Program that will increase premiums higher than sustainable for homeowners and, therefore, higher than is sustainable for the program.

In Louisiana, 80 percent of policyholders will see increases in the first year, and at times, for some, premiums will become unaffordable and can collapse the value of their home. The Presiding Officer is also from a coastal State. This will absolutely affect everyone who lives in a coastal State.

Now, particularly, in my State, in light of recent storms, it is important that we understand the sustainability of the National Flood Insurance Program is key.

Congress never passed a bill requiring that FEMA implement Risk Rating 2.0. President Biden can stop it. He has chosen not to. We have asked that FEMA delay implementing this program or reconsider it altogether.

Now, by the way, FEMA has been slow to share information with policyholders and, frankly, misleading Congress by hiding the true consequences of 2.0 and not being up front with the cost in the out-years. They said they would tell policyholders by August 1 of the increase in premiums, but they missed the deadline. It didn't come down to homeowners and insurers until the middle of September. Some are still trying to figure out what this rating system will mean for their life.

In 2019, my office reached out to the administration, and we were able to successfully delay the implementation saying that there needed to be further consideration. This time, however, the Biden administration has chosen not to delay it.

Now, let's just take a quote from a working family in Lake Charles, LA, who does not—I repeat—does not live in a flood zone. They currently pay $572 for flood insurance on a single-family home that is worth approximately $250,000. The quote he received—this is real life. This isn't theoretical. The quote that he received under Risk Rating 2.0 raises his premium to over $5,000—$572 to $5,000.

Now, rate increases are capped at 18 percent annually, so it doesn't happen next year. But this is 18 percent compounded. It is kind of like a balloon on one of those little helium things. It starts off and it doesn't seem that it is inflating, and then, all of a sudden, it inflates rapidly, like a balloon note on a mortgage.

So with progressive increases, when it gets to $5,000—actually, $5,624—he will have to choose: Do I continue my policy?

Now, he is not in a flood zone. If you think about actuarially, you want people who are not at high risk to spread the cost for everybody else.

Under this, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that 20 percent of policyholders will drop their insurance. That has a risk of putting the National Flood Insurance Program into an actuarial death spiral where those at lower risk drop the insurance, the remaining risk is forced upon a relatively small number of people raising their risk even more, and you gradually have a continual falloff of the number of people in the program.

Now, some policyholders are required to pay for the insurance by law, but this puts them in an even worse situation. They will either have to put thousands of dollars up for their insurance or risk losing their home.

I would ask President Biden, who unquestionably is an empathetic man and empathetic to the working families of our country, to consider delaying Risk Rating 2.0.

Now, there are a couple of criticisms of the flood insurance program, in general, which are unfounded.

First: These are millionaires' vacation homes; why do we even have a program?

This is factually not true. When CBO looked at samples of home values in the program, it ranged from $220- to $400,000. And I imagine the President from New Jersey—President of the Senate from New Jersey—can think of a middle-income family, a police officer and a teacher; who now live in a home worth $400,000. These are not millionaires or billionaires.

In my home State of Louisiana, these are middle-income and working families, folks trying to make ends meet. They are not folks in a vacation home. And here is an example of homes, after recent Hurricane Ida, that would need flood insurance: middle-income homes.

By the way, you can see these homes are built a little bit on a berm. They have actually taken the effort to protect their homes from flooding. So the home itself is not flooded, just everything else around it. On the other hand, I can promise you that there are older neighborhoods in which the water is above the doorstep.

Now, looking specifically at Risk Rating 2.0, data shows who will see the rate hikes. It is bad news for Louisiana, where rates will increase for almost everybody.

The second criticism of the program is that it subsidizes people who suffer repetitive flood damage. Now, this argument is mitigated, if you will, by offering mitigation. Data shows that mitigation is good for the taxpayer. According to the National Institute of Building Sciences, for every $1 spent in Federal mitigation grants, it saves the program an average of $6.

In the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, there is $3.5 billion in flood mitigation assistance grants—grants going towards buying up properties that have experienced repetitive loss. Shoring up the program by removing high-risk properties protects other properties. It is true in your State, and it is true in my State. It is a wise investment to protect the National Flood Insurance Program.

So we can have a conversation, by the way, about a criticism that if mitigation opportunities are offered to homeowners and they decline them, what to do about that. On the other hand, when folks are offered mitigation, they almost always accept the opportunity for that.

Finally, some argue that private insurers will replace the National Flood Insurance Program. But let's be honest, that will not occur. I support the expansion of private insurance covering flood properties. Consumers should have options. If nothing else, this highlights the need for a long-term fix to the program.

In the past, I proposed reforms to ensure that NFIP is affordable and accessible to homeowners, accountable to taxpayers, and sustainable. I worked on flood insurance programs with Senators MENENDEZ and GILLIBRAND, both of them coming from States affected by flooding, just as mine did as well. This makes it bipartisan, two different regions. It is not only about the Gulf Coast; it is about the Atlantic Coast, the Pacific Coast; and it is about our island properties.

By the way, I have been speaking about Louisiana, but Risk Rating 2.0 applies nationwide. It impacts all those living on our coasts. Once more, we should all—all of us representing States with coastlines—ask the Biden administration to halt Risk Rating 2.0.

This Congress, I will continue to work to reform NFIP. In addition to affordability, accessibility, accountability, and sustainability, there needs to be an emphasis on supporting prevention and mitigation efforts to prevent future floods.

At the end of the day, flood insurance must be affordable for the homeowner, accessible, accountable to the taxpayer, and sustainable for the future.

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR A.R. HARRIS, SR.

Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to honor a man in my State of Louisiana, who has dedicated nearly 80 percent of his life to preaching the gospel and serving others through his faith.

Pastor A.R. Harris, Sr., was born December 16, 1932, in Jonesboro, LA. He has preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ since he was 7 years old and led God's people for over six decades.

Pastor Harris is a veteran who served our country in the United States Army during the Korean war. He and his wife Eva of 63 years have six wonderful children, four of whom followed their father's footsteps to preach the Good Word to spread the Gospel. He and Eva are being honored for their 46 years of service at their church, Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church #2.

He is a man of God, family, and country; and it is my privilege to stand here on the floor of the U.S. Senate and recognize the faithful service of Pastor A.R. Harris, Sr.

God bless him, his family, and God bless the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2953

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, you know, it is no secret that I oppose President Biden's tax proposal. I think it is bad policy that would undercut growth and derail American prosperity.

But one of the worst parts of the President's plan is the provision requiring financial institutions to report their customer's transactions of $600 or greater to the IRS.

That means anytime an American pays a bill, makes a deposit, transfers funds, or makes a purchase of $600 or more, their bank, credit union, or financial institution would be forced to report that data to the IRS.

Opposition to this proposal is deep and bipartisan. I don't care if you are a

Republican, Democrat, or Independent. No one wants the IRS looking over their shoulder every time they make a financial transaction. The IRS doesn't efficiently use the data it collects now.

Why in the world would we give them more information?

If the IRS has reason to believe you are not paying all that you owe in taxes, they have the ability to audit you. They don't need any more private financial data on any of us. The bulk of the data collection they are proposing will do nothing to close the so-called tax gap. All it does is violate the liberty of every freedom-loving American who values their financial property.

The proposal would dramatically increase IRS audits of working Americans. The overwhelming majority of people the IRS would look into as a result of this policy would not have done a single thing wrong, but when the IRS starts snooping, it will cost you big money. That means hiring a high-priced attorney/accountant who will bleed you dry.

President Biden claims his proposal would only impact the rich, but middle-class families are the ones who will ultimately pay the price.

Additionally, the IRS has a history of data security failures. Just earlier this year, the confidential tax information of over a dozen well-known Americans leaked from the Agency and was published in the press. That was unacceptable and unlawful, but nothing was done to hold the IRS accountable.

But this is, unfortunately, nothing new. Under President Biden's watch, when he was Vice President, conservative groups and individuals were targeted for aggressive audits. And as recently as this year, a Texas-based charity was denied tax-exempt status because the IRS considered the charity too close to Republicans and too close to Christianity.

Folks, that is pitiful.

Providing the IRS with massive amounts of financial-transaction data will only make it easier for them to target groups or individuals they disagree with. If anything, we need to be reining in the IRS and holding officials accountable who go after taxpayers for political reasons.

The outcry from voters has been strong and swift. Some of my Democrat colleagues are feeling the heat from their constituents and are starting to walk back the President's proposal. The American people have them on the run.

Democrats in Congress are talking about only requiring transactions of only $10,000 or more to be reported to the IRS. While fewer Americans would be directly impacted by this threshold, we would still feel the broader, negative effects.

That being said, on Tuesday of this week, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, the President's top economic adviser, defended the Biden plan and doubled down on the $600 IRS proposal.

Regardless of whether Democrats settle on $600 or $10,000 threshold, every American would suffer. That is because our community banks and credit unions will be overwhelmed—I mean overwhelmed—with a tidal wave of compliance data. Small banks and credit unions won't be able to afford to hire the staff that they are going to need, forcing them to close their doors in a lot of rural and minority areas.

And for Americans, including many minorities, living in rural communities across the country, these small banks and credit unions are a focal point for the community. They provide the money folks need to buy their first home or car; they fuel the economic development, provide good-paying jobs, and pump resources back into these rural communities.

If these community banks and credit unions close, it would cut off access to capital for millions of Americans in communities. They would suffer. Livelihoods would be destroyed.

That is why I, along with my colleague from Florida, Senator RICK SCOTT, have introduced a bill prohibiting the IRS from creating, implementing, or administering a financial reporting regime that would require financial institutions or individuals to report data or financial transactions or account balances to the IRS.

To be clear, my legislation does not touch the Bank Secrecy Act or any of the regulations either implemented or issued under that act.

My bill has been endorsed by the American Bankers Association, the Independent Community Bankers of America, the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions, the Credit Union National Association, the Heritage Action for America, the League of Southeastern Credit Unions, and the Alabama Bankers Association. These organizations and their members know that if President Biden's proposal goes through, banking, as we know it, will end.

At this time, I would like to yield the floor to my distinguished colleague from Florida, Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I would like to thank Senator TUBERVILLE for leading this very important effort.

I want to be very clear. What President Biden is proposing here is as close to policy from communist China as we have seen in the United States. In oppressive regimes like Cuba and communist China, we have come to expect a surveillance state where the government has access to every part of a person's life. Now Joe Biden wants to bring that here to America.

Let me explain what the Biden administration and Democrats in Washington are proposing. Democrats want to open your bank account to Federal agents. Under Joe Biden's America, the Federal Government's authority would be vastly expanded so the IRS can get a look at any account over $600. The madness doesn't stop there. This new rule from Joe Biden would also require banks to report every transaction of $600 or more. Does anyone honestly think the Federal Government will keep your private information safe?

Want to buy a bed? Here comes the Federal Government. But say you want to buy a new shotgun. Hunting season is coming up. Again, here come the feds. How about giving money to your favorite charities; supporting a cause or a political candidate you care about; for childcare or paying for mental health counseling? Perhaps you are just selling off a little furniture and want to put your profits in a savings account. For every one of these transactions I have just described, the government is going to come take a look.

Every American should be disgusted and furious by this insane overreach of the Federal Government. Think about the private, personal information the government would have access to. It is incredibly intrusive, and Joe Biden wants to make it nearly limitless. Again, does anyone honestly think the Federal Government would keep your private information safe? I understand that families are angry. I have heard from more than 18,000 constituents over just the last 2 weeks about how disgusted they are with this plan.

Biden wants to expand the surveillance state of the Federal Government to target every American family. Ninety-five percent of American households have a bank account, and this policy will have impacts on every single one of those accountholders. But it is not just banks; Joe Biden is expanding the Federal surveillance state to monitor your finances across the board. They will be watching your local credit union and your PayPal and Venmo accounts. They will even be watching to see how you spend and earn cryptocurrency. This is an outrageous violation of Americans' privacy.

I think the Democrats are also hearing from their constituents. Recent reports say the President and Democrats in the House are looking at raising the threshold from $600 to $10,000. That would still hit many Americans families.

We are not just talking about checking accounts; this applies to savings, retirement, and investment accounts. You name it, the feds want to take a look.

Again, I am not describing something in Cuba or communist China; I am talking about what Joe Biden and the Democrats want to do right here in the U.S.A. I can't wait for my Democratic colleague to explain why President Biden is even proposing this. How can you possibly justify to the American people that the IRS should be snooping around in their bank, retirement, or investment accounts?

There is only one explanation, and it is simply terrifying. The Democrats want to control how you spend your money. Democrats want to control your expenditures, your charitable and

political giving, and your investments. The more power Democrats can grab from American families, the more control they think they will get over each and every American.

This all boils down to Joe Biden and the radical left bringing the American people under the thumb of his socialist tax-and-spend agenda. After all, how else is he going to be able to squeeze every last penny out of American families' bank accounts to pay for his socialist plans?

Here is how the Democratic Party works: They refuse to audit our Federal Agencies that year after year send billions in improper payments to the wrong people, which they rarely ever recover. They refuse to hold their government accountable for reckless waste and massive debt. But they want to put the magnifying glass on hard-working families who are just trying to live their dreams.

Under Biden's socialist regime, it is rules for thee but not for me. How is that different from communist China, where the government lives in opulence while their citizens live totally dependent on the government in poverty?

I will not stand for this outrageous plan. No American should tolerate this unprecedented overreach. I am proud to support Senator TUBERVILLE's legislation and hope every one of my colleagues looks at this for what it is: communist China-style totalitarian surveillance.

I yield back to Senator TUBERVILLE.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. I would like to yield the floor to my distinguished colleague from Indiana, Senator BRAUN.

Mr. BRAUN. Thank you, Senator TUBERVILLE.

Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Every year, I travel and visit every county in the State of Indiana—92 of them. You know, I can't ever recall anyone saying that they want the IRS to poke into their business more on a day-to-day basis. In fact, they bemoan the fact that many years ago, the IRS was actually sifting through stuff to determine who was conservative or not before they might grant status to your entity.

We have gotten to a point—and I think Senators TUBERVILLE and SCOTT have eloquently laid out the details. I want to take a little different approach.

I have been here a little less than 3 years, and this kind of entrepreneurialism through government, growing the Federal Government, having an Agency like the IRS that can't do its job well with the money that we do give to it, is just another example of trying to pile on one bad thing after another.

It would be different if we weren't doing it borrowing 23 percent of the money we spend every year. Imagine that in your own household, in a State or local government, a business. You would be laughed out of the banker's office if you did that and then wanted a loan to cover it and then do it the next 10 years. It doesn't work anywhere else.

This is an example that I think, along with maybe the vaccine mandate, where you are now forcing small businesses to do something when they finally got a rhythm—and businesses have protected their employees and their customers as well as anybody out there in that journey. You have got that nonsense that is going to be unfurled here soon. But it is an example of where, at some point, enough needs to be enough.

The IRS has had a poor record of doing things to boot. Earlier, ProPublica released illegally obtained tax records of many Americans. We had the incident of issues with conservative businesses being discriminated against in getting proper status set up. I introduced the Protect Taxpayer Privacy Act in June for that because the IRS is already doing things that they shouldn't be doing. This would be a perfect companion to what Senator TUBERVILLE is putting out here.

To wrap it up, we have to be careful when we send people here. If you were knocking it out of the park, delivering results, not borrowing money to do the things we try to do anyway, and then you tee up something like this—this is going to do nothing more than unleash more of an Agency that doesn't do well in its job anyway, and it is truly an example of government gone wild.

I thank Senator TUBERVILLE for bringing this to a focal point.

I yield back to him.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator BRAUN and Senator SCOTT again for supporting this bill.

I am proud to partner with him in this effort to safeguard the financial privacy of American citizens.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2953, which is at the desk. I further ask 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 an objection?

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President and colleagues, the Senator's proposal in effect would be a game-winning touchdown for wealthy tax cheats.

IRS Commissioner Rettig, a Republican appointee, came before the Finance Committee earlier this year and said the total amount of taxes evaded each year could be as high as $1 trillion. Cheating by those at the very top is one of the major causes of that huge tax gap. A big reason why is that the automatic reporting and strict rules that apply to the typical, hard-working taxpayer—nurses and firefighters, for example—they don't always apply to those at the top. That means the tax cheats are able to hide their cheating in the shadows.

The Senator's proposal would help them keep it that way. This proposal would make it extraordinarily difficult to collect the information necessary to crack down on the high-flying tax cheats.

The argument against information reporting is always the same, and it has been consistently wrong. Despite what opponents say, what President Biden and Democrats have proposed is focused on rooting out tax cheating at the top. It wouldn't apply to accounts with deposits and withdrawals under $10,000. And for most people, that is $10,000 on top of your paycheck. It is not about anybody's transactions. They wouldn't be reported, colleagues. It wouldn't create any new surveillance of digital currency. This information-reporting proposal is about reporting only two numbers: the total amount going into an account and the total amount going out of it. Social Security income does not count either.

So this idea—and I have listened to my friends—that somehow this is going to end Western civilization just doesn't hold up.

In fact, Commissioner Rettig, a Republican appointee, pointed out recently that this plan could actually reduce the odds of an audit for middle-class taxpayers, those folks that I was talking about, the nurses and the firefighters.

I am going to close with just a couple of other points. Most of my colleagues know that I am about as strong a privacy hawk as there is in the Senate. And I don't take a backseat to anybody when it comes to fighting for Americans' privacy, whether it is taxpayer data, communications, web traffic—you name it. And, colleagues, all of that work, all of that private work, is on the public record. It is a matter of public record. It isn't an atomic secret.

In those debates about privacy, it is also striking that it is most often Members of the other side attempting to stop reforms, for example, to government surveillance of phone records and emails and web browsing—web browsing. But when Democrats are working to crack down on ultrawealthy tax cheats, that is when, suddenly, we have got Republicans saying: Oh, my goodness; who is going to be sensitive to privacy?

I want to repeat, as I have on this floor again and again, I will talk to anybody on either side of the aisle with any philosophy about protecting taxpayer data. As the chairman of the

Senate Finance Committee, which handles privacy policy, I want it understood that our committee—and I, particularly, given my record on privacy issues—we take privacy very seriously.

That is not what is on offer by the other side today. The bottom line is wealthy tax cheats are ripping off the American people to the tune of billions and billions of dollars per year. Tax cheats thrive when the reporting rules that apply to them are loose and murky. Democrats want to fix this broken approach and crack down on cheating at the top. The Senator's proposal would make that impossible, and it would hand—colleagues, it would hand, the Senator's proposal—a big fourth-quarter victory to the tax cheats.

For that reason, I object.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, this is a simple two-page bill that will protect every American from an invasion of privacy by Big Brother Government IRS. I am sorry to see that my Democratic colleagues oppose protecting the financial privacy of American taxpayers. That is a real shame.

I think you would be hard-pressed to find a Member of the U.S. Senate who can honestly say that a majority of their constituents support President Biden's proposal for the IRS to monitor a $600 or more transaction. I don't think you could find one.

We ought to be able to stand up together, in a bipartisan fashion, to reject this radical proposal. I am confident that the American people will continue to put pressure on their elected representatives to reject this plan. I will work with my colleagues to address legitimate concerns, though I suspect there are none, and any position is going to be purely political.

Americans across the country can count on Senator SCOTT and myself to keep up the fight of this important issue.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5323

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we have reached a really important point in our relationship with one of our great allies in the world. The United States has before it the challenge—and this Congress can meet that challenge—for $1 billion of supplemental security assistance to replenish Israel's Iron Dome system.

That funding is provided in H.R. 5323, the Iron Dome Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2022, passed by the House of Representatives by an overwhelming—and I emphasize ''overwhelming''—bipartisan support.

I want to thank my Connecticut colleague ROSA DELAURO of New Haven for her leadership and all of the Members of the House of Representatives for their vision and courage in separating this measure and passing it. And we should do so now, as quickly as possible.

All of us know that the 2016 memorandum of understanding negotiated between Israel and the United States provides $500 million per year in security assistance for Israel's missile defense. The MOU allows Israel to request additional funds to replenish and restore missile defense capabilities in exceptional circumstances.

We all remember vividly the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas, and in our minds still vividly and graphically are the pictures of that Iron Dome system intercepting missiles aimed at civilians in Israel. The Iron Dome defense system intercepted about 90 percent of those potentially lethal missiles targeting populated areas of Israel.

In total, about 4,400 rockets were launched by Hamas. Should the Iron Dome have failed, countless Israeli civilians would have been killed. This system performed with such extraordinary and exceptional prowess, showing its necessity for both humanitarian and defensive purposes.

I recently returned from a trip to Israel, where I talked to the top leadership of the new government, including Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. I was inspired and excited by the determination of the Israeli leadership and, I believe, the Israeli people to inaugurate a new era where we are even closer to Israel than we have been in the past.

There have been some bumps in the road; there have been some potential disagreements in this body; but we should focus on making sure that Israel's defense is completely bipartisan; that our relationship with Israel crosses party lines. We have that opportunity today to renew the sense of bipartisanship in our unshakeable relationship with Israel.

And that relationship goes beyond just security concerns. We are bound by culture, heritage, faith, and a common commitment to democracy. And Israel has that commitment in perhaps the most constantly dangerous neighborhood in the world.

Iron Dome is a defensive system. It is solely defensive, and it defends against the loss of civilians on both sides, in Gaza as well as Israel, because the loss of life in Israel, if it occurs, if Iron Dome is lacking, will lead to escalating violence that will cost lives in Gaza as well.

The Iron Dome prevents escalating hostilities that will cost lives among both Palestinians and Israelis. So its defensive value is indisputable, and that is why it does have bipartisan support here. It has the President's support. He stated:

> We're also going to discuss Israel's unwavering—unwavering commitment that we have in the United States to Israel's security. And I fully, fully, fully support replenishing Israel's Iron Dome system.

A quote from his meeting prior to meeting with Prime Minister Bennett at the White House.

Just 2 days before he made those remarks, Secretary Austin also expressed his support:

> You can also see that commitment as we advocate for the replenishment of the Iron Dome missile defense system. The administration is committed to ensuring that Iron Dome can defend Israeli civilian population centers targeted by terrorist attacks, and we're working closely with Congress to provide all the necessary information to respond positively to your request for the—for $1 billion in emergency funding, and it's going to save more innocent lives.

I am concerned that Members of the U.S. Senate are blocking passage of this bill. Senator PAUL has demanded that we add unrelated language to rescind funds from the Department of State and the Department of Defense before he will agree to a unanimous consent decree. We should prevent this sacred relationship from becoming a political football. We should make sure that we preserve it as a bipartisan source of consensus.

And that is not to say necessarily that we agree with every single act, every single measure that our Israeli allies take. We can be friends and family and still disagree.

But our aid should not be conditioned on agreeing with every single policy or action taken by our Israeli friends. This measure is a defensive platform that saves lives. It is a humanitarian step that should be regarded for what it is—essential to our alliance, our relationship, and our bond with Israel.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, following consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 140, H.R. 5323; that there be up to 2 hours of debate; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill be considered read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I agree with the Senator from Connecticut that we should pass the proposal. In fact, I have offered a proposal to fund the Iron Dome with $1 billion that should be paid for, though. We are facing a $30 trillion debt. We borrow $2 million a minute. Inflation is rising. They are wanting to pile more debt upon our country. So, if we are going to help our ally Israel, I think we need to be strong to do it, we need to be not piling on debt without consequences, and this should be paid for.

There is a very easy pay-for that I have proposed. There is $6 billion left in a reconstruction fund for the Afghan national government. Well, the Afghan

national government no longer exists. In the haste to leave, the Biden administration has let the Taliban overrun the country.

So I asked the other day, in committee, of Secretary Blinken: This $6 billion, are you planning on giving it to the Taliban?

And he said: Well, it depends on whether they fulfill their commitments.

To me, that sounds like a pretty big ''if,'' but if the Biden administration says that they fulfill their commitment and expectations, the understanding is the Biden administration is going to give $6 billion to the Taliban.

So, not only do they let them take $80 billion of equipment, not only did we leave in complete disarray, Democrats now want to say: Oh, we have got to keep this money because we have to give it to the Taliban.

That is obscene.

We should immediately rescind all of that money. If you want to give money to Afghanistan, let's vote on it again. But you gave the money to the previous government, and now you want to give the money to the Taliban, which has overrun the country. It is a disgrace. The Taliban shouldn't get a penny. And we should pay for things, even for things that we are trying to give to allies.

So I have a proposal before the desk. My proposal says to fully fund the $1 billion for the Iron Dome project. Fully fund it. We have already given billions for it. We are willing to give $1 billion more, but we are going to pay for it by not giving money to the Taliban. So it is a pretty easy sort of list. We asked every Senator on the Republican side if they objected to this, and not one Republican objected to this. So the reason the Iron Dome is being held up is because the Democrats are objecting to its being paid for.

I am here today to support the Iron Dome. I am giving a proposal that would give them their $1 billion right now. It could happen today. All I ask is that it be paid for with money that has already been appropriated and that is, in all likelihood, going to be given to the Taliban if we don't take it away now. I think it is a very reasonable proposal.

I am disappointed that the Democrats are objecting to Iron Dome today. It is a disappointment that they are against paying for it with a fund that is already out there, and that they so much love the idea of giving the money to the Taliban that they are going to insist on blocking Iron Dome funding because they are insistent on ''No, no, we can't get rid of the $6 billion because, if the Taliban behaves, we are going to give it to them.''

Look, I don't care if the Taliban behaves. I wouldn't give them a penny. There are other ways of trying to have a diplomatic relationship other than giving money to people. People think that somehow, if the Taliban behaves, we have got to give them money? I think that is a crazy notion.

So, without question, I will object.

I ask the Senator to modify his request so that, instead of his proposal and as in legislative session, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 140, H.R. 5323; further, that the only amendment in order be my substitute amendment, which is at the desk. I further ask that there be 2 hours of debate, equally divided between the two leaders, and that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Paul substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time, and that the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, let's set the record straight.

There is no possibility of this money or any other money going to the Taliban. Section 9021 of the fiscal year 2021 Defense Appropriations Act—we all voted for it—makes funding the Taliban illegal, and if any Pentagon official breaks that law, they could go to jail under the Antideficiency Act.

Whatever the Secretary of State may have answered to Senator PAUL's question at a hearing, we should know and he should know that spending money in any way that enables it to go to the Taliban would be breaking the law, and he would have to come to Congress to use any of that money to aid the Taliban. So this is a false issue.

The funds that the Paul amendment seeks to rescind have actually not yet been appropriated. He targets the $3.3 billion in the fiscal year 2022 request. You can't rescind funds that haven't yet been appropriated. So the amendment falls of its own weight, but I want to deal with the merits.

No. 1, the Paul amendment seeks to rescind funds from the Department of Defense's Afghan Security Forces Fund. Those funds are still needed to complete the withdrawal. They are in an account that is urgently needed to terminate contracts that are already in place and secure military equipment that has been withdrawn from Afghanistan.

All of the complaints about the withdrawal and all of the complaints about the need to secure that military equipment are met by this funding. Defunding the Pentagon in this way will, in fact, disrupt the shutdown of these activities and open the United States to legal action from contractors. I have been advised, for those reasons, that the Department of Defense strongly opposes the Paul amendment because it makes ending the war in Afghanistan more difficult.

Let me just close by saying that there is a need for humanitarian support in areas where the Palestinians live. There is a need for aid for water treatment and vaccines and health and all of the needs—humanitarian needs—of the Palestinian people.

One of the encouraging parts of my visit with the Israeli leadership was their recognition that Israel has a humanitarian obligation in this area. They recognize, as well, that we may not always agree on every facet of our relationship, but this measure should be unconditional because it is defensive, and it is humanitarian to support the Iron Dome.

I wish my Republican colleagues were here to refute Senator PAUL, because I know many of them support it.

Therefore, I will not modify my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, I am disappointed that the Democrats will again today block the Iron Dome funding as paid for. I think it is important that we do support our allies. I am in support of the Iron Dome funding, but I think, at the very least, it should be paid for. We have offered them various permutations of this—either the entire $6 billion from the Afghan reconstruction fund or $1 billion. We have offered them other alternatives to look at other funding in government that already exists to see if we could pay for this.

So the real reluctance is on the Democrats' part to pay for aid, and the thing is that we can't just blindly keep giving money away without repercussions. We are $30 trillion in debt.

So I am disappointed today that the Democrats will block the Iron Dome funding as paid for, and I do object to the underlying proposition.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I would just close, Mr. President, by saying we need to pass this measure. We need to do it now, and there is no need for pay-for. We should move ahead with this unanimous consent. I regret the objection.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5323

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, when I traveled to Israel in 2019, I saw with my own eyes the Iron Dome system up close and in person. I met with the brave soldiers who operate and protect it—young men and women, in many cases, no older than 18 or 19 years old.

Iron Dome is a missile defense system that has successfully intercepted thousands of missiles fired by terrorist groups, like Hamas, at Israeli population centers. It has protected Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It has protected them all from harm and saved countless lives, Israelis and Palestinians alike.

This incredible feat of defense technology is a shining example of the unbreakable U.S.-Israel security partnership. The U.S. Army is in the process,

as well, of acquiring Iron Dome batteries, and it tested the system as recently as August, meaning this lifesaving technology could also protect American men and women in uniform from a variety of missile threats.

Let me be clear. I want to emphasize the word ''defense.'' Iron Dome is a purely defensive system. It is a shield—a miraculous shield—against death and destruction, one that America should be proud to help support and has supported across both Democratic and Republican administrations and in Democratic and Republican Congresses for over a decade. Iron Dome saves lives; Iron Dome prevents an escalation of violence; and Iron Dome provides a critical window for diplomacy.

This past May, terrorist organizations launched over 4,400 rockets at Israel. That is right—4,400 rockets. Iron Dome was key to preventing 90 percent of these rockets from reaching their targets, saving the lives of innocent Israeli citizens. We should be proud to support this technological feat that has protected countless lives and will continue to do so.

My trip to Israel and my visit to see Iron Dome, well, is on my mind today because Israel needs our help, and they need it now.

This summer, following the barrage of rocket fire—those 4,400 missiles that Israel had to endure and which the Iron Dome protected Israel against—Israel made an emergency request to the United States for security assistance in order to replenish and repair the Iron Dome defense system to defend against future potential conflicts.

To Israel's north, on the border with Lebanon, which I went to see just 2 years ago, Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed terrorist organization, is estimated to possess over 100,000 missiles. Those 100,000 missiles are pointed at Israel, including thousands of precision missiles. If war were ever to break out again between Israel and Lebanon, as it did in 2006, Iron Dome would play a crucial role in protecting civilians—all civilians in Israel.

Just a few months ago, I joined Democratic and Republican colleagues in urging the continued support for Iron Dome. Support for Iron Dome is about the integrity of the U.S.-Israel relationship. There has always been strong bipartisan support for the U.S.-Israel defense partnership. That bipartisan support continues today.

The failure to fund this critical defensive tool would be catastrophic for Israel and would result in lives lost. It would lead to more conflict, and it would weaken the bond between the United States and our greatest ally in the Middle East. We must take action to ensure that this program remains fully operational.

The House of Representatives has already passed legislation on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis to fund Iron Dome. It was a vote of 420 for, and only 9 against. So now it is the Senate's turn to act.

Earlier this week, my colleague Senator MENENDEZ, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said this: ''There is no conceivable reason why anyone in this Chamber or on either side of the aisle should stand in the way of U.S. support for this lifesaving defense to be fully ready for the next attack.''

He is exactly right. Opposition to Iron Dome is contrary to U.S. national security interests and violates the commitment that the U.S. Government made to Israel.

We have an opportunity to rebuild the Iron Dome shield, to support the security of our most important ally in the Middle East, and to save lives. But we must take action right here and right now.

So as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, following consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 140, H.R. 5323; that there be up to 2 hours for debate; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill be considered read a third time, and that the Senate vote on passage of the bill without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, as we speak, the Taliban is regaining control, has control over most of Afghanistan, is brutalizing women, kicking women out of school. Women will no longer be participating in the government.

It is really just unconscionable that Democrats insist that money be there to give to the Taliban.

Any person who believes and truly believes that the Taliban is a menace to women's rights and to women in a civilized world should join me in saying: We should make sure that no money ever goes to the Taliban.

When Secretary Blinken was asked about this, he said that if there is cooperation and if they meet expectations, the $6 billion—and some say up to $10 billion—available for the previous government will be given to the Taliban, who violently overthrew this government.

We are asking something very simple. We could fund Iron Dome today. Make sure that everybody who listens to this understands. This is being blocked by Democrats who don't want to pay for it.

We have a proposal that would have proposed $1 billion today for Iron Dome, but it would have been paid for by taking money out of an account that has been allocated and that Secretary Blinken has indicated he will give to the Taliban if they behave.

So I think it is a real problem, and it is a problem of this body that the cavalier nature of just letting our country pile on $30 trillion of debt. You ask how we got here. We got here $1 billion at a time.

So rarely do we have an episode or a time where we can object. You know, I would object to a trillion if it were on the floor. I would object to $50 billion on the floor.

But the billion dollars ought to be paid for. And there are so many payfors. But this is why government grows by leaps and bounds and becomes more and more wasteful over time.

So I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. PAUL's objection is unacceptable. He knows it is unacceptable. This is no time for political games. It could jeopardize the support for our allies and people in need of lifesaving assistance.

I challenge all my Republican colleagues to let us take up the House-passed bill, passed 420 to 9, and fund Iron Dome for our national security—our national security—as well as Israel's.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I want to use the opportunity of the Senate floor today to call to the attention what I think is an alarming proposal that would allow the Internal Revenue Service to track nearly all inflows and outflows of Americans' bank accounts.

I heard this story—I heard this proposal while I was home in Kansas, and my reaction was: I assume this is just something on the internet, something that people are perhaps fabricating. Surely no one seriously is proposing that every transaction of $600 in one's bank account and $600 out of one's bank account is something that the Internal Revenue Service should be monitoring and recording, or that records would need to be provided to the IRS with that information.

It is one of those thing I thought, well, that is just some crazy something that somebody is talking about. But, lo and behold, unfortunately, I have learned that, over the years—sometimes my constituents have brought me things in the past that tell me the story. It is, like, I can't believe that would be true, but let me check it out; and far too often, it turns out that it really is someone's proposal in the Nation's Capital.

Most Kansans would react to this concept by saying: I can't believe it is true. And then: Make sure you do something to keep it from happening.

In this case, it is apparently true. And not only is it true, it is true because it is supported, it is proposed by the Biden administration.

It is the Secretary of the Treasury, Janet Yellen, who believes and testified that this is a good idea. It is Charles Rettig, the IRS Commissioner, who believes that this is important to accomplish. It is not just somebody's ideas. It is somebody who has something that—because they have something to say that matters that can cause it to happen is for this.

For the IRS knowing how much money a Kansan earns, that just isn't enough. How much an American earns, it isn't enough to know our income. Now the IRS wants to know how you spend that income.

This is an invasion of privacy that focuses on account flows, not just on income, and it intrudes on virtually every American.

The claim that this will help tax wealthy cheats—I am all for taxing wealthy cheats, but instead, this isn't that. It gives the government the unprecedented access to nearly every working American's bank account.

Rather than listening to the enormous pushback from Americans and eliminating from consideration this invasive mandate, Democrats are simply suggesting to tweak the proposal depending on the revenues needed to fund this massive tax-and-spend spree that is around the corner.

In recent weeks, I have heard from more than 1,000 Kansans who are alarmed at this massive expansion of IRS reach and authority, this invasion of privacy. The last thing my Kansas constituents would want when it comes to their own bank account is more bureaucrats watching and dictating how they live their lives. This provision is a threat to their privacy. They see it that way, and it is.

Kansas relies heavily on small-town banks and credit unions to provide rural communities and their citizens with lending services to finance a small business expansion, to allow a family to pay for college, or to buy a home.

The relationship between our bankers, our credit unions, and their customers and clients is a special one. It is personal. That private relationship between a banker and their customer is one that is based upon trust. The banker no more wants to be in the middle of invading their customers' privacy. Mandating that banks report to the government their customers' account activities will significantly breach the trust that a customer, a client has with their banker.

These financial institutions are often run by just a handful of employees, and are often a family operation handed down from one generation to the next. We have lots of small local banks and credit unions already knee-deep—perhaps waist-deep—in red tape; something they have to deal with every day, and something we have tried nearly every day to reduce or eliminate.

Our bankers and credit unions spend millions of dollars to comply with the anti-money laundering policies, and those often yield minimal results.

This proposal would turn our banking system into an extension of the Internal Revenue Service while forcing local banks to shoulder the cost. And these costs, of course, ultimately would be paid for—guess who—the customer, the citizen.

So not only are we—would this proposal allow our privacy to be intruded upon, but we would be paying as it happens.

Unfortunately, the IRS has increasingly politicized and—has been politicized and has a history of targeting disfavored groups and individuals, and has proven incapable of protecting taxpayers' data from leaks.

Entrusting this bureaucracy, the IRS, or, really, any other bureaucracy in Washington, DC, with the supervision of your personal finances is no way to close a tax gap.

At a time when the American people are more weary than ever of the Federal Government and their Agencies, this proposal will do nothing but further increase that distrust.

Democrats in Congress and particularly in the Biden administration should prioritize strengthening the faith in the financial service, not pursuing these kinds of policies that will push underbanked Americans away.

Ultimately, this plan will not achieve its stated goal of increasing tax revenues. Rather, it will lead to more harassment of average Americans and those who work at their financial institutions.

It is clear to me that there is an attempt here to leave no stone unturned to find every possible way to tax everyday Americans in order to fund a massive spending spree.

So while we hoped that this proposal was just idle talk, something that somebody said over a cup of coffee at the local doughnut shop or the cafe, something that when we went to find out if there was any truth to it we discover: Oh, no, I could tell my constituents this isn't happening, this is just something that somebody is gossiping about.

But no. It is a serious proposal by the Biden administration, and it has serious consequences to the well-being, financial, but perhaps more importantly, the privacy, something that Americans deserve, something that Americans request, and something that is already too often lacking in our lives—privacy—and in this case, privacy from the Federal Government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Iowa.

TRUMP INVESTIGATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to address the Senate Judiciary majority's Trump investigation examining the period from December 14, 2020 through January 3, 2021.

The majority released their report this morning; the minority released our report this morning.

This truncated investigation doesn't support the long-running Democratic narrative that Trump used the Justice Department to try to overturn the 2020 election. And it is truncated because we don't have all the records and this committee only interviewed three witnesses.

The available evidence shows that President Trump didn't use the Department of Justice to subvert the 2020 election. For example, one witness testified that President Trump had no impact—I repeat, no impact; and the words ''no impact'' come from that witness—on what the Department did to investigate election allegations.

In fact, the evidence shows that President Trump listened to his advisers and to their recommendations, and that he followed those recommendations.

The witnesses also testified that President Trump didn't fire anyone at the Justice Department relating to the election.

Records from this investigation indicate that President Trump's focus was on ''legitimate complaints and reports of crimes.''

Witnesses testified that President Trump's main focus was on making the Department aware of the potential criminal allegations and to ensure that the Department did its job. It wasn't President Trump directing or ordering specific investigative steps. Witnesses also testified that it wasn't unreasonable for President Trump to ask the Department what it was doing to investigate election fraud and crime allegations.

Now, with respect to the other core issues in the Democratic narrative, the available evidence shows three facts.

Fact No. 1: President Trump rejected sending the letter drafted and advocated by Assistant Attorney General Clark to various States to contest the election.

Fact No. 2: President Trump rejected firing Attorney General Rosen. Indeed, after Bill Barr submitted his resignation as Attorney General, President Trump apparently considered Richard Donoghue as a replacement, showing his displeasure with Rosen.

Third and final fact: President Trump accepted Acting Attorney General Rosen's position that the Department not file a lawsuit against the States with reported voter issues.

The Democrats' report makes much of the efforts by individual lawyers to push the Department to take these steps, but the fact is, none of these steps were taken because President Trump made the ultimate decision not to take those steps. At each of these critical decision points, the President asked his advisers for their candid views and their candid recommendations, and the President followed them.

Now, ask yourself this: Where would we be now if President Biden followed the advice and recommendations of his advisers regarding Afghanistan? And we know what that advice was because we heard it last week before the committees in the House and Senate by the generals who were testifying.

Again, I am not sure why the committee is releasing transcripts and an investigative report when the investigation doesn't seem to be complete yet. I, as chairman of a committee, run investigations differently. I collect records and run all the necessary interviews. I gather the full set of facts.

Then and only then, I release the material publicly.

So far, the narrative the majority has been spinning here just isn't borne out by the facts. So this advice from me: Don't take this Senator's word for it; do as we have done on the Republican side. Read the transcripts. I think you will come to the very same conclusions that I have just stated.

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR LISA SCHULTE MOORE

Mr. President, on a second point and a much shorter point, I would like to recognize an outstanding professor at Iowa State University. Professor Lisa Schulte Moore of Iowa State University is doing important work on behalf of farmers and rural communities, and eventually it affects all Americans.

Dr. Schulte Moore is a landscape ecologist and professor of natural resource ecology and management. Additionally, she serves as associate director of the Bioeconomy Institute at Iowa State University.

Dr. Schulte Moore was recently recognized as the 2021 MacArthur Foundation Award recipient and the first-ever Iowa State MacArthur Fellow. This award is known as the Genius Grant and is given to individuals who have shown a dedication to their field through creativity and originality.

Dr. Schulte Moore is a founder of the Prairie STRIPS conservation program. Established in 2003 at the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Prairie City, IA, this program studied the effects of planting prairie strips on farmland.

Before I continue, I just used the name Neal Smith—former Congressman Neal Smith of Iowa, 36 years a Member of the House of Representatives. He has been retired quite a while now. He just celebrated, I think, his 100th birthday and is still active in the Des Moines community.

Participants found that prairie strips can protect the quality of our soil and water by reducing farm field soil loss by 95 percent. They also reduce nitrogen and phosphorus runoff by up to 80 percent. Because of the professor's work, prairie strips are used in 14 States on over 115,000 acres of cropland.

In addition to the $625,000 received through the MacArthur Foundation, Dr. Schulte Moore was recently awarded a $10 million Federal grant to turn biomass and manure into fuel. With this research, the professor is looking for additional ways that farm waste can be turned into renewable fuel and consequently not contribute to the degradation of the environment.

Whether it is researching the next generation of biofuels or helping farmers understand what conservation practices work best at their farms, I am grateful that the MacArthur Foundation recognized Dr. Schulte Moore. Her dedication and innovation encourage young people at Iowa State University and beyond to become involved in agriculture.

The fact is, the United States has the safest and most abundant food supply in the world thanks to the American farmer and through research at institutions like Iowa State University.

Congratulations, Dr. Schulte Moore. Iowa State University and the State of Iowa are lucky to have a professor like you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

VACCINES

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. President Biden ran on a promise to be a unifying moderate. He promised to bring America together. On the campaign trail, he promised to ''shut down the virus, not the country.'' As we have seen with his vaccine management, the opposite has happened.

Joe Biden and Democrats in Washington have adopted an agenda of systemic socialism focused on expanding government and Federal control. In Joe Biden's America, the government knows better than the people, and President Biden has shown that he is eager to use government mandates to keep families in check.

President Biden's latest vaccine mandate for private companies tramples on the personal freedoms of Americans. This unconstitutional order will push more Americans out of the workforce, devastate our economy with product and service shortages that cripple supply chains, and throw America into a stagflation crisis not seen since the 1970s.

By forcing some working Americans to choose between keeping their jobs or doing what they believe is best for their health, Biden's mandate hurts the people he claims to help—workers, low-income Americans, and seniors on a fixed income, who will all be either hit with higher unemployment, higher prices, or a shortage of available goods.

When I think about the impact of burdensome government regulations, I think about my dad. My adopted father was a truckdriver. Anyone who has driven trucks or been close to someone in that line of work knows how demanding that job can be. It is hard work, and it is one of the most critical jobs in our country. Truckdrivers are like the offensive linemen of America's supply chain—often overlooked but absolutely essential to getting things moving. Our country is already experiencing a significant shortage of truckdrivers. We can't afford to lose any more.

Of course, trucking isn't the only industry that will be affected by Biden's unconstitutional mandate; nearly every sector is under the gun. In an economy where simply keeping shelves stocked is an everyday challenge, losing workers in almost any critical industry will have a catastrophic impact across our supply chains and drive prices even higher.

Just this week, a month and a half before Thanksgiving, Amazon began already giving Black Friday discounts on goods because they expect so many delays and shortages on goods. That means families who have to wait for holiday bonuses before they can go shopping are going to be facing ''out of stock'' signs online and in stores.

Joe Biden needs to answer this question: How is he going to fix this? How can Joe Biden guarantee that our supply chains won't completely crumble under his failed policies and mandates?

In fact, I urge President Biden to have Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo testify to the Commerce Committee on the shortages we are already seeing and the shortages that we anticipate.

Ensuring the stability of American supply chains requires the urgent attention of the Biden administration. As a member of the Commerce Committee and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Tourism, Trade, and Export Promotion, I know this testimony from Secretaries Buttigieg and Raimondo would be useful in understanding how this will be addressed.

We are already starting to see major supply issues. Seafood restaurants in Miami are seeing price increases of 50 to 60 percent on fish. Furniture stores in Florida are seeing wait times of 6 to 8 months before they can deliver certain products. Florida grocery stores are warning of product shortages as customers are starting to see empty shelves.

Small business owners and families aren't able to afford those kinds of drastic increases, but if President Biden has his way, those transportation difficulties are going to become even worse and prices will rise even higher. Right now, rising prices on everyday goods are forcing American families to make hard choices.

I have said it on this floor countless times, and I will say it again: Reckless government spending causes inflation. The reckless spending agenda of Joe Biden and Democrats here in Washington is having disastrous effects on families across our country.

We can never forget that, as inflation worsens and prices surge higher, it is the poorest Americans and those on fixed incomes who are hurt the most. There are single moms wondering if they can put an extra few gallons of gas in the car and still afford to put dinner on the table this week or moms like mine who took on odd jobs to make ends meet and watched the smallest price changes at the grocery store to make sure we could still get by.

If President Biden actually spoke with small and midsized employers and hard-working families instead of big banks and CEOs, he would learn that massive Federal mandates won't help us get our economy back on track. His Big Government mandates will only hurt us.

I want to be clear. I got the vaccine. I had COVID. And I encourage every American to talk with their doctor and consider doing the same. But getting the vaccine is a choice every American

gets to make for themselves. We can't give people an ultimatum to comply, quit, or get fired. It is a gross overreach by the Federal Government at a time when we need more jobs, not less; lower prices on everyday goods, not higher.

Unlike Joe Biden and Democrats in Washington, I don't believe that government knows better than the American people. My parents didn't have much of a formal education, but they worked hard and made the choices they felt were right for the health and well-being of our family. They relied on government to keep them informed, and they made their own choices. That is how government should work.

That is what I did when I was Governor of Florida. In 2016, Florida was faced with the Zika virus, which impacted newborns. Rather than placing mandates on pregnant women or restricting their travel to areas with local transmission of Zika, which we knew where they were, we simply informed Floridians. We worked to be as transparent as possible and offered free Zika testing to all pregnant women in Florida. That is how the Federal Government should deal with COVID. The government's role in public health is to inform and support, not mandate.

Our country has seen labor shortages caused by Democrats' failed policies of rewarding unemployment, paying people more to stay at home than to get back to work. Energy prices are surging, and inflation is raging. American families can't afford more of President's Biden's radical policy decisions that are inflicting lasting damage and driving our economy backwards.

Restoring and strengthening our supply chains is a critical step in getting the American economy rolling forward.

It is time for President Biden to acknowledge that massive, unconstitutional mandates on private companies won't do anything but hurt American business and throw gasoline on the already raging inflation crisis he has created.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

TRIBUTE TO WARRANT OFFICER HERSHEL ''WOODY'' WILLIAMS

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I am here today to honor the lives of our World War II Medal of Honor recipients who bravely served our Nation, including the last surviving recipient who just celebrated his 98th birthday, Hershel ''Woody'' Williams.

My colleague is here with me. We have known Woody for years and years and years. This is a person who has never quit serving his country from the day he was born to the day he fought and won the Congressional Medal of Honor in Iwo Jima.

If you ever saw any pictures and basically the war videos we see, you see a little guy running around Iwo Jima shooting the flame thrower in the pill boxes. That was Woody. It is just unbelievable.

He is a fellow West Virginian. He was a marine, a Medal of Honor recipient for his heroic efforts at the Battle of Iwo Jima that I have been told involved the flame thrower, which I have seen. And it is not just one. I think he went through five flame throwers because when he ran out, he went and reloaded and went at them again. It is just unbelievable.

Woody has dedicated his life to our great and our beautiful United States through his service in the military and his dedication to supporting veterans and advocating for their needs for decades after.

There is not a time when I know that Senator CAPITO and myself don't hear from Woody and there is something going on, whether it is at the cemetery, or whether we are having a ride for the Gold Star families. We do a motorcycle ride, which I would like to invite the Presiding Officer to.

I say to the Presiding Officer: You would enjoy it. It is wonderful.

Senator CAPITO has been with us before on that. It is just a wonderful thing, and Woody has never failed to be part of it. Now, he rides in a sling shot, but, by golly, he makes the whole route.

He has dedicated his life fully to our veterans and to the Gold Star families.

He is bound and determined to get a committal shelter built at the Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery. Again, Senator CAPITO and I, both serving on the Appropriations Committee, have committed that we are united in getting this done. We will get that done, and it needs to be.

That basically would ensure that the families of our fallen soldiers and veterans, they have a safe place to lay their loved ones to rest, protected from the weather, rain, Sun, and snow throughout the year.

In this year's Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill, we include a language to create a pilot program that allows Federal veterans cemeteries to build shelters for those purposes. But we must ensure the pilot program includes State veterans cemeteries, like the Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery.

The families of our fallen servicemembers deserve to honor their loved ones in peace, and I am proud to help Woody fight for this simple request.

Americans like Woody Williams answered the call to serve our great Nation during World War II, and he fought to ensure democracy prevailed. Their sacrifices allowed the rest of us to enjoy the freedoms we hold sacred and help make the United States the strongest Nation in the world.

I am going to share with you one story that Woody has told all of us back home. He says the thing that he remembers most and the thing that he stills grieves the most about, he had two marines that were protecting him with gunfire while he ran around, and their lives were sacrificed for him. I think both got shot and perished. And he says: They gave their life for me to do my job and protect and save my life.

There is not a day that goes by, he says, he doesn't think about that, how the Good Lord spared him and the sacrifices that were made for him and our country.

So I believe that honoring all of those who served in World War II by allowing the last surviving—and I want to make sure we understand. Woody Williams is the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II.

We are asking that he be allowed to lay in State at the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. And what better way to honor this generation, their sacrifices than the President to authorize the State funeral for that brave individual.

And Woody—there is not a better person to represent all of those who sacrificed and given their all, all of those who were basically decorated for their valor, to do this. And bestowing this great honor on the last survivor and the World War II Medal of Honor recipient would be the perfect way to come together as a nation to salute the ''greatest generation.''

So I am honored to be here with my colleague and my friend Senator CAPITO in a bipartisan—you know, I have always said this: The glue that holds this country together is the people who put themselves in harm's way for all of us.

They didn't say: Well, I will put a uniform on and I will take a bullet for the Republican, but not the Democrat, or I will take a bullet for the Democrat and not the Republican.

Senator CAPITO's father took a bullet for all of us too, and she will speak about that, I am sure, and the bravery that he had. He was my dear friend, and we all miss him. But the sacrifices that my parents and Senator CAPITO's parents and the generation—that was the ''greatest generation,'' I think, that we will ever see because they took responsibility and took responsibility for their action. They held themselves accountable for their actions, and that showed the character that generation has.

And that is what I would hope these young interns and all the young pages that we have here understand, that your character is defined the day that you take responsibility for the actions—good, bad, or indifferent—and be able to look yourself in the mirror and say: I made a mistake. I can do better. That is my fault. I will fix that. That is character.

So I am honored to be here and to honor every World War II veteran, every World War II Medal of Honor recipient.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in our efforts to honor these brave veterans. And I call on our President, President Biden, to grant our request.

With that, I yield the floor to my colleague.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, it is an honor to talk about a good friend of ours, Woody Williams, here with my fellow Senator from the West Virginia, to talk about our fellow West Virginian, Hershel ''Woody'' Williams.

He is just an incredible, incredible, individual. He turned 98 just, I think, last week. So he was born in 1923, which was the same year my father was born. Woody and I have talked about this because when I see him, I see my dad and that generation. My dad is no longer with us. You know, they did incredible things at such a young age.

One day, I was honored to sit next to Woody on an airplane flying home. He travels all over. It is amazing where he goes and what he does. He told me his whole story of joining the Marines and signing up for the Marines and why he wanted to do it. He was a country boy, just born—they didn't really actually know when he was born. He didn't have a full birth certificate. And he is a little guy. He wasn't quite big enough to maybe get—be able to join, and he worried about that. He was 17, but nobody really knew how old he was.

I asked him: Well, what was your attraction of being in the Marines?

He said one day he was in town and he saw this guy walk by, and he was fully dressed in a Marine uniform.

And he said: I want to be that guy. I want to wear that uniform.

And he persevered, as he has in every aspect of his life.

There are so many, as Senator MANCHIN said, so many brave from that ''greatest generation'' that served in World War II. And he is the final World War II veteran Medal of Honor recipient of that award.

We are so proud of him in West Virginia because, you know, it didn't stop there for him. He spent a lifetime advocating for veterans, for veterans' health, for fallen soldiers' families, in a whole variety of roles, and he never stopped.

As Senator MANCHIN said, he fought valiantly in the Battle of Iwo Jima, storming those pill boxes, all four of them, under relentless fire. He survived the entire 5-week campaign in Iwo Jima. As we know, that was one of the most staunchly defended Japanese strong points at that time, and his actions played a critical role in the eventual capture of that island.

He has inspired future generations to want to serve our Nation. He is a hero for what he has done at home. He has committed himself for 75 years to veterans and their families, and he created the Hershel Woody Williams Foundation.

Through his foundation, Woody advocates for and recognizes the sacrifices of our Gold Star families who have lost loved ones in the military.

Because of his tremendous efforts, Woody and his foundation are responsible for 60 Gold Star family memorial monuments. Senator MANCHIN and I have been to the grand opening. They just had a new one in Charleston, on the grounds of the Charleston capitol. It is beautiful to see, and the other 70 additional monuments that are going to be built in the future.

We need reminders, I think. We need reminders of the sacrifices that people make. And we need reminders of what it takes to defend our liberties, our freedoms, our families. So we are really, really pleased to be here.

The West Virginia Legislature included Woody in the West Virginia Hall of Fame and named him a Distinguished West Virginian in 1980, and again in 2013, and they would probably do it again next year. He is just so exceptional.

His unending energy and passion have also inspired many generations. He has spoken to numerous schools, universities, community events, and veterans' receptions, promoting patriotism and the ideals of service above self.

I have been privileged to attend—and I know Senator MANCHIN has too—several speeches given by Woody Williams, keeping in mind the last one I heard, he was 97 years old. Oh, my gosh, so inspiring. It makes you just want to feel pride for our country but also for our people, that our country boy from West Virginia could keep inspiring the next generations.

He has been here to the Halls of the U.S. Capitol. Or you might have even seen him at the coin flip—how did he get there?—at the Super Bowl in 2018. So he has gone on to really, I think, be a remarkable human being. If you haven't met him or haven't seen him, make sure you get a chance if you hear he is coming your way.

Abraham Lincoln famously said: ''Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure.''

Today, I am proud to honor my friend, with Senator MANCHIN and many other West Virginians and others around the country, and to share his stories of courage, compassion, and the service not only in the past but the service that he has today. I am glad to join a bipartisan group of our colleagues in honoring him and honoring him in the future.

Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. MANCHIN. I say to Senator CAPITO, if you could just wait a minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. I know you remember this very well.

Woody is a person who taught us all how to say the Pledge of Allegiance. Because we think we know how to say it. We all memorized it as a little kid: ''I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands.''

Woody would always say: One Nation under God—do not stop, do not hesitate at ''one Nation.'' It is ''one Nation under God.'' It is not ''one Nation.'' ''Under God with liberty and justice for all.''

He corrected us, and he never would let us say it without going with no pause because he said we are a nation under God.

And I will never forget. He drove that home so many times to all of us. So the young pages here, I hope you will remember that.

With that, maybe we should do a ''happy birthday'' together to Woody because he is probably watching. So together, you and I? Happy birthday, Woody.

Ms. CAPITO. Happy birthday, Woody.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I also want to wish Woody a happy birthday as well.

I just join my colleagues today to commemorate and honor some of the Nation's most admirable warfighters in the Second World War, and I so appreciate my colleagues bringing their personal stories to the floor today. This is something that all Americans should cherish—the stories of these heroes. We have very few of these brave heroes still among us today, and it is so important that they receive every ounce of recognition that we can give them for their selflessness and extraordinary heroism.

I am pleased to be a cosponsor of Senator MANCHIN's legislation to provide a merited celebration and commemoration of the last living World War II Medal of Honor recipient, Woody Williams, who recently celebrated his 98th birthday.

Medal of Honor recipients like Mr. Williams demonstrated a courageous and noble commitment to our Nation, and their exemplary actions deserve all the praise that we can give them.

I am proud to represent a State that has several World War II Medal of Honor recipients of its own, in Mississippi: Van Thomas Barfoot of Edinburg, Robert T. Henry of Greenville, James Daniel Slaton of Gulfport, Louis Hugh Wilson of Brandon, and Jack Harold Lucas of Hattiesburg, whom I still remain friends with his family today.

From Germany to Japan, these men served our Nation without hesitation in the height of the Second World War, defending our Nation, our allies, and the very principles of freedom. It fills my heart with great pride to call these late veterans my fellow Mississippians. The tributes we offer today for Mr. Williams in truth stand for our deep appreciation for all of those who fought in World War II.

I thank my colleagues for their great work on this important recognition and the opportunity to be a part of this.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I join my colleagues today in support of our bipartisan resolution to designate a state funeral in honor of the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient for

World War II. Woody Williams is that person, and this would also recognize millions of Americans for their service and sacrifice during the war.

The Medal of Honor represents a small token of our appreciation for the spirit, determination, and gallantry of those who performed far beyond the call of duty, those of our ''greatest generation'' who gave everything on the battlefield. This includes five brave Medal of Honor recipients from the great State of Montana: William W. Galt, Laverne Parrish, Leo J. Powers, Donald Ruhl, and Henry Schauer. Each of these men pitted bravery and heroism against great odds and showed exemplary devotion to our Nation. Now, they have all passed, but their memories live on in each of us—in our freedoms, in the freedoms of our children, and in those of our children's children.

Today, we have a special opportunity to honor their service and ensure that their acts of heroism are never forgotten. A state funeral for the last surviving World War II Medal of Honor recipient is a key part of fulfilling this promise. These ceremonies offer our Nation the opportunity to pause and reflect on the service of not only the individual but also those who served alongside them.

It is my hope that President Biden designates this state funeral so that we may honor the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II with this distinction. It is time to pay a final salute to the millions of men and women of our ''greatest generation'' who served our country with great courage.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, shortly, I will ask for unanimous consent on the nomination of Robert L. Santos to be the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau.

The mission of the Census Bureau is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the Nation's people and our economy. The census and the Bureau's surveys are critical for communities, businesses, and people across our Nation to ensure communities have the resources and the information they need to thrive.

The Census Bureau Director must meet the challenge of this mission. They must have experience in the collection, analysis, and use of statistical data and demonstrated management experience at large organizations.

Robert Santos is an eminently qualified nominee for this role. He has over 40 years of experience as a manager and expert in the field of survey design and statistical research, including experience as a manager at the most renowned research centers for statistics, as principal of a market research firm, and currently at the nonprofit Urban Institute.

He has interacted closely with the Census Bureau for decades as a researcher, a stakeholder, and an expert adviser, serving on the Census Advisory Committees and National Academies' panels on Federal statistics. Mr. Santos has demonstrated a deep knowledge of the Census Bureau, its data, and its stakeholders. He has demonstrated a commitment to upholding the Bureau's mission of producing essential, high-quality data that our Nation relies on.

It is critical that we confirm Mr. Santos to the Census Bureau so they can continue their important work with a well-qualified leader at the helm.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 311 and 312, Robert Luis Santos, of Texas, to be Director of the Census for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2021; and Robert Luis Santos, of Texas, to be Director of the Census for a term expiring December 31, 2026. (Reappointment); that the nominations be confirmed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

First, happy birthday. Is it your birthday?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No, sir. Don't rush it.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. As my colleague knows, the Census Bureau performs critically important functions to collect accurate and timely data. Unfortunately, I am concerned that this nominee will politicize the Census Bureau and will not perform his duties in a fair and unbiased fashion, which this position demands.

I cannot and will not consent to allowing this nominee to move forward in an expedited manner. We should take a vote so every Senator can get on the record with their support or opposition to this nominee. Therefore, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the last few months, the American people have watched in disbelief and then in anger as the Biden administration has completely fumbled the response to the border crisis.

In the spring, the biggest concerns were the thousands of children coming across the border. We lacked the facilities, the personnel, and the resources to provide proper care for those children, particularly in those kinds of numbers. At one point, one of the processing centers in Donna, TX, in the Rio Grande Valley was at 1,600 percent of capacity.

Then, in the summer, the scale and scope of the crisis grew. In addition to the thousands of unaccompanied children entering our country each month, the number of family units has skyrocketed.

I should pause to add, Mr. President, that the reason why the smugglers send in unaccompanied children is because they know they will simply be placed with sponsors in the interior of the country and most of them will fail to return to the immigration courts for their asylum hearing. So they will have been successfully placed in the United States, sometimes with relatives, sometimes with noncitizens, sometimes with foster families who don't know them at all. That is why the smugglers have been smuggling unaccompanied children.

But in August alone, more than 86,000 members of families—typically women with young children—have crossed the border. Now that we have reached the fall, the crisis has shifted once again.

I think what really grabbed people's attention was when they saw the little town of Del Rio, TX, with 15,000 Haitian migrants under a bridge in Del Rio, TX. First of all, they were shocked. They thought this was a Central American phenomenon or Mexican migrants. But the reality is, as Border Patrol will tell you and has told me, we literally have people coming from around the world across the southern border, including some countries of particular concern.

So the Haitians got people's attention and completely overwhelmed the border region and our capacity to deal with them. That is why 400 Border Patrol agents had to be shipped in from other parts of the border or from interior checkpoints, which means that those other locations were understaffed or perhaps had no staff at all. That, in turn, is an invitation to the drug smugglers to smuggle more drugs across the border.

I have mentioned time and time again this shocking number: 93,000 Americans died of drug overdoses last year. The vast majority of those drugs come across the southern border. So the cartels—these criminal organizations that smuggle people, drugs, and other contraband—they are pretty smart. They understand where the weaknesses are, where the gaps are both in our policy and in our physical ability to secure the border, and they play us just like a fiddle.

The individuals and families huddled under the Del Rio Bridge—they were

trying to escape triple-digit temperatures.

It is hot in August and September in Texas, and they had little, if any, access to food, clean water, or restrooms. It took a number of days before the Department of Homeland Security was able to remove them from what the New York Times described as squalid conditions—truly, Third World conditions.

Now, President Biden has said to the migrants: Don't come to the United States. But the fact is, what he says with his mouth, with his lips, is contradicted by all of his policies and all of his action and inaction.

Here, let me share a few headlines from the last several months: ''Overwhelmed Texas border community begins busing migrants to Austin''; ''Migrants freed without court notice—sometimes no paperwork''; ''Haitian migrants released in U.S. on 'very, very large scale'.''

Folks beyond our borders are reading this. Friends and family in the United States are communicating with potential migrants who have come across. Certainly, the human smugglers—the coyotes—who get rich and are getting richer with every person they smuggle into the United States, are reading these headlines and watching cable TV and talking to people inside the heartland of our country. The message they see with their own eyes or they hear from others contradicts this lip service, really, that President Biden has been paying to border security.

Like I said, this is especially true among the cartels and criminal organizations that charge thousands of dollars a head to bring folks from literally anywhere around the world. It just gets a little more expensive. If you want to come from, let's say, the Middle East or if you want to come from, let's say, Iran or Afghanistan, it is a little more expensive than if you just want to come from Mexico or Central America, but you can do it because the same networks and criminal organizations run those networks in those countries around the world.

Last week, the Biden administration handed the cartels a big recruiting tool.

Let me read you another headline: ''U.S. Will No Longer Deport Illegal Immigrants Based on Undocumented Status Alone.''

That is what Secretary Mayorkas, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, said: The U.S. Government will not enforce U.S. law.

As if we needed to add any more to the chaos and the crisis on the border, Secretary Mayorkas has provided explicit confirmation that the Department of Homeland Security will not enforce our immigration laws. His directive strongly discourages Immigration and Customs Enforcement from even carrying out their most basic duties.

I know it seems like a long time ago, but it wasn't that long ago when people said: ''Abolish the police.'' Before that, they said: ''Abolish ICE,'' Immigration and Customs Enforcement. But now they are, maybe, not so much intent on abolishing ICE as just telling them don't do your job. Don't enforce the very laws that we in Congress have made.

Considering the fact that the border czar, Vice President HARRIS, once compared ICE to the Ku Klux Klan, we probably should have seen this coming. Liberal activists can throw out their ''Abolish ICE'' posters because the administration is, effectively, nullifying the Agency from the inside.

The reality of the situation, however inconvenient it may be, is that, by entering the United States illegally, migrants are breaking U.S. laws. We are fortunate, indeed, and grateful to the hard-working men and women of ICE and Customs and Border Protection, who are committed to enforcing our laws and keeping the American people safe, but they can't do it when they are told don't do your job or if the administration continues to denigrate these officers to try to shame them and to publicly criticize them for doing what we have asked them to do.

Secretary Mayorkas's decision not to enforce our immigration laws isn't an example of prosecutorial discretion, which is the usual excuse; it is a violation of his oath. The Department of Homeland Security is charged with safeguarding the American people, but it can't do it because of the direction of its own leadership—a member of President Biden's Cabinet.

There is nothing wrong with prioritizing the removal of the most dangerous criminals who are here illegally. Previous administrations have prioritized certain categories, like those suspected of terrorism or others who could be a threat to our national security or public safety, but there is a difference between prioritizing and exempting entire categories from enforcement altogether.

Under this new guidance from Secretary Mayorkas, ICE officers are discouraged from arresting or removing illegal immigrants unless they have been convicted of a serious crime. It is unclear, though, whether domestic violence meets this criteria. Certainly, other crimes don't. So it defies all common sense to ask our law enforcement officers—that is what ICE officers are; they are law enforcement officers—to turn a blind eye to illegal conduct and not do what they have sworn to do in a professional oath.

I am reminded of a controversial directive issued by another one of President Biden's nominees to enforce our Nation's laws. Rachael Rollins was nominated to serve as the U.S. attorney for Massachusetts and is currently the district attorney for Suffolk County—home to Boston. She is a current nominee from the Biden administration.

Shortly after taking office as the Suffolk County district attorney for the State and local office, she released a memo that outlined more than a dozen crimes that should be ignored by law enforcement. This was the district attorney, who was charged with enforcing the laws, saying to law enforcement: Ignore the laws.

According to Ms. Rollins, individuals who committed offenses like trespassing, shoplifting, larceny—that is stealing—wanton or malicious destruction of property or even possession with intent to distribute drugs should not be prosecuted.

Again, I have no issue with law enforcement using limited resources to address the biggest threats and to prioritize their prosecution decisions, but they cannot, I believe, consistent with their oaths, exempt wholesale classes of criminals from enforcement.

Under the Biden administration, we are already seeing a record-low number of deportations for people who violate our immigration laws. Back in April, as border crossings hit their highest level in 20 years, ICE removed the lowest number of illegal immigrants on record. There is no coincidence there. The guidance from Secretary Mayorkas sends an unequivocal message to the entire world that, if you want to come to the United States illegally, you will be able to stay as long as you don't get caught committing a murder or some other crime of a similar nature.

The administration has tried to claim that this will not serve as a pull factor. That is what the Border Patrol talks about with the push factors—poverty, violence, and maybe things like that which are the push factors for immigration—but they also talk about the pull factors, which are things that the migrants see and the smugglers see that will actually attract more illegal immigration to the United States. The administration has tried to claim that this refusal to enforce our immigration laws won't act as an additional pull factor because, they say, the order only applies to immigrants who entered the United States before November 2020.

But let's consider some of the other things that have been said. For example, Vice President HARRIS said migrants should not come to the United States because they will be turned back. That is clearly not happening. That is clearly not the case.

We were told that the Department of Homeland Security would use title 42, a public health law, to return the vast majority of Haitian migrants because, after all, while we are still dealing with the pandemic of COVID–19, these migrants, by and large, aren't vaccinated, and they are not tested for COVID–19 when they are released into the interior of the United States. You would think that would be a problem for the Biden administration, but Secretary Mayorkas just flat lied to the American people when he said what would happen to the migrants from Haiti. Some 13,000 migrants from that group have been released into the interior of the United States before even appearing in front of an immigration judge.

Clearly, that was a lie when he said they would be repatriated to their country of origin. So we have no reason to believe that things will be any different this time.

The President can't have it both ways. He can't say he is taking a tough stance on illegal immigration to appease one wing of the Democratic Party while implementing policies that just encourage more illegal immigration to appease the other wing.

The only way to address this crisis is to enforce our laws, not as the Biden administration wishes they were written. If we are going to have any hope of managing the current crisis and the additional crisis that will necessarily follow, deterrence is a key.

As the Border Patrol told me, there have to be consequences for illegal immigration. If there are no consequences, people are going to continue to come in greater and greater numbers.

Albert Einstein reportedly once said: Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Unless the administration backs up their ''do not come'' statements with actions which actually send the same message, we are going to continue down this very dangerous road.

What will need to happen next before the administration takes this crisis seriously? More than 200,000 border crossings during each of the last 2 months didn't get their attention nor did the group of 30,000 migrants in Del Rio, TX, in a matter of days. So you can't help but ask: How many more migrants will have to suffer before President Biden and Vice President HARRIS finally back up their empty statements with action?

We stand ready to help and to work on a bipartisan basis. As a matter of fact, Senator SINEMA and I, along with our colleagues HENRY CUELLAR and TONY GONZALEZ in the House, have a bipartisan-bicameral border solutions bill. It is not perfect, and it doesn't answer all the questions, but it is a good place to start. So far, we have heard nothing but crickets from the administration. Apparently, they don't care about the status quo and, so far, seem unwilling to do anything differently to correct it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to conclude my remarks today.

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I just listened to my colleague from Texas talk about what is going on at the border. I thought he made a lot of really good points, and I appreciate his willingness not just to talk about this issue and the crisis we have on our southern border but also to talk about solutions.

One of the solutions he talked about and I have heard about a lot recently—I am the ranking Republican on the Homeland Security Committee. In the last week, I have had the opportunity to speak with both the current Border Patrol Chief and also the recently retired Border Patrol Chief about what is happening on the border and the real-world problems that it is creating.

One thing they tell me is, just let us finish the small parts of the wall that haven't been completed because it is impossible for us to enforce the laws if you have these openings. Secondly, they said: Please let us complete the technology.

On both sides of this aisle, we have agreed, in the past, that, even if we disagree on having a fence along any parts of the border, including the urban areas, we will agree on the technology that ought to go with it.

They told me these stories that I had confirmed when I was down at the border earlier this year in that the technology that goes with it—the remote sensing cameras, the remote sensors in the ground, and so on—were stopped as soon as the Biden administration came in even though they were already paid for. So it wasn't just stopping construction; it was, in effect, in my view, more important that they have actually stopped the technology that is needed to be able to protect the border.

Senator CORNYN talked about how he and Senator SINEMA have worked on legislation to deal with some of these issues. I appreciate that because that is what is needed. We need to make some changes. We can't just continue to do what we are doing because we have over 200,000 people a month now coming over—unprecedented numbers. Usually, in the summer, those numbers go down a lot, but they have actually increased this summer.

We also need to fix a broken asylum system. This should not be a partisan issue.

It is obviously not working. People come to our border. They claim asylum. They are allowed to come into the United States. They are told, you know: Please go to an immigration office and check in, but 4 or 5 years until your immigration case is likely to be heard, sometimes longer.

Meanwhile, these folks are in the United States.

And then at the end of the process, even though those who end up going through the court system are self-selected because they are the folks who more likely—I think are more likely to have an asylum claim that is valid—but even when you go all the way through that process, guess what. Only 15 percent of those from countries like Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador—the so-called Northern Triangle countries—or other countries like Ecuador, only 15 percent are granted asylum by an immigration judge.

But, meanwhile, everybody is in the United States. And as I said earlier, the internal enforcement is not occurring, so people are literally not being told they have got to go back. And often, obviously, not identified because, after 4 or 5 years, many people are embedded in our community.

So the asylum system has become a pull factor, and we need to realize that.

I was in four countries in Latin America earlier this year—Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador—and I heard from every one of the Presidents in those countries, the same thing in different ways, but the same thing, which is: You guys are pulling our people to your southern border because the traffickers, the smugglers, the coyotes, who are making all this money, are coming to our families and saying: Hey, come to the border. Give me 10,000 bucks. I will take your kids there. I can get them into school in the interior of the United States, and they are right.

Their narrative might not be exactly right. I am sure they exaggerate. But as a whole, what they are saying is correct. In other words, our system is so broken that these people who are exploiting poor people all over Latin America and elsewhere now—all over the world they are starting to come through our border in bigger numbers—are able to say: If you come with me, I will get you in.

That is because the asylum system is broken. So until we fix the asylum system, we can do everything else we are talking about—I don't think this is going to work.

And by the way, when I talk to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle about this, when I talk to Secretary Mayorkas about it, they acknowledge this is broken. I mean, you have to.

The 13,000 Haitians that just came into our country, that walked in, were given a bus ticket or a plane ride and told: Here is an immigration office. Please check in.

My understanding is the vast majority of those people had applied for asylum, and we said: Come on in.

And in 4 or 5 years, their case may be heard. And if they come to that trial, many of them will be deemed, just as the Central Americans are deemed, to be economic refugees.

Look, if you or I were in Central America and knew we could better ourselves and our family and take care of our kids by coming to the United States, wouldn't we make the same decision?

But don't we also in the United States have an obligation to have an orderly, legal way to do that?

And we have one. We are the most generous country in the world in terms of taking in immigrants. And I am a strong supporter of the legal immigration system. But we have got to have a proper way to do it. It has got to be legal. Otherwise, again, people are going to be exploited.

This trip north is not a safe trip. It is a dangerous trip, and people die in the desert. These kids are not treated well. Many are assaulted.

I did a study on this when I was head of the Permanent Subcommittee of Investigations. We did two reports. One

was on kids who were taken into HHS custody at the border, and then when they were sent out to their sponsors—because that is what happens. You go to the Border Patrol, then HHS, then you are sent out to sponsors.

You know who the sponsors were?

The very traffickers who had brought them up—in this case, from Guatemala—who were exploiting them.

And those same traffickers took those kids and took them to an egg farm, where they had to work 11, 12 hours a day, no school, paid little or nothing, living on bare mattresses underneath trailers.

Finally, luckily, a local law enforcement official figured out what was going on and was able to save these kids.

But that is not a system we should want in America. We should want a legal, orderly system that works for everybody. By the way, including the many, many people around the world who are waiting in line patiently to come to the United States through legal means.

So I hadn't meant to talk about this today, but I appreciate the fact that my colleague mentioned it. And I do think it is very important that, on a bipartisan basis, we put aside our political rhetoric on this and talk about solutions.

I think we should go back to a system where we are encouraging people to apply for asylum in their home country, and, second, to do it from third countries. If they are not comfortable doing it in their home country because they really are feeling persecuted for some reason, do it in a third country.

Those agreements were in place during the Trump administration. They were starting to work. They have now been ended. And then if you come to the border, have the adjudication be immediate. Let's spend the money to have the processing centers there at the border so people aren't waiting 4, 5, 6 years to go to their immigration hearing that they may or may not attend, as you can understand.

Instead say: You want to come as an asylee? Here is the system. Your adjudication is going to occur right now.

And for those who apply and are successful—which, again, is about 15 percent of people from the countries that are sending most of these migrants—then you would come in as an asylee and you would have the ability to be resettled legally and you would have the ability to work.

But if you are one of the 85 percent, you would be told: Sorry, you didn't make the standards. You have got to go back home, and you can apply legally, and here is the way you do it.

Wouldn't that make more sense for our country?

By the way, there is now a backlog of 1.3 million people waiting for these asylum hearings—1.3 million people. And it is growing every day.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. President, I had planned today to talk about something else, which is the tax situation that we are facing with this new proposal from the Democrats.

You probably heard about the Build Back Better legislation, also sometimes called the reconciliation bill. It is in reconciliation because it wouldn't require any Republican votes, and Democrats are proposing to take this through Congress, much as they did in March with the $1.9 trillion legislation.

This is also called the $3.5 trillion bill, this Build Back Better. Actually, I would argue it is a lot more than 3.5 trillion when you look at the actual spending in it.

But let's focus on the tax side for a moment because that is how it is intended to be paid for.

The tax hikes, which would be the largest tax increases in America in at least 50 years, systematically dismantle a lot of the pro-growth and pro-job reforms that were put in place in 2017.

Why do I call them pro-growth and pro-jobs?

Because they worked. They helped Americans keep more of their hard-earned earnings. They helped businesses to be more successful, to hire more people and increase wages. And they are a big reason that, as of February of 2020—the month that we went into in this pandemic, as of February 2020—we had 19 straight months in this country of wage growth of over 3 percent per annum—19 straight months.

But what all of us should want—Republican, Democrat, all of us—higher wages. And by the way, most of that wage growth went to lower- and middle-income Americans.

That is what we should want too, right?

That was happening. In fact, as of that point, we had the lowest poverty rate in the history of America. We started keeping track of it back in the fifties. It was the lowest poverty rate ever. This was just a year or so ago. This was before the pandemic hit.

We also had a 50-year low in unemployment—the lowest unemployment ever—for certain groups: Blacks, Hispanics, disabled, others.

So this is something that was an achievement, that met the standards that we talk about on both sides of the aisle—more economic opportunity, closing the wage gap, giving people a chance to come off the sidelines and get a job. Things were happening, and in large measure, because of these 2017 reforms.

And yet, in this proposal that is now being proposed, called the Build Back Better proposal, there are tax increases that dismantle much of the reform in 2017 that caused this economic growth.

U.S.-based corporations are going to have a really hard time competing now in the global economy again because it takes our tax rate back up to being the highest, depending on where they end up in terms of their rate—one of the highest or the highest rate in the entire world.

The average corporate tax rate under the Ways and Means proposal will be 32 percent again—back up into the thirties—instead of an average of 21 percent, plus about 5 points on the State average, which is about 26 percent.

So, again, it puts us in a position where we are not competitive with the rest of the world. That is why we changed it back in 2017. In fact, according to the International Tax Competitiveness Index, the Democrats' plan would cause the United States to drop steeply down the rankings from 21st in the world to 28th in the world among developing countries in terms of competitiveness of our Tax Code.

Once again, as happened too often before the 2017 reforms—and, by the way, has not happened since then—companies will choose to say: OK. I am out of here.

Because of the Tax Code and the tax changes that they want to make, companies will say, as they did before 2017, because of the tax laws: I can't be competitive as an American company. I am going to go be a company of some other country.

It is called inversions. Sounds bad, and it is. Nobody wanted inversions. Democrats, Republicans, we all hated them. Guess what. We stopped them. After the 2017 reforms, they stopped.

Miraculously, we had companies in Ohio that chose to do that. It was terrible. They chose to actually become foreign companies because our Tax Code was so uncompetitive. We can't let that happen again.

Small businesses, which make up about 99 percent of the business in America, and they account for about two-thirds of the jobs in America—and, by the way, most of the job growth is in small businesses—are also hit hard by these tax increases.

The vast majority of small businesses are structured as what you call pass-throughs. In other words, they don't pay taxes at the company level; the individuals who own the company pay the taxes. That is the vast majority of companies in America.

So when you raise individual income taxes, guess what happens. You are socking it to not just the wealthy or whoever you are trying to sock it to; you are socking it to small business because that is, again, the vast majority of businesses in America, most of the employees. And that is how they are taxed, down to the individual level.

To make matters worse, the Biden administration seems intent on ending section 199A, which is a deduction we put in place on purpose to help small businesses kind of level the playing field between big businesses and small businesses. They are actually talking about getting rid of that deduction. So for small businesses listening today, be aware.

In all, the more successful pass-through companies should expect their Federal tax rate to rise from about 29.6 percent today to about 46.4 percent under the Democrats' new plan—46.4 percent taxation on small business.

How does that make sense?

So I think what is going to happen is you will see a lot of small businesses go out of business if this happens and certainly not be able to create new jobs and the opportunity that we saw during the 2018, 2019 time period.

But it is not just larger and small businesses that are going to feel the impact of these tax hikes. American workers and families will find themselves losing more of their hard-earned cash from all sides, thanks to the across-the-board tax increases, whether in estate taxes, capital gains taxes, retirement account taxes, the marriage tax, cigarette excise taxes—the list goes on and on.

It is no surprise, then, that contrary to what President Biden has repeatedly said, according to the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation—they are the people up here on the Hill who tell us what the impact is of tax law changes. The Joint Committee on Taxation, analyzing this tax proposal that is out there already—this is the Democrat tax proposal of the Ways and Means Committee—they say a lot of taxpayers who make less than $400,000 a year are going to see higher taxes.

Some percentage of taxpayers in every bracket will see tax rates go up, even folks making between 40,000 and 50,000 a year, according to the distribution tables by the Joint Committee on Taxation.

More than one in three taxpayers making between $100,000 and $200,000 per year will be paying higher taxes in 2023—more than one in three. By 2031, more than three-quarters of those middle-class taxpayers will be paying higher taxes.

This is according to the Joint Committee. I encourage you to go on their website. Joint Committee on Taxation, JCT.org.

So even working-class families are going to end up paying some of the price of this spending spree in the form of higher taxes. But all of us have to pay an additional price in damage to our economy.

According to the Tax Foundation, the combined long-run effects of the tax hikes include a decline in our long-run gross domestic product of 0.98 percent. So about a 1-percent decline in our GDP—wow—a decline of the wage rate of about 0.68 percent, and a loss of 303,000 full-time jobs.

So this is the Tax Foundation analyzing what the effects of this would be in addition to what I have talked about in terms of the tax hikes.

The Joint Committee on Taxation has looked at this and said: Well, if you raise taxes on corporations, it is going to come primarily out of the pockets of the workers, and that is a lot of these middle-class families. But also it is going to reduce our economy. It is going to decline our wages. And it is going to result in a loss of over 300,000 full-time jobs.

That is the Tax Foundation.

So, to be honest, I am not exactly sure where the President got the notion he has been repeating lately that the price tag on this $3.5 trillion—maybe $5 trillion; I don't know; depending on how you look at the spending—is zero dollars. That is what he said. It is zero dollars.

Even by their own admission, the big tax hikes we are talking about here are not going to cover all the spending, No. 1. But more importantly, billions of dollars lost in economic growth, a significant decline in wages, and hundreds of thousands of jobs lost doesn't sound like zero to me; it sounds like a bad deal for the American people.

So, along with my Republican colleagues, we have to keep telling the American people what is in this tax proposal and urging people to learn more about how these new taxes are going to affect them, their businesses, and their communities, and weigh in with their representatives in Congress.

Why would the American people support tax hikes that are going to be bad for workers and bad for our businesses? We have a responsibility to our constituents to ensure that does not happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2846

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, President Biden announced his vague, still-unwritten mandate for the vaccine just almost a month ago. He said then, at the time of his announcement, that his ''patience was wearing thin.'' Those are his words, not mine. Yet, oddly, President Biden's administration is now in no particular rush to implement the rule. So almost a month has now elapsed, but there is still no rule and therefore no implementation of the rule. Perhaps President Biden and those who work with him are realizing what countless Americans already know: that the mandate was not well thought out.

First, neither the President of the United States specifically nor the Federal Government generally has the authority to issue a sweeping vaccine mandate of this nature. The Constitution doesn't empower the Federal Government and certainly not the President individually, acting in isolation, with the right, the authority, or the power to broadly dictate personal medical decisions for all Americans with the stroke of the Executive pen.

I spoke earlier this week and I also spoke last week about individuals with religious, moral, and medical reasons to forgo vaccinations. The President's mandate ignores their concerns and their rights.

Much of corporate America is already starting to fire unvaccinated workers despite the legitimate religious, moral, or health concerns that those workers might have. Some are even being charged fees for being married to an unvaccinated spouse. So it is not just their decisions but that of their spouses that are causing them to confront adverse action from their employer, all as a result of this mandate—a mandate which doesn't yet exist. Even though time was of the essence a month ago when it was issued, there is still no rule and still nothing to enforce, but people are starting to enforce what they think will be in the rule if and when it ever does get promulgated.

In recent days, I have heard from over 200 Utahns who are at risk of losing their jobs due to this mandate. They are scared of becoming not just unemployed but unemployable—unemployable, second-class outcasts due to the President's order.

Have we lost compassion? Have we lost all reason? Troublingly, it seems that these mandates aren't based in reason. The mandate completely ignores the millions of Americans who have previously contracted and recovered from COVID–19. These people have antibodies against the virus.

In other countries where significant research on natural immunity has been conducted, the results are compelling. A study conducted in Italy shows that natural immunity is more effective than vaccines at reducing risk of future infection. Another study of half a million people in Denmark has shown that natural immunity provides significant, lasting protection against infection. Finally, a study from three separate hospitals in Israel found that natural immunity from a previous COVID infection was ''27 times more effective than vaccinated immunity in preventing symptomatic infections.'' But the President's mandate announcement makes no mention of natural immunity—no mention whatsoever. Our entire national health apparatus seems to disregard the significant protection individuals have if they previously had and recovered from COVID.

Now, I believe the vaccines are generally safe and effective. I have been vaccinated. Every member of my family has been vaccinated, with my encouragement. I see these vaccines as a miracle, one that is helping to protect millions and millions of Americans—hundreds of millions of Americans, for that matter. But I also recognize that millions of Americans are already protected by their natural defenses because they contracted COVID, before the vaccines were available in many instances, and they have recovered and therefore have natural immunity. The science shows that this immunity is strong, that it is effective, and that it is widespread in America.

So I, today, am offering a bill that would require Federal Agencies to recognize, accept, truthfully characterize, and include natural immunity in any regulation. This bill does not say that vaccines are bad or unhelpful; it merely asks the Federal Government to respect widely available science.

I am glad to be joined in this effort by Senators BRAUN, TUBERVILLE, and SULLIVAN as cosponsors.

The bill would allow us to keep Americans employed and help us beat

the pandemic in a smart way, in a reasoned, rational way, and in a compassionate way.

Now, I believe—in fact, I am quite confident that the mandate in its entirety will be struck down as unconstitutional, as having been issued outside the authority of the President of the United States. This simple bill wouldn't undo the whole thing, as I believe the courts are certain ultimately to do. This simple bill is narrow, and it would simply give peace of mind to Americans and employers by recognizing and upholding evidence-based realities concerning our natural defense to COVID. It is a commonsense proposal, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

So, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on HELP be discharged from further consideration of S. 2846 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, unfortunately, even though the Senate has had multiple exposures now to nonsense ideas like this bill, they keep coming back.

Now, Agencies like the CDC and NIH are already looking closely at data on COVID infection and natural immunity. They have been since the earliest days of this pandemic.

In an August ''Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report,'' CDC assessed data from Kentucky and found that out of a group of people who had been infected with COVID before, those who were unvaccinated were twice as likely to get COVID again than the people who were vaccinated. In other words, being unvaccinated puts you at higher risk of being reinfected, period.

Getting vaccinated is a necessary step to protect you but also to protect those around you.

We are in the middle of the deadliest pandemic in American history. It has now killed 700,000 people and counting. If we are going to end this thing, if we are going to reopen our economy, if we are going to save lives, we need to get everyone vaccinated when they are eligible.

We don't need politicians suggesting they know more than those experts and ignoring the data. We don't need bills meant to weaken one of our strongest tools to get this thing behind us, like the ones that Republicans have repeatedly been pressing for.

Workplace safety standards are nothing new in this country. Immunization requirements are nothing new in this country. And let's be clear. The vaccine requirements President Biden has enacted so far include tailored exemptions for legitimate religious and medical considerations that have long been standard. The emergency temporary standard he has envisioned would allow testing as an alternative.

People are dying every day. Families are scared, and they are tired, and they are angry that even as they try so hard to do the right thing so we can end this crisis, their hard work is being undermined.

So can the Republicans stop the theatrics and stop wasting our time? Can they stop pretending they know more than the experts about this disease? Is that too much to ask?

It isn't, and I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I appreciate the insight and the thoughtful attention paid to this matter by my friend and distinguished colleague, the Senator from Washington.

I respectfully submit that we are not dealing with theatrics when it comes to hard-working Americans, including the more than 200 Utahns whom I have heard from just in the last 2 weeks, who are losing their jobs or are at immediate risk for doing so based on a decision forced upon them by an action that has been threatened but not taken and in no way legally articulated by the President of the United States.

These are not theatrics for those who are losing their jobs. That is just not an accurate portrayal, and it really is disrespectful to those who are enduring that. To them, these are not theatrics. To them, this is their ability to make a living.

As far as the characterization that these claims of natural immunity are one off, I have yet to see any study that refutes the studies I referenced a moment ago—not the one from Denmark, not the one from Italy, and not the one from Israel that shows the significant immunity benefits conferred by a previous COVID infection, one from which a person has fully recovered. In the case of at least two of those studies—the one from Italy and the one from Israel—the immunity is as strong if not stronger. In fact, the one from Israel concluded that it is 27 times more protective.

Yet we continue to hear efforts like this one today characterized as ''theatrics,'' characterized as ''nonsense ideas like this bill''—bills that try, in the case of the bill that we are talking about today, to protect the employment rights and the personal decisions of Americans who have natural immunity or, as in previous bills, those who have a legitimate medical concern, especially where that concern is one that has been taken on the advice of a board-certified physician who has advised them, based on a preexisting medical condition, not to get it.

I also heard that the President has indicated that there would be exceptions. We don't know what those exceptions are. Many of those exceptions are not being honored by those segments of corporate America already moving to implement and enforce this vaccine mandate.

What is happening is that HR departments and general counsel's offices in large corporations—those with more than 99 employees—are understandably trying to get ahead of this so that they are not behind when the rule actually issues, so they won't run any risk of the aggressive, heavy fines with which they have already been threatened. So for that reason, many of them are trying to get ahead of it, and many of them are now using President Biden's speech about the yet-to-exist rule, and they are either threatening to fire or preparing to fire or in some cases already have fired people regardless of any exceptions that they think they ought to be entitled to. It is easier for the corporation, in some instances, perhaps, or maybe more convenient or maybe more in conformity with the liking of the individuals making the decision to do that, but it is not fair to the workers. It is especially not fair in light of the fact that all of these actions are being undertaken in response to a yet-to-exist rule promulgated by an executive branch Agency that has yet to act at the behest of the President of the United States—one person without statutory authority and without constitutional authority to do this. That is tragic.

Because he doesn't have the authority to do this, it shouldn't happen at all. At a minimum, we, as the lawmaking body within the Federal Government, have an obligation to take it down. Even if we can't take it all down or to stop it, we at least have an obligation to try to make its effects less draconian, less hurtful, and less harmful to individuals who, by no choice of their own and no fault of their own, aren't in a position to get this, whether because of religious convictions, natural immunity, or a health condition or something else.

It is tragic. We are better than this. We should be acting to protect Americans, not make them more vulnerable.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I am here to talk about the President's Build Back Better agenda and its importance to our country.

We have heard a lot over the last couple of months about the new jobs that that plan will bring. It is estimated by economists that it will generate 4 million jobs every year for the next 10 years. That is because we are going to be investing in modernizing our infrastructure.

We have already heard about the important work to modernize our roads and our bridges, expand our transit systems, build out the infrastructure of the 21st century, including high-speed internet to every American household and every small business.

We have talked about the importance of deploying a clean energy grid and making sure that we move toward a clean energy economy. That will put millions of Americans to work in good-paying jobs. If you are generating that kind of economic activity, that kind of wage opportunity, obviously, that is good for every American household and brings in more income.

But, today, I am going to gather with some of my colleagues, organized by the Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, who will join us shortly, to talk about how the Build Back Better agenda will not just generate millions of jobs and good-paying jobs, but help the dollars that Americans have in their pockets and bank accounts travel faster, how it is going to save them money.

Now, one way it is going to save money is for families with kids. They are going to get a tax cut. In fact, that tax cut was put in place as part of the American Rescue Plan that we passed earlier this year. As a result of a tax cut for families with kids, families around the country right now are getting up to $300 per child to help cover the everyday costs of raising kids and addressing the needs of a family.

That will also cut child poverty in half, but only for this year. It is currently scheduled to terminate at the end of this year, that tax cut for American families with kids. So one of the things we do in the Build Back Better agenda is extend that for many years because it doesn't make sense to have that terminate and have those families stuck with all those additional costs.

But there is also another way that the Build Back Better agenda is going to help every dollar that comes into the family bank account go farther, and that is by reducing the costs that they face in so many of their everyday household expenditures.

I want to focus on a couple of areas. One is in the area of childcare, one is in the area of healthcare and prescription drugs, and the other is the energy costs and gas costs that so many families face. The Build Back Better agenda is going to lower the costs for American families in those areas so that the income they have will go much further.

I want to start with childcare because working parents with infant children are scraping by today to pay for childcare, paying, on average, $1,300 every month to get licensed care.

Under the Build Back Better agenda, if you look at the projections, you will see that Marylanders—families in my State of Maryland—will see their childcare bills cut nearly in half with weekly savings of $141 every week. That is $7,322 a year for childcare costs—lowering of childcare costs for those families.

If you think about the need to try to get more people in the workforce, it is understandable that if you are a parent with kids, you want to make sure that when you go into the workforce, your kids have an affordable and secure place during the day. And right now that is not an option for millions of American families. So one of the things this proposal does, the Build Back Better plan, is dramatically reduce those costs for childcare.

The proposal will also cut prescription drug costs for seniors. We have been having a debate for years about the need to allow Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices on behalf of all of us, on behalf of all the beneficiaries in Medicare.

The Veterans' Administration negotiates drug prices for veterans who are in their care, and yet we don't allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices. This is nuts. And it runs up the costs for Medicare because if you don't get to negotiate price, the pharmaceutical companies get to set the price wherever they want. So this proposal, the Build Back Better plan, will cut those costs and reduce prescription drug costs for Part D premiums by 15 percent.

We are also proposing to expand Medicare to cover vision, dental, and hearing services. This is a big gap in the current Medicare Program. Right now, seniors, on average, each year, are paying $914 out of pocket for hearing services, $874 for dental services, and $230 for vision services. Our proposal would cover that big gap in the Medicare Program.

I am going to talk for one moment about energy prices because we all know we have to move to a clean energy economy. We are going to make it easier to do that as we put more Americans to work in that area.

One of the things that is proposed is a generous electric vehicle tax credit of up to $12,500. This will make it easier for Americans to afford those cars. It is much easier to run a car on cheaper electricity than on gas.

But it is also going to help folks who continue to drive their gas-powered cars for years to come, because if we get more people into electric cars, that means less demand for gas, and so that means the folks who continue to drive in their gas cars will get lower gas prices. And we all know that gas prices have been on the rise.

Finally, talking about energy savings—you know, the best way to save energy money is to make sure that we don't waste as much energy. All of us know that we have homes, in many cases they are not that well insulated. So part of this plan also includes help to homeowners to more cheaply make their homes energy efficient. That means, with a given amount of power, they will heat their homes at cheaper costs because there will be less wasted energy.

In situation after situation, if you look at this bill, not only will it generate more jobs at better wages, not only will it provide working families with kids with tax cuts, but it will also help Americans save money on everything from prescription drugs to childcare, to energy prices, and many others.

That is what economists have said, and that is especially true because we are going to pay for this by finally requiring big corporations to pay their fair share and not allow them to hide so many of their profits offshore in places like Bermuda and the Cayman Islands. And we are going to ask the very wealthiest, billionaires, to also pay more for the success of the entire country.

So I just want to emphasize the fact—because we hear so much misinformation in this Chamber about what is in the Build Back Better agenda—that in addition to the jobs and higher wages, it is also going to help save families money on their bills so that their dollars will travel farther.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, let me start by asking unanimous consent that the vote on the motion to discharge the Lhamon nomination occur at 3:30 p.m. today.

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

BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the opportunity we have before us to deliver results for the people we work for.

Right now, too many Americans are struggling to make ends meet and get ahead because of the cost and availability of childcare, healthcare, home care, and prescription drugs.

In my home State of Wisconsin, people like Zena, a human resources representative from Twin Lakes, needs us to pass the Build Back Better Budget that invests in working families.

Zena has been battling several severe autoimmune diseases, and she has been battling this for more than 15 years. She fell very ill after contracting norovirus, and she was unable to work and ultimately lost her job, as well as her employer-sponsored healthcare that came with it.

Sick and uninsured, she turned to our State's BadgerCare program for help. But because the Republicans in the Wisconsin State Legislature have refused a Federal investment to fully expand Medicaid coverage, Zena was locked out of the program and unable to access necessary healthcare coverage. Like millions of Americans, Zena found herself in the Medicaid coverage gap and was forced to make choices that no one living in the United States should have to face, choices like paying for life-sustaining medication or paying her mortgage.

Right now, the people we work for are paying two to three times more for their prescription drugs than people in

other wealthy countries. This needs to change, and we have an opportunity to get the job done if we simply make the superwealthy and most profitable corporations, like the big drug companies, pay their fair share of taxes.

For years, Congress has been talking about lowering the cost of prescription drugs, so let's finally do it by giving Medicare the power to negotiate lower prescription drug prices that will save taxpayers money. Let's stand on the side of seniors, who should no longer be at the mercy of Big Pharma.

In addition to lowering the cost of needed medications, our Build Back Better budget provides the opportunity to expand Medicare benefits to include vision, dental, and hearing. The last time I checked, your ears, eyes, and teeth are all a part of your overall health, and there is no good reason not to include them in Medicare coverage.

Right now, the United States is also in the midst of a long-term care and caregiving crisis. Hundreds of thousands of older adults and people with disabilities who need and qualify for home- and community-based care services are unable to access them. I know something about this. I was my grandmother's caregiver, and I know firsthand the challenges that family caregivers face.

But we can do something about this, and we should, with Build Back Better legislation that invests in long-term care; creates new, good-paying homecare jobs; and raises wages for care workers who often work around the clock to care for our loved ones yet live in poverty.

All of this and more is doable if Washington finally says we are not going to continue spending trillions of taxpayer dollars on tax loopholes and tax giveaways for huge, profitable corporations, millionaires, and billionaires.

This is all to say that we face an urgent choice: Do we work for the powerful special interests who have too much influence in Washington, or do we work for people like Zena and others like her who simply look for a little help from us to even the playing field and to get ahead?

This is our moment to prove to the American people—to people like Zena—that their government works for them, not just those at the top. I have faith that we can do this for Zena, for Wisconsin, and for the millions of Americans counting on us to get the job done for them.

I yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, as we go over the wonderful things that Build Back Better offers—including tax benefits for families with children, support for home care and childcare for family members, lower prescription drug costs—I want to focus on a particular area, which is the addiction crisis, which grinds on in Rhode Island. I think every Member of this body knows a family who has been touched by this crisis.

I remember visiting the small town of Burrillville, RI, a close-knit community. People know one another there. On January 1, 2015, no one would have known that half a dozen people would die in Burrillville of drug overdoses in the next 3 months. That went through that community just in a heartbreaking wave, and it remains burdened by addiction and overdose.

We have made a lot of gains since then. The CARA bill that Senator PORTMAN and I did, CARA 2.0, which was baked into the SUPPORT Act, shifted the way we think about addiction so we don't see it as a moral failing. We recognize its medical nature. We recognize, frankly, the noble nature of the path to recovery that people have to walk. We invested in prevention and education and treatment.

But still there is a massive gap that remains between the needs of families who have a member who is facing addiction and the care and support that we give them, and Build Back Better makes some really important steps for those families—first, for new mothers in recovery.

A new mom has a lot going on: caring for a newborn, coping with a potential substance abuse complication for that newborn, and caring for herself in her often deadly battle with addiction. Build Back Better would grow the workforce specializing in that care for moms.

The Medicaid Reentry Act, which I did with Senator BALDWIN, is also in the mix to provide Medicaid coverage to people as they get out of jail and prison. We showed in Rhode Island that these programs dramatically reduce overdoses and deaths in the weeks following release from incarceration. Steady access to care through Medicaid will save lives.

There is a boost to the Minority Fellowship Program because it is demonstrable that a more diverse workforce produces better outcomes for patients and families.

Finally, the peer recovery coach is a personal favorite of mine. We are pioneering this in Rhode Island. These are people who have walked the path of addiction and recovery, and they can relate to people who are struggling in a way that you and I might not be able to. Their role, after an overdose or in a crisis, to get people onto the path of recovery is wonderfully important.

All of the other things we are doing will actually create more stable lives. When events happen that knock people off of the path of recovery, having a stable life actually allows for a better shot at recovery and work around relapse.

So there is a lot to love in Build Back Better, and I want people to know that we did not forget those folks who are struggling with addiction or walking the noble path of recovery.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators MERKLEY, KAINE, and I be able to complete our remarks prior to the vote.

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, we are all gathered here today, the group of us, to make a real case for passing the Build Back Better agenda and what it really means to people back in our home States, as Senator WHITEHOUSE was just explaining about Rhode Island. We get a lot in the minutia here for good reason. We are fighting a lot of forces. But in the end, what I know about this agenda, from the infrastructure in the bipartisan infrastructure bill to the work we are doing as part of this people-first agenda, it is about putting the people of this country first over the pharmaceutical companies, over polluters.

As I see those fires rage in my State, I know we have to do something about it. As I see people coming to me after years and years and years about the costs of common drugs—Lyrica. You see it advertised on TV all the time. What you might not know is that it has gone up 50 percent in just the last 5 years.

What I do know is that the people of this country overwhelmingly—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—support bringing costs down for families, support a big middle-class tax cut, and support doing something about pharmaceutical prices.

Chief among the reforms in this bill when it comes to healthcare will be allowing Medicare to negotiate directly for less expensive drugs for our seniors. I think 46 million seniors should be able to get a pretty good deal, and I know they could if someone let them do it.

Right now, in law, because the pharmaceutical companies lobbied to get it done, they got a ban—a ban—on Medicare negotiating better prices for our seniors. This doesn't just help our seniors, to lift this ban; it helps everyone in America because this is the single biggest purchaser of drugs, our seniors, because they need help in their later years. They have health issues.

The stories I have heard in my State—people like Claire from St. Paul. When the cost of the prescription drugs she relied on to manage her arthritis jumped from 60 bucks per month to 1,400 bucks per month, she knew she could no longer afford it. She tried over-the-counter options. Her arthritis advanced. She could barely hold a fork and a knife. I met a woman who was literally holding the drops of her insulin from day to day to day so she could save it for the next day. That is how we are treating seniors in our country?

Let's unleash the power of 46 million seniors, get better prices for the drugs, push this Build Back Better agenda, which puts people first, and bring down the cost of prescription drugs.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor to my friend from Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, Build Back Better invests in families, the foundations for our families to thrive—in education, in childcare, in healthcare, and in housing. So much is needed. It makes huge investments critical to taking on the biggest challenge facing mankind: climate chaos.

Earlier this summer, the U.N. climate panel released a report they called ''code red for humanity'' because the science shows what a dire path we are on right now.

Another report, this one coming from Save the Children and published in the journal Science, titled ''Born into the Climate Crisis,'' shows how much harder life is going to be for our children. Let me say it again: for our children—not our children's children, not our grandchildren's grandchildren; our children. On average, they will experience 2½ times more droughts than we did, three times as many floods, three times as many crop failures, twice the number of wildfires, and so forth. This is the dangerous and unforgiving world we are willfully leaving our children if we do not act now to control methane and carbon dioxide that are heating up our planet and causing these catastrophes. This is a collective effort of humankind, but America has to act and help lead the world to action.

Now, some say we simply cannot afford the investments, but the truth is, we can't not afford to act. Last year alone, America confronted 22 separate billion-dollar disasters. That came with a $95 billion pricetag to the American people. Winds and flooding and severe storms accounted for $35 billion. Hurricanes over the last 5 years cost $400 billion. Those numbers don't account for the droughts, the wildfires, the impact on sea life, ocean ecosystems, the fishing industry. They don't account for any of that.

We are facing massive economic disasters if we don't act on climate, and the way we act: We pass Build Back Better. We set ourselves on that path to net zero in the next 30 years, reducing our emissions over the next decade to half of what they were in 2005, ensuring that 80 percent of our American electricity is carbon-free by 2030, and ensuring that half of America's auto fleet is electric by the same time. We have the tools. We have to have the political will to act. So we must pass Build Back Better.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I rise with my colleagues on Build Back Better, and I just want to emphasize two points that really matter to me.

First, Build Back Better is absolutely critical to combine with the infrastructure bill. If we make an infrastructure investment that will be the biggest since the Interstate Highway System, who is going to build it? Who is going to build it?

Open the paper. You can't hire schoolbus drivers. You can't hire truckers. We have a tight labor market right now. What Build Back Better does is massive investments in the American workforce, beginning with the workforce of tomorrow—our children—all the way up through community college, workforce development, and immigration reforms that will expand the Nation's workforce.

If we invest in infrastructure but don't think about making sure that we have the workforce to do it, what a missed opportunity. The Build Back Better plan has amazing investments in our workforce—the workforce we need right now and the workforce we will need for decades.

The second thing about Build Back Better that I particularly appreciate is what it does for children.

If we pass Build Back Better, we will have done for American children what Social Security has done for American seniors.

Let me just point something out.

Pre-Social Security, you would work your whole life; you would educate your kids; you would be the PTA president or the Little League coach or the Sunday school teacher. You would retire, and 50 percent of people would retire and then go below the poverty level. That was what being a senior citizen was in the United States before Social Security.

FDR basically said: We want you to have a dignified retirement because you have worked, and you have earned it.

So Social Security, once passed and implemented, dropped the senior poverty rate from 50 percent to 10 percent. There has never been a program that has been as successful in doing exactly what it was designed to do as Social Security.

Build Back Better can do the same thing for kids. We are a nation that has tolerated, for decades, a youth poverty level dramatically higher than the adult poverty level. What does that say about a society? Yet we have sort of acted like: Well, I guess that is the law of nature. I guess we can't do anything about it. I guess kids are just going to be a lot poorer than adults.

We don't have to tolerate it. We can do something about it with the combined impact of the child tax credit, the childcare tax credit, the funding for childcare, universal pre-K, paid parent and family leave, and free community college. If you put those things together, we will do for children what Social Security did for adults, and we will no longer be a nation that tolerates an unacceptably high children's poverty rate and says: Well, there is nothing we can do about it.

We can do something about it, and we will do something about it. That is why I so strongly support, with my colleagues, Build Back Better.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

DEBT CEILING

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, as we await the vote this afternoon, I hope we will resolve a number of things today so that we make sure we stand by the full faith and credit of the United States and not let regular people's interest rates go up, the economy go to tatters, and our credit rating be downgraded. I hope we can get this done.

At the same time, just as Americans have gone through this pandemic—just as those moms and dads have been at home, with their toddlers on their knees and laptops on their desks; just as they have been teaching their first graders how to use a mute button; and just as so many people have lost their jobs or risked their lives while working on the frontline—they are ready to get through this. They see the light at the end of the tunnel or, as we say in Duluth, MN, the lighthouse on the horizon. They see this just as we continue to work, as best we can, with a number of our colleagues we disagree with because we think we should just simply move through this and make sure we are standing by the full faith and credit of the United States and not let our debt ceiling lapse.

As we do that, we are looking to the future just as America is. Just as we are starting to see those jobs come back, they are going back to work; they are starting to see their families again; they are going to family reunions; they are starting to be able to go to weddings again. As all of this is happening—as we get the vaccine out there and as we bring people back together—we also have to plan for that future just like families do every day.

That is what this is about, the Build Back Better agenda. That is what this is about—putting people in front of so many people who, honestly, have done pretty well during this time. There are a whole bunch of billionaires who didn't even have to pay taxes while these families have been struggling through the pandemic. There are a whole bunch of people for whom it is easier to go and get prescription drugs or do whatever they want while other people are having to choose between filling their refrigerators with food or filling their prescriptions at the pharmacy.

So you got a tour in the last half hour from Maryland to Wisconsin, the State of my neighboring friend TAMMY BALDWIN; to Rhode Island; to the great State of Oregon on the west coast; to my home State of Minnesota; to close by Senator KAINE's State of Virginia. What we are seeing, while our States may be very different, and what we are hearing are the same things: Regular people want to bring costs down. That is what this bill is about—bringing costs down for families in America—and there are many ways we are going to do this.

One is with straightforward tax cuts for people. Another is with making it

easier to afford things. It is that simple. That is what I like most about it in my State. They want to make it easier to get childcare. They want to make it easier to get healthcare. They want to make it easier for their parents at the moment when they go to assisted living or they need to get someone in to help them, just like my dad, whom we lost this year. He got that long-term care insurance. I don't know why he did it, but he did. I knew the day that his money ran out, and he was going to go on Medicaid because that was there for his safety net. So many families in America know exactly what I am talking about, and what this bill does is build on the safety net we have in place.

So let's remember that. Putting our kids first, our seniors first, our families first, our healthcare first—that is what this is about.

We look forward, over the next few weeks, to getting this bill done and getting it agreed to. To me, it is not always about what those top numbers are and everything you hear on the news; it is for what it is going to mean to the families in my State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, following the disposition of the motion to discharge, the Senate resume legislative session; that there be 3 hours for debate under the control of Senator LEE or his designee and 1 hour under the control of the majority; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur with an amendment; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be considered expired, amendment No. 3848 be withdrawn, and the Senate vote on the motion to concur with the amendment; that if the motion to concur with the amendment is agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table without intervening action or debate; further, that upon disposition of the House message with respect to S. 1301, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 259; that if cloture is invoked on the nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate vote on the confirmation of the nomination at 5:30 p.m., Monday, October 18.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 410 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Luján	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—49

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	
Graham	Portman	

NOT VOTING—1

BURR

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Pursuant to S. Res. 27 and the motion to discharge having been agreed to, the nomination will be placed on the Executive Calendar.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR AMERICANS ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

There will now be up to 3 hours of debate under the control of the Senator from Utah, Mr. LEE, or his designee, and 1 hour under the control of the majority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, we are rapidly approaching a milestone in our country, and it is not a good one. We are rapidly approaching $30 trillion in debt. We are accumulating debt like we never have at any time in our history. We are actually accumulating debt at the rate of over $2 million per minute.

Now, some say deficits don't matter. Some on the left say they have this new monetary theory: We can just print it all up. You can all have free stuff. There will be manna from Heaven. And nothing could go wrong; we are just going to give you money. If not $1,400 checks a month or a year, why don't we give you monthly checks?

That is part of the new plans. The new plans of the $3½ trillion that we are facing down at this point—that will all be borrowed—is to give people free money; to give people free this, free that. But I think people are smarter than that. I think people know that, ultimately, you don't get anything in life without hard work; you don't get anything in life, really, for free.

Isn't there some kind of ramification to so much borrowed money? When someone comes to you and says or they call you on the phone and they say ''Here is a thousand dollars; all you have got to do is sign up for this,'' most people immediately recoil and they say ''Well, that might be a scam. Somebody is going to be ripping me off to say that.''

Well, that is sort of the bait-and-switch of the politics we face now. People are saying: We are going to give you free college, free cars, free cell phones, free this, free that. Everything in life will be free. You won't have to work anymore.

The problem is, there are ramifications. Money doesn't grow on trees. Money has got to come from somewhere. So either we borrow it and we become more indebted to foreign countries, we tax people for it, or ultimately the way we fix a lot of our deficit problems is we simply print the money.

So when the Federal Reserve prints the money, as we increase the money supply, the money that we have becomes worth less and less; it loses its purchasing power. This is the insidious tax of inflation.

The interesting thing about it is that inflation is a regressive tax. It doesn't affect everyone the same. In fact, the tax of inflation actually affects the working class, the people of lower incomes, and those on fixed incomes and pensions, retirees—it affects them much worse because they don't have the ability for their income to go up.

So, right now, we are facing 5 percent inflation because of the massive borrowing that, really, both parties instituted in the last year. They decided that the result to the pandemic would be to close everything down, destroy the economy, and then give everyone free money. And, to a large extent, both parties actually did this last year.

Now, this year, the decision has been made by Republicans to say: Whoo, this is so much. We have got to stop. We have got to get people back to work and let the economy recover.

So it has primarily been Democrats this year, but both parties have a certain responsibility to this—at least some members of both parties. But, as the inflation occurs and as this effect is being transmitted to the economy, you find that those who suffer are those who cannot raise their incomes, those who have fixed incomes or low incomes.

One of the things you see here is that, if we have 5-percent inflation, what does that mean?

You say: Well, I don't know. It means I lose my purchasing power by 5 percent next year.

But what if it happens year in and year out for a decade, and you have lost 50 percent of your purchasing power?

It means, to make up for that, you really have to have a 50-percent increase in your wages.

So will wages keep up with inflation?

The dirty little secret is that, in some ways, wages will rise, but maybe they rise an equivalent amount or a little bit less, and you say a decade later: I am not any better off.

And there become people mired and more dependent on government as government gets larger and larger. They think they are getting free stuff, but it is not really free. The allure of something for nothing—this is the allure of socialism. This is a false allure. It is the idea that you are going to be able to get something and you are not going to have to pay for it.

So we have accumulated $30 trillion in debt. Interest payments have been fairly low over the past decade or so. Interest payments are at about, you know, 1, 2, 2.5 percent, but now interest rates are rising. Even at the low interest rates, our interest rate that we pay each year has grown to about $300 billion a year.

So, with $300 billion a year, people say: Well, there is a debt ceiling. If the debt ceiling doesn't come up, we will default, and Wall Street will become hysterical, and there will be a collapse of the stock market.

Well, there doesn't need to be. Nobody is really for spreading discalm or spreading, you know, chaos among the marketplace. We all want the marketplace to be calm.

How could we calm the marketplace?

Well, what we would say to the marketplace is, we will pay our bills and we are not going to default on our currency. And the way you can pay for your bills is to pay for them with income. We bring in $3.8 trillion a year in tax revenue. The interest payment is $300 billion. It is less than we bring in in 1 month. So the annual payment on interest is less than what we bring in in tax revenue in 1 month.

Why can't we pay the interest? Why would we ever not pay the interest on our debt? Why?

Because we are overdrawn and because all the rest of the spending is crowded out by the interest.

We have got plenty of money to pay for the interest. We just don't have enough left to pay for the cocaine studies with Japanese quail. That is, you know, about a million bucks.

You say: Oh, it is only a million bucks.

Well, they studied Japanese quail to see whether or not Japanese quail on cocaine are more sexually promiscuous.

How did we get to a $30 trillion debt?

Because there are studies like that littered throughout the budget. In fact, the group that does these studies, the National Science Foundation, we just increased their budget by two-thirds. It was mostly the Democrats, but, once again, many of the Big Government Republicans voted for this too. So we have exploded the National Science Foundation.

Now, was there any warning that the National Science Foundation was one of the most wasteful parts of our government?

Well, yes, since 1972.

There was a Senator at the time named William Proxmire. He was a conservative, or a maverick, Democrat from the Midwest, and he started an award. He called it the Golden Fleece Award. The first award he gave was for a study from the National Science Foundation. It was over a study that was $50,000. That was when $50,000 was a lot of money. And the study was to see what makes people happy.

Really?

People were aghast that we were spending $50,000 on it. He complained, and he gave them a booby prize and a Golden Fleece Award.

And, lo and behold, we are still doing it. The same organization, last year, did a million-and-a-half-dollar study that if you take a selfie of yourself while smiling and then look at the selfie later on, does it make you happy? That cost a million-and-a-half bucks.

Why do people like each other? Why do people fall in love?

These aren't studies for taxpayer dollars. But these are small ticket items. They say: Oh, you could never balance the budget on that.

Well, what about the $70 million spent on a hotel in Kabul, and the contractor ran off with the money, and it was never built?

What about a $48 million gas station—no; strike that—natural gas gas station in a remote area of Afghanistan?

Well, very few, if anybody, in the United States has a car that runs on natural gas.

Why was the U.S. Government building a natural gas gas station in Afghanistan?

Because we have gone ''woke'' on the green climate. We are for the green climate. We have got to combat climate change and reduce the carbon footprint of Afghanistan.

Really?

I thought the military was supposed to kill the enemy and defend the country, but we are reducing the carbon footprint in Afghanistan.

Somebody put this up—I think it was Rod Dreher—the other day. It was a little video clip. It was tragic, but somewhat hilarious in its tragicness.

He said: This is when we lost the Afghan war.

It had a picture of a urinal. I think it was by Marcel Duchamp, some Dadaist artist back in, like, 1917, and I guess he thought it would be really hilarious to put a male urinal in a museum and call it art. I don't know if it was really art or if it was a joke, but the thing is they were having these Afghan men and women in robes and veils and everything studying Dadaist art—a male urinal—and asking them what they thought of this. You could see a couple of women just sort of shaking their heads with utter incomprehension.

When we are spending money sending Ph.D.s over to Afghanistan to teach Dadaist art—that a male urinal is somehow art—I think that is why some of them think that we are actually the culture that is in decay, not theirs.

But the thing is we are spending money right and left. The right spends it on military adventures, and the left spends it on welfare, and the compromise that always happens around here is that right comes together with left, and they all agree: Well, you know, we might as well just spend it on both.

So everything goes up. The military budget went up. We already spend more than all of the countries. More than 10 countries combined is our military budget—$750-some-odd billion. Republicans and Democrats just raised it $25 billion more.

In the midst of ending a war, where is the peace dividend? What happened?

We ended a war. I thought we would have a little more money left over.

So, today, I tried to take $6 billion that is supposed to go to the Afghan Reconstruction Fund, to the old Afghan Government. There is no Afghan Government. They have been overrun by the Taliban.

I would love for Americans who are watching this to call me today, at my office, and tell me why the Taliban should get money.

I asked that we take that money away, put it back in the Treasury, and spend some of it on the Iron Dome for Israel, and it was objected to by the Democrats because, by golly, they will spend money, but they don't want to offset it with any spending cuts.

Well, really?

We should have zero dollars being sent to any government in Afghanistan.

I asked Secretary Blinken about this, and his response was: Well, I can't guarantee it, and if they—you know, if they are meeting expectations and they are acting and behaving properly, they might get this money.

Really?

I don't see a scenario or a world in which U.S. taxpayer dollars would be going to the Taliban. It makes utterly no sense at all.

But we have spending that is literally out of control. The only time I have ever heard a Democrat—most of the time, they are honest in that they don't care about the debt. But the only time I have ever heard them say anything about it is when they say: Well, you know, it happens because you cut taxes.

Well, you know, it is verifiably false. You can go back to the Reagan tax cuts, when the rates went from 70 to 50, and then from 50 to 28.

Do you know what happened?

The government got more revenue because, when you tax people less, when you let them keep more of their own money, guess what. Their incentives to produce go up, and the economy grows by leaps and bounds. So when Reagan cut taxes dramatically, the economy responded and grew tremendously.

When we cut taxes in 2017, it was the same thing. It was the same thing: Revenue didn't go down. Revenue went up.

So how did the deficit get worse? Why did the deficit get worse? Was it because we cut taxes in 2017?

No. It was because we piled on the money. We just were spending money like there was no tomorrow.

So, before we got to the extraordinary times we have now, where everything is about COVID and we are just going to spend money like there is no tomorrow, we were borrowing $1 trillion a year. The main segments of government—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, food stamps, other welfare, and military—probably comprise three-fourths or more of government.

If you look at that on an annual basis, before you get to the extraordinary binge over the last 2 years, we were already $1 trillion short every year—$1 trillion short. So, last year, we added a couple trillion more, and our deficit for the year—for 1 year—was $3 trillion. We have never, ever borrowed that much.

There are going to be ramifications. You are already seeing some of the ramifications. You are seeing the prices in the grocery store go up; you are seeing the prices at the pump go up; you are seeing sometimes wages go up. But you are also seeing prices rising faster than wages, which often happens in an inflationary cycle.

Some people have trouble comprehending these numbers.

What is a billion? What is a trillion?

Reagan had an analogy he did. He said: If you want to know how big ''a billion'' is, take thousand-dollar bills and put them in your hand, and when you have them about 4-inches high, you have got $1 million. But if you want to know how much or how tall a stack of $1,000 would be if you had $1 trillion, it would be 60 miles high—over 60 miles high.

That is what kind of money we are talking about. That was to get to a trillion.

So we have $1 trillion of institutional debt that is added every year, but now we are talking about a time when they are talking about adding, in one bill, $3.5 trillion. The bill that they have before us has $1 billion in spending for every page. Every page of the bill has an extra billion dollars in spending. It is extraordinary. We have never, ever seen anything like this.

What happens when a country destroys its currency?

We have examples in history. In Germany, in 1923, the money was starting to lose its value in about September. A loaf of bread might have cost 100 mark when, before, it cost 1 mark. Two weeks later, it was 1,000 marks, but then 2 weeks later, it was 10,000 marks, and then it was a million, and then it was several million. This happened in a 2-month period of time.

People say: Oh, when it comes, when the currency unravels, it will be gradual.

In Germany, it happened in a 2-month period.

In Venezuela, the currency is completely worthless. It is the same in Germany. It is almost better to burn your currency for fuel or warmth than it is to spend it. This is what happens when you have runaway spending and out-of-control deficits. Venezuela is one of the richest countries in South America. They have more oil underground than Saudi Arabia, but, frankly, socialism doesn't work. Socialism is this borrow and spend. It has this alarming tendency to want to offer everybody everything and say it is going to be free. Many of these things backfire.

For the last year, we have been saying: Oh, gosh. We feel sorry for workers, so we are going to pay them while they are unemployed.

But guess what. If you pay them more than the market wage, more of them will choose unemployment, and more of them will choose unemployment, and more of them will stay unemployed for a longer period of time. We found this out in the 2008 recession.

During the 2008 recession, we extended unemployment. It is normally 26 weeks, paid for by a tax, and it largely works within the confines of a State-run program. We extended it to 99 weeks—almost 2 years.

But do you know what the studies found?

This is part of the syndrome we have around here. It is sort of the ''big heart, small brain'' syndrome. I think many of these people want to help people; they just don't understand that what they are doing is actually hurting the same people they are trying to help.

So if you extend unemployment to 99 weeks, and then, all of a sudden, the guy, at 99 weeks—or woman—says, ''I need to get a job,'' and they go to the employer and say, ''I have been out of work for 99 weeks, and I have been on unemployment,'' and the other person who is applying for the job says, ''Well, I have been out of work for 10 weeks, and I am looking for a job,'' who do you think the employer hires?

Every time, it is the person out of work for 10 weeks.

As for the person who hasn't worked for 99 weeks, they are like: There might be something wrong here. We might have gotten to the point where we have lost the work ethic.

So what have you done to the people who you try to help?

You have actually kept them out of the workplace so long that they become unemployable.

After they become unemployable, what do they become?

They become the permanently unemployable, the nonworking part.

Do you wonder who this is?

Sixty-two percent of the country is in the workforce, and 38 percent is not. These are people who are permanently out of the workforce. These aren't people who can't work. These are just people who, for one reason or another, are no longer in the workforce.

Now, some of them really can't work, and we have sympathy for that, but many of them are people who just stayed out of work too long or took the wrong incentives or became addicted to drugs or alcohol because they weren't working.

So there are things we can do in our country, but if we are not careful, it is going to slip away from us. I don't want our country to be Venezuela, and I don't want our country to destroy its currency, but what we are offering is a more difficult sell because the other side is going to give you free college and free daycare and free cars and free cell phones.

What we are offering is opportunity. What we are offering is the freedom to try to strive. We are offering equality before the law, not equality of outcome after you have done your work, after you have tried to participate—equality before the law.

One of the interesting things that I think isn't often grasped by people is that if you want equal outcomes, if you want everybody to be the same and you want to equalize everybody, you actually have to treat them unequally.

In our country, it took a while, but we have gotten to the point where people truly believe in the concept of equality before the law. But if you also want to believe in equal outcomes at the end, realize you can't believe in both. They are mutually exclusive. You cannot believe in equality before the law if you want equal outcomes.

If you want this so-called equity at the end, you want everybody to be equal at the end, you have to treat them unequally because some people are either born with more talent, born with more money, born with more sense, luckier, work harder—there are a lot of reasons.

If you put 100 people in a room and you give them all 5 bucks, within an hour, somebody will have more. Somebody had some cigarettes. Somebody really wanted to smoke, and they have a dollar. The money spreads around the room. They have done these experiments. Money doesn't stay in one

place, but it is by and large, in a free society, based on work. But once the government becomes in charge of things, it becomes less of a meritocracy and becomes more of a society based on who you know.

There are rich people—don't get me wrong. When you look at socialism, there are rich people: Maduro, Chavez, Castro—incredibly rich people. They own their own islands. They have billions of dollars. Their relatives are all rich.

So instead of a society mostly based on merit—we talk about the greatness of America. One of the most important things about capitalism and freedom and what happened in America is, for the first time, it wasn't based on who you were; it wasn't based on royal lineage. For the most part, Europe was, you know, longtime landowners and royalty, and a very small percentage of the public did very well.

In fact, before 1820, before the Industrial Revolution, virtually everybody in the world—96, 98 percent of the world lived in extreme poverty. A bare subsistence level. Barely enough to eat. There was no obesity because there was barely enough food. You just scraped by. That was 98 percent of the world.

Fast-forward to today, after we have adopted what Adam Smith talked about as far as trade, division of labor, and capitalism, do you know what we have now? When you look at poverty—less than $2 a day in the world—it is less than 10 percent of the world. You won't find this on television. There is not going to be any good news on television or in the newspaper. The poorest people in our country actually are equivalent to the middle class in most countries. We are a huge success, but we are a country misguided and led astray by media that aren't honest.

For example, if you watched CNN, you would think that nobody is getting vaccinated, and it is a complete disaster, and, whoa, we are stuck in this rut because no one is vaccinated. It is completely untrue. Over 90 percent of people over 65, who are the most vulnerable, are vaccinated. Now, sure, there are a lot of younger people who aren't vaccinated, and there are some older people, but 90 percent is a pretty good success. Over age 50, it is like 75, 80 percent of people. People are informed. They know this is a disease that can affect any age but affects primarily the older ages.

For example, the one truth you won't be told is that an 85-year-old has a 10,000 times greater chance of dying than a 10-year-old. Now, you think we should treat them the same? If you were their doctor, do you think a 10-year-old should get the same healthcare and the same prescriptions for what they need to do as an 85-year-old? That makes no sense at all.

I see 10-year-olds and I see 5-year-olds out on the Mall—my wife and I were walking down to the Lincoln Memorial the other day, and I saw 5-year-olds in groups, led by teachers, wearing masks outside. There is no science to that.

We have Dr. Fauci spreading mistruths across the country, saying we have to forcibly vaccinate the kids? There is no science behind any of that. In fact, England is rejecting what we are doing. In England, because of the age skew, because of what they are seeing—that the people most at risk are of an older age—they are actually saying: Instead of forcibly vaccinating children, why don't we try to make the vaccine doses available for the elderly? Why don't we target our care to those who are at highest risk?

We have a problem in our country. We have people who have so politicized science that there are people struggling and dying every day because they have never heard about monoclonal antibodies. We have people dying every day because the government, at the behest of Dr. Fauci and a few other people, has said: You can't get monoclonal antibodies if you are in the hospital.

I talk to people every day who really have not yet heard of monoclonal antibodies, who get COVID again after being fully vaccinated or sometimes not being vaccinated and are not getting the treatment because Dr. Fauci says: If you are in the hospital, you don't get it.

So we have medicine that is coming from on high, from a central authority like the politburo, and doctors are afraid to prescribe. This has never happened in our country before. Doctors were able to make their own decisions based on their own experience, based on studies, based on real-life examples, but using their own discretion. Now doctors are afraid to prescribe monoclonal antibodies, and many of them are disallowed from prescribing it to an inpatient.

Realize the ridiculous nature of that. You are in the emergency room. You are sick, and you are coughing. You might be dying from COVID. You get to the emergency room. You don't know what to say. You can barely talk. Your spouse has to be able to tell the doctor ''Please stop'' in an emergency room. Give them the monoclonal antibodies before they are admitted because once they are admitted, we won't treat them. It is the same way with symptoms. You have to have symptoms within the first 10 days. If you don't have symptoms—if you are on day 11, you won't get monoclonal antibodies. It is completely arbitrary, it is capricious, and it has to do with government-mandated guidelines.

Let's take some of the other truths or mistruths that are out there.

I have said over and over again that cloth masks don't work because they don't. Peer-reviewed studies have shown time and time again that cloth masks don't work. But when Dr. Fauci tells you that all masks work, when he comes in all draped with three masks on himself with little insignias, clever insignias of different sports teams, he is actually spreading a mistruth that causes lives to be lost.

Why? Let's say you have a 75-year-old woman and she gets COVID, and her husband is taking care of her. Do you think the advice to go into the room to feed her, bathe her, help her get in and out of her clothes while she is sick, while wearing a cloth mask is a good idea or a bad idea? It is malpractice. Yet, for some reason, the left-wing media has lauded this man as the second coming, and what he is telling you is absolutely verifiably dangerous to your health.

The only mask that really works of any real value is the N95 mask. The surgical masks have some value but not very much. Most of the air is going around the mask. They just aren't of value. But you have to submit. The man is telling you to do it; you got to do what you got to do. But the thing is, when you tell people something is safe, they tend to react to that and have behavior, and in their behavior, they are in favor of something that may well actually be risky behavior for them.

The vaccinations—because we ignore natural immunity, we directed the vaccine to the wrong people and still are. For example, because of Dr. Fauci's lead—India is accepting his lead as well, and India does not have enough vaccine. They have a billion people. They can't vaccinate enough people fast enough. So if you have a billion people and you have 200 million doses of vaccine, who do you think you should give it to? Should you give it to the 10-year-old the same as the 85-year-old? No. That is ridiculous. But what about two 65-year-olds and one of them has had COVID and one of them hasn't?

The studies are plentiful. The studies are throughout that say that if you have already had it, you have natural immunity to COVID, as good or better than the vaccine.

Do you think it makes good public health policy to say that everybody who is 65 should get it instead of saying: Have you had it? Why don't we check you for antibodies if you think you have had it? Maybe you should wait until we have vaccinated every 65-year-old who doesn't have immunity.

These are real things. These are real discussions. But if you have these, unless it is on the Senate floor—actually, that is not even true. You can say this on the Senate floor, and YouTube will take it down. I have had it happen. I have given speeches on the floor that YouTube takes down.

So this is a world in which people need to realize and get back to the ideas of classical liberalism where we debated things. Classical liberalism was about skepticism; it was about you having your opinion and me having my opinion. But the difference between the elitist or the collectivist point of view and the individual right point of view is, I believe you have every right to your opinion.

But if you are a collectivist and you believe that, from the very top down, all medical decisions come from Dr. Fauci, and if he doesn't want you to

fly, you don't get to fly—see, it is different from individual liberty because I think if you have a differing opinion, you are welcome to your opinion.

If an airline has a policy I don't like, maybe I choose not to fly, but the idea that we are going to restrict everyone's behavior based on what they decide to do—what is next? People eat too many cheeseburgers. We are not going to give them a heart stent because we think they haven't behaved and haven't listened to the doctors on what they should be eating?

There is no end to this. But in the end, if we are not careful, we are going to spend this country into oblivion. COVID is a big cause of the extra spending we have now, but I can tell you, there are ramifications that are coming quick. They are coming in the form of higher prices. But there is no reason in the world for us to default. We have plenty of money. We should simply pay for the interest based on what comes in every month.

With that, I would like to reserve my time and turn it over.

Mr. LEE. Will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. PAUL. Sure.

Mr. LEE. Senator PAUL, when you and I were both elected to the Senate back in 2010, I remember the national debt was an issue then. It was becoming large enough that people were concerned about it. As it mounted, sometimes we had conversations about how long it might continue—how long it might continue to spiral upward.

Are you surprised to see that here we are, 11 year later, 11 years after you and I arrived here, and where it has gone since then?

Mr. PAUL. I guess ''surprised'' is not the word I would choose; I would say disappointed.

You know, the tea party movement—we had 100,000 people on the Mall out there. People were concerned about the debt. They were concerned about constitutional government.

I remember you and I meeting for the first time and talking about how we needed to reverse some of these terrible precedents that had allowed government to grow large and that the courts need to reform government, as well as government be reformed from its elected officials.

But, yes, we had a great debate that summer. In the summer of 2011, we said we wouldn't raise the debt ceiling without reform.

Mr. LEE. If the gentleman would yield for a question again, I believe it was during that summer that a number of people started focusing on emerging economic research, including research proposed by Professors Rogoff and Reinhart at Stanford University suggesting that whenever the debt-to-GDP ratio exceeds a certain level, exceeds roughly 100 percent, 1-to-1, certain things start to happen, and economic growth becomes more elusive.

As I recall, we were nowhere close, yet, to the 1-to-1 ratio. Now that we have blown past that, what do you think that ought to tell us about the fact that, even as we have blown past that point, we are now being asked to raise the debt ceiling by larger and larger amounts or as sometimes——

Mr. PAUL. Without any reform.

Mr. LEE. For a time period without any reform.

Mr. PAUL. Yes. I remember when, a couple of years after that, we actually became that—our economy was equal to our debt. So the gross domestic product—how much everything is worth that is produced in the whole country—was about 17 or 18 billion at the time, as the debt sort of crossed that.

We are now, depending on how you measure it, some say at like 140 percent of our GDP, and the interesting thing is, that is about where Greece was when Greece began to declare its bankruptcy and was unable to pay its bills.

It is alarming. It is foolish and unwise for us to say: Oh, there are no consequences. I think there will be consequences, and the No. 1 thing that we are seeing now is inflation.

Mr. LEE. Now, we have seen, with—our status as the United States having the world's reserve currency, the U.S. dollar, has given us some flexibility in that area, flexibility that other countries like Greece haven't had.

Do you think there is some risk of becoming overly confident in that world reserve currency status? In other words, could we be jeopardizing the very thing that we fought so hard to achieve and that so few nations ever achieve?

Mr. PAUL. Yes. And I think that you are right. Having the world's currency allows us—you know, many countries trade in dollars. You will go into marketplaces all around the world, and what they are actually exchanging is dollars. So as we have bought more goods than we have exported, we import more than we export, we paid for that in dollars. Some have described that as being able to export our inflation.

People have also said: Well, the dollar isn't perfect. It is a fiat currency. It is being inflated.

But everybody else is so bad that we are sort of the cleanest shirt in a closet full of dirty shirts.

So, yes, I think being the reserve currency has allowed us to last longer, but there are immutable rules of economics that eventually catch up to a country, and I think we approach those. I don't think anybody can predict exactly when we get there, but I think we are approaching a time—and it may not be a gradual unraveling. You know, if you look back at the history of our marketplace, we have had these black swan events. We have had these events where the marketplace, in 7 or 8 days in our history, most of the losses have happened calamitously.

Even in 2011, when the market went down, there was a debate. They said: Oh, it is because we risked the debt ceiling.

Well, many of us thought that the marketplace went down at that time because we actually continued to borrow without reforming the process.

Mr. LEE. In an economy where currency and circulation isn't backed up by any tangible object and where the government has effectively the ability to just print more money, even if that currency happens to be the world's reserve currency, at some point after you keep printing money, doesn't that cause problems?

Mr. PAUL. It is based on faith, and so when does the faith end? Faith is not something particularly—it is hard to determine faith in the dollar. One way you can determine it is, will people buy our bonds. One of the indications that people lose faith in our currency is that when, to borrow money, you see your bond prices rise; you see interest prices rise. I think that is coming.

You know, we are already seeing inflation at a 5-percent rate. Typically, you will see the interest rates rise as well. And there is going to be a time there are going to be repercussions. I fully believe that you cannot continue to borrow at this rate without ultimately suffering, perhaps, an economic calamity. And I want to stop that for our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we have a debt ceiling for a reason. It is not completely arbitrary. It is not just made up. It is not something that someone came up with for their own amusement. No. When the sheer numeric volume, the quantity, the amount of our national debt ceases to cause panic; when the principle of jeopardizing our children's future loses effect; when the sacrifice it would cost taxpayers to pay the debt becomes laughably large; when all else fails, Congress sets a cap and says: Here, here, here. We have to think about this. We have to think about this debt problem.

There is a reason why we have that. They are sound reasons rooted in logic, rooted in mathematics, rooted in the inevitability of our own future if we don't control the way that the Federal Government spends money. Now, nearly half of the Members of this entire body—almost the entirety of the Senate Republican conference—wrote a letter almost 2 months ago, saying that we would not raise the debt limit. We committed that we were finally going to make a change for the sake of families back home and generations still unborn. We were going to make a change to rein in reckless spending.

Now we are faced with more spending and more debt than our country has ever seen before. Our debt-to-GDP ratio has now reached a staggering level of 125 percent.

The national debt is rushing toward $30 trillion, and far too quickly, this body is signaling a willingness and, I might dare say, an eagerness to sign on

the dotted line without thinking through the consequences or at least without thinking through the consequences of everyone outside this building, without thinking through the consequences of those who are wealthy and well connected and will probably fare just fine regardless of the Federal Government's reckless practice of effectively just printing more money.

Let me tell you why that is such a problem and why I think it is so dangerous. First of all, as I mentioned a moment ago in my exchange with the Senator from Kentucky, once we pass this 1-to-1 debt-to-GDP ratio, economists have scoured the landscape and looked at economies all over the world throughout human history, throughout periods of time in which any records have been kept at all, and they have concluded that this 100 percent debt-to-GDP ratio is tragic; it is dangerous; it is perilous. Once you cross that Rubicon, you are in some very, very tough positions. Economic growth starts to sputter. It staggers. It becomes more and more difficult to get out of the death spiral.

You see, in the past, even as our national debt has been on the rise, we have been OK insofar as it has increased, more or less, to a degree commensurate with the size of our economy. Economic growth has been such that it remained, more or less, constant—less constant lately, but it has remained somewhat proportional to the size of our economy. Economic growth has propelled that, but that is the problem. It is the goose that laid the golden egg. And we know what happens when you get rid of that goose or when you meaningfully impair its ability to lay those golden eggs.

Once we reach that point, we pass the 100 percent debt-to-GDP ratio, we know that our economic growth will stall, and it will become far more difficult to pay off. We also know that it matters on a very personal level, for reasons I will get into more in just a moment, for poor and middle-class American families everywhere, throughout Utah and across America. People who are living paycheck to paycheck or otherwise on a fixed income or fixed budget, like most American families, find that when the government just prints more money—as it tends to do when we start to borrow and then spend trillions of dollars at a time more than the Federal Government is bringing in—that brings about inflation. It is as though there are a basket of goods that the economy is capable of faithfully, consistently producing from one year to another. The basket of goods might grow or shrink a little bit from year to year, but it is going to tend to fluctuate mostly at the margins. The big picture is going to look fairly consistent.

So what happens when the government just prints more money and puts that into circulation? The purchasing power of each dollar is diminished. Now, this tends to work out fine. In fact, it can work out really well for wealthy and well-connected individuals. The rich usually figure out a way to get even richer off of this dynamic. They can hedge against it. They can figure out a way to benefit in one way or another from the chaos and sometimes even from the government spending. But where does that leave everyone else? Well, for most people—and by ''most people'' I mean 99 percent of Americans—it is not going to make them wealthier. It is going to make them poorer because most people are still living with more or less the same income, more or less the same resources. They have still got more or less the same basket of goods in the economy, but when you have got more dollars in the American economy because we are effectively printing more, each dollar matters less. It buys less—everything from gas to groceries, from housing to healthcare. Poor and middle-class American families suffer while the wealthy and well connected might benefit. And a small handful of politicians receive a pat on the back, thanking them, congratulating them as they congratulate themselves and each other for what they characterize as a job well done.

Sure, they will always be able to point to someone who benefits from the programs they are sponsoring that they are creating. Some of those people won't be wealthy and well-connected interests. Some of them will be deserving families, some of them, poor and middle-class American families. But, you know, most families are just made poorer as government expands its footprint.

Let's look at what happened last year alone. During the last few years before the pandemic, we were bringing in about $3 trillion a year in tax revenue. We were spending about $4 trillion—a massive, embarrassing, disgraceful, indefensible deficit, an annual deficit of about a trillion dollars a year. It was inexcusable, especially at the height—at the peak—of an economic cycle.

Then the pandemic hit. Last year, we still brought in about $3 trillion in tax revenue, just as we had expected, just as we had during the previous 2 years. Only this time we didn't spend $4 trillion. We spent $6.6 trillion. We brought in $3 trillion, and we spent $6.6 trillion. We spent more than double what we brought in. We spent more money that was borrowed than the money that was paid into the Treasury.

What did that do? Well, it dramatically increased the money supply—abruptly, in a way that hurts poor and middle-class American families. It is a predictable, foreseeable result.

Look, if you are playing Monopoly and all of a sudden you decide to just double the amount of money that everyone gets in the game, it doesn't make everybody better off; it just increases the prices that are paid.

What happens when that is real money and those are real people, when it is not just plastic game pieces at stake, but it is hungry mouths that need to be fed and sheltered and cared for? That is where it hurts. And that is what is so tragic when the Government colludes with itself, with a small handful of people on the outside encouraging it to do so, some whispering in the ears of the politicians, telling them that they will be doing so many great things; that the expenditures and the expansion of government is worth the investment.

They are not doing it with their own money. No, they are doing it with the money of America's poor and middle class. It is really a sort of reverse Robin Hood sort of thing. We are stealing from the poor to give to the rich and the well connected and to give good headlines to a small handful of politicians. Shame on us. Shame on us all. Shame on this institution as we have done that.

Look, I came to the U.S. Senate 11 years ago, committed to reducing the size, the scope, the reach, the cost, and the overall footprint of the Federal Government and its impact on the lives of everyday citizens. I did so based on the understanding and based on the indisputable fact that whenever government expands its reach, it does so at the expense of individual liberty and individual prosperity.

It doesn't mean that government doesn't have a place. It doesn't mean that we don't need government; quite the contrary, we do. But it just means that there is always a balancing that has to be taken into account. You can't expand government without hurting average, everyday people who are subject to those things.

Unfortunately, 11 years later, that same government is larger, more expensive, and more burdensome than ever before. In a farcically futile system, Americans now work for months out of every year just to pay their Federal taxes. Then, after all that is done, they are insultingly demeaned and told that it is not enough; in fact, it hasn't been enough for a long time.

Even though some of you who are now taxpayers and now voters have now worked months—at least weeks, maybe months—out of every year just to pay your Federal taxes, and even though a lot of this debt may have been accumulated before some of you were old enough to vote or some of you were even born, no matter. You have got to pay it. This is making that worse. We are making it worse for present living Americans, those who are of voting age, working age, taxpaying age, and those who are not. And it is also adding burdens to those who have not even been born, whose parents have yet to meet. The regulatory state is growing ever more costly in terms of its economic impact.

I have been studying the cost of the Federal regulatory system for about 25 years. I first started thinking about it while I was in law school. I remember a guest speaker came to speak at our

law school, and he explained that the Federal regulatory system adds what he characterized as sort of a backdoor, invisible, de facto tax on poor and middle-class Americans. He explained that it is a backdoor invisible tax, it is regressive, and that it affects everyone and disproportionately the poor and middle class because of the fact that nowhere is any consumer able to identify the precise cost to them. In fact, most of them don't even know that it exists because unlike their tax bill, there is no return at the end of the year. Unlike their sales tax that typically will show up on someone's receipt or a property tax or anything else, there is no written indication of it that tells any one taxpayer or citizen what it is costing them every year. But it is there.

Anyway, back in I think 1996 or 1997, he explained that the Federal regulatory system was imposing this backdoor, invisible, highly regressive tax on Americans to the tune of $3 or $400 billion a year. I remember thinking, this is staggering, because that is a lot of money. It is a lot of money that could otherwise go toward other priorities, whether in the government, you know, shoring up Social Security or Medicare; or some other program providing for soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines with what they need; or in the lives of families, providing for housing, education, for nourishment or other needs of our children. It just goes into the cost of complying with Federal regulations.

So, yes, Americans do pay for that, we explained; they just pay for it in a way that they can't quite see. There is no single bill that tallies the size of the expense for it, but they do pay for it nonetheless. They pay for it with higher prices on goods and services, everything they buy, and they also pay for it with diminished wages, unemployment, and underemployment.

So here we are 25 years later. No one knows for sure what the Federal regulatory system costs, but most estimates I have seen of late put the number at about $2 trillion a year—$2 trillion. That is the backdoor, invisible tax that Americans pay through higher prices on goods and services, diminished wages, unemployment, and underemployment, due to what it costs to comply with Federal regulations.

Most people don't even think much about Federal regulations, and with good reason. People have other, better things to do. Those who do think about them are perhaps inclined to think—maybe because they have been taught to think or because they have never been taught otherwise—that these costs are borne by billionaires; that they are borne by big, blue chip corporations or a type of industrial tycoon whom you would associate with a Monopoly game piece perhaps. But they are, in fact, borne by poor and middle-class Americans everywhere. That is money they can't get back, on top of the money they had to pay after working weeks or months out of every year just to pay their Federal taxes, and then being told: By the way, after the $2 trillion that you as a people were required to pay through this backdoor, invisible, highly regressive regulatory tax, so to speak, and on top of the $3 trillion that you paid on your taxes, it is still not enough because we are now nearly $29 trillion in debt. It is sad. It is insulting. It is discouraging.

I mentioned inflation a minute ago, and I want to get back to that for a moment. It is the natural, foreseeable consequence of a government that really knows no limits on what it is there to do and knows essentially no limits on what it can spend. These days, if the Federal Government can dream it, if politicians can desire it, they can fund it.

There has never been an institution on planet Earth that had access to more capital than the Federal Government does. There has never been a government in the existence of planet Earth that has had the ability to produce the amount of wealth that this Nation has and the ability of its people to produce that wealth and the ability of the government to spend that amount of money. Because of that, this government also has tremendous bargaining power, and it has correspondingly tremendous borrowing power that goes along with that.

In other words, because the American economy has been strong and because the U.S. dollar has been the world's reserve currency of choice, that has given us this ability. It might make it seem like money, while not growing on trees technically, can be sort of printed into existence, just taken out of thin air, and that we won't feel the consequence for it.

Now, you can get away with that a little bit longer when you have the world's reserve currency and in an economy as large as ours, with credit that has been relatively good compared to that of other sovereign nations, but it does have limits, and we are seeing those limits now. We are seeing them in ways that we haven't seen yet. I was worried about this, scared to death of it 10, 11 years ago when I first got here, but it is so much worse now. It is so much worse now because we have behaved in a way that has made it worse. You can't hide it for that long. The piper eventually has to be paid, and the consequences can eventually make themselves known. It is finally starting to harm American families by reducing their real earnings and undercutting their purchasing power.

In new research that we just released this week, the Joint Economic Committee, Republicans—and I am the ranking Republican on that committee—found that these rising prices are brought about as a result of a mix of two types of inflation: transitory inflation and more lasting inflation brought about by runaway government spending. We found that government stimulus measures have ignited more lasting and more systemic inflation. These inflationary pressures are building on transitory inflation, and they are pushing prices higher.

That is why I am really concerned that, over a year after the recession officially ended, Congress continues undaunted, unhindered, and seemingly more eager than ever in its desire to pursue new massive government spending measures, including a $3.5 trillion budget resolution—the single largest spending package in history.

If Congress continues to pursue spending packages that boost consumer demand while at the same time depressing employment and investment, which is exactly what we are doing, then government-induced inflation will increase even further, with even more drastic, painful consequences for us all but especially for America's poor and middle class. The wealthy and well connected will do just fine. The wealthiest among us will probably get richer as a result. The politicians among us who vote for these things will probably be patted on the back, congratulated by a compliant, dutiful news media, and, most importantly, congratulated by each other, while poor and middle-class Americans will be left silently carrying the bill and bearing the pain of what they are doing to them.

Congress should consider the inflationary risks of this pattern of unfettered, unrestrained government spending. My colleagues should be aware that the costs go beyond the simple sticker price of new spending.

The American people will be better served by policies that are geared toward returning Americans to work and removing barriers to business investment in American workers. But we are not doing that. We are going in the opposite direction of where we should, and as a result, Americans are paying the price, especially poor and middle-class Americans.

It is certainly affecting people in my home State of Utah. Eighty-five percent of Utahans who were polled recently said that they were concerned about inflation, and they have reason to be. We have data from all over the country. Look, nationwide, overall, prices are up 5.3 percent over last year, just in 1 year alone—5.3 percent overall nationwide. In some areas of the economy, it is particularly acute. You see it in meat prices, which are up 8 percent overall from last year. Beef is an astounding 12 percent more expensive than last year. Milk is 10 percent more expensive. Gasoline costs 50 percent more than it did a year ago. In the Salt Lake City area, home prices are up 26 percent above where they were last year. So everything from gas to groceries and from housing to healthcare—they are all going up in like fashion.

Global supply chains, quite frankly, can't keep up. Warnings are already being raised about holiday shortages and huge price increases as there just

aren't enough goods in the entire economy to meet demand, because, again, you just add more money to it. It doesn't make it more affordable; it makes it less affordable. More spending and therefore more money chasing fewer goods will only cause prices to rise even more. That hurts the poorest Americans the most.

The Federal Government prioritizes those who are already wealthy and well connected with its spending, and its politicians right here in this Chamber congratulate themselves and each other and are congratulated by a compliant mainstream news media that for whatever reason always wants to praise the expansion of the Federal Government even when it hurts America's poor and middle class, which it does.

Americans are paying the price. Poor and middle-class Americans are paying the price—those least able to do anything about it. Yes, we are causing that. Those we prioritize, helping the wealthy and well connected with this kind of spending—those Americans who don't have paid lobbyists are left in the dust, holding the bags and harmed the most.

We aren't cold or calloused for rejecting more spending—no, no. We are considering those who end up paying the price for this Monopoly money ploy to spend without end. The everyday Americans, the hard-working Americans shouldn't be harmed like this. Yet they are going to be. They are already feeling that. It is indefensible.

So we are nearing the point of nearly $29 trillion in our national debt. It is the highest debt in our Nation's history. The debt-to-GDP ratio is now over 125 percent. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, debt-to-GDP ratio, where economic growth around the world throughout human history—growth tends to stall out once we cross that 100 percent debt-to-GDP ratio. Just a couple of years ago, we were still in the 80-percent range, and now we are at about 125 percent.

Politicians have promised to deal with the national debt for decades. They promised it over and over and over again, and now the argument has shifted. Some on the other side of the aisle are saying that debt doesn't matter or that it might even be good. In fact, they are saying that it is so necessary that if we don't add to it, if we don't augment it, if we don't feed this beast, then we are somehow going to cause an economic catastrophe.

Now, look, it may be good for their socialist makeover of America. It is disastrous for the people back home, especially those who they claim will be benefitting from it. The debt has reached absolutely unimaginable levels. It is almost $230,000 per taxpayer, nearing $87,000 per citizen.

Meanwhile, businesses across the country are struggling to keep their doors open among labor shortages, skyrocketing prices, heavy regulation, vaccine and other mandates, and people losing their jobs.

Because the President of the United States is using authority he doesn't have through an order he is unwilling to even share with us, they are going to choose, in some cases, between getting a vaccine that in some cases might be hazardous to their health based on unique circumstances and the judgment of their own doctor—yet they have to choose between getting the vaccine and losing their job.

Many businesses are barely inching along. So, no, they don't need more government spending. In fact, talking to countless business owners in Utah, more spending is the last thing they need. But it is certainly the last thing that poor and middle-class Americans need. What happens when we do that is they all get poorer, even as we are congratulated and we congratulate each other for expanding government yet again.

I have had recent conversations with a number of businessowners who, because of the heavy hand, the heavy spending practices of government, have been unable to keep themselves even in business.

I spoke to one of many restaurant owners recently who explained his inability, even after increasing repeatedly the offering price, offering huge, huge sign-in bonuses—$15, then $16, then $18, then $19, then $20 an hour on top of that hiring bonus just to hire people to work in his restaurant in a college town with a lot of young people who are usually willing to work in restaurants. They couldn't do it because of government interference. The government was competing with them. The government was paying people more to not work than they could be paid to work. This is only compounding the problem.

None of this would be possible if we weren't effectively operating this government with a printing press that makes the American people poorer.

So, yes, I signed that letter 2 months ago, along with 46 Republican Senators, almost the entire Senate Republican Conference. I signed that not just because the letter looked neat, not because it would get praise—I know we would get the opposite of that in the press—but because of the people we represent, especially the poor and middle class we represent, who will be made poorer and less secure every single time we do this.

I can't vote to raise this debt ceiling, not right now, especially given the plans at play to increase spending immediately by another $3.5 trillion, which according to some is only as low as $3.5 trillion because of creative accounting. But the real number might be more than $5 trillion. Regardless, we can't do that. We can't afford that.

It is not that the government can't physically do it—we know its ability to do it—but we also know that when it exercises that ability to do that, poor and middle-class Americans suffer.

I can't do this to them, neither should any of us.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The Senator from Wyoming.

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I rise to address the elephant in the room that almost no one is talking about. Everyone is talking about the debt limit, but almost no one is talking about the debt.

I am a rancher, and I often think about policy in ranching terms. This is ''all hat, no cattle'' politics.

We are starting down a track of a $29 trillion national debt. Let me say that again: a $29 trillion debt.

When I first came to Congress, it was just under $10 trillion, which seemed at the time an insurmountable debt. Now, we are getting closer to $30 trillion. Certainly, if the spending that is being entertained by the majority party and the Biden administration passes, we will be well over $30 trillion.

In the immortal, but edited, words of Jimmy MacMillan—''the rent is too [dang] high,'' guy—the debt is too dang high.

Another sobering statistic that was raised by the last speaker, in February, the Congressional Budget Office said that the national debt would surpass the economy's size this year, meaning the debt-to-GDP ratio has long been an indicator of the country's fiscal health and countries have historically tended to decline once their debt surpassed their gross domestic product. This year, that country is us. It is the United States of America. Remember, countries historically decline once their debt passes their gross domestic product. That is what is happening here.

It is a very sobering thought, but not a thought that is part of the debate for raising the debt ceiling. The debt ceiling increase that is being discussed now is so more spending can occur without addressing our debt-to-GDP ratio. We cannot go on like this. It is irresponsible at the deepest levels.

Now, I understand and I appreciate the concerns that have led to this short-term debt limit deal, but the fact of the matter is, unless we actually address the spending problems that are driving our national debt—and soon—we are already saddling future generations of people in my State of Wyoming and all the American people with a debt that they will never be able to repay. And soon, interest payments on that debt will crowd out other spending. The only reason it hasn't happened already is because interest rates have been relatively low.

But we have to pay interest on our debt before we pay other things, including the things that are in the majority party and the Biden administration's $3.5 trillion plan. I believe this is unforgiveable.

Now, I am new to the Senate, so I was not here the last time we had to address the debt ceiling issue. But the last time it came up, it was Republicans who were the majority party and were on the dance floor by themselves.

Since Republicans were in power in Senate, Democrats left the Republicans to dance by themselves and raise the debt limit alone. So anyone talking about this issue today needs to recognize that history.

It is normal for the party in power—where now the Democrats control the House, the Senate, and the White House, it is normal for them to raise the debt ceiling.

The problem is that both when Republicans have been in the majority and have raised the debt ceiling and now Democrats are in the majority and are going to raise the debt ceiling, neither party seems to talk about the debt. They only talk about raising the debt ceiling.

It is really kind of shocking that the main focus of this debate, whenever it occurs, is never on how we got here. It is never on why we spend too much. It is never on the debt itself. It is always on just raising the ceiling or suspending the ceiling so we can spend more, so we can run up more debt, so we can have higher interest payments that can crowd out other spending, that can create the vicious cycle that creates deficit after deficit after deficit.

Our colleagues on the left can throw back at any Republican here that spending has gone on like drunken sailors, even among Republicans, and they are not wrong—and, also, I mean no disrespect to the Navy in referencing sailors. Happy birthday to the Navy, celebrating its 246th birthday yesterday.

There is a lot of blame to go around here. What I would like to see us do is get together, both parties, all colleagues who are interested in this subject, come up with a way to address our debt, to balance our budget, whether it is freezing spending or addressing our trust funds or recognizing how we can fix our entitlement programs or how we can make the Social Security fund solvent, which we know how to do and do not have the political courage to do. We have to contain these massive interest payments. We must start addressing this issue.

Earlier this year, I proposed the Sustainable Budget Act to create bipartisan solutions to our long-term spending. The Sustainable Budget Act should be on the table.

My colleagues Senators ROMNEY and MANCHIN also introduced the Trust Act to shore up the long-term fiscal solvency of our trust funds. That is another bill that should be on the table at the same time that we are debating raising the debt ceiling.

Both of these ideas are worthy proposals that we should be discussing now on a bipartisan basis because this problem isn't one that only affects one party. When the time comes to pay the bill, our debt holders don't care—won't care—if you are a Republican or a Democrat. They only care about getting paid, and we are swiftly approaching a time when we will be unable to do so.

You know, one of the reasons that I became so interested in digital currencies, in nonfiat currencies, is because they are not issued by a government. Bitcoin is not issued by a government, so it is not beholding to the debts that are run up by governments, including the greatest government that has ever existed on the face of the Earth, the United States of America.

The United States of America is now at the point where our debt exceeds our GDP ratio. It is the point at which nations decline. If we are going to let the dollar decline, having the lessons of history in front of us, and failing to act, we are truly irresponsible.

In the event that that contingency occurs, I want to make sure that nonfiat currencies—currencies not issued by government, currencies not beholden to political elections—can grow, can allow people to save, can be there in the event that we fail at what we know we have to do.

There is no proof yet in the 21st century that we are going to make this right. Time and again, in the U.S. House and the Senate, time and again, Presidents of both parties have run up the debt irresponsibly, with no plan to address it. So thank God for bitcoin and other nonfiat currencies that transcends the irresponsibility of governments, including our own. That is an indictment of our responsibility—Democrats and Republicans, Presidents and Congress—our responsibility to address this looming, predictable, massive issue.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise to speak for the generations of Americans who this body is irresponsibly drowning in debt.

Now, to be clear, debt is a bipartisan problem. Debt is a problem both parties bear substantial responsibility for.

To understand just how true that is, we need look back just 21 years. In the year 2000, when this century began, our national debt stood at roughly $5 trillion.

Mr. President, I want you to pause and think about that. The year 2000 wasn't that long ago. Five trillion dollars is the total amount we owed.

In 2001, George W. Bush became President. During the 8 years of Bush's Presidency, the debt doubled from $5 trillion to $10 trillion. My party bears a significant degree of responsibility for that growth.

Then in 2008, Barack Obama was elected President; and over the next 8 years, the debt doubled again, from $10 trillion to $20 trillion.

I want you to pause and reflect on that. The $5 trillion debt that we started the 21st century with had been accumulated by 42 Presidents over two centuries; and then two Presidents, over 16 years, one a Republican and one a Democrat, took our debt and increased it by 300 percent, quadrupled the Nation's debt in 16 years.

As we stand here today in 2021, some 9 months into the Joe Biden Presidency, the debt is roughly $29 trillion.

My home State, the great State of Texas, has roughly 29 million residents. That means the national debt is $1 million for every man, woman, and child in the State of Texas. That is reckless and irresponsible.

Now, my Democratic colleagues point out that Republicans spent too much during the Trump Presidency. I agree. Much of that spending I voted against. And I would note last year was an extraordinary year with a pandemic unlike anything any of us have ever seen in our lives. I wish Republicans had been better at exercising fiscal responsibility when we had control of the White House and both houses of Congress.

The unfortunate reality in this body, though, is that when you have a multi-trillion-dollar spending bill, you can usually count on the votes of every single Democrat and about half the Republicans. So on spending bill after spending bill, we see 75 to 80 Senators coming together—usually all the Democrats and half the Republicans.

And there are about 20 of us who try to say: Why are we bankrupting our kids and grandkids? Why are we digging the hole deeper and deeper and deeper?

But that is—at least right now—a minority view in this body.

But the fact that my party bears significant responsibility for the debt we have today is not to draw an equivalency between what has happened in the past and what is happening right now, because, Mr. President, what Senate Democrats, what House Democrats, and what President Biden are doing now has no precedence in our Nation's history. It is an order of magnitude different. Senate Democrats, House Democrats, and President Biden, if the spending proposals they have put forth pass, within a 12-month period, they will have spent $9.5 trillion.

One of the problems people have at home is understanding big numbers. A million, a billion, a trillion—they have all got an ''illion'' in them. It is hard to tell the difference. That just sounds like a lot of money.

Well, let's put $9.5 trillion in context: $9.5 trillion is more than twice what the United States spent to win World War II. The entire course of the war, it cost us less than half of that to save the free world and defeat the Nazis. And Washington Democrats are trying to spend that in 12 months. It is wildly irresponsible. It is reckless.

They are trying to accompany that with trillions of dollars of new taxes. If the Democrats get their way, every tax you can think of is going up. Individual income tax is going up. Corporate taxes are going up. Small business taxes are going up. Capital gains taxes are going up. The death tax is going up. Farmers are paying more in taxes. Ranchers are paying more in taxes. Small businesses are paying more in taxes. Working families are paying more in taxes.

Joe Biden campaigned promising no one who makes $400,000 a year or less will see their taxes go up. That statement was a flat-out falsehood.

And, by the way, look, I recognize Joe Biden and I are of a different party, so maybe you are inclined not to credit me with my assessment of the truth or falsity of President Biden's promise.

Well, if you don't take my word for it, take the Joint Committee on Taxation's word for it, that analyzed the Democrats' tax program and found, for roughly 80 percent of Americans, taxes either stay the same or go up; that it is cutting taxes for a very small portion of Americans. It is raising taxes on people with incomes as low as $40,000 a year.

By the way, it is also worth noting part of the Democratic talking points is that the deficit is driven by the 2017 tax cuts. Those are good partisan talking points. Those will get a round of applause in any Democratic gathering. Although I say that, with all candor, Mr. President, I haven't been to many Democratic gatherings, but I feel confident that is accurate; that Democrats like: ''Yes, too many tax cuts.''

Before you are inclined just to believe that political rhetoric, however, you might at least pause to look at the facts, to look at the numbers. And the facts and numbers show that, after we passed the 2017 tax cuts, cutting taxes on working families across this country, that we saw record prosperity; we saw the lowest unemployment in 50 years; we saw the lowest African American unemployment ever recorded; we saw the lowest Hispanic unemployment ever recorded; and we saw Federal tax revenues go up.

So the next time you hear a Democrat say the debt comes from the tax cut, it just ain't so. The next year, the Treasury got more money in taxes than it had the year before. So the Democratic narrative about tax cuts driving the debt is—to borrow a term from the current President—malarkey.

The debt that we are facing as a result of this wild spending spree is going up and up and up, and one of the consequences of that spending and that debt is we are seeing an inflation bomb going off in this country.

Now, for younger Americans, inflation may not sound very real. Inflation is not something we have lived with in recent times. We have been in this sort of weird holiday from economic history with inflation being very, very low.

Mr. President, you and I are both old enough to remember the 1970s. We are both old enough to remember double-digit inflation, 21-percent interest rates.

Inflation is a cruel tax, and it is a tax on everybody, but it is particularly cruel on the most vulnerable.

You know who gets hammered with inflation? Senior citizens, seniors who spent their whole lives saving. And they suddenly see the values of their savings going down and down and down because Washington politicians are devaluing their money—seniors who are on a fixed income get the same amount of money each month, but suddenly the cost of everything goes up.

Right now, today, all across this country—in Texas, in Virginia, and in every other State—prices are going up. The cost of gasoline has skyrocketed as a direct result of Joe Biden and the Democrats' policies. The cost of food is going up. The cost of rent is going up. The cost of lumber is going up. The cost of homes is going up.

According to the chief economist at Moody's Analytics, for households earning the U.S. median annual income, which is about $70,000 a year, the current inflation rate has forced them to spend another $175 a month in food and fuel and housing. That works out to $2,100 a year.

So each month, if your family is at the median income level in the United States, the Democrat inflation tax is about 175 bucks a month. And that is before their massive tax rates kick in, and that is before this body passes the Bernie Sanders socialist budget.

It is worth noting just how radical these Democrats are. President Biden is in the White House; that is true. But in the Senate, Senate Democrats have the slimmest majority possible. This is a 50–50 body. It is only by virtue of the Vice President's tie-breaking vote that they have any majority at all. Yet Democrats have interpreted this incredibly close election as a mandate to radically transform this country.

Joe Biden didn't campaign on that. Joe Biden campaigned as a nice, happy, centrist moderate. No more mean tweets. Nothing to scare you at home. We are just going to return to the halcyon days of yesteryear.

Five years ago—well, let's go back even further than that. Nine years ago, Mr. President, when you and I were both elected to the Senate—we arrived here the exact same time. Nine years ago, there was exactly one socialist in this body that admitted he was a socialist. That was BERNIE SANDERS.

If you asked Senator SANDERS, he would say: I am a socialist. I am not a Democrat. I am running as a socialist.

And most of the Democrats in this body would say: No, no, no. That is not me. I am not a socialist like him.

That was a fringe view. Even in the 2020 election, Joe Biden, when he was running in a primary against BERNIE SANDERS, said: No, no, no. I am not a socialist.

Well, today, BERNIE SANDERS is the chairman of the Budget Committee. We are in the midst of debating, passing, the Bernie Sanders socialist budget—$5.5 trillion. That is radical. That is extreme. And I think our Democratic colleagues are too scared of the left flank in their own party to dare stand up to it.

Now, in addition to the reckless spending, to the reckless taxes they are trying to ram through, to the massive debt they are trying to ram through, we also have a radical agenda across the country, including on our southern border, where we are facing a crisis on our southern border. Over 2 million people are expected to cross illegally this year. The highest rate of illegal immigration in 21 years, and congressional Democrats refuse to do anything about it.

Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS have handed the agenda over to the open-border radicals, and we are seeing a public health crisis; we are seeing a national security crisis; we are seeing a humanitarian crisis as a result.

As bad as the economic and domestic policy has been, the foreign policy has been even worse, including the greatest national security disaster and foreign policy disaster in a generation—the utterly incompetent and calamitous surrender in Afghanistan.

All of that extreme agenda is being pushed by Joe Biden and CHUCK SCHUMER and NANCY PELOSI, which brings us to our present crisis, the debt ceiling crisis.

Our national debt is roughly $29 trillion. Yet Democrats want to add trillions more to that. How many trillions? We don't know. They are battling within their conference just how many trillions more with which to saddle this country, but it is going to be a lot.

But do you know the curious thing? This crisis is 100 percent manufactured by Democrats. Why is that? Because for the entirety of this Congress, Democrats have had complete, 100-percent power to raise the debt ceiling anytime they have wanted.

How is that? Well, ordinarily, in this body, the way legislation moves, it needs 60 votes to move. It is called the legislative filibuster. But there is an exception to that, and it is a big exception. It is called budget reconciliation. It comes from the Budget Act of 1974. Under budget reconciliation, you only need 50 votes, not 60 votes. It is the biggest exception that exists to the filibuster rule.

Democrats, unfortunately, have 50 votes in this body. They have a majority in the House, and they have the White House. That means Democrats, using budget reconciliation—and it is clear, by the way, that you can raise the debt ceiling by using budget reconciliation—could have raised the debt ceiling in January. They didn't. They could have raised the debt ceiling in February. They didn't. They could have raised it in March or April or May or June, July, August, September. They didn't. We are in October. Democrats could have raised the debt ceiling today. They didn't. They could have done it with only Democratic votes, and there would not have been a single thing Republicans could have done to stop them. They know that. They don't dispute that.

So why are we facing a crisis? If, for 10 months, Democrats could have done this anytime they had wanted, why didn't they? Well, it is because there are at least some Democrats who realize that drowning the Nation in debt

and spending and taxes is not popular back home. The voters don't like it.

So, instead, Majority Leader SCHUMER has not once, not twice, but three times tried to move a legislative vehicle to raise the debt ceiling that requires 60 votes. He didn't have to do it. He could have done it using reconciliation and using only Democratic votes. He had the total power to do that, but he didn't want to do that. He wanted to use it—to move it forward in a way that required at least 10 Republicans to join with him. Why? There is one and only one reason for this. I would challenge any Senate Democrats to ask Majority Leader SCHUMER if there is any other reason he proffered for not doing what he could have done at any time, day or night. The only reason is to obscure accountability. The only reason is to blame some of that debt on Republicans so that Senate Democrats could claim: Hey, both parties did it.

What the Democrats are doing right now is unprecedented. It is radical. They know it, and they are scared of it. So what are we seeing instead? We are seeing CHUCK SCHUMER tell the American people: We are on the verge of a default. We are seeing Joe Biden threaten that the United States will default on our debt. We are seeing the Treasury Secretary threaten that the United States will default on our debt. Joe Biden's threats to default on the debt are wildly reckless and irresponsible.

Let me be clear so that no one is confused: The United States should never, ever, ever default on our debt—period. All 100 Senators in this Chamber agree with that. There is not a single Senator in either party who believes the United States should default on our debt.

Why does Joe Biden go on national television and threaten to default on the debt when he could have raised the debt ceiling anytime he wanted? Because he is playing a game of political brinksmanship, threatening a calamitous result on the American economy because he wants to browbeat Republicans into serving as a smokescreen to help hide the responsibility Democrats pay for their massive spending and debt.

I have got to say, for the last several months, I was proud of my party. The Republicans were united. We were standing together. We were standing as one. And every single Republican—all 50 Republicans were telling anyone who would listen: We will not participate in raising the debt ceiling. If the Democrats are going to raise trillions in spending, they need to raise the debt ceiling and own the debt that their reckless spending is producing. Our party was completely united.

The Republican leader and I—and he and I have had significant disagreements over the years, but on this question, we were in exactly the same place. We were saying exactly the same thing. Our conference has a wide range of views from conservatives to moderates to libertarians. All 50 of us were on the same page. The Democrats have the power to raise the debt ceiling on their own. They are engaged in wildly reckless spending, and if they are going to do that, they need to be the ones to vote for this debt.

We were united for 2 months. Indeed, 46 of us signed a letter to CHUCK SCHUMER, I think 2 months ago, making clear what our position was. I helped write that letter. It was not a fringe position of a couple of members of the conference; we got 46 out of 50 Republican Senators to sign it. So SCHUMER knew. PELOSI knew. Biden knew. But they chose to engage in reckless brinksmanship.

Now, I believe the end result of this game of chicken was clear: that Democratic Leader SCHUMER was on a path to surrender. He was on a path to doing what he should have done a week ago or 2 weeks ago or 3 weeks ago or a month ago or 2 months ago, which is moving a reconciliation bill and raising the debt ceiling.

I can tell you there were Democratic Senators—multiple Democratic Senators—coming to me and coming to the other members of my party, saying: OK. How much time would it take to move a reconciliation bill? Can we get it done in time for the October 18 date that the Treasury Secretary has laid out?

To a person, Republicans answered: Yes, there is plenty of time, under the rules of reconciliation, to move forward. There is no barrier. You have all the time you need.

I believe Democratic Leader SCHUMER was on the verge of surrendering, and then unfortunately, yesterday, Republicans blinked. I think that was a mistake. I think that was the wrong decision.

Now, I will tell you, the reason Republican leadership made that decision to blink was because Senate Democrats threatened to nuke the filibuster, to eliminate the filibuster. I don't know if that threat was real. I don't know if they would have carried through on it or not. But I understand why Republican leadership blinked. Ending the filibuster would enable the Democrats to pass an even more radical agenda than the one they are doing right now. It would enable the Democrats to pass things that would profoundly alter this Nation, perhaps irreparably. So I understand why Republican leadership blinked, but I wish they had not. I wish they had not because I believe we were on the verge of victory.

The American people agreed with us. The Democratic position, on its face, was objectively unreasonable. Here is the Democratic position: We have complete power to raise the debt ceiling anytime we want, but the only way we will do it is if Republicans do it with us. Otherwise, we will default on the debt.

Even the Capitol Hill press corps—and, Mr. President, in your quieter moments, you will admit it leans very far left—even the Capitol Hill press corps knew that was ridiculous.

So unfortunately, yesterday, we were on the verge of victory, but we turned that victory into defeat.

Now, let's be clear what the order of magnitude of this defeat is. We are soon going to vote on moving to take up the debt ceiling. The political games played by Democratic Leader SCHUMER may have prevailed in the short term by cajoling 10 or more Republicans to vote with the Democrats to allow a vote on the debt ceiling. I hope that doesn't happen. I hope we defeat that vote. I am certainly going to vote no, and I am urging my colleagues to vote no. But if 60 or more Senators vote to take up the vote, then we will see a clear divide. On the debt ceiling, all 50 Republicans will vote no. On the debt ceiling, all 50 Democrats will vote yes. We will see a clear divide. I wish it had happened without the political games, without the political theater, that Democratic leadership played.

One of the reasons I think it was a mistake for Republican leadership to give in to the demands, to the hostage-taking, to the political terrorism of the other side, is that it significantly hurts the credibility of the Republican conference. The Democratic leader is no doubt telling every Democratic Senator: You see, they won't hold their ground. They will give in. All we have to do is stand strong, and they won't stand and fight against us.

Now, I hope that proves nothing more than hot air. I hope that proves a bad estimation of what Republican Senators will do. I can tell you this conference remains absolutely united that the Bernie Sanders' socialist budget of $5.5 trillion, with trillions in taxes, is wildly and recklessly irresponsible and would do massive damage to this country. I hope and believe we will stay united on that. But we could have stayed united on the debt ceiling as well. We could have stayed united in making clear that the Democrats had every ability to do this on their own, but sometimes in a poker game, a bluff wins the pot. In this case, to mix my metaphors, which would make my high school English teacher very angry, in the game of chicken, CHUCK SCHUMER won this game of chicken. As two trucks drove toward each other on a country road, one or the other was going to turn or you were going to have a lot of dead chickens.

I wish Republicans had not blinked. We shouldn't have done that, but the strategic mistake by our leadership should not distract from the fundamental divide in this body.

I don't know why it is the Democratic Senators look at this last election—an unbelievably close election—and conclude that there is no need for bipartisanship in the Senate, that their mandate is to ram through a radical and socialist agenda.

And let me be clear by the way: The first major bill the Democrats took up was a $1.9 trillion spending bill, a so-

called COVID relief bill. I say so-called COVID relief because only 9 percent of the bill was healthcare spending on COVID. It was a liberal wish list, paying off special interests that support the Democrats.

You know, Mr. President, you and I were both at Joe Biden's inauguration. We sat on the steps of the Capitol. We heard President Biden give what I thought was a pretty good speech; a speech about unity, a speech about coming together, a speech about healing.

Sadly, that speech didn't even last the time it took for the words to be transmitted over the airways to the people listening at home.

It would have been easy for President Biden and Democrats to pass a bipartisan COVID relief bill—easy. There were Republicans eager to do so. And to show that that is not just empty posturing, that that is not just partisan language, last year, when we had a Republican majority in the Senate, we passed bipartisan COVID relief bills not once, not twice, not three times, not four times—five times. Five times.

When Republicans had the majority, we didn't ram through COVID relief bills that were hard partisan bills, but, instead, we worked together with the other side.

When Joe Biden, who promised healing and unity, the first big bill he had, he made a choice: Do I want to honor what I said, or do I want to give into the angry socialist left?

And he rammed through a bill—a $1.9 trillion spending bill—that in the House of Representatives got zero Republican votes, and in the Senate got zero Republican votes.

And I have got to tell you, Senate Democrats didn't want a Republican vote. There wasn't even a minute of discussion of negotiation. There wasn't an attempt to make it bipartisan. It was: We have the power by the narrowest, narrowest margin, and we are going to abuse that power.

And, sadly, it hasn't changed. It has continued.

This Bernie Sanders, socialist budget—$5.5 trillion—is reckless and partisan, and it will get zero Republican votes in the House, it will get zero Republican votes in the Senate—because the Democrats believe they have a short window to fundamentally transform this Nation and to destroy the free market system that has produced the greatest prosperity this Nation has ever seen.

This is tragic, and I, for one, will continue doing everything humanly possible to lead the fight to stop this radical agenda that threatens the lives, the safety, the security, the liberties, the constitutional rights, and the financial future of 29 million Texans.

Bankrupting our kids and grandkids is serious business, and the political games from the Democrats are meant to distract from that.

And let me note, finally, there is legislation I have supported all 9 years I have served in this body. It is legislation introduced by the Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY, called the Full Faith and Credit Act, although I actually prefer a different name for it.

The name I prefer is the default prevention act. It is legislation that says, in the event the credit limit is not raised, the United States will never ever, ever default on the debt; that even without the credit limit being raised, there are tax revenues coming in every month.

So the default prevention act makes clear we will prioritize those tax revenues to interest on the debt, to paying our Active Duty military, and to Social Security and Medicare.

Government by crisis would end, or at least be substantially mitigated, if we pass the default prevention act.

Earlier today, I was on a radio program—Sean Hannity's radio program, where he played an interesting clip of Democrats all talking about debt ceiling denial or default denial.

And I would commend the other party. One of the things the Democrats do really well is message discipline. When they come up with talking points, it is remarkable. Every Democrat in these United States of America, from Joe Biden down to the county dog catcher, they repeat the exact same words.

So Sean Hannity played a whole series of just clips of Democrats using the identical talking points: Debt ceiling denial, default denial.

You know who is in denial is the Democrats. They are in denial that the debt ceiling exists. They are in denial of the $29 trillion that is bankrupting our kids and grandkids.

And they like these crises. Why do I know they like these crises? Because they don't want to pass the default prevention act.

If the Democratic Senators who give speeches about how bad a default would be, if they actually believed that, we could come together today and we could ensure the citizens of Texas, the citizens of Virginia, the citizens of Utah that there will never ever, ever, ever be a default of our debt.

But if we did that, it would mean that Senator SCHUMER and NANCY PELOSI and President Biden couldn't engage in the kind of theatrics, the kind of reckless brinksmanship that we have seen over the last several weeks. That would jeopardize their radical agenda.

I hope and pray that this body, the Senate, serves as the last bulwark to stop the radical socialist agenda that Washington Democrats are trying to ram through.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I missed most of what Senator CRUZ said, but I think I have a general idea of what he was going to say.

So what is this all about tonight? Why are we here?

So the bottom line is we have a debt ceiling increase that is coming due under our law. The debt ceiling has been dealt with numerous times since I have been here.

What is this all about?

My Democratic colleagues—we worked together to pass a $1.2 trillion bill for roads, bridges, ports, and electrical vehicles. I was 1 of 19 Republicans. Made sense to me.

The reason we have got a debt ceiling problem beyond the normal course of business is that my Democratic colleagues, through reconciliation, are going to keep on spending from $3½ to $5 trillion that has got zero to do, in my view, with infrastructure as we know it. It is more about expanding the size and scope of government.

They have every right to pursue this, and we, as Republicans, have every right to make it hard.

So Senator MCCONNELL has been saying for 2 months now that if you are going to spend the money through reconciliation, you need to raise the debt limit through reconciliation. And there has been a change of heart here at the last minute, but we will be doing this again in December.

So here is my point: I think you should do that. I think the reconciliation process is available to you. I think you should be required to use it, and I don't intend to help you spend any more of this money.

Now, what does reconciliation mean?

It means that you can do it by yourself through a process that allows 50 votes, not 60.

As Budget ranking member, I am willing to waive the 3 days. I am willing to try to make the process less painful. But the point is that you need to own this, and that was our position until recently.

We will be doing this again in December, and this idea that the rules of the Senate may change because of this issue or any other issue—I want to get something off my chest.

When President Trump was President, we had the House and the Senate, and there was enormous pressure on Republicans to change the rules to get everything we wanted, and a lot of Democratic colleagues standing up for the constitutional filibuster—legislative filibuster. We sent a letter with over 60-something names on it basically saying to the leaders of the Senate: Let's don't make the Senate the House.

All of a sudden, you are now in charge of 50–50, and there is a constant stream of threats, coming from the President this time, to change the rules of the Senate to raise the debt limit because you don't want to use reconciliation.

If you have no more respect for the Senate than that, go ahead and change the rules.

I am not going to live the rest of my political life under threat. I am asking no more of you than I ask of myself.

So if the reason the Republican Party has changed its position is because we think somehow what we were

doing would put the Senate in peril, well, then, the Senate was in peril a lot more than we thought it was.

It never entered my mind to go to Democratic colleagues and say: If you don't do a few things that I need to have to get people off my ass at home, then I may have to do carve-outs of this and that.

I didn't do it because I don't think it is the right thing to do. I am not going to tolerate it now.

Now, I will work with you when it makes sense, but what you are doing makes no sense to me, and you need to pay a political price for it under the rules.

I am not doing anything illegal. The Republican Party wasn't doing anything backdoor. We said there is a way forward on the debt ceiling. It is reconciliation. And that is the process you should use because of what you are doing in terms of spending all this money, and we are just not going to be part of making it easy for you to spend all this money.

And here we are. Ten Republicans are going to be voting here pretty soon. I will not be one of them.

And to my Republican colleagues: I understand where you are coming from. I don't fault you for your vote. You know, I was 1 of 19 Republicans that voted for an infrastructure package. A lot of you didn't agree. Some of you were vocal about it. I can take criticism from within my party and without. I try to be respectful.

I will be respectful tonight, but here is our problem as Republicans: We said for 2 months we are going to do one thing, and at the end we have done another.

What does it really matter?

I don't know. I think it matters to the people who listen to us and have some faith in us.

So to my Democratic colleagues: If we get through the night, we will be doing this again. And I promise you, come December, I will be doing everything I can to give you a reasonable reconciliation process to make it as painless as possible in terms of process, but this is what you should be doing because this is what you are doing to the country.

And to my Republican colleagues: We will have another bite at this apple, and we need to decide who we are and what we believe. And if we are not going to pursue this strategy anymore, let's just tell the people of the country up front it was a bad idea, we shouldn't have done it. I think it wasn't a bad idea, but let's not mislead people here. Let's not say one thing and do another.

So I am hoping that we can find a way to do some things together before now and 2022. There are some things on Section 230. The colleague, the Presiding Officer, is one of the best people in the world to do things with if you are looking for bipartisanship on immigration. We have got a broken border, we have got DACA at risk. Maybe we can do a small deal on immigration.

But the point for me is this was a self-inflicted wound, and we need not do this again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we had a number of Senators come to the floor over the last couple of hours talking about some of the problems that we face as a country. They are real, they are serious, and they are being made more severe still and more severe than they need to be by virtue of the step that the Senate is, I fear, about to take.

When we extend the debt limit without any plan as to how you are not going to be back in the same position in just a few more months and you are raising it or, as we have been doing it lately, just suspending the debt limit, you are creating sort of a debt limit Mardi Gras, an era in which any amount of additional borrowing is permitted during that period.

It becomes especially dangerous during times like this one, where we are spending not just to the tune of billions, not just to the tune of hundreds of billions, not just to the tune of a trillion more than we take in, but to the tune of many trillions more than we take in each and every year. That is what is hurting poor and middle-class American families. It is a reverse Robin Hood that is so perverse. It is a reverse Robin Hood effect. We are effectively borrowing—stealing from the poor and giving it to the rich and well connected, and we are giving the praise that accompanies it to the politicians who clamor for attention as a result of other people spending other people's money that other people will have to work for to earn back and to pay it back. Some of those people aren't old enough to vote yet; some of them have not been born; and some will be born years from now to parents who have not met.

It is not fair for us to do that, and that is why this isn't just another debt ceiling debate. It is not just another debt limit discussion. This one is so much bigger than it has been in the past. The effects are being felt so much more directly than they have at any other time in the past when we have raised this.

I know that this can come across to a lot of people as an intensely partisan place. I understand how people can think that. In some ways it is. Everything about it reminds people of that, especially the visual images that they see. You know, we have got 100 desks in here; 50 of them are on that side of the aisle, and 50 of them are on this side of the aisle. And there are a number of issues on which there is a division of thought, a set of pretty deep disagreements that sometimes lead to votes that break down more or less along partisan lines. There is a lot of that.

In my view, it doesn't reflect a petulant desire to disagree for the sake of being disagreeable. It tends to reflect something a little deeper, a little more heartfelt, and, more than anything, it reflects a genuine difference of opinion among the people we represent.

We don't like to disagree around here. In fact, I like agreeing. I don't like being disagreeable with those on the other side of the aisle. Many of my very favorite people in the U.S. Senate are people who don't share my party affiliation and who are at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum for me. It makes it that much more fun to work with them because there are a number of areas where we can and where we do agree.

So there are ways in which this place is portrayed in the entertainment media and in the news media that are accurate, insofar as they show this sometimes heated debate that occurs across party lines. There is some of that that occurs. It is an incomplete picture because there are a lot of areas where we agree, where we reach conclusions that are good, and we reach them together.

There is another feature of that, though, that is very seldom portrayed in the news media, in the entertainment media, or elsewhere in our society and in our culture, and it worries me. And that is about the areas where there is bipartisanship—a bipartisanship that maybe is good for people in this Chamber, but leaves a lot of people out in the cold. It is good for politicians whether they have an R or a D after their name, but it is bad for everyone else, especially the poor and middle class. That part concerns me. It worries me a lot. You know, we didn't get to this point, going into the pandemic at the peak of an economic cycle, where we were spending a trillion dollars a year more than we were taking in—we didn't get to that point without a lot of bipartisanship.

We didn't get to the point of trillion-dollar annual deficits without a whole lot of Republicans and a whole lot of Democrats agreeing together to spend a trillion dollars more each year than we were taking in with record-low unemployment, with strong economic growth. We were still borrowing that much. Twenty-five percent—$1 out of every $4 spent by the government—was borrowed. There is a lot of bipartisanship in that, but not all bipartisanship is equal and not all bipartisanship is good for hard-working poor and middle-class Americans. Some of it is downright harmful.

We didn't get to the point where we spent last year more than double what we brought in. We brought in $3 trillion, miraculously, during the height of the pandemic, and yet we spent $6.6 trillion last year. We didn't get to that point without a whole lot of bipartisanship and without a whole lot of Republicans agreeing with a whole lot of Democrats to spend that much more than we had.

We didn't get to be almost $30 trillion in debt without a whole lot of bipartisanship. That was a whole lot of Republicans and a whole lot of Democrats

agreeing to do something that might have felt good in the moment—might have done a lot of good in the moment—but didn't take into account the forgotten man and the forgotten woman in the picture. The poor and middle-class family that finds it harder to get by, to buy everything from housing to healthcare, from gas to groceries, it didn't take them into account. So, no, not all bipartisanship makes sense. Not all bipartisanship has the best interests of the American people at heart.

Sometimes you need someone in the room to express hesitation, to express reluctance. Sometimes it is one or two, and sometimes it is half. That is why I was elated. I was pleased when a few months ago nearly every Member of the Senate Republican conference, 46 out of the 50 of us, signed a letter.

Now, the letter explained a few things, a few things that I think are pretty important to remember. It explained, for example, that we don't ever want to see the Federal Government default on its debt, pointing out that not raising the debt limit is a different decision than a decision to default on the debt. We bring in more than enough money every month and every year to meet the debt service obligations of every month and every year—a significant amount more, in fact.

Sometimes changing the prioritization of spending can allow us to borrow less than we would otherwise. So nearly every Member of the Republican Senate conference signed this letter acknowledging that we don't want to default. And we do find ourselves in an untenable position in which Democrats are wanting to pass a $3.5 trillion bill that really, according to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, would end up costing more like $5 trillion. And we don't think it is right in that circumstance to just suspend the debt ceiling and that we are not going to do it.

So we signed this letter. We said, we, the undersigned Republican Senators are letting Senate Democrats know and the American public know that we will not vote to increase the debt ceiling, whether that comes through a stand-alone bill, a continuing resolution, or any other vehicle. This is a problem created by Democratic spending, and Democrats will have to accept sole responsibility for facilitating.

I want to be clear. It is not saying that the underlying problem was created entirely by Democrats. But it is saying that what the Democrats were about to do and are still planning to do is the driving reason why we are unwilling to just suspend the debt ceiling. Remember, when we are suspending it, we are not just raising it by a certain amount. We are creating a period of debt ceiling Mardi Gras, a period in which any amount of additional borrowing is allowed under the law. And when you have got one party that wants to add to the tune of many trillions of dollars to our already out-of-control debt, one that is now in the range of about 125 percent of our GDP, that is a problem. It was not unreasonable for us to make that commitment. It would have been unreasonable for us not to make that commitment. Sometimes you need someone who is willing to say: Maybe this isn't such a good idea.

I commend those who signed the letter. I implore all who signed it to remember that commitment, to remember it to their voters. I don't think it helps for us to just suspend the debt ceiling anyway, and I don't think it helps to dismiss this simply as a cloture vote.

The point of the letter was that the Democrats have the ability to do this on their own through the reconciliation process. If they want to do it, they should use that process. They haven't used that process. In light of that, we have no business facilitating it.

I see we have an additional colleague here who is interested in speaking. In deference to him, I am going to let him proceed.

Before I do so, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a copy of that letter, dated August 10, 2021, signed by 46 Republican Senators.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, August 10, 2021.

TO OUR FELLOW AMERICANS: Since taking total control of the United States federal government, with the Presidency, a narrow majority in the House, and Vice President Harris providing the deciding vote in an evenly split Senate, Democrats have embarked on a massive and unprecedented deficit spending spree. Without a single Republican vote, they passed a $1.9 trillion ''Covid relief'' bill in March even though $1 trillion was still unspent from previous bipartisan Covid relief bills.

Now they have passed a $3.5 trillion Budget Resolution, again without a single Republican vote. The non-partisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget has calculated that a more honest score of this budget resolution will likely exceed $5 trillion. Senate Democrats shamelessly estimate their tax and spending plan will result in a $45 trillion debt level by 2031.

In order for this spending to occur, our nation's debt limit will have to be increased significantly. Because Democrats are responsible for the spending, they need to take responsibility for increasing the debt ceiling. They have total control of the government, and the unilateral ability to raise the debt ceiling to accommodate their unilateral spending plans. Indeed, Democrats have the ability to raise the debt limit through the Budget Resolution by introducing appropriate language in the upcoming reconciliation process (or a subsequent reconciliation). Doing so would not require a single Republican vote, and would appropriately require each and every Democrat to take responsibility for their out-of-control spending.

We should not default on our debts under any circumstances. If Democrats threaten a default, it will only be because they refuse to vote for the debt ceiling increase necessitated by their own irresponsible spending. Democrats, at any time, have the power through reconciliation to unilaterally raise the debt ceiling, and they should not be allowed to pretend otherwise.

We, the undersigned Republican Senators, are letting Senate Democrats and the American public know that we will not vote to increase the debt ceiling, whether that increase comes through a stand-alone bill, a continuing resolution, or any other vehicle. This is a problem created by Democrat spending. Democrats will have to accept sole responsibility for facilitating it.

Mitch McConnell, Mitt Romney, Mike Lee, Patrick J. Toomey, Marsha Blackburn, John Barrasso, James Inhofe, Steve Daines, Deb Fischer, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lindsey Graham, Ted Cruz, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Chuck Grassley, John Boozman, Ben Sasse, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, Roger Marshall, Bill Cassidy, Mike Rounds, Ron Johnson, Josh Hawley, Cynthia M. Lummis, Tommy Tuberville, Rick Scott, Thom Tillis, Rand Paul, James Lankford, Mike Braun, Marco Rubio, Roy Blunt, Richard Burr, Tim Scott, James E. Risch, Bill Hagerty, Joni Ernst, Dan Sullivan, Shelley Moore Capito, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Jerry Moran, Todd Young, Rob Portman.

Mr. LEE. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank the Senator from Utah for his courtesy.

Thank you, Senator LEE.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2196

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Americans across the country, people around the world, and myself believe that in this room, they know that President Biden is failing at our southern border. That is not a secret. We have had months of record-shattering numbers of illegal immigrants crossing our southern border.

We have had unfathomable amounts of illegal drugs produced by Mexican cartels—meth, fentanyl, heroin—coming into our country. It is making its way across that southern border and into States like my home State of Montana.

Many of you have probably heard me say that Montana is a northern border State with a southern border crisis. Well, that is true. The crisis at our southern border, created by President Biden, is out of control, and we all know we must do something to change the status quo to protect our families and our communities.

But what I am here to talk about today is how President Biden is also failing at our northern border—the border between the United States and Canada. While our southern border remains wide open to illegal drugs, illegal immigrants—many potentially COVID-positive or unvaccinated—our northern border remains closed because of President Biden.

The hypocrisy here is stunning. It is infuriating. It is unexplainable. There is no reason or rationale behind President Biden's decision. It can't be because of COVID–19 or because of vaccination rates. Canadians are over 80

percent vaccinated—80 percent. Haitians, on the other hand, coming across the southern border, have less than a 1-percent COVID vaccination rate. So if COVID–19 and the vaccination rates were the issue, then why did President Trudeau lift his restrictions and start allowing Americans to travel to Canada on August 9? It makes no sense.

President Biden is prohibiting Canadians from traveling into the United States. They can't come into Montana.

Who is paying the price for President Biden's hypocrisy? Montanans are paying the price. Montana families and Montana businesses are paying the price. Montana border communities and northern border communities across the country are paying the price. President Biden's inexplicable policies are hurting Montana's economy, destroying jobs, shuttering businesses, and hurting our families.

In fact, let me give you an example. Great Falls, MT, which proudly calls Malmstrom Air Force Base its home, reported that they have seen a 20- to 25-percent decrease in revenue due to the continued border closure. This is, sadly, the story we are hearing from many communities and business owners across Montana as Canadians are no longer able to come visit our beautiful State.

This has been going on for far too long. Since the President will not do the right thing, to use some good old-fashioned Montana commonsense to listen to Montanans and open our northern border, I have introduced a bill to do just that.

And, by the way, I have seen some of my colleagues across the aisle join me in calling on this administration to reopen the northern border, and I am grateful for that, but actions speak louder than words.

Today, we have the opportunity to stop putting the power in the hands of President Biden to make the right decision here—he hasn't made it—because we know that won't happen. Today, we can pass my bill, called the Restoring the Northern Border Travel Act, and require the Biden administration to reopen the northern border. Let's help revitalize Montana. How about the other northern border States? Let's put an end to this irrational closure and this hypocrisy. A wide open southern border and a closed northern border, it doesn't make any sense.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in passing my bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 2196 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask 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?

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I appreciate my colleague from Montana's efforts to get the northern border travel back to normal. I understand that this is an important issue in Montana, and it is important to families along our northern border, not only Montana but across our Nation.

I just want to flag a couple of things, if I can. This legislation has not been considered just yet in the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on which I serve and formerly chaired. Given the importance of this issue, I will be more than happy to work with my colleague from Montana on a path forward from this time.

I am concerned, having said that, that this legislation, as is, is a bit too broad and could have unintended consequences, including making it harder to address future challenges at our borders. Having said that, fortunately, the Biden administration is already taking action to safely and responsibly reopen our border, including the recent announcement to expand the eligibility of travelers to enter the U.S. via air travel that will go into effect—I believe it is next month.

Again, I appreciate my colleague's efforts here and am ready to work with him, as I said to him just a few minutes ago, more than willing to work with him on this bill within the Homeland Security Committee where I serve as a senior Democrat, and we can look at changes to refine the legislation and help build bipartisan support for it.

Unfortunately, however, tonight I have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I am grateful for the support the Senator from Delaware has offered here. The reason I am down here asking for the unanimous consent this evening is to provide a sense of urgency to try to get this done now.

President Trudeau opened up the Canadian border on August 9, and President Biden has kept the border shut down to Canadians coming in during that entire time. It doesn't make sense. COVID is a concern. We agree on that. However, it should not be a concern at the U.S.-Canadian border, with Canadians having an 80-percent vaccination rate.

Canada began letting fully vaccinated Americans cross the border 2 months ago. Canada has a higher vaccination rate than the United States. I find it a bit hypocritical to talk about the concern about vaccination rates and relating that to the northern border and, at the same time, the southern border is wide open with vaccination rates, for example, of Haitians of less than 1 percent.

So anyway, we want to get this resolved. We are seeing businesses and families suffer in northern border States. This administration continues to have a wide open southern border policy while keeping the northern border closed. Montana can't figure that one out. Many of us who live in northern border States see the same thing. The hypocrisy has to end. The travel at the U.S.-Canadian border needs to be restored immediately.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back the remaining time on both sides.

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

All time is yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301, an act to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans, with amendment No. 3847.

Charles E. Schumer, Ron Wyden, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Tina Smith, Amy Klobuchar, Jacky Rosen, Christopher Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Jeanne Shaheen, Mazie K. Hirono, Tim Kaine, Debbie Stabenow, Angus S. King, Jr., Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jeff Merkley.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301, an act to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans with amendment No. 3847 offered by the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 411 Leg.]

YEAS—61

Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Manchin
Barrasso	Duckworth	Markey
Bennet	Durbin	McConnell
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Menendez
Blunt	Gillibrand	Merkley
Booker	Hassan	Murkowski
Brown	Heinrich	Murphy
Cantwell	Hickenlooper	Murray
Capito	Hirono	Ossoff
Cardin	Kaine	Padilla
Carper	Kelly	Peters
Casey	King	Portman
Collins	Klobuchar	Reed
Coons	Leahy	Rosen
Cornyn	Luján	Rounds

Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Shelby
Sinema
Smith
Stabenow
Tester
Thune
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—38

Blackburn
Boozman
Braun
Cassidy
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Ernst
Fischer
Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Inhofe
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
Moran
Paul
Risch
Romney
Rubio
Sasse
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sullivan
Tillis
Toomey
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—1

Burr

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). On this vote, the yeas are 61, the nays are 38.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in a few moments, the Senate will pass an extension of the debt limit through early December, avoiding a first-ever, Republican-manufactured default on the national debt.

On Monday morning, I said we needed to pass a bill to address the debt limit by the end of the week, and that is exactly what we did.

Republicans played a dangerous and risky partisan game, and I am glad that their brinksmanship did not work. For the good of America's families, for the good of our economy, Republicans must recognize in the future that they should approach fixing the debt limit in a bipartisan way.

What is needed now is a long-term solution so we don't go through this risky drama every few months, and we hope Republicans will join in enacting a long-term solution to the debt limit in December. We are ready to work with them.

Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans insisted they wanted a solution to the debt ceiling, but said Democrats must raise it alone by going through a drawn-out, convoluted, and risky reconciliation process. That was simply unacceptable to my caucus, and, yesterday, Senate Republicans finally realized that their obstruction was not going to work.

I thank very much my Democratic colleagues for our showing our unity in solving this Republican-manufactured crisis. Despite immense opposition from Leader MCCONNELL and the Members of his conference, our caucus held together and we pulled our country back from the cliff's edge that Republicans tried to push us over.

This is a temporary but necessary and important fix. I appreciate that, at the end of the day, we were able to raise the debt limit without a convoluted and unnecessary reconciliation process that, until today, the Republican leader claimed was the only way to address the debt limit.

Let me say that again. Today's vote is proof positive that the debt limit can be addressed without going through the reconciliation process, just as Democrats have been saying for months.

The solution is for Republicans to either join us in raising the debt limit or stay out of the way and let Democrats address the debt limit ourselves. Those are the two choices, and it is very simple.

Senate Democrats want a long-term solution to the debt limit to make sure financial markets remain stable and our economic recovery stays on track. America's full faith and credit must never be used as a political bargaining chip. I hope my Republican colleagues relent from trying to make it one when we revisit this issue soon.

So now that Republican brinkmanship has relented, Senate Democrats will focus on passing the Build Back Better agenda so we can finally build up ladders of opportunity for people to climb up to the middle class, to help people already in the middle class stay there, to fight climate change, and create the good-paying jobs of tomorrow and rekindle that sunny American optimism that has long been the course of our national identity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the motion to refer and the amendments pending thereto fall.

AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN

Under the previous order, amendment No. 3848 is withdrawn and all postcloture time is expired.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The question occurs on agreeing to the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301 with amendment No. 3847.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 412 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Booker
Brown
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Coons
Cortez Masto
Duckworth
Durbin
Feinstein
Gillibrand
Hassan
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Luján
Manchin
Markey
Menendez
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Sinema
Smith
Stabenow
Tester
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—48

Barrasso
Blunt
Boozman
Braun
Capito
Cassidy
Collins
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Ernst
Fischer
Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
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
Toomey
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—2

Blackburn
Burr

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 259, Gustavo A. Gelpi, of Puerto Rico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Gary C. Peters, Michael F. Bennet, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin, Patty Murray, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, Patrick J. Leahy, Robert Menendez, Bernard Sanders, Mark R. Warner, Tina Smith, Richard J. Durbin, Ben Ray Luján.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Gustavo A. Gelpi, of Puerto Rico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted ''nay''.

(Mr. OSSOFF assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 413 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rubio
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Scott (FL)
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Luján	Sinema
Collins	Manchin	Smith
Coons	Markey	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Tester
Duckworth	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Feinstein	Murray	Warnock
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Warren
Graham	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—39

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Tuberville
Ernst	Paul	Wicker
Fischer	Portman	Young

NOT VOTING—7

Blackburn	Hagerty	Menendez
Burr	Johnson	
Cotton	Marshall	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 39, and the motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Cloture having been invoked, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Gelpi nomination.

The majority leader.

TRIBUTE TO MEGAN MERCER

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Madam President, while most of the attention in this Chamber falls on the elected Members, today I want to recognize one of the many people who work behind the scenes, who quite literally makes the Senate come to life, and someone we wish a fond, happy farewell.

Megan Mercer, thank you for all you have done over the past few years in your role as senior floor assistant. We see you scurrying around, making sure everything works, and we so much appreciate it. Day after day, you have made this body work, and we wish you well on the road ahead.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 364.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Patricia Tolliver Giles, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 364, Patricia Tolliver Giles, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Mark R. Warner, Charles E. Schumer, Raphael Warnock, Thomas R. Carper, Tim Kaine, Jon Ossoff, Brian Schatz, Angus S. King, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin, Tina Smith, Christopher Murphy, Tammy Duckworth, Sheldon Whitehouse, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Christopher A. Coons, Patty Murray, Jack Reed.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed October 7 be waived and that the cloture motion ripen at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 19.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 346, Xochitl Torres Small, of New Mexico, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development and that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Xochitl Torres Small, of New Mexico, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Small nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. LUJÁN. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all without intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 356 and 357; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Alexander Hoehn-Saric, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission; and Alexander Hoehn-Saric, of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of seven years from October 27, 2020?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

THE CALENDAR

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 130, S. 233; Calendar No. 131, S. 1226; Calendar No. 132, S. 2205; Calendar No. 133, S. 2126.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding en bloc?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills be considered read a third time and passed en bloc and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc.

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

DONNA M. DOSS MEMORIAL ACT OF 2021

The bill (S. 233) to designate the Rocksprings Station of the U.S. Border Patrol located on West Main Street in Rocksprings, Texas, as the ''Donna M. Doss Border Patrol Station'' was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 233

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 ''Donna M. Doss Memorial Act of 2021''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) A native of the State of Washington, Agent Donna Marie Doss—

(A) proudly and honorably served her country as an Agent of the U.S. Border Patrol for more than 15 years;

(B) began her service with the U.S. Border Patrol in 2003; and

(C) graduated as part of the 569th Session of the Border Patrol Academy with Class 584 on June 6, 2005.

(2) Agent Doss—

(A) served on a Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force on the southern border for 3 years before being assigned to the northern border;

(B) was promoted to Supervisory Border Patrol Agent in Laredo Border Patrol Sector, where she was named an Operations Officer in 2016; and

(C) relocated to Abilene, Texas in 2017, where she served as a Resident Agent.

(3) On February 2, 2019, Agent Doss responded to a call for assistance from the Texas Department of Public Safety near Interstate 20 in Tye, Texas. While on scene, Agent Doss was struck and killed by a passing vehicle.

(4) Agent Doss is survived by her husband, father, mother, 2 stepchildren, a sister and a brother.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION.

The Rocksprings station of the U.S. Border Patrol located on West Main Street in Rocksprings, Texas, shall be known and designated as the ''Donna M. Doss Border Patrol Station''.

SEC. 4. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the station described in section 3 shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Donna M. Doss Border Patrol Station''.

SYLVIA H. RAMBO UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

The bill (S. 1226) to designate the United States courthouse located at 1501 North 6th Street in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as the ''Sylvia H. Rambo United States Courthouse'', and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 1226

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

SECTION 1. SYLVIA H. RAMBO UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The United States courthouse located at 1501 North 6th Street in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, shall be known and designated as the ''Sylvia H. Rambo United States Courthouse''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Sylvia H. Rambo United States Courthouse''.

MALCOLM J. HOWARD UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

A bill (S. 2205) to designate the United States courthouse located at 201 South Evans Street in Greenville, North Carolina, as the ''Malcolm J. Howard United States Courthouse'', and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2205

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

SECTION 1. MALCOLM J. HOWARD UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The United States courthouse located at 201 South Evans Street in Greenville, North Carolina, shall be known and designated as the ''Malcolm J. Howard United States Courthouse''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Malcolm J. Howard United States Courthouse''.

LOUISA SWAIN FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING

A bill (S. 2126) to designate the Federal Office Building located at 308 W. 21st Street in Cheyenne, Wyoming, as the ''Louisa Swain Federal Office Building'', and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2126

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

SECTION 1. LOUISA SWAIN FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Federal Office Building located at 308 W. 21st Street in Cheyenne, Wyoming, shall be known and designated as the ''Louisa Swain Federal Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Federal Office Building referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Louisa Swain Federal Office Building''.

NATIONAL HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS WEEK

Mr. LUJÁN. 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. 372.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 372) designating the week beginning September 13, 2021, as ''National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week''.

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

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 372) was agreed to.

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that 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 preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of September 21, 2021, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and that the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 400.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 400) designating September 2021 as ''National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month''.

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

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, 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. 400) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of September 30, 2021, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ENERGY EFFICIENCY DAY

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 411, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 411) designating October 6, 2021, as ''Energy Efficiency Day'' in

celebration of the economic and environmental benefits that have been driven by private sector innovation and Federal energy efficiency policies.

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

Mr. LUJÁN. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 411) was agreed to.

Mr. LUJÁN. I ask unanimous consent that 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 preamble was agreed to.

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

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 412, S. Res. 413, S. Res. 414, S. Res. 415, and S. Res. 416.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

BUDDY CHECK WEEK

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 544 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 544) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one week each year as ''Buddy Check Week'' for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes.

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

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

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

The bill (S. 544) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 544

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

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF BUDDY CHECK WEEK BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall designate one week each year to organize outreach events and educate veterans on how to conduct peer wellness checks, which shall be known as ''Buddy Check Week''.

(b) EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During Buddy Check Week, the Secretary, in consultation with organizations that represent veterans, nonprofits that serve veterans, mental health experts, members of the Armed Forces, and such other entities and individuals as the Secretary considers appropriate, shall collaborate with organizations that represent veterans to provide educational opportunities for veterans to learn how to conduct peer wellness checks.

(2) TRAINING MATTERS.—As part of the educational opportunities provided under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide the following:

(A) A script for veterans to use to conduct peer wellness checks that includes information on appropriate referrals to resources veterans might need.

(B) Online and in-person training, as appropriate, on how to conduct a peer wellness check.

(C) Opportunities for members of organizations that represent veterans to learn how to train individuals to conduct peer wellness checks.

(D) Training for veterans participating in Buddy Check Week on how to transfer a phone call directly to the Veterans Crisis Line.

(E) Resiliency training for veterans participating in Buddy Check Week on handling a veteran in crisis.

(3) ONLINE MATERIALS.—All training materials provided under the educational opportunities under paragraph (1) shall be made publicly available on a website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) OUTREACH.—The Secretary, in collaboration with organizations that represent veterans, may conduct outreach regarding educational opportunities under subsection (b) at—

(1) public events where many veterans are expected to congregate;

(2) meetings of organizations that represent veterans;

(3) facilities of the Department; and

(4) such other locations as the Secretary, in collaboration with organizations that represent veterans, considers appropriate.

(d) VETERANS CRISIS LINE PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure that a plan exists for handling the potential increase in the number of calls into the Veterans Crisis Line that may occur during Buddy Check Week.

(2) SUBMITTAL OF PLAN.—The head of the Veterans Crisis Line shall submit to the Secretary a plan for how to handle excess calls during Buddy Check Week, which may include the following:

(A) Additional hours for staff.

(B) The use of a backup call center.

(C) Any other plan to ensure that calls from veterans in crisis are being answered in a timely manner by an individual trained at the same level as a Veterans Crisis Line responder.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS VETERANS.—The term ''organization that represents veterans'' means an organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) VETERAN.—The term ''veteran'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of such title.

(3) VETERANS CRISIS LINE.—The term ''Veterans Crisis Line'' means the toll-free hotline for veterans provided by the Secretary under section 1720F(h) of such title.

PROTECTING MOMS WHO SERVED ACT OF 2021

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 796 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 796) to codify maternity care coordination programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Tester substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read three times and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 3860) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting Moms Who Served Act of 2021''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) MATERNAL MORTALITY.—The term ''maternal mortality'' means a death occurring during pregnancy or within a one-year period after pregnancy that is caused by pregnancy-related or childbirth complications, including suicide, overdose, or other death resulting from a mental health or substance use disorder attributed to or aggravated by pregnancy-related or childbirth complications.

(2) POSTPARTUM.—The term ''postpartum'', with respect to an individual, means the one-year period beginning on the last day of the pregnancy of the individual.

(3) PREGNANCY-ASSOCIATED DEATH.—The term ''pregnancy-associated death'' means the death of a pregnant or postpartum individual, by any cause, that occurs during pregnancy or within one year following pregnancy, regardless of the outcome, duration, or site of the pregnancy.

(4) PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATH.—The term ''pregnancy-related death'' means the death of a pregnant or postpartum individual that occurs during pregnancy or within one year following pregnancy from a pregnancy complication, a chain of events initiated by pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated

condition by the physiologic effects of pregnancy.

(5) RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP.—The term ''racial and ethnic minority group'' has the meaning given that term in section 1707(g)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300u–6(g)(1)).

(6) SEVERE MATERNAL MORBIDITY.—The term ''severe maternal morbidity'' means a health condition, including a mental health condition or substance use disorder, attributed to or aggravated by pregnancy or childbirth that results in significant short-term or long-term consequences to the health of the individual who was pregnant.

SEC. 3. SUPPORT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF MATERNITY CARE COORDINATION.

(a) PROGRAM ON MATERNITY CARE COORDINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out the maternity care coordination program described in Veterans Health Administration Directive 1330.03.

(2) TRAINING AND SUPPORT.—In carrying out the program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide to community maternity care providers training and support with respect to the unique needs of pregnant and postpartum veterans, particularly regarding mental and behavioral health conditions relating to the service of those veterans in the Armed Forces.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary $15,000,000 for fiscal year 2022 for the program under subsection (a)(1).

(2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Amounts authorized under paragraph (1) are authorized in addition to any other amounts authorized for maternity health care and coordination for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMUNITY MATERNITY CARE PROVIDERS.—The term ''community maternity care providers'' means maternity care providers located at non-Department facilities who provide maternity care to veterans under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, or any other law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) NON-DEPARTMENT FACILITIES.—The term ''non-Department facilities'' has the meaning given that term in section 1701 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 4. REPORT ON MATERNAL MORTALITY AND SEVERE MATERNAL MORBIDITY AMONG PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM VETERANS.

(a) GAO REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, and make publicly available, a report on maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among pregnant and postpartum veterans, with a particular focus on racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes for veterans.

(b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) To the extent practicable—

(A) the number of pregnant and postpartum veterans who have experienced a pregnancy-related death or pregnancy-associated death in the most recent 10 years of available data;

(B) the rate of pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 live births for pregnant and postpartum veterans;

(C) the number of cases of severe maternal morbidity among pregnant and postpartum veterans in the most recent year of available data;

(D) an assessment of the racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity rates among pregnant and postpartum veterans;

(E) identification of the causes of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity that are unique to veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, and infertility or miscarriages that may be caused by service in the Armed Forces;

(F) identification of the causes of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity that are unique to veterans from racial and ethnic minority groups and such other at-risk populations as the Comptroller General considers appropriate;

(G) identification of any correlations between the former rank of veterans and their maternal health outcomes;

(H) the number of veterans who have been diagnosed with infertility by a health care provider of the Veterans Health Administration each year in the most recent five years, disaggregated by age, race, ethnicity, sex, marital status, and geographical location;

(I) the number of veterans who have received a clinical diagnosis of unexplained infertility by a health care provider of the Veterans Health Administration each year in the most recent five years; and

(J) an assessment of the extent to which the rate of incidence of clinically diagnosed infertility among veterans compare or differ to the rate of incidence of clinically diagnosed infertility among the civilian population.

(2) An assessment of the barriers to determining the information required under paragraph (1) and recommendations for improvements in tracking maternal health outcomes among pregnant and postpartum veterans who—

(A) have health care coverage through the Department;

(B) are enrolled in the TRICARE program (as defined in section 1072 of title 10, United States Code);

(C) have employer-based or private insurance;

(D) are enrolled in the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

(E) are eligible to receive health care furnished by—

(i) the Indian Health Service;

(ii) Tribal health programs; or

(iii) urban Indian organizations; or

(F) are uninsured.

(3) Recommendations for legislative and administrative actions to increase access to mental and behavioral health care for pregnant and postpartum veterans who screen positively for maternal mental or behavioral health conditions.

(4) Recommendations to address homelessness, food insecurity, poverty, and related issues among pregnant and postpartum veterans.

(5) Recommendations on how to effectively educate maternity care providers on best practices for providing maternity care services to veterans that addresses the unique maternal health care needs of veteran populations.

(6) Recommendations to reduce maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among pregnant and postpartum veterans and to address racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes for each of the groups described in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of paragraph (2).

(7) Recommendations to improve coordination of care between the Department and non-Department facilities for pregnant and postpartum veterans, including recommendations to improve—

(A) health record interoperability; and

(B) training for the directors of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks, directors of medical facilities of the Department, chiefs of staff of such facilities, maternity care coordinators, and staff of relevant non-Department facilities.

(8) An assessment of the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to access maternal health data collected by the Department of Health and Human Services and, if applicable, recommendations to increase such authority.

(9) To the extent applicable, an assessment of potential causes of or explanations for lower maternal mortality rates among veterans who have health care coverage through the Department of Veterans Affairs compared to maternal mortality rates in the general population of the United States.

(10) Any other information the Comptroller General determines appropriate with respect to the reduction of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among pregnant and postpartum veterans and to address racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes for veterans.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ''Tribal health program'' and ''urban Indian organization'' have the meanings given those terms in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603).

The bill (S. 796), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. LUJÁN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 261.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Christine P. O'Hearn, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 261, Christine P. O'Hearn, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Charles E. Schumer, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert Menendez, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher A. Coons, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Jacky Rosen, Patrick J. Leahy, Mazie K. Hirono, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Richard J. Durbin, Chris Van Hollen, Tina Smith, Ben Ray Luján.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the cloture motion on Calendar No. 364 and that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, October 7, be waived and that the cloture motion ripen at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 19.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TEXAS ABORTION BAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last night, a Federal judge in Texas did what the U.S. Supreme Court should have done. He issued an injunction blocking Texas' clearly unconstitutional bounty hunter abortion ban from being enforced while challenges to the law make their way through the courts. The ruling by U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman came in response to a challenge of the Texas ban brought by the Federal Department of Justice.

The Texas abortion law, known as S.B. 8, is the most restrictive abortion law in the Nation and the most serious challenge to Roe v. Wade in 50 years. It was deliberately crafted to outlaw most abortions while allowing State lawmakers to evade judicial review. It deputizes private citizens to enforce the ban by suing anyone who ''aids and abets'' a woman seeking an abortion. And it offers rewards of $10,000 or more to plaintiffs who bring suits.

In his ruling, Judge Pitman wrote that Texas politicians had ''contrived an unprecedented and transparent statutory scheme'' that has ''unlawfully prevented [women in Texas] from exercising control over their lives in ways that are protected by the Constitution.''

The Supreme Court order allowing the Texas law to take effect was a product of the Court's ''shadow docket'' of cases that are decided without full briefing or oral arguments—and without transparency or accountability.

The 5–4 order, from the Court's conservative majority, was criticized by some of the Court's own members, including Chief Justice John Roberts, who warned that Texas lawmakers had created a ''model for action,'' that other States could copy to undermine constitutionally protected rights.

The Chief Justice was right. Since the Court's ruling on S.B. 8, elected officials and political candidates in a number of States have vowed to introduce similar abortion bans.

With Judge Pitman's wise ruling last night, that rush to use citizen bounty hunters to avoid legal accountability while denying the constitutional rights of women and perhaps others is on hold—at least for now. But the threat to constitutional rights remains. Texas has already filed a notice of appeal in the conservative Fifth Circuit.

Abortion providers remain at risk of facing bounty hunter lawsuits if they perform abortions prohibited by the ban while the injunction is in place. Anti-choice organizations have vowed to be ''vigilant'' in suing individuals retroactively if the order is reversed.

I hope that justice—and the Constitution—will prevail in the coming days as this litigation continues. The fundamental rights of millions of Texans are at stake.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month to celebrate our Hispanic and Latino communities and their immeasurable contributions to our Nation. Hispanic and Latinos have been with our country since its very founding and have helped make America exceptional. Hispanic and Latino Americans play vital roles in our communities. They are our teachers, our heathcare heroes, our entrepreneurs, our essential workers, our public servants and elected officials, all vital to the fabric of our Nation.

Hispanic Heritage Month started as a commemorative week that Congress established in 1968 and expanded to a full month in 1988 to recognize the critical role the Latino community has played in the civil rights movement. Celebrations start September 15, a significant date, as it is the independence date for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, while Mexico celebrates its independence on September 16, and Chile celebrates its independence on September 18.

This month, we celebrate the nearly 61 million Latino Americans across the country and the more than 600,000 Hispanic or Latino residents in Maryland. Maryland is proudly one of the most diverse States in the Nation. We are home to people with origins in Central and South America, with sizeable populations of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans.

America is a nation of immigrants; people from far and wide have settled in the United States, the land of opportunity. Since the Immigration Act of 1965, millions of individuals from Central and South America have immigrated to the United States for numerous reasons, including economic instability or violence in their native country.

We take this month to highlight the importance of the Hispanic and Latino communities, including the election in 1822 of Joseph Marion Hernandez, the first Hispanic in Congress, as Florida's Delegate. Today, according to the Congressional Research Service, there are 54 Hispanic or Latino Members—a record number—serving: 47 in the House, including two Delegates and the Resident Commissioner, and seven in the Senate.

Though the Hispanic and Latino communities have been essential to America's identity, from the scientific innovation to art, culture, music, food, and so much more, we must still recognize the disparities that these communities face. For the second year, we are celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month during the COVID–19 pandemic. The pandemic has affected people of color at disproportionate rates in terms of economic distress and case severity. The Hispanic or Latino unemployment rate soared to 18.9 percent in February of 2020. Hispanic or Latina women took even larger losses compared to their male counterparts. The unemployment disparity is due to the overrepresentation of Hispanic or Latino workers in the food preparation or serving industry, as well as building and grounds cleaning and maintenance. These sectors suffered some of the harshest economic effects of the pandemic. Even though the unemployment rate has decreased to 6.4 percent in Hispanic and Latino communities—6.2 percent in Maryland—they still have not experienced the same economic recoveries as their White counterparts.

For the immigrants who do not have a green card, their likelihood to have lost a job is even higher. Many say that at least one family member in their household has lost a job or wages. Families are suffering; they are worried about putting food on the table or even losing their homes. The financial toll of the last year and a half has exacerbated the prepandemic inequalities that the Hispanic or Latino communities were already facing.

Hispanic or Latino people are also more likely face the harshest health effects of the COVID–19 pandemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hispanic or Latino people are twice as likely to catch COVID, 2.8 times more likely to be hospitalized, and 2.3 times more likely to die compared to their White counterparts. In my own home State, Hispanic or Latino people are 14.3 percent of the case rates when they only make up 10.6 percent of our population. With the widening gaps of healthcare coverage, Hispanic or Latino families face large hospital bills for their bouts of COVID. Twenty percent of nonelderly Hispanic or Latino people are

uninsured. Although the Affordable Care Act and President Biden's expansion of the Affordable Care Act have helped many receive healthcare coverage, people of color remain less likely to have healthcare coverage.

It is our duty in Congress to ensure that our Hispanic and Latino communities have the resources and access to healthcare they need so we can close the gap between them and their White counterparts. This comes with educating these communities on how to sign up and receive healthcare. It also comes with comprehensive immigration reform to provide an easier pathway to citizenship so people can come out of the shadows.

Regardless of the repercussions of the pandemic, Hispanic and Latino Americans remain optimistic, filled with love and pride for their families, communities, and the United States of America. I want to take this opportunity to thank Hispanic and Latino Americans for their contributions that have made the United States the country it is today. I want to thank the hard-working Hispanic and Latino essential workers who have put their lives at risk to keep our country running during the pandemic. I want to thank the Hispanic and Latino communities who love our Nation and strive to change it for the better. Thank you for being an important part of the American story.

REMEMBERING AMBASSADOR GEORGE S. VEST, III

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I would like to bring to the attention of colleagues the recent passing of long-time U.S. diplomat George Southall Vest, III, a long-time resident of Bethesda, MD. He was 102 years old. His career with the State Department spanned the Cold War era, from 1947 to 1989. As chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, I want to draw particular attention to Ambassador Vest's representation of the United States at the initial multilateral discussions of 35 countries that led to an historic summit in Helsinki, Finland, from July 30 to August 1, 1975, where the Helsinki Final Act was signed.

An all-European summit was not a priority for the United States in the early 1970s. Indeed, it was a long-standing Soviet proposal, and Washington was wary of its use to confirm the division of Europe, give added legitimacy to communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and provide an opportunity for Moscow to divide the United States from its European allies. Washington agreed to engage but saw little value in the effort. As Ambassador Vest himself was quoted as saying, ''This was the first time after World War II where all the Eastern European countries, all the Western European countries, together with Canada and the United States, sat down to talk about security and cooperation . . . I had very, very few instructions. I was left pretty much to feel my own way.''

The early work of Ambassador Vest and his team and that of his immediate successors led to the Helsinki Final Act, which included 10 principles guiding relations between states that serve as a basis, to this day, of our response to events in Europe, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine and other neighbors. The Final Act provided a comprehensive definition of security that includes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the basis for us to address today's brutal crackdown on dissent in Belarus and authoritarianism elsewhere. It also provided for a follow-up to the Final Act with regular reviews of implementation and development of new norms, a multilateral effort now represented by today's 57-country Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with its important institutions and field missions.

Ambassador Vest, left pretty much to feel his own way, may not have intended to make such an impact on European security. Keep in mind that he represented the United States in these negotiations during the tumultuous time of U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, an oil crisis on the horizon, the growing Watergate scandal at home, and a rising Soviet threat across the globe. Nevertheless, his initial efforts contributed to an end of the Cold War division of Europe rather than a confirmation of it. That is quite a turnaround. I should add that the Congress later played a major role in shaping the U.S. contribution to this result when it created the Helsinki Commission in 1976. While things have changed since then, the Commission does now what it did in the late 1970s: ensure that human rights considerations are central to U.S. foreign policy and U.S. relations with other countries.

Given the challenges we face today, I hope it is useful to remind my colleagues of Ambassador Vest's legacy as a diplomat. Both before and after the negotiations, he served in positions in which he worked to strengthen ties with Europe, including through the NATO alliance and dialogue with a growing European Union. He was also a mentor to new generations of American diplomats. All of this followed his combat service as a forward artillery observer in Europe during World War II.

George Vest joined the Foreign Service in 1947, after using the G.I. Bill to earn his master's degree in history from the University of Virginia, where he had received his B.A. in 1941. He served as Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs under President Carter and as U.S. Ambassador to the European Union from 1981 to 1985. His last assignment at the State Department was as Director General of the Foreign Service. He retired in 1989 as a ''career ambassador,'' a rank requiring a Presidential nomination and Senate confirmation.

George Vest's father was an Episcopal priest and Vest graduated from the Episcopal High School in Alexandria, VA, before attending U-Va. He was as dedicated to his church as he was to our Nation. He served on the vestry at St. Albans Episcopal Church and volunteered in its Opportunity (thrift) Shop, both located on the Close of Washington National Cathedral. He also tutored students in DC public schools. Two sons, George S. Vest, IV of Fairfax, VA, and Henry Vest of Broomfield, CO, and two granddaughters survive him. I send my condolences to his family and thank them for his life of service. Let us be inspired by Ambassador George Vest and plant our own seeds for a better world tomorrow.

RECOGNIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF MAINE, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

Mr. KING. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Department of Maine, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Maine VFW. Maine VFW was founded in 1921 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving U.S. veterans of overseas conflicts, advocating for all veterans, their families, and their communities, and recognizing the sacrifices America's servicemen and women have made for this great country. Maine VFW, alongside its sister chapters across the United States, represents the oldest war veterans' organization in America. Every year for the last century, it has made a positive and tangible impact for Maine veterans. Maine VFW deserves not only our admiration, but also our gratitude.

Since its founding, Maine VFW has secured an array of remarkable victories for its membership and the many communities it serves. Through the Veterans Affairs office at Togus, Maine VFW helps recoup more than $5 million in earned benefits every year. Maine VFW also advocates for veterans and their families at the State and National level and has helped shape national security and veterans' policy for generations of Americans. In 2020, for example, Maine VFW helped expand the VA's list of conditions for which there is a presumptive service connection for veterans exposed to Agent Orange and has made important strides to support veterans exposed to toxic chemicals in the first Gulf War and the Global War on Terror. Additionally, Maine VFW has worked tirelessly to improve mental healthcare for American veterans and successfully advocated for the John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act, landmark legislation to increase the VA's mental health workforce and strengthen rural veterans' access to care, which was signed into law last year. Pursuant to its commitment to patriotic service, stewardship, and education, Maine VFW also spearheads a variety of community advocacy initiatives, food and blood drives, and Homeless Veterans Stand Downs to respond

to the needs of Maine's most vulnerable populations.

On the national level, Veterans of Foreign Wars and each of its State chapters have played a central role in the passage of nearly every important piece of veterans' legislation over the last 100 years, including the GI bills that have helped millions of veterans pursue education and training opportunities since 1944. VFW champions several major youth education and scholarship programs, such as Voice of Democracy, a competitive audio-essay scholarship that awards nearly $2 million annually to students in grades 9–12. VFW and Auxiliary members participate in thousands of community service initiatives and major philanthropic campaigns each year. VFW also performs important work abroad, advocating for prisoners of war and servicemembers who remain missing in action.

Throughout our Nation's history, America's veterans have put themselves in harm's way overseas so that we may enjoy freedom at home. A testament to Maine's dedication to this cause is the number of veterans per capita in our State, which consistently ranks as one of the highest in the Nation. Day in and day out, the Maine VFW works to support these veterans and their communities and has done so for a century. On behalf of a grateful nation, I would like to honor and thank the Maine VFW for these 100 years of service. Its steadfast support for servicemembers, veterans, and their families continues to change the lives of Americans at home and abroad.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES E. FLEMING

• Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to the remarkable life of Retired BG Charles E. Fleming, a 35-year veteran of the Illinois Army National Guard who passed away on September 8, 2021.

General Fleming was a graduate of the University of Illinois, Western Illinois University, and the U.S. Army War College. He honorably served his country in the Army National Guard from 1970 to 2005, obtaining the rank of brigadier general. He assumed duties as assistant adjutant general in September of 2001 and was responsible for the preparation and deployment of Illinois Army National Guard units in support of Operations Santa Fe and Enduring Freedom immediately following the September 11, 2001, terrorists' attacks, and the beginning stages of the National Guard's transition from a strategic reserve to an operational force.

General Fleming served as principal assistant to the adjutant general in all matters pertaining to supervision and management of the Illinois Department of Military Affairs and the Illinois Army National Guard. Throughout his military career, he achieved many awards and decorations including; the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Army Service Ribbon.

General Fleming also molded citizens as a teacher for Kewanee School and a principal and superintendent of schools for the Cuba School District and founding assistant commander of the Chicago Military Academy at Bronzeville. He leaves behind his wife of 53 years, Gayle, and their 2 children, daughter Nichole and son Robert. May his legacy of service and kind spirit serve as an inspiration to us all.•

RECOGNIZING CLEAR CUT PHOCUS, LLC

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week, I recognize an outstanding Kentucky small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Clear Cut Phocus, LLC of Louisville, KY, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Growing up in Louisville, John Mittel dreamed of being a doctor. As a competitive swimmer, he developed an interest in health and fitness. John's passion for innovation and engineering led him to the University of Louisville, where he earned a bachelor of science in industrial engineering. John then enrolled at the University of Louisville School of Medicine to pursue his childhood dream. Like many students, John relied on coffee, energy drinks, and soda for a caffeine boost. One night, during a late-night study session, John thought, Why not just put caffeine in water? Over the next 2 years, he worked with his mentor, Tom O'Grady, to turn that idea into a business. They spent most of 2016 developing their brand and fine-tuning the Phocus formula, launching their product in 2017. After graduating from medical school in 2018, John deferred his residency in ophthalmology to continue building his company.

Today, Phocus is a thriving small business providing consumers nationwide a healthy alternative to the traditional energy drink. Headquartered in Louisville, Phocus recently celebrated its fourth anniversary. To date, Phocus has developed 11 flavors of sparkling and regular water infused with caffeine extracted from green tea, electrolytes, and the amino acid L-theanine. Unlike traditional energy drinks, Phocus beverages have zero calories and are free of sweeteners, sodium, and additives. Phocus beverages are available at several regional and national retailers and are featured in over 200 corporate offices across America. In 2020, Phocus Cola was named the Best New Product at BevNET's Best of 2020 Awards.

Like many small business owners, John and Tom are actively involved in their community. Locally, Phocus regularly supports community organizations, including the Louisville City Football Club's youth soccer clinics and the American Junior Golf Association's Justin Thomas Junior Championship. During the holiday season, Phocus has teamed up with ESPN Louisville for its ''Cram the Van'' toy and clothing drive for children in need. During the COVID–19 pandemic, the company donated 200,000 cans of Phocus to 472 hospitals and healthcare facilities across 40 States. In May of 2021, their ''Buy One. Gift One. A Case for Teachers.'' program donated cases of Phocus to teachers nationwide in recognition of Teacher Appreciation Month. Phocus's community involvement, success, and products have been profiled in local and national outlets, including WDRB, WAVE3, Louisville Courier-Journal, Louisville Business Journal, MarketWatch, Fox News, and CNBC.

Clear Cut Phocus, LLC is a remarkable example of the resilience and adaptability of locally owned small businesses. Small businesses, like Phocus, form the heart of towns across Kentucky and play a critical role in Kentucky's beverage industry. Congratulations to John, Tom, and the entire team at Phocus. I wish them the best of luck, and I look forward to watching their continued growth and success in Kentucky, and beyond.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Swann, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. DURBIN for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Rahul Gupta, of West Virginia, to be Director of National Drug Control Policy.

Elizabeth Prelogar, of Idaho, to be Solicitor General of the United States.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first

and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 2951. A bill to allow a tax credit for certain charitable contributions related to the evacuation of certain individuals from Afghanistan; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 2952. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow manufacturers and sponsors of a drug to use alternative testing methods to animal testing to investigate the safety and effectiveness of a drug, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TUBERVILLE (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 2953. A bill to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from requiring financial institutions to report on the financial transactions of their customers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 2954. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to alter the definition of ''conviction'', and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 2955. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to make permanent the direct hire authority of the Secretary of Defense for domestic defense industrial base facilities, the Major Range and Test Facilities Base, and the Office of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 2956. A bill to advance targeted, high-impact, and evidence-based inventions for the prevention and treatment of global malnutrition, to improve the coordination of such programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2957. A bill to ensure the digital contents of electronic equipment and online accounts belonging to or in the possession of United States persons entering or exiting the United States are adequately protected at the border, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 2958. A bill to require the Attorney General to make competitive grants to State, tribal, and local governments to establish and maintain witness protection and assistance programs; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Ms. SMITH):

S. 2959. A bill to provide that, due to disruptions caused by COVID–19, applications for impact aid funding for fiscal year 2023 may use certain data submitted in the fiscal year 2022 application; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 2960. A bill to encourage reduction of disposable plastic products in units of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 2961. A bill to prohibit a State or local government from using highway safety program funds for traffic control or traffic enforcement if such State or local government defunds the police, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 2962. A bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to ensure market competition in onshore oil and gas leasing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 2963. A bill to establish a socioeconomic labor threshold and use that threshold for purposes of chapter 67 of title 41, United States Code; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. BALDWIN:

S. 2964. A bill to clarify the status of the North Country, Ice Age, and New England National Scenic Trails as units of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BRAUN:

S. 2965. A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to study the current and projected demands on rural broadband networks associated with data transmission due to increased network usage; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. SMITH, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2966. A bill to provide additional benefits to American workers whose employment has been impacted as a result of the transition to a clean energy economy; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. KING, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 2967. A bill to establish an Assistant Secretary of State for Arctic Affairs; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 2968. A bill to increase the number of judgeships for the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and certain district courts of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 2969. A bill to establish a Commission on Structural Alternatives for the Federal Courts of Appeals; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 2970. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to provide for the appointment of additional Federal circuit judges, to divide the Ninth Judicial Circuit of the United States into two judicial circuits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 2971. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to revise the Standard Occupational Classification System to accurately count the number of emergency medical services practitioners in the United States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. HAWLEY, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 2972. A bill to repeal section 230 of the Communications Act of 1934; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. LEE, Mr. TUBERVILLE, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 2973. A bill to establish an Inspector General of the National Institutes of Health; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. REED, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2974. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a Reducing Youth Use of E–Cigarettes Initiative; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2975. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Navy to carry out a pilot program on using data recorders to improve the readiness and safety of the operation of military tactical vehicles; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. REED, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 2976. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to permit a Federal student loan borrower to elect to terminate repayment pursuant to income-based repayment and repay such loan under any other repayment plan for which the borrower is otherwise eligible; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 2977. A bill to allow State manufacturing extension partnerships to award grants to small- and medium-sized manufacturers for the purpose of training new workers to replace departing experienced workers; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2978. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to consider certain transactions related to precious metals for purposes of identifying jurisdictions of primary money laundering concern, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2979. A bill to amend the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act to establish the Office of Policy Development and Cybersecurity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 2980. A bill to authorize the voluntary donation of grazing permits and leases in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. OSSOFF):

S. 2981. A bill to amend the National Housing Act to establish a mortgage insurance program for first responders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2982. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to establish or expand programs to implement evidence-aligned practices in health care settings for the purpose of reducing the suicide rates of covered individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BRAUN:

S. 2983. A bill to provide for an accelerated approval pathway for certain drugs that are

authorized to be lawfully marketed in other countries; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 2984. A bill to establish that a State-based education loan program is excluded from certain requirements relating to a preferred lender arrangement; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Ms. WARREN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. TESTER, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 2985. A bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination Act and the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to provide advance appropriations authority for certain accounts of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education of the Department of the Interior and the Indian Health Service of the Department of Health and Human Services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 2986. A bill to require a review of sanctions with respect to Russian kleptocrats and human rights abusers; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S.J. Res. 28. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. KING, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. Res. 410. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month to raise awareness and enhance the state of cybersecurity in the United States; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BENNET, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KING, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. Res. 411. A resolution designating October 6, 2021, as ''Energy Efficiency Day'' in celebration of the economic and environmental benefits that have been driven by private sector innovation and Federal energy efficiency policies; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. COONS, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. Res. 412. A resolution designating October 8, 2021, as ''National Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Day'' ; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. PETERS):

S. Res. 413. A resolution designating the week of October 3 through October 9, 2021, as ''National Community Policing Week'' ; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MORAN, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. Res. 414. A resolution designating October 16, 2021, and October 16, 2022, as ''World Food Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. Res. 415. A resolution designating the week beginning on October 10, 2021, as ''National Wildlife Refuge Week'' ; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. Res. 416. A resolution designating the week of October 17 through 23, 2021, as ''National Chemistry Week'' ; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HAGERTY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KELLY, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 417. A resolution recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month and celebrating the heritage and culture of Latinos in the United States and the immense contributions of Latinos to the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. SMITH, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. KING, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. ERNST, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. RISCH, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. BURR, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. Res. 418. A resolution expressing support for the designation of October 3 through October 9, 2021, as ''National 4-H Week'' ; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. MORAN):

S. Res. 419. A resolution acknowledging and commemorating the World War II women in the Navy who served in the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (''WAVES''); to the Committee on Armed Services.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 385

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 385, a bill to improve the full-service community school program, and for other purposes.

S. 535

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 535, a bill to authorize the location of a memorial on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces that served on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism, and for other purposes.

S. 618

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 618, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and extend the deduction for charitable contributions for individuals not itemizing deductions.

S. 657

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 657, a bill to modify the presumption of service connection for veterans who were exposed to herbicide agents while serving in the Armed Forces in Thailand during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes.

S. 697

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 697, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman's birth.

S. 765

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 765, a bill to improve United States consideration of, and strategic support for, programs to prevent and respond to gender-based violence from the onset of humanitarian emergencies and to build the capacity of humanitarian actors to address the immediate and long-term challenges resulting from such violence, and for other purposes.

S. 796

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 796, a bill to codify maternity care coordination programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 976

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 976, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and to

expand eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation paid to certain survivors of certain veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 998

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 998, a bill to provide grants to States that do not suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew a driver's license of a person or refuse to renew a registration of a motor vehicle for failure to pay a civil or criminal fine or fee, and for other purposes.

S. 1106

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1106, a bill to prohibit the sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 1273

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1273, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit to small employers for covering military spouses under retirement plans.

S. 1362

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1362, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 1378

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1378, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to allow for the retirement of certain animals used in Federal research, and for other purposes.

S. 1404

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1404, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company in recognition of their unique and distinguished service as a ''Ghost Army'' that conducted deception operations in Europe during World War II.

S. 1425

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1425, a bill to enable the Federal Trade Commission to deter filing of sham citizen petitions to cover an attempt to interfere with approval of a competing generic drug or biosimilar, to foster competition, and facilitate the efficient review of petitions filed in good faith to raise legitimate public health concerns, and for other purposes.

S. 1536

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1536, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the availability of medical nutrition therapy services under the Medicare program.

S. 1548

At the request of Mr. LUJÁN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1548, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the diversity of participants in research on Alzheimer's disease, and for other purposes.

S. 1670

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1670, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a nonrefundable credit for working family caregivers.

S. 1779

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1779, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate copayments by the Department of Veterans Affairs for medicines relating to preventive health services, and for other purposes.

S. 1780

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1780, a bill to remove college cost as a barrier to every student having access to a well-prepared and diverse educator workforce, and for other purposes.

S. 1813

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1813, a bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to support research on, and expanded access to, investigational drugs for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and for other purposes.

S. 1850

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1850, a bill to preserve the memorials to chaplains at Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

S. 1873

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1873, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of multi-cancer early detection screening tests.

S. 1988

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1988, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect access to telehealth services under the Medicare program.

S. 2119

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2119, a bill to provide for nonpreemption of measures by State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in certain boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel or persons doing business in Israel or Israeli-controlled territories, and for other purposes.

S. 2172

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2172, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve grants, payments, and technical assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2207

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2207, a bill to temporarily increase the availability of temporary nonimmigrant nonagricultural workers for the purposes of restoring American forests, and for other purposes.

S. 2222

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2222, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to lower the standard for removing employees who disclose tax return information without authorization, and for other purposes.

S. 2238

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2238, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize and extend the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Prevention and Services program, and for other purposes.

S. 2405

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2405, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to States to improve outreach to veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2502

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2502, a bill to provide first-time, low-level, nonviolent simple possession offenders an opportunity to expunge that conviction after successful completion of court-imposed probation.

S. 2565

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2565, a bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to provide for the testing of a community-based palliative care model.

S. 2675

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms.

COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2675, a bill to amend the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to increase appropriations to Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 2700

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2700, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to improve the detection, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues among public safety officers, and for other purposes.

S. 2765

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2765, a bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills.

S. 2854

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2854, a bill to allow for the transfer and redemption of abandoned savings bonds.

S. 2863

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2863, a bill to require the imposition of sanctions with respect to the Taliban and persons assisting the Taliban in Afghanistan, and for other purposes.

S. 2869

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2869, a bill to temporarily limit the authority of the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to prescribe chargeable premium rates for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Program.

S. 2876

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2876, a bill to prioritize the efforts of, and to enhance coordination among, United States agencies to encourage countries in Central and Eastern Europe to improve the security of their telecommunications networks, and for other purposes.

S. 2919

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2919, a bill to designate Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal public holiday and replace the term ''Columbus Day'' with the term ''Indigenous Peoples' Day'', and for other purposes.

S. 2948

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2948, a bill to protect the right of individuals to bear arms at water resources development projects.

S.J. RES. 21

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 21, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to prohibit the use of slavery and involuntary servitude as a punishment for a crime.

S. RES. 321

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 321, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to reduce traffic fatalities to zero by 2050.

At the request of Ms. SMITH, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 321, supra.

S. RES. 377

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 377, a resolution urging the European Union to designate Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organization.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 2954. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to alter the definition of ''conviction'', and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Fair Adjudications for Immigrants Act. This legislation would ensure that immigrants with criminal convictions do not face barriers to naturalization and experience unfair removals after their convictions have been dismissed, expunged, or pardoned by a Federal or State locality.

What the bill would do. The Fair Adjudications for Immigrants Act is important in ensuring immigrants are not unjustly treated after receiving a criminal charge that never resulted in a conviction or after a previous conviction no longer stands.

Specifically, this bill would ensure that immigrants whose convictions have been overturned are not penalized when they are no longer considered valid in the court of conviction or for sentences that have been fully suspended by the sentencing court.

By redefining the term ''conviction'' in the Immigration and Nationality Act, this legislation also clarifies that any adjudication that is appealable or in which the court has issued a judicial recommendation against removal or probation without judgment will not count as a conviction.

The bill would apply retroactively to any conviction, adjudication, or judgement entered before, on, or after the enactment of this bill. Finally, it establishes that an immigrant cannot be removed on the basis of a conviction if the sentencing court issues a recommendation against removal to the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Why the bill is needed. Under current law, rather than having access to many rehabilitative measures that are afforded in the criminal justice system, immigrants with dismissed criminal charges, suspended sentences, or criminal convictions that are no longer considered valid in the court of conviction still face severe consequences in the immigration court system.

Some of the immigration consequences that immigrants can face include unjust removals, mandatory detention, and barriers to naturalization.

It is imperative that we resolve this disparity between immigration and criminal law to prevent those immigrants with dismissed criminal charges or with convictions that are no longer considered valid in the court of conviction from continuing to face punitive immigration consequences.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Ms. SMITH):

S. 2959. A bill to provide that, due to disruptions caused by COVID–19, applications for impact aid funding for fiscal year 2023 may use certain data submitted in the fiscal year 2022 application; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2959

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 ''Supplemental Impact Aid Flexibility Act''.

SEC. 2. IMPACT AID PROGRAM.

Due to the public health emergency directly relating to COVID–19 and notwithstanding sections 7002(j) and 7003(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7702(j), 7703(c)), a local educational agency desiring to receive a payment under section 7002 or 7003 of such Act (20 U.S.C. 7702, 7703) for fiscal year 2023 that also submitted an application for such payment for fiscal year 2022 shall, in the application submitted under section 7005 of such Act (20 U.S.C. 7705) for fiscal year 2023—

(1) with respect to a requested payment under section 7002 of such Act—

(A) use the data described in section 7002(j) of such Act relating to calculating such payment that was submitted by the local educational agency in the application for fiscal year 2022; or

(B) use the data relating to calculating such payment for the fiscal year required under section 7002(j) of such Act; and

(2) with respect to a requested payment under section 7003 of such Act—

(A) use the student count data relating to calculating such payment that was submitted by the local educational agency in the application for fiscal year 2022, provided that payments for fiscal year 2023 shall be calculated by the Secretary using the expenditures and rates described in clauses (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv) of section 7003(b)(1)(C) of such Act that would otherwise apply for fiscal year 2023; or

(B) use the student count data relating to calculating such payment for the fiscal year required under section 7003(c) of such Act.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 2986. A bill to require a review of sanctions with respect to Russian kleptocrats and human rights abusers; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to sound the alarm on the national security threat that corruption represents and to echo the determination made earlier this year by President Biden that corruption constitutes a core national security threat to the United States.

Along with many colleagues in this body, I have worked long and hard to fight corruption—which undermines democracy, human rights, and the rule of law and is behind so many of the persistent problems that we seek to solve.

The recently released Pandora Papers investigations—coordinated by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and involving 150 media outlets, including The Washington Post and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project—reveal the astonishing extent to which questionable financial flows are entering our country and those of our allies. This warrants further review. Although we had known that such a system of offshore finance exists, it is still shocking to see the scale of the corruption, documented in great detail by emails, contracts, and other documents. Foreign dictators, their associates, and other foreign officials have stolen untold sums—billions of dollars—and moved that dirty money into our democracies, into real estate, bank accounts, trusts, and other financial instruments.

This is a profound threat to our national security. It hollows out the rule of law abroad and now it threatens to hollow out the rule of law at home.

Foreign kleptocrats cannot do this alone. Although kleptocrats may steal abroad, to taint our political system with that money requires the assistance of enablers—American lawyers, accountants, trust, and company service providers, real estate professionals, and the like—who put aside any moral qualms they may have about working for the enemies of democracy to obtain a small slice of the illgotten gains.

The Pandora Papers make clear that U.S. enablers apparently play an outsized role in helping to move stolen assets from dictatorships and struggling democracies into consolidated democracies—an appalling and corrupt transference of wealth from those who need it most to those who have no need at all.

All told, the papers include documents from 206 U.S. trusts in 15 States and Washington, DC, and 22 trustee companies. While there is obviously much legitimate business to be done in creating and managing trusts and investments—and we should be careful about overstating or generalizing without careful examination of each case—it appears that some Americans may have knowingly played a significant role in facilitating corruption.

The papers include 300 politicians and public officials from more than 90 countries and territories—though no Americans and exceedingly few Western Europeans. This comes as no surprise. The movement of corrupt money runs east to west, not west to east. It is the tragedy of the post-Cold War world that corruption has come west along with dirty money rather than democracy going east. There are names in the papers that also come as no surprise—Putin cronies Konstantin Ernst and Gennady Timchenko are both named. Both are included on Alexey Navalny's list of 35 human rights abusers and kleptocrats. Timchenko is already under U.S. sanctions, though Ernst is not. Now would be a good time to consider sanctions on him.

The Aliyevs of Azerbaijan also make an appearance. They collectively own a real estate empire in London worth $700 million. A Chinese Communist Party official also was found to have used an offshore company to trade in U.S. stocks.

However, there is good news. It does not have to be this way. The triumph of global kleptocracy is not inevitable. We can fight back, and we are. Never before has there been an American administration so focused on the countering corruption or a Congress so creative and aggressive in facing down the threat. President Biden is the first President ever to declare countering corruption to be a ''core U.S. national security interest.'' Congress has formed a Caucus against Foreign Corruption and Kleptocracy. The House recently passed no fewer than six different counterkleptocracy measures in the National Defense Authorization Act, which included bills of mine. Now it is incumbent upon us in the Senate to do the same.

First is the Combating Global Corruption Act that would create a public and tiered country-by-country reporting requirement on compliance with international anti-corruption norms and standards. Those countries in the lowest tier of this report would have their leadership evaluated for Global Magnitsky sanctions.

Then there is the Global Magnitsky reauthorization that would reauthorize and enhance these critical sanctions for targeting global kleptocrats and human rights abusers—exactly the sort of people identified in the Pandora Papers. I am also proposing a new measure—and I am introducing it today—that would mandate the administration evaluate the ''Navalny 35'' for Global Magnitsky sanctions. Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, in a letter addressed to President Joe Biden earlier this year, called for the United States to impose sanctions on dozens of Russian oligarchs and government officials, whom it credibly accuses of political persecution, human rights abuses, and corruption. I agree with the Navalny team and urge the administration to move forward on this.

All three of these measures have been included in the House National Defense Authorization Act, and I urge my colleagues to include them in the Senate National Defense Authorization Act.

The Pandora Papers are a wake-up call to all who care about the future of democracy. Thirty years after the end of the Cold War, it is time for democracies to band together and demand an end to the unprecedented corruption that has come to be the defining feature of the global order. We must purge the dirty money from our systems and deny kleptocrats safe haven.

It will take hard decisions and difficult reforms, but we can do it. We already have the bipartisan momentum. Now we only have to see it through.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 410—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH TO RAISE AWARENESS AND ENHANCE THE STATE OF CYBERSECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. KING, and Ms. HASSAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. RES. 410

Whereas internet-based devices are present in every aspect of life for many people in the United States, with constant connection providing opportunities for innovation and modernization;

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic forced daily aspects of societal life to online environments that are vulnerable to cyber attacks;

Whereas the number of cellular Internet of Things (commonly referred to as ''IoT'') connections is expected to reach 3,500,000,000 in 2023, increasing at an annual growth rate of 30 percent;

Whereas a connected society is subject to cybersecurity threats that can compromise even the most personal and sensitive of information;

Whereas connected critical infrastructure is subject to cybersecurity threats that can compromise fundamental economic and health and safety functions;

Whereas malware is any malicious software that can be used to compromise the integrity of an electronic device, including the various types of software that give cyber

criminals unique methods to monitor and control online activity or steal personal information or other sensitive data, such as—

(1) adware;
(2) botnets;
(3) ransomware;
(4) rootkits;
(5) spyware;
(6) Trojans;
(7) viruses; and
(8) worms;

Whereas the Federal Bureau of Investigation received more than 2,000 ransomware complaints in 2020 accounting for nearly $30,000,000 in losses;

Whereas social engineering to trick individuals to give up their credentials, often through phishing attacks, can allow attackers to access personal information and accounts, leading to substantial harm;

Whereas public Wi-Fi hotspots can be convenient, but are not always secure, and may expose anyone connected to the network to a malicious cyberattack;

Whereas there were more than 2,000,000 cybercrimes reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 2020 equating to more than $4,000,000,000 in losses;

Whereas everyone can take simple steps to minimize the chance of a cybercrime, including—

(1) setting strong passwords;
(2) using multi-factor authentication;
(3) installing updates;
(4) understanding privacy settings;
(5) backing up data; and
(6) thinking critically and carefully about online offers;

Whereas National Cybersecurity Awareness Month is a collaborative effort between government and industry—

(1) to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity;
(2) to provide education to public and private sector partners through events and initiatives;
(3) to ensure that public and private sector partners, and all people of the United States, have the tools and resources needed to be safer and more secure online; and
(4) to increase the resilience of the United States in the event of a cyber incident;

Whereas, in 2021, National Cybersecurity Awareness Month will emphasize personal accountability and the importance of taking proactive steps to enhance cybersecurity at home and in the workplace, focusing on key areas such as—

(1) cyber hygiene;
(2) phishing scams; and
(3) cybersecurity trainings;

Whereas the theme of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month in 2021 is ''Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart.'';

Whereas there are approximately 500,000 unfilled cybersecurity jobs in the United States; and

Whereas the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security works with public sector, private sector, and government partners—

(1) to share information;
(2) to build greater trust; and
(3) to lead the national effort to protect and enhance the resilience of the physical and cyber infrastructure of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month;
(2) commits to continuing to work with Federal agencies, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, businesses, educational institutions, and other organizations to enhance the state of cybersecurity in the United States; and
(3) recognizes October as National Cybersecurity Awareness Month in 2021, with the theme ''Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart.'', as an opportunity—

(A) to provide education to the people of the United States about cybersecurity; and
(B) to help all people of the United States be safer, more secure, and more aware while online and using connected devices.

SENATE RESOLUTION 411—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 6, 2021, AS ''ENERGY EFFICIENCY DAY'' IN CELEBRATION OF THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS THAT HAVE BEEN DRIVEN BY PRIVATE SECTOR INNOVATION AND FEDERAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY POLICIES

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BENNET, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KING, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. HASSAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 411

Whereas October has been designated as ''National Energy Awareness Month'';

Whereas improvements in energy efficiency technologies and practices, along with policies of the United States enacted since the 1970s, have resulted in energy savings of more than 60,000,000,000,000,000 British thermal units and energy cost avoidance of more than $800,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas energy efficiency has enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress and in administrations of both parties for more than 40 years;

Whereas bipartisan legislation enacted since the 1970s to advance Federal energy efficiency policies includes—

(1) the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6201 et seq.);
(2) the National Appliance Energy Conservation Act of 1987 (Public Law 100–12; 101 Stat. 103);
(3) the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 13201 et seq.);
(4) the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15801 et seq.);
(5) the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17001 et seq.);
(6) the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–11; 129 Stat. 182); and
(7) the Energy Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–260; 134 Stat. 2418).

Whereas energy efficiency has long been supported by a diverse coalition of businesses (including manufacturers, utilities, energy service companies, and technology firms), public-interest organizations, environmental and conservation groups, and State and local governments;

Whereas, since 1980, the United States has more than doubled its energy productivity, realizing twice the economic output per unit of energy consumed;

Whereas more than 2,000,000 individuals in the United States are currently employed across the energy efficiency sector, as the United States has doubled its energy productivity, and business and industry have become more innovative and competitive in global markets;

Whereas the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy of the Department of Energy is the principal Federal agency responsible for renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency efforts;

Whereas cutting energy waste saves the consumers of the United States billions of dollars on utility bills annually; and

Whereas energy efficiency policies, financing innovations, and public-private partnerships have contributed to a reduction in energy intensity in Federal facilities by nearly 50 percent since the mid-1970s, which results in direct savings to United States taxpayers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 6, 2021, as ''Energy Efficiency Day''; and
(2) calls on the people of the United States to observe Energy Efficiency Day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 412—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 8, 2021, AS ''NATIONAL HYDROGEN AND FUEL CELL DAY''

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. COONS, and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 412

Whereas hydrogen, which has an atomic mass of 1.008, is the most abundant element in the universe;

Whereas the United States is a world leader in the development and deployment of fuel cell and hydrogen technologies;

Whereas hydrogen fuel cells played an instrumental role in the United States space program, helping the United States achieve the mission of landing a man on the Moon;

Whereas private industry, Federal and State governments, national laboratories, and institutions of higher education continue to improve fuel cell and hydrogen technologies to address the most pressing energy, environmental, and economic issues of the United States;

Whereas fuel cells utilizing hydrogen and hydrogen-rich fuels to generate electricity are clean, efficient, safe, and resilient technologies being used for—

(1) stationary and backup power generation; and
(2) zero-emission transportation for light-duty vehicles, industrial vehicles, delivery vans, buses, trucks, trains, military vehicles, marine applications, and aerial vehicles;

Whereas stationary fuel cells are being placed in service for continuous and backup power to provide businesses and other energy consumers with reliable power in the event of grid outages;

Whereas stationary fuel cells can help reduce water use, as compared to traditional power generation technologies;

Whereas fuel cell electric vehicles that utilize hydrogen can completely replicate the experience of internal combustion vehicles, including comparable range and refueling times;

Whereas hydrogen fuel cell industrial vehicles are deployed at logistical hubs and warehouses across the United States and exported to facilities in Europe and Asia;

Whereas hydrogen is a nontoxic gas that can be derived from a variety of domestically available traditional and renewable resources, including solar, wind, biogas, and the abundant supply of natural gas in the United States;

Whereas hydrogen and fuel cells can store energy to help enhance the grid and maximize opportunities to deploy renewable energy;

Whereas the United States produces and uses approximately 10,000,000 metric tons of hydrogen per year;

Whereas engineers and safety code and standard professionals have developed consensus-based protocols for safe delivery, handling, and use of hydrogen; and

Whereas the ingenuity of the people of the United States is essential to paving the way for the future use of hydrogen technologies: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates October 8, 2021, as ''National Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Day''.

SENATE RESOLUTION 413—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 3 THROUGH OCTOBER 9, 2021, AS ''NATIONAL COMMUNITY POLICING WEEK''

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. PETERS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 413

Whereas police officers are indispensable members of the community who put their lives on the line to protect others;

Whereas promoting strong relationships founded in trust and mutual respect between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve helps ensure the safe and effective execution of the law;

Whereas law enforcement officers and communities that work together to address public safety concerns can create lasting solutions to difficult challenges;

Whereas recent events have sparked a nationwide call to improve the interactions between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve, particularly communities of color;

Whereas community policing facilitates peaceful dialogue, capable of fostering understanding and trust, between law enforcement officers and civilians;

Whereas community policing can help improve the equal enforcement of the laws;

Whereas community policing informs the public about the challenges that law enforcement officers face in executing their duties provides law enforcement officers insight into the concerns of community members;

Whereas a long-term commitment to community policing is necessary to eliminate the underlying causes of crime;

Whereas the advancement of community policing should be supported to ensure that State and local law enforcement agencies have necessary resources; and

Whereas community policing has been recognized as an important tool for improving the relationship between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of October 3 through October 9, 2021, as ''National Community Policing Week''; and

(2) supports community policing and encourages the people of the United States, law enforcement agencies, and elected officials to identify ways in which communities can improve public safety, strengthen relationships, and build trust.

SENATE RESOLUTION 414—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 16, 2021, AND OCTOBER 16, 2022, AS ''WORLD FOOD DAY''

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MORAN, and Ms. STABENOW) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 414

Whereas hunger and malnutrition are daily facts of life for hundreds of millions of people around the world;

Whereas women and children suffer the most serious effects of hunger and malnutrition;

Whereas millions of children die each year from hunger-related illness and disease;

Whereas many people suffer permanent physical or mental impairment because of vitamin or protein deficiencies;

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic exacerbated the severity and frequency of food insecurity in 2020, represented by—

(1) an estimated increase of 148,000,000 people experiencing severe food insecurity in 2020 as compared to 2019; and

(2) an estimated 928,000,000 people, or 12 percent of the global population, experiencing food insecurity;

Whereas the United States has a long tradition of demonstrating humanitarian concern for the hungry and malnourished people of the world;

Whereas there is an ever increasing concern in the United States and in other countries about threats to the future food supply, including—

(1) misuse and overuse of land and water;

(2) loss of biological diversity;

(3) erosion of genetic resources on a global scale; and

(4) transboundary pests and diseases, such as the Desert Locust for plants and anthrax for livestock;

Whereas the world community increasingly and consistently calls upon the United States to resolve food problems stemming from natural- and human-made disasters by providing humanitarian assistance;

Whereas the United States—

(1) plays a major role in the development and implementation of international food and agricultural trade standards and practices; and

(2) recognizes the positive role that global food trade can play in enhancing human nutrition and alleviating hunger;

Whereas, although progress has been made in reducing the incidence of hunger and malnutrition in the United States, certain groups remain vulnerable to malnutrition and related diseases;

Whereas the conservation of natural resources, the preservation of biological diversity, and strong public and private agricultural research programs are required for the United States—

(1) to remain food secure;

(2) to continue to aid the hungry and malnourished people of the world;

(3) to assist in building a more resilient global food system; and

(4) to preserve and sustain our forests, land, oceans, and waterways.

Whereas the United States is a world leader in the development of agricultural innovation and technology aimed at enhancing the improved production, safety, and quality of the world food supply and must continue to maintain that role;

Whereas participation by private voluntary organizations and businesses, working with national governments and the international community, is essential in the search for ways to increase food production in developing countries and improve food distribution to hungry and malnourished people;

Whereas the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (referred to in this preamble as the ''FAO'') is mandated to lead global efforts to address food and nutrition security issues;

Whereas the member nations of the FAO have unanimously designated October 16 of each year as ''World Food Day'';

Whereas the FAO has worked to organize activities and efforts on ''World Food Day'' in more than 130 countries to promote awareness of and action for people suffering from hunger and malnutrition;

Whereas past observances of ''World Food Day'' have been supported—

(1) by proclamations by Congress, the President, the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the territories and possessions of the United States; and

(2) by programs of the Department of Agriculture and other Federal departments and agencies;

Whereas private voluntary organizations and community leaders are participating in planning ''World Food Day'' observances in 2021 and 2022, and a growing number of these organizations and leaders are using ''World Food Day'' as a focal point for year-round programs; and

Whereas the people of the United States can express their concern for the plight of hungry and malnourished people throughout the world by study, advocacy, and action: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 16, 2021, and October 16, 2022, as ''World Food Day''; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe the days with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 415—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 10, 2021, AS ''NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK''

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 415

Whereas in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island in Florida;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System is administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and has grown to 568 national wildlife refuges and 38 wetland management districts, with units located in every State and territory of the United States;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important recreational and tourism destinations in communities across the United States, and offer a variety of recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System receives more than 61,000,000 annual visits that—

(1) generate more than $3,200,000,000 for local economies; and

(2) support 41,000 jobs;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System has hosted more than 37,000,000 birding and wildlife observation visits in recent years;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important to local businesses and gateway communities;

Whereas 434 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have hunting programs and 378 units have fishing programs that support more than 2,500,000 hunting visits and more than 8,300,000 fishing visits annually;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System contains many different kinds of ecosystems, including tropical and boreal forests, wetlands, deserts, grasslands, arctic tundras, and remote islands, and spans 12 time zones from the United States Virgin Islands to Guam;

Whereas national wildlife refuges support more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 1,000 species of fish;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are the primary Federal lands that support waterfowl habitats;

Whereas, since 1934, the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund has generated more than $1,100,000,000 and enabled the conservation of more than 6,000,000 acres of habitat for waterfowl and numerous other species in the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas refuges provide protection to more than 380 threatened species and endangered species;

Whereas 101 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System are within 25 miles of cities and suburbs where 80 percent of individuals in the United States live;

Whereas through the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service works to dismantle barriers that have blocked under-served communities from full and equal participation in outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation;

Whereas the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program fosters strong new conservation coalitions, educates and employs youth, betters communities, builds trust in government; and connects individuals with nature;

Whereas more than 33,000 volunteers and almost 180 national wildlife refuge ''Friends'' organizations contribute approximately 900,000 volunteer hours annually, the equivalent of 442 full-time employees, and provide an important link to local communities;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide an important opportunity for children to discover and gain a greater appreciation for the natural world;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds to explore, connect with, and preserve the natural heritage of the United States;

Whereas, since 1995, national wildlife refuges across the United States have held festivals, educational programs, guided tours, and other events to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week during the second full week of October;

Whereas the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the week beginning on October 10, 2021, as National Wildlife Refuge Week; and

Whereas the designation of National Wildlife Refuge Week by the Senate would recognize more than a century of conservation in the United States, raise awareness about the importance of wildlife and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and celebrate the myriad recreational opportunities available for the enjoyment of this network of protected lands: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning on October 10, 2021, as ''National Wildlife Refuge Week'';

(2) encourages the observance of National Wildlife Refuge Week with appropriate events and activities;

(3) recognizes the importance of national wildlife refuges to wildlife conservation, the protection of imperiled species and ecosystems, and compatible uses;

(4) acknowledges the importance of national wildlife refuges for their recreational opportunities and contribution to local economies across the United States;

(5) identifies the significance of national wildlife refuges in advancing the traditions of wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation;

(6) finds that national wildlife refuges play a vital role in securing the hunting and fishing heritage of the United States for future generations;

(7) recognizes the important work of urban national wildlife refuges in welcoming racially and ethnically diverse urban communities that were long excluded, including work—

(A) to foster strong new conservation coalitions;

(B) to provide education and employment opportunities to youth;

(C) to improve communities;

(D) to build trust in government; and

(E) to connect individuals with nature;

(8) acknowledges the role of national wildlife refuges in conserving waterfowl and waterfowl habitat under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.);

(9) reaffirms the support of the Senate for wildlife conservation and the National Wildlife Refuge System; and

(10) expresses the intent of the Senate—

(A) to continue working to conserve wildlife; and

(B) to manage the National Wildlife Refuge System for current and future generations.

SENATE RESOLUTION 416—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 17 THROUGH 23, 2021, AS ''NATIONAL CHEMISTRY WEEK''

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 416

Whereas chemistry is the science of the basic units of matter and, consequently, plays a role in every aspect of human life;

Whereas chemistry has broad applications, including food science, soil science, water quality, energy, sustainability, medicine, and electronics;

Whereas the science of chemistry is vital to improving the quality of human life and plays an important role in addressing critical global challenges;

Whereas innovations in chemistry continue to spur economic growth and job creation and have applications for a wide range of industries;

Whereas the practitioners of chemistry are catalysts of positive change in their communities and the world;

Whereas National Chemistry Week is part of a broader vision to improve human life through chemistry and to advance the chemistry enterprise;

Whereas the purpose of National Chemistry Week is to reach the public with educational messages about chemistry in order to foster greater understanding of and appreciation for the applications and benefits of chemistry;

Whereas National Chemistry Week strives to stimulate the interest of young people, including women and underrepresented groups, in enthusiastically studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and in pursuing science-related careers that lead to innovations and major scientific breakthroughs;

Whereas National Chemistry Week signifies the collaborative nature of science and promotes partnership between scientific societies, academia, industry, and the public;

Whereas National Chemistry Week highlights many of the everyday uses of chemistry, including in food, dyes and pigments, plastics, soaps and detergents, health products, and energy technologies;

Whereas the theme of the 32nd annual National Chemistry Week is ''Fast or Slow . . . Chemistry Makes It Go!''; and

Whereas students who participate in National Chemistry Week deserve recognition and support for their efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning on October 17, 2021, as ''National Chemistry Week'';

(2) supports the goals and welcomes the participants of the 32nd annual National Chemistry Week;

(3) recognizes the need to promote the fields of science, including chemistry, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to encourage youth, including from underrepresented groups, to pursue careers in these fields; and

(4) commends—

(A) the American Chemicals Society (ACS) and the partners of that society for seeking opportunities to engage with the public and for organizing and convening events and activities surrounding National Chemistry Week each year;

(B) the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE) for leading collaborative engagement in National Chemistry Week;

(C) the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) for leading collaborative engagement in National Chemistry Week; and

(D) the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) for leading collaborative engagement in National Chemistry Week.

SENATE RESOLUTION 417—RECOGNIZING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH AND CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE AND CULTURE OF LATINOS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE IMMENSE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LATINOS TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HAGERTY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KELLY, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 417

Whereas, from September 15, 2021, through October 15, 2021, the United States celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month;

Whereas the Bureau of the Census estimates the Hispanic population living in the 50 States at more than 60,000,000 people, plus close to 3,200,000 people living in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, making Hispanic Americans 18.75 percent of the total population of the United States and the largest racial or ethnic minority group in the United States;

Whereas, in 2021, there were close to 1,000,000 or more Latino residents in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and in each of

the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington;

Whereas, from 2010 to 2019, Latinos grew the population of the United States by approximately 9,829,000 individuals, accounting for more than ½ of the total population growth of the United States during that period;

Whereas the Latino population in the United States is projected to grow to 111,000,000 people by 2060, at which point the Latino population will comprise more than 28 percent of the total population of the United States;

Whereas the Latino population in the United States is currently the third largest population of Latinos worldwide, exceeding the size of the population in every Latin American and Caribbean country, except Mexico and Brazil;

Whereas, in 2019, there were more than 18,687,000 Latino children under 18 years of age in the United States, which represents approximately ⅓ of the total Latino population in the United States;

Whereas 27.3 percent of public school students in the United States are Latino, and the share of Latino students is expected to rise to nearly 30 percent by 2027;

Whereas 19.5 percent of all college students in the United States are Latino, making Latinos the second largest racial or ethnic minority group enrolled in higher education in the United States, including 2-year community colleges and 4-year colleges and universities;

Whereas, from 1996 to 2016, the number of Hispanic students enrolled in schools, colleges, and universities in the United States doubled from 8,800,000 to 17,900,000, and Hispanics now make up 24 percent of all people enrolled in school in the United States;

Whereas a record 32,000,000 Latinos were eligible to vote in the 2020 Presidential election, representing 13.3 percent of the electorate in the United States;

Whereas, in the 2020 Presidential election, Latinos cast 16,600,000 votes, a 30.9 percent increase from the number of votes cast by Latinos in the 2016 Presidential election;

Whereas the number of eligible Latino voters is expected to rise to 40,000,000 by 2030, accounting for 40 percent of the growth in the eligible electorate in the United States by 2030;

Whereas, each year, approximately 800,000 Latino citizens of the United States reach 18 years of age and become eligible to vote, a number that could grow to 1,000,000 per year, potentially adding 10,000,000 new Latino voters by 2032;

Whereas it is estimated that, in 2020, the annual purchasing power of Hispanic Americans was $1,700,000,000,000, which is an amount greater than the economy of all except 17 countries in the world;

Whereas there are close to 4,000,000 Hispanic-owned businesses in the United States, supporting millions of employees nationwide and contributing more than $700,000,000,000 in revenue to the economy of the United States;

Whereas, in 2018, Hispanic-owned businesses represented the fastest growing segment of small businesses in the United States, with those businesses representing 5.8 percent of all businesses in the United States;

Whereas, as of August 2018, more than 28,000,000 Latino workers represented 17 percent of the total civilian labor force of the United States, and, as a result of Latinos experiencing the fastest population growth of all race and ethnicity groups in the United States, the rate of Latino participation in the labor force is expected to grow to 20 percent by 2024, accounting for ⅕ of the total labor force;

Whereas, in 2017, the labor force participation rate of Latinos was 66.1 percent, higher than the labor force participation rate of non-Hispanics, which was 62.2 percent;

Whereas, as of 2017, there were approximately 326,800 Latino elementary and middle school teachers, 77,033 Latino chief executives of businesses, 54,576 Latino lawyers, 73,372 Latino physicians and surgeons, and 15,895 Latino psychologists, who contribute to the United States through their professions;

Whereas Hispanic Americans serve in all branches of the Armed Forces and have fought bravely in every war in the history of the United States;

Whereas, as of 2019—

(1) more than 200,000 Hispanic members of the Armed Forces serve on active duty; and

(2) there are approximately 1,200,000 Hispanic veterans of the Armed Forces, including 136,000 Latinas;

Whereas, as of 2018, more than 399,000 Hispanics have served in post-September 11, 2001, overseas contingency operations, and Hispanics represent 12.1 percent of the total number of veterans who have served in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since September 11, 2001;

Whereas, as of August 2019, at least 688 fatalities in Iraq and Afghanistan were members of the Armed Forces who were Hispanic;

Whereas an estimated 200,000 Hispanics were mobilized for World War I, and approximately 500,000 Hispanics served in World War II;

Whereas more than 80,000 Hispanics served in the Vietnam war, representing 5.5 percent of individuals who made the ultimate sacrifice for the United States in that conflict, even though Hispanics comprised only 4.5 percent of the population of the United States during the Vietnam war;

Whereas approximately 150,000 Hispanic soldiers served in the Korean war, including the 65th Infantry Regiment of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, known as the ''Borinqueneers'', the only active duty, segregated Latino military unit in the history of the United States;

Whereas 61 Hispanic Americans have received the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force bestowed on an individual serving in the Armed Forces;

Whereas Hispanic Americans are dedicated public servants, holding posts at the highest levels of the Government of the United States, including 1 seat on the Supreme Court of the United States, 6 seats in the Senate, and 47 seats in the House of Representatives; and

Whereas Hispanic Americans harbor a deep commitment to family and community, an enduring work ethic, and a perseverance to succeed and contribute to society: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15, 2021, through October 15, 2021;

(2) esteems the integral role of Latinos and the manifold heritages of Latinos in the economy, culture, and identity of the United States; and

(3) urges the people of the United States to observe Hispanic Heritage Month with appropriate programs and activities that celebrate the contributions of Latinos to the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 418—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF OCTOBER 3 THROUGH OCTOBER 9, 2021, AS ''NATIONAL 4-H WEEK''

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. SMITH, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. KING, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. ERNST, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. RISCH, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. BURR, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. RES. 418

Whereas 4–H is the largest youth development organization in the United States, supporting nearly 6,000,000 young people across the country;

Whereas 4–H helps young people become confident, independent, resilient, and compassionate leaders;

Whereas 4–H is delivered by the Cooperative Extension System, a community of more than 100 land-grant universities across the United States that provides experiences for young people to learn through hands-on projects in the important areas of health, science, agriculture, and civic engagement;

Whereas the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the Department of Agriculture serves as the Federal partner of 4–H in collaboration with land-grant universities, the Cooperative Extension System, and the National 4–H Council;

Whereas National 4–H Week showcases the incredible ways that 4–H provides opportunities for all young people and highlights the remarkable members of 4–H in all 50 States and across the globe who work each day to make a positive impact on other individuals;

Whereas the 4–H network of nearly 500,000 volunteers and 3,500 professionals provides caring and supportive mentoring to all members of 4–H, helping members to grow into true leaders, entrepreneurs, and visionaries; and

Whereas members of 4–H will celebrate ''National 4–H Week'' during the week of October 3 through October 9, 2021: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of October 3 through 9, 2021, as ''National 4–H Week'';

(2) recognizes the important role of 4–H in youth development and education; and

(3) encourages all citizens to recognize 4–H for the significant impact the organization and members have made and continue to make by empowering young people with the skills needed to lead for a lifetime.

SENATE RESOLUTION 419—ACKNOWLEDGING AND COMMEMORATING THE WORLD WAR II WOMEN IN THE NAVY WHO SERVED IN THE WOMEN ACCEPTED FOR VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICE (''WAVES'')

Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. MORAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 419

Whereas, despite social stigmas and public opinion averse to women in uniform, women applied for military service in such numbers that enrollment ceilings were reached within the first several years;

Whereas, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (referred to in this preamble as ''WAVES'') on July 30, 1942, when he signed the Navy Women's Reserve Act (Public Law 77–538; 56 Stat. 730) into law;

Whereas, while women had served in the enlisted ranks of the Navy in a variety of positions during World War I, legislation passed after World War I limited women to service as nurses until the creation of the WAVES;

Whereas, during World War II, women in the United States were recruited into the Armed Forces to perform military assignments so that men could be freed for combat duties;

Whereas, under the direction of Lieutenant Commander (later Captain) Mildred Helen McAfee, the WAVES peaked in 1945 at nearly 83,000 officers and enlisted personnel, or approximately 2.5 percent of the wartime strength of the Navy and was composed of women from urban and rural communities across many socioeconomic backgrounds;

Whereas, the Secretary of the Navy's Annual Report Fiscal Year 1945 stated that there were 8,475 officers and 74,497 enlisted WAVES serving in the spring of 1945;

Whereas the WAVES worked at large and small naval commands from Florida to Washington and from California to Rhode Island, as well as overseas;

Whereas the WAVES numerous and diverse contributions ranged from yeoman, chauffeur, and baker to pharmacist, artist, aircraft mechanic, and dental hygienist;

Whereas during World War II, WAVES served as training instructors throughout the country for newly recruited WAVES as well as thousands of aspiring male naval aviators, gunners, and navigators destined for combat units;

Whereas the WAVES who served in naval aviation taught instrument flying, aircraft recognition, celestial navigation, aircraft gunnery, radio, radar, air combat information, and air fighter administration but were not allowed to be pilots;

Whereas the WAVES served the Navy in such numbers that, according to a Navy estimate, enough men were freed for combat duty to crew the ships of 4 major task forces, each including a battleship, 2 large aircraft carriers, 2 heavy cruisers, 4 light cruisers, and 15 destroyers;

Whereas, at the end of World War II, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal stated that members of the WAVES ''have exceeded performance of men in certain types of work, and the Navy Department considers it to be very desirable that these important services rendered by women during the war should likewise be available in postwar years ahead'';

Whereas, by the end of World War II, more than 400,000 women had served the United States in military capacities, with every Navy aviator who entered combat having received some part of his training from a WAVE;

Whereas the WAVES, despite their merit and the recognized value and importance of their contributions to the war effort, were not given status equal to their male counterparts, and struggled for years to receive the appreciation of Congress and the people of the United States;

Whereas the WAVES helped to catalyze the social, demographic, and economic evolutions that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s and continue to this day; and

Whereas the pioneering women who served in the WAVES are owed a great debt of gratitude for their service to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the women who served the United States in the Navy Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (''WAVES'') during World War II;

(2) commends the WAVES who, through a sense of duty and willingness to defy stereotypes and social pressures, performed military assignments to aid the war effort, with the result that men were freed for combat duties; and

(3) recognizes that the WAVES, by serving with diligence and merit, not only opened up opportunities for women that had previously been reserved for men, but also contributed vitally to the victory of the United States and the Allies in World War II.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3847. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1301, to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans.

SA 3848. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 3847 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill S. 1301, supra.

SA 3849. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1301, supra.

SA 3850. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 3849 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill S. 1301, supra.

SA 3851. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 3850 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the amendment SA 3849 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill S. 1301, supra.

SA 3852. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3853. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3854. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3855. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3856. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3857. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3858. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3859. Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3860. Mr. TESTER proposed an amendment to the bill S. 796, to codify maternity care coordination programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3847. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1301, to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. INCREASE OF PUBLIC DEBT LIMIT.

The limitation under section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, as most recently increased by section 301 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 (31 U.S.C. 3101 note), is increased by $480,000,000,000.

SA 3848. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 3847 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill S. 1301, to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect 2 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 3849. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1301, to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 3850. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 3849 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill S. 1301, to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans; as follows:

On page 1, line 3, strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''.

SA 3851. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 3850 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the amendment SA 3849 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill S. 1301, to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans; as follows:

On page 1, lines 1 and 2, strike ''4 days'' and insert ''1 day''.

SA 3852. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title X, insert the following:

SEC. _____. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE USMMA.

There are authorized to be appropriated for the period of fiscal years 2022 through 2030, $611,026,400 to the Department of Transportation for infrastructure replacement and improvement projects at the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

SA 3853. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title VII, insert the following:

SEC. 7___. INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMPREHENSIVE AUTISM CARE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

(a) AGREEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall seek to enter into an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (in this section referred to as the ''National Academies'') for the National Academies to carry out the activities described in subsections (b) and (c).

(2) TIMING.—The Secretary shall seek to enter into the agreement described in paragraph (1) not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) ANALYSIS BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES.—

(1) ANALYSIS.—Under an agreement between the Secretary and the National Academies entered into under subsection (a), the National Academies shall conduct an analysis of the effectiveness of the Department of Defense Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration program (in this section referred to as the ''demonstration program'') and develop recommendations for the Secretary based on such analysis.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The analysis conducted and recommendations developed under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the Pervasive Developmental Disabilities Behavior Inventory as a measure to assist in the assessment of domains related to autism spectrum disorder, and a determination as to whether the Secretary is applying such inventory appropriately under the demonstration program.

(B) An assessment of the methods used under the demonstration program to measure the effectiveness of applied behavior analysis in the treatment of autism spectrum disorder.

(C) A review of any guidelines or industry standards of care adhered to in the provision of applied behavior analysis services under the demonstration program, including a review of the effects of such adherence with respect to dose-response or expected health outcomes for an individual who has received such services.

(D) A review of the expected health outcomes for an individual who has received applied behavior analysis treatments over time.

(E) An analysis of the increased utilization of the demonstration program by beneficiaries under the TRICARE program, to improve understanding of such utilization.

(F) Such other analyses to measure the effectiveness of the demonstration program as may be determined appropriate by the National Academies.

(G) An analysis on whether the incidence of autism is higher among the children of military families.

(H) The development of a list of findings and recommendations related to the measurement, effectiveness, and increased understanding of the demonstration program and its effect on beneficiaries under the TRICARE program.

(c) REPORT.—Under an agreement between the Secretary and the National Academies entered into under subsection (a), the National Academies, not later than 270 days after the date of the execution of the agreement, shall—

(1) submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the findings of the National Academies with respect to the analysis conducted and recommendations developed under subsection (b); and

(2) make such report available on a public website in unclassified form.

(d) TRICARE PROGRAM DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''TRICARE program'' has the meaning given that term in section 1072(7) of title 10, United States Code.

SA 3854. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title III, insert the following:

SEC. 332. STANDARDS FOR RESPONSE ACTIONS WITH RESPECT TO PFAS CONTAMINATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In conducting response actions to address PFAS contamination from Department of Defense or National Guard activities, the Secretary of Defense shall conduct such actions to achieve a level of PFAS in the environmental media that meets or exceeds the most stringent of the following standards for PFAS in any environmental media:

(1) The applicable State standard, in effect in that State, as described in section 121(d)(2)(A)(ii) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9621(d)(2)(A)(ii)).

(2) The applicable Federal standard as described in section 121(d)(2)(A)(i) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9621(d)(2)(A)(i)).

(3) A health advisory under section 1412(b)(1)(F) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300g-1(b)(1)(F)).

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) PFAS.—The term ''PFAS'' means a perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substance with at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom.

(2) RESPONSE ACTION.—The term ''response action'' means an action taken pursuant to section 104 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9604).

(c) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Except with respect to the specific level required to be met under subsection (a), nothing in this section affects the application of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.).

SA 3855. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title V, insert the following:

SEC. ___. AUTHORITY OF MILITARY JUDGES AND MILITARY MAGISTRATES TO ISSUE MILITARY COURT PROTECTIVE ORDERS.

(a) JUDGE-ISSUED MILITARY COURT PROTECTIVE ORDERS.—Chapter 80 of title 10, United Stated Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 1567b. Authority of military judges and military magistrates to issue military court protective orders

''(a) AUTHORITY TO ISSUE MILITARY COURT PROTECTIVE ORDERS.—The President shall prescribe regulations authorizing military judges and military magistrates to issue protective orders in accordance with this section. A protective order issued in accordance with this section shall be known as a 'military court protective order'. Under the regulations prescribed by the President, military judges and military magistrates shall have exclusive jurisdiction over the issuance, appeal, renewal, and termination of military court protective orders and such orders may not be issued, appealed, renewed, or terminated by State, local, territorial, or tribal courts.

''(b) ENFORCEMENT BY CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In prescribing regulations for military court protective orders, the President shall seek to ensure that the protective orders are issued in a form and manner that is enforceable by State, local, territorial, and tribal civilian law enforcement authorities.

''(2) FULL FAITH AND CREDIT.—Any military court protective order shall be accorded full faith and credit by the court of a State, local, territorial, or tribal jurisdiction (the enforcing jurisdiction) and enforced by the court and law enforcement personnel of that jurisdiction as if it were the order of the enforcing jurisdiction.

''(3) RECIPROCITY AGREEMENTS.—Consistent with paragraphs (1) and (2), the Secretary of Defense shall seek to enter into reciprocity agreements with State, local, territorial, and tribal civilian law enforcement authorities under which—

''(A) such authorities agree to enforce military court protective orders; and

''(B) the Secretary agrees to enforce protective orders issued by such authorities that are consistent with section 2265(b) of title 18.

''(c) PURPOSE AND FORM OF ISSUANCE.—A military court protective order—

''(1) may be issued for the purpose of protecting a victim of an alleged covered offense, or a family member or associate of the victim, from a person subject to chapter 47 of this title (the Uniform Code of Military Justice) who is alleged to have committed such an offense; and

''(2) shall include—

''(A) a finding regarding whether such person represents a credible threat to the physical safety of such alleged victim;

''(B) a finding regarding whether the alleged victim is an intimate partner or child of such person; and

''(C) if applicable, terms explicitly prohibiting the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force that would reasonably be expected to cause bodily injury against such intimate partner or child.

''(d) BURDEN OF PROOF.—In determining whether to issue a military court protective order, a military judge or military magistrate shall make all relevant findings by a preponderance of the evidence. The burden shall be on the party requesting the order to produce sufficient information to satisfy the preponderance of the evidence standard referred to in the preceding sentence.

''(e) TIMING AND MANNER OF ISSUANCE.—A military court protective order may be issued—

''(1) by a military magistrate, before referral of charges and specifications to court-martial for trial, at the request of—

''(A) a victim of an alleged covered offense; or

''(B) a Special Victims' Counsel or other qualified counsel acting on behalf of the victim; or

''(2) by a military judge, after referral of charges and specifications to court-martial for trial, at the request of qualified counsel, which may include a Special Victims' Counsel acting on behalf of the victim or trial counsel acting on behalf of the prosecution.

''(f) DURATION AND RENEWAL OF PROTECTIVE ORDER.—

''(1) DURATION.—A military court protective order shall be issued for an initial period of up to 180 days and may be reissued for one or more additional periods, each of which may be up to 180 days, in accordance with paragraph (2).

''(2) EXPIRATION AND RENEWAL.—Before the expiration of any period during which a military court protective order is in effect, a military judge or military magistrate shall review the order to determine whether the order will terminate at the expiration of such period or be reissued for an additional period of up to 180 days.

''(3) NOTICE TO PROTECTED PERSONS.—If a military judge or military magistrate determines under paragraph (2) that a military court protective order will terminate, the judge or magistrate concerned shall direct that each person protected by the order be provided with reasonable, timely, and accurate notification of the termination.

''(g) REVIEW OF MAGISTRATE-ISSUED ORDERS.—

''(1) REVIEW.—A military judge, at the request of the person subject to a military court protective order that was issued by a military magistrate, may review the order to determine if the order was properly issued by the magistrate.

''(2) STANDARDS OF REVIEW.—A military judge who reviews an order under paragraph (1) shall terminate the order if the judge determines that—

''(A) the military magistrate's decision to issue the order was an abuse of discretion, and there is not sufficient information presented to the military judge to justify the order; or

''(B) information not presented to the military magistrate establishes that the military court protective order should be terminated.

''(h) DUE PROCESS.—

''(1) PROTECTION OF DUE PROCESS.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a protective order authorized under subsection (a) may be issued only after reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard and to present evidence, directly or through counsel, is given to the person against whom the order is sought sufficient to protect that person's right to due process.

''(2) EMERGENCY ORDERS.—A protective order on an emergency basis may be issued on an ex parte basis under such rules and limitations as the President shall prescribe. In the case of ex parte orders, notice and opportunity to be heard and to present evidence must be provided within a reasonable time not to exceed 30 calendar days after the date on which the order is issued, sufficient to protect the respondent's due process rights.

''(i) RIGHTS OF VICTIM.—The victim of an alleged covered offense who seeks a military court protective order has, in addition to any rights provided under section 806b (article 6b), the following rights with respect to any proceeding involving the protective order:

''(1) The right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of the proceeding and of any change in the status of the protective order resulting from the proceeding.

''(2) The right to be reasonably heard at the proceeding.

''(3) The right to appear in person, with or without counsel, at the proceeding.

''(4) The right be represented by qualified counsel in connection with the proceeding, which may include a Special Victims' Counsel.

''(5) The reasonable right to confer with a representative of the command of the accused and counsel representing the government at the proceeding, as applicable.

''(6) The right to submit a written statement, directly or through counsel, for consideration by the military judge or military magistrate presiding over the proceeding.

''(j) RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS TO FIREARMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

''(A) a military court protective order issued on an ex parte basis shall restrain a person from possessing, receiving, or otherwise accessing a firearm; and

''(B) a military court protective order issued after the person to be subject to the order has received notice and opportunity to be heard on the order, shall restrain such person from possessing, receiving, or otherwise accessing a firearm in accordance with section 922 of title 18.

''(2) NOTICE TO ATTORNEYS GENERAL.—

''(A) NOTICE OF ISSUANCE.—Not later than 72 hours after the issuance of an order described in paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall submit a record of the order—

''(i) to the Attorney General of the United States; and

''(ii) to the Attorney General of the State or Territory in which the order is issued

''(B) NOTICE OF RECISSION OR EXPIRATION.—Not later than 72 hours after the recission or expiration of an order described in paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall submit notice of such recission or expiration to the Attorneys General specified in subparagraph (A).

''(k) TREATMENT AS LAWFUL ORDER.—A military court protective order shall be treated as a lawful order for purposes of the application of section 892 (article 92) and a violation of such an order shall be punishable under such section (article).

''(l) COMMAND MATTERS.—

''(1) INCLUSION IN PERSONNEL FILE.—Any military court protective order against a member shall be placed and retained in the military personnel file of the member, except that such protective order shall be removed from the military personnel file of the member if the member is acquitted of the offense to which the order pertains, it is determined that the member did not commit the act giving rise to the protective order, or it is determined that the protective order was issued in error.

''(2) NOTICE TO CIVILIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT OF ISSUANCE.—Any military court protective order against a member shall be treated as a military protective order for purposes of section 1567a including for purposes of mandatory notification of issuance to Federal and State civilian law enforcement agencies as required by that section.

''(m) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER AUTHORITIES.—Nothing in this section may be construed as prohibiting—

''(1) a commanding officer from issuing or enforcing any otherwise lawful order in the nature of a protective order to or against members of the officer's command;

''(2) pretrial restraint in accordance with Rule for Courts-Martial 304 (as set forth in the Manual for Courts-Martial, 2019 edition, or any successor rule); or

''(3) pretrial confinement in accordance with Rule for Courts-Martial 305 (as set forth in the Manual for Courts-Martial, 2019 edition, or any successor rule).

''(n) DELIVERY TO CERTAIN PERSONS.—A physical and electronic copy of any military court protective order shall be provided, as soon as practicable after issuance, to the following:

''(1) The person or persons protected by the protective order or to the guardian of such a person if such person is under the age of 18 years.

''(2) The person subject to the protective order.

''(3) To such commanding officer in the chain of command of the person subject to the protective order as the President shall prescribe for purposes of this section.

''(o) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) CONTACT.—The term 'contact' includes contact in person or through a third party, or through gifts,

''(2) COMMUNICATION.—The term 'communication' includes communication in person or through a third party, and by telephone or in writing by letter, data fax, or other electronic means.

''(3) COVERED OFFENSE.—The term 'covered offense' means the following:

''(A) An alleged offense under section 920, 920a, 920b, 920c, or 920d of this title (article 120, 120a, 120b, 120c, or 120d of the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

''(B) An alleged offense of stalking under section 930 of this title (article 130 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

''(C) An alleged offense of domestic violence under section 928b of this title (article 128b of the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

''(D) A conspiracy to commit an offense specified in subparagraphs (A) through (C) as punishable under section 881 of this title (article 81 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

''(E) A solicitation to commit an offense specified in subparagraphs (A) through (C) as punishable under section 882 of this title (article 82 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

''(F) An attempt to commit an offense specified in subparagraphs (A) through (C) as punishable under section 880 of this title (article 80 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

''(4) MILITARY JUDGE AND MILITARY MAGISTRATE.—The terms 'military judge' and 'military magistrate' mean a commissioned officer of the armed forces who is a member of the bar of a Federal court or a member of the bar of the highest court of a State and who is certified to be qualified, by reason of education, training, experience, and judicial temperament, for duty as a military judge or magistrate by the Judge Advocate General of the armed force of which the officer is a member.

''(5) PROTECTIVE ORDER.—The term 'protective order' means an order that—

''(A) restrains a person from harassing, stalking, threatening, or otherwise contacting or communicating with a victim of an alleged covered offense, or a family member or associate of the victim, or engaging in other conduct that would place such other person in reasonable fear of bodily injury to any such other person;

''(B) by its terms, explicitly prohibits—

''(i) the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force by the person against a victim of an alleged covered offense, or a family member or associate of the victim, that would reasonably be expected to cause bodily injury;

''(ii) the initiation by the person restrained of any contact or communication with such other person;

''(iii) any other behavior by the person restrained that the court deems necessary to provide for the safety and welfare of the victim of an alleged covered offense, or a family member or associate of the victim; or

''(iv) actions described by any of clauses (i) through (iii).

''(6) SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL.—The term 'Special Victims Counsel' means a Special Victims' Counsel described in section 1044e and includes a Victims' Legal Counsel of the Navy.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''1567b. Authority of military judges and military magistrates to issue military court protective orders.''.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President shall prescribe regulations implementing section 1567b of title 10, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)), by not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 3856. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title V, insert the following:

SEC. ____. RANDOMIZING SELECTION OF COURT-MARTIAL PANEL MEMBERS.

(a) DETAIL OF PANEL MEMBERS.—Section 825(e)(2) of title 10, United States Code (article 25(e)(2) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) When convening a court-martial, the convening authority shall use a randomized selection process to detail as members thereof such members of the armed forces as are qualified for duty by reason of availability. No member of an armed force is eligible to serve as a member of a general or special court-martial when the member is the accuser or a witness for the prosecution or has acted as preliminary hearing officer or as counsel in the same case.''.

(b) RANDOMIZED SELECTION PROCESS.—

(1) RANDOMIZED SELECTION PROCESS.—The Secretary of Defense shall promulgate policy and guidance that develops and implements a system for the randomized selection of qualified personnel available to the convening authority for detail to court-martial panels.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The randomized selection process developed and implemented under paragraph (1) may include parameter controls that—

(A) allow for exclusions based on scheduling availability; and

(B) allow for controls based on military rank.

(3) QUALIFIED PERSONNEL DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''qualified personnel'' means a person eligible to serve as a court-martial panel member in accordance with subsections (a) through (c) of section 825 of title 10, United States Code (article 25 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice).

(c) MANUAL FOR COURTS-MARTIAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall recommend such changes to the Manual for Courts-Martial as are necessary to ensure compliance with this section.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The President shall prescribe regulations implementing this section not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 3857. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title III, add the following:

SEC. 318. CONSIDERATION UNDER DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM FOR STATE-OWNED FACILITIES OF THE NATIONAL GUARD WITH PROVEN EXPOSURE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND WASTE.

(a) DEFINITION OF STATE-OWNED NATIONAL GUARD FACILITY.—Section 2700 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) The term 'State-owned National Guard facility' means land owned and operated by a State when such land is used for training the National Guard pursuant to chapter 5 of title 32 with funds provided by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a military department, even though such land is not under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense.''.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM.—Section 2701(a)(1) of such title is amended, in the first sentence, by inserting ''and at State-owned National Guard facilities'' before the period.

(c) RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESPONSE ACTIONS.—Section 2701(c)(1) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) Each State-owned National Guard facility being used for training at the time of actions leading to contamination by hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants.''.

SA 3858. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of part II of subtitle B of title V, add the following:

SEC. 520B. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND SERVICE IN THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 37 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 653 the following new section:

''§ 654. Non-discrimination and service in the armed forces

''Service in the armed forces shall be open to all persons who are able meet the standards and eligibility criteria for military service, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, or sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 653 the following new item:

''654. Non-discrimination and service in the armed forces.''.

SA 3859. Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle E of title X of division A, add the following:

SECTION 1043. PROHIBITION ON THE INDEFINITE DETENTION OF CITIZENS AND LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Due Process Guarantee Act''.

(b) LIMITATION ON DETENTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4001(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking ''No citizen'' and inserting the following:

''(1) No citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) Any Act of Congress that authorizes an imprisonment or detention described in paragraph (1) shall be consistent with the Constitution and expressly authorize such imprisonment or detention.''.

(2) APPLICABILITY.—Nothing in section 4001(a)(2) of title 18, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1)(B), may be construed to limit, narrow, abolish, or revoke any detention authority conferred by statute, declaration of war, authorization to use military force, or similar authority effective prior to the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) RELATIONSHIP TO AN AUTHORIZATION TO USE MILITARY FORCE, DECLARATION OF WAR, OR SIMILAR AUTHORITY.—Section 4001 of title 18, United States Code, as amended by subsection (b), is further amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

''(b)(1) No United States citizen or lawful permanent resident who is apprehended in

the United States may be imprisoned or otherwise detained without charge or trial unless such imprisonment or detention is expressly authorized by an Act of Congress.

''(2) A general authorization to use military force, a declaration of war, or any similar authority, on its own, may not be construed to authorize the imprisonment or detention without charge or trial of a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States apprehended in the United States.

''(3) Paragraph (2) shall apply to an authorization to use military force, a declaration of war, or any similar authority enacted before, on, or after the date of the enactment of the Due Process Guarantee Act.

''(4) This section may not be construed to authorize the imprisonment or detention of a citizen of the United States, a lawful permanent resident of the United States, or any other person who is apprehended in the United States.''.

SA 3860. Mr. TESTER proposed an amendment to the bill S. 796, to codify maternity care coordination programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting Moms Who Served Act of 2021''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) MATERNAL MORTALITY.—The term ''maternal mortality'' means a death occurring during pregnancy or within a one-year period after pregnancy that is caused by pregnancy-related or childbirth complications, including suicide, overdose, or other death resulting from a mental health or substance use disorder attributed to or aggravated by pregnancy-related or childbirth complications.

(2) POSTPARTUM.—The term ''postpartum'', with respect to an individual, means the one-year period beginning on the last day of the pregnancy of the individual.

(3) PREGNANCY-ASSOCIATED DEATH.—The term ''pregnancy-associated death'' means the death of a pregnant or postpartum individual, by any cause, that occurs during pregnancy or within one year following pregnancy, regardless of the outcome, duration, or site of the pregnancy.

(4) PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATH.—The term ''pregnancy-related death'' means the death of a pregnant or postpartum individual that occurs during pregnancy or within one year following pregnancy from a pregnancy complication, a chain of events initiated by pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated condition by the physiologic effects of pregnancy.

(5) RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP.—The term ''racial and ethnic minority group'' has the meaning given that term in section 1707(g)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300u–6(g)(1)).

(6) SEVERE MATERNAL MORBIDITY.—The term ''severe maternal morbidity'' means a health condition, including a mental health condition or substance use disorder, attributed to or aggravated by pregnancy or childbirth that results in significant short-term or long-term consequences to the health of the individual who was pregnant.

SEC. 3. SUPPORT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF MATERNITY CARE COORDINATION.

(a) PROGRAM ON MATERNITY CARE COORDINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out the maternity care coordination program described in Veterans Health Administration Directive 1330.03.

(2) TRAINING AND SUPPORT.—In carrying out the program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide to community maternity care providers training and support with respect to the unique needs of pregnant and postpartum veterans, particularly regarding mental and behavioral health conditions relating to the service of those veterans in the Armed Forces.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary $15,000,000 for fiscal year 2022 for the program under subsection (a)(1).

(2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Amounts authorized under paragraph (1) are authorized in addition to any other amounts authorized for maternity health care and coordination for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMUNITY MATERNITY CARE PROVIDERS.—The term ''community maternity care providers'' means maternity care providers located at non-Department facilities who provide maternity care to veterans under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, or any other law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) NON-DEPARTMENT FACILITIES.—The term ''non-Department facilities'' has the meaning given that term in section 1701 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 4. REPORT ON MATERNAL MORTALITY AND SEVERE MATERNAL MORBIDITY AMONG PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM VETERANS.

(a) GAO REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, and make publicly available, a report on maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among pregnant and postpartum veterans, with a particular focus on racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes for veterans.

(b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) To the extent practicable—

(A) the number of pregnant and postpartum veterans who have experienced a pregnancy-related death or pregnancy-associated death in the most recent 10 years of available data;

(B) the rate of pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 live births for pregnant and postpartum veterans;

(C) the number of cases of severe maternal morbidity among pregnant and postpartum veterans in the most recent year of available data;

(D) an assessment of the racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity rates among pregnant and postpartum veterans;

(E) identification of the causes of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity that are unique to veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, and infertility or miscarriages that may be caused by service in the Armed Forces;

(F) identification of the causes of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity that are unique to veterans from racial and ethnic minority groups and such other at-risk populations as the Comptroller General considers appropriate;

(G) identification of any correlations between the former rank of veterans and their maternal health outcomes;

(H) the number of veterans who have been diagnosed with infertility by a health care provider of the Veterans Health Administration each year in the most recent five years, disaggregated by age, race, ethnicity, sex, marital status, and geographical location;

(I) the number of veterans who have received a clinical diagnosis of unexplained infertility by a health care provider of the Veterans Health Administration each year in the most recent five years; and

(J) an assessment of the extent to which the rate of incidence of clinically diagnosed infertility among veterans compare or differ to the rate of incidence of clinically diagnosed infertility among the civilian population.

(2) An assessment of the barriers to determining the information required under paragraph (1) and recommendations for improvements in tracking maternal health outcomes among pregnant and postpartum veterans who—

(A) have health care coverage through the Department;

(B) are enrolled in the TRICARE program (as defined in section 1072 of title 10, United States Code);

(C) have employer-based or private insurance;

(D) are enrolled in the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

(E) are eligible to receive health care furnished by—

(i) the Indian Health Service;

(ii) Tribal health programs; or

(iii) urban Indian organizations; or

(F) are uninsured.

(3) Recommendations for legislative and administrative actions to increase access to mental and behavioral health care for pregnant and postpartum veterans who screen positively for maternal mental or behavioral health conditions.

(4) Recommendations to address homelessness, food insecurity, poverty, and related issues among pregnant and postpartum veterans.

(5) Recommendations on how to effectively educate maternity care providers on best practices for providing maternity care services to veterans that addresses the unique maternal health care needs of veteran populations.

(6) Recommendations to reduce maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among pregnant and postpartum veterans and to address racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes for each of the groups described in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of paragraph (2).

(7) Recommendations to improve coordination of care between the Department and non-Department facilities for pregnant and postpartum veterans, including recommendations to improve—

(A) health record interoperability; and

(B) training for the directors of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks, directors of medical facilities of the Department, chiefs of staff of such facilities, maternity care coordinators, and staff of relevant non-Department facilities.

(8) An assessment of the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to access maternal health data collected by the Department of Health and Human Services and, if applicable, recommendations to increase such authority.

(9) To the extent applicable, an assessment of potential causes of or explanations for lower maternal mortality rates among veterans who have health care coverage through the Department of Veterans Affairs compared to maternal mortality rates in the general population of the United States.

(10) Any other information the Comptroller General determines appropriate with respect to the reduction of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among pregnant

and postpartum veterans and to address racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes for veterans.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ''Tribal health program'' and ''urban Indian organization'' have the meanings given those terms in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. LUJÁN . Mr. President, I have 5 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the majority and minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 9 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA, AND BROADBAND

The Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Michael Jones, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the year so he can participate in the National Defense Authorization Act consideration.

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

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my legislative fellows Stephanie Gibbs, Tara Maher, and Tom Rakus be accorded floor privileges.

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

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2021, THROUGH MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2021

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn to then reconvene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, October 8, 11:30 a.m.; Tuesday, October 12, 12 noon; and Thursday, October 14, at 5 p.m. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate adjourns on Thursday, October 14, it next convene at 3 p.m. on Monday, October 18; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the O'Hearn nomination, with all provisions under the previous order in effect. Finally, that if the Gelpi nomination is confirmed, that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2021, AT 11:30 A.M.

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 9:23 p.m., adjourned until Friday, October 8, 2021, at 11:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ELIZABETH DE LEON BHARGAVA, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE JOHN BOBBITT.

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

KATHY K. IM, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2024, VICE LORETTA CHERYL SUTLIFF, TERM EXPIRED.

THOMAS E. ROTHMAN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2026, VICE JUDITH M. DAVENPORT, TERM EXPIRED.

ELIZABETH M. SEMBLER, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2026. (REAPPOINTMENT)

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

ELAINE TREVINO, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE CHIEF AGRICULTURAL NEGOTIATOR, OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, VICE GREGORY DOUD.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM S. LYNN

DISCHARGED NOMINATION

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions was discharged from further consideration of the following nomination pursuant to S. Res. 27 and the nomination was placed on the Executive Calendar:

CATHERINE ELIZABETH LHAMON, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate October 7, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

XOCHITL TORRES SMALL, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

ALEXANDER HOEHN–SARIC, OF MARYLAND, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION.

ALEXANDER HOEHN–SARIC, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM OCTOBER 27, 2020.