Once again, it is abundantly clear that the Green New Deal is a bad deal for American families.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Nachmanoff nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael S. Nachmanoff, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nachmanoff nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 435 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—2

Feinstein	Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Nagala nomination.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sarala Vidya Nagala, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

VOTE ON NAGALA NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nagala nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 436 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—2

Feinstein	Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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. 367, Omar Antonio Williams, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

Charles E. Schumer, Ben Ray Luján, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher A. Coons, Elizabeth Warren, John Hickenlooper, Jacky Rosen, Brian Schatz, Tammy Baldwin, Patrick J. Leahy, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Cory A. Booker, Raphael Warnock, Alex Padilla.

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 Omar Antonio Williams, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 437 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—2

Feinstein	Rounds

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 52, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss again the scheme by rightwing donor interests to capture

and control our Supreme Court, just like big industries have captured and controlled regulatory agencies through history.

In these speeches, I have covered the origins, motivations, and central players in the scheme; and, today, I am here to respond to a little bit of counterprogramming from the scheme.

So, obviously, Job 1, if you have captured an agency, is to pretend it is not captured; it is still legit.

Well, on Thursday, the minority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, one of the principal operatives of the court capture scheme, traveled to The Heritage Foundation, one of the central dark-money groups in the court capture scheme, to toast Justice Clarence Thomas, one of the most ardent justices in pursuing the scheme's donors' goals and purposes.

Senator MCCONNELL opened by lauding Justice Thomas for his campaign to overturn decades of precedent protecting women's constitutional right to abortion. That is an important point to note because the court is set to take up not one but two cases offering the new 6–3 Republican majority a chance to tear down Roe v. Wade.

But his other mission was to defend the court capture scheme, and that is an important mission right now because the court just hit an all-time low on Gallup's national approval survey. According to a poll out this month by one of the most respected pollsters in the country, about two-thirds of Americans think politics guides the Supreme Court's decisions. And that is not a partisan opinion. Republicans and Democrats share that view in equal proportion.

And Americans aren't wrong. When big Republican donor interests come before the Court, they win—it looks like every time. I have shown the pattern. I have published an article on it. It is currently at 80 to 0. Lawyers would love to take evidence like that—an 80-to-0 record—into court as pattern evidence of bias.

So when the evidence is bad, what do you do? You blow smoke. There is an old, old propaganda technique of accusing your adversary of the exact wrong you are committing. It is such an old propaganda technique that it even has a Latin name: the ''tu quoque fallacy,'' from the Latin for ''you too.'' The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as ''retorting a charge upon one's accuser.'' It is a rhetorical trick.

At Heritage, Senator MCCONNELL used this rhetorical trick, retorting a charge that critics like me of what has happened to the Court were trying to politicize the Court. Now, that is a particularly tricky version of this rhetorical trick because it is an accusation of something that we did not do, coming from people who actually did that.

We have all seen in plain view the mischief done by Senate Republicans to capture the Court for big special interests. They weren't even subtle. So the ''tu quoque'' rhetorical trick says to accuse us of what they did.

The Republican leader's rhetorical charge stood on a Supreme Court brief that I wrote, along with a number of my colleagues. And in that brief, we quoted a Quinnipiac poll. That Quinnipiac poll showed that a majority of American voters believe the Court is—and I quote the poll here—''motivated mainly by politics''—''motivated mainly by politics'' and the poll continued that those voters believed the Supreme Court should be—and, here, I am quoting the poll—''restructured in order to reduce the influence of politics.'' That is the language from the poll question. And in our brief, we quoted it precisely.

In his telling, Senator MCCONNELL leaves out the quotation marks and turns what was essentially an uncontested observation of fact of what that poll said, using the language of that poll, into what the rightwing has constantly replayed and cooked up as a threat to the Court. He also suggested that I had called for expansion of the Court, which I have actually not done. But never let the facts get in the way of a good story, huh?

In his telling, the majority leader's telling, it is Democrats who are up to no good at the Court. Let's look at what that telling leaves out because it masks a lot.

First, it masks the Court's partisan record, the record I have described: Justice Thomas and his fellow Republican appointees in the 5-to-4 and now 6-to-3 majority on the Robert's Court has handed down over 80 partisan 5-to-4 decisions benefiting easily identified Republican donor interests. Like I said, by my reckoning, it is an 80-to-0 record for the big donors. His telling masks all of that.

It also masks the entire Republican Court-packing operation that yielded three donor-selected Justices and hundreds of lower court judges during the Trump Presidency.

It masks the big donors' nominations turnstile at the Federalist Society, where they decided who would and would not become a Justice. It was insourced to the White House for it to vet and select Trump nominees.

It masks the dark money political attack groups, which used massive anonymous donations to apply political pressure on behalf of the donors' nominees.

And it masks Leonard Leo and the shady $250 million web of dark money groups outed by the Washington Post for packing and influencing the Court.

What else does it mask? It masks the influence operation built to steer those Justices' attention to rightwing donor priorities.

It masks the armada of amici curiae—so-called friends of the court—appearing before the Court by the orchestrated dozen, funded by dark money.

It masks the dark money front groups that comb the country for cases that can catapult selected controversies before the Court to help the Justices change precedent; it masks the special interest fast lane those front groups have established to get cases quickly before the Court, a fast lane the Court indulges; and it masks the hot house dark money so-called think tanks, like the Heritage Foundation where Senator MCCONNELL spoke, where legal theories benefiting Big Donor interests are planted and watered and fertilized and propagated for the Court to adopt.

And, last, it masks what Republicans did, shredding norms and rules that the Senate had long relied on to manage judicial nominations, the scrapping of the Supreme Court filibuster; the scrapping of the circuit court blue slip; the acceptance of preposterous assertions of executive privilege to hide nominees' records; the refusal to grant Merrick Garland so much as courtesy visits, let alone a hearing; the invention of the so-called Garland rule about not confirming Justices near an election; the mad rush to confirm Brett Kavanaugh under the cloud of barely examined sexual assault allegations; and then the hypocritical full 180 reversing that so-called Garland rule to jam a rightwing Justice onto the Court 8 days before an election.

This was all done in plain view. This was not subtle. You have got to be gaslighting really hard to not pay attention to all that evidence.

I will tell you what, we weren't the only ones watching. The American people are watching, and they are fed up with all of this. They trust their noses, and they know this reeks.

Senator MCCONNELL and I do agree on one thing. There are, as he said, ''storm clouds'' swirling around the Court.

I also agree with him when he said this; he said:

> One of our country's two major political movements has decided they're fed up with trying to win the contest of ideas within the institutions the framers left us and would rather take aim at the institutions themselves.

That statement is exactly true. It is just that Senator MCCONNELL got exactly wrong which party is the guilty one. Against that litany of interference and influence and dark money all around the Court that I just described, one misquote from a brief—it is not even a contest.

Here is a final quotation to set next to Senator MCCONNELL's. It comes from Lewis Powell a few months before he took his seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. In a memo he wrote to one of the most significant forces in Republican politics, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—a memo, by the way, that was never disclosed to the Senate during his confirmation proceedings. Here is what he wrote:

> Under our constitutional system, especially with an activist-minded Supreme Court, the judiciary may be the most important instrument for social, economic and political change.

Powell branded the courts a major element of what he called ''The Neglected Political Arena'' that Big Business and rightwing ideologues should

move in and exploit. Exploiting that is exactly what the rightwing donor scheme is. It enmired the Court in dark money influence. It packed the judiciary with judges selected to rule in the big donors' favor. It won an 80-to-0 rout of partisan decisions benefiting Big Donor interests. And it is steering the Court to protect the dark money that was the prime vehicle for capturing the Court in the first place.

Oh, yes, indeed, the Court has been politicized, but look at the evidence. We weren't the ones who did it, and no amount of smoke can obscure the evidence of how this Court became the Court that dark money built.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, after months of—well, I won't call it infighting; I will call it intraparty negotiating, our Democratic colleagues are still trying to reach an agreement on their multitrillion-dollar tax-and-spending spree legislation. They have yet to decide how much money they want to spend. I think they started—the Senator from Vermont started at $6 trillion, and then we heard it was $3.5 trillion. Now we are hearing that it may be more on the order of what the Senator from West Virginia said was his cap of $1.5 trillion. We still also don't know how much they are willing to raise taxes to cover the cost or how far they want to move America into a European welfare state.

Still, our colleagues are trying to reach a deal in a matter of days. Our colleagues are rushing to compile the largest peacetime tax hike in American history and see just how much government overreach those hard-earned tax dollars can buy.

Some Members experienced buyer's remorse before even swiping the taxpayers' credit card, so our colleagues are trying to scale back this massive spending bill. We read, but we don't know, but it is reported that they have cut certain programs, like free college, which, despite the name, we know that free programs actually cost money because somebody has to pay for them. We also read that they are scaling back other plans, including paid leave and the expanded child tax credit, to reduce the short-term costs and hope for more money down the line.

I think, if truth be told, once these policies are established, many times they are very difficult to repeal later on, which is why they are trying to establish a toehold even for a short period of time. But even with these pared-down proposals, there is still plenty of government overreach to go around.

One of the biggest dreams of our Democratic colleagues is government-run healthcare. We have heard the left embrace Medicare for All as its rallying cry. Well, the Senator who popularized that policy is now chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, Senator SANDERS, and he wields a lot of power when it comes to this particular tax-and-spending bill. It is no surprise that his top priority is a dramatic expansion of Medicare.

Initially, we read that our colleagues wanted to lower the age of Medicare eligibility by 5 or 10 years, making tens of millions of younger Americans eligible for this benefit. This, of course, comes at a time when Medicare is in financial trouble already. In just 5 years, the trust fund for Medicare Part A is scheduled to go insolvent.

It hardly seems right, while your boat is in danger of sinking, to add more and more people into the boat. Instead of fixing those problems or providing stability for Medicare, our colleagues want to spread those waning dollars even thinner.

The sky-high cost of expanding eligibility seems to have eliminated that provision. Again, this is based on reporting since no one has actually seen the documents, but a massive expansion of benefits apparently is still being discussed. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this expansion would cost more than $350 billion in the first 10 years. We will see if the chairman of the Budget Committee is able to keep this provision off the chopping block.

But this is only part of the plan to put the government in greater control of our daily lives—of all Americans' daily lives. Another big-ticket item which certainly must poll well is free childcare. Again, nothing is free; it just means somebody—not you—is having to pay for it. But free programs, as it turns out, don't come cheap. In this case, the original pricetag was pegged at $450 billion.

The American people won't just pay more in taxes to cover this program; many families will end up spending more on childcare. One left-leaning think tank analyzed the impact of this free childcare bill and found that it is likely to have a devastating impact on middle-class families. According to the People's Policy Project, the Democrats' childcare plan would cause middle-class families to pay more than $13,000 more a year in childcare. That is not just a price increase for the top 1 percent; that is for people who earn more than their State's median income, which in Texas is just under $62,000. It is hard to imagine a family of four who brings home $62,000 a year having an extra $13,000 to spend on childcare, especially when they are already being pummeled by inflation and rising costs.

We will see all the ways that President Biden was wrong when he said that ''my Build Back Better agenda costs zero dollars.'' Of course, nobody believes that, but the President keeps saying it over and over and over again. But the American people are pretty smart, and they understand when the wool is being pulled over their eyes or when they are being sold a bill of goods by saying: Yeah, we are going to spend $3.5 trillion, but it is actually going to cost zero. It is really an insult to their intelligence.

Our colleagues across the aisle have also proposed a litany of tax increases on families, workers, and small businesses to cover part of the costs of this massive spending bill, and they hope the increase in the size and power of the Internal Revenue Service will make sure that Big Brother doesn't miss anything.

The administration wants to double the size of the Internal Revenue Service by increasing the number of agents by 15 percent every year for the next decade. Well, we have already seen what a politically motivated IRS can do. We know about the leaking of taxpayer information recently, and we remember the IRS targeting controversy during the Obama administration. IRS bureaucrats subjected conservative groups to a double standard when it came to scrutiny compared to left-leaning nonprofit groups, and it looks like the Biden administration may want to dust off that old playbook.

The administration also wants to give the IRS unprecedented power to snoop in your bank account. The administration proposed requiring banks to give the IRS data on accounts with more than $600 in annual transactions. So that means every time you bought a washing machine or a refrigerator, you paid your rent, maybe paid your mortgage, maybe bought a car, that information would be reported to the IRS. The IRS already knows how much you earn because that is reported, but that is apparently not enough for the IRS surveillance. They want to make sure that the IRS, like Big Brother, knows everything you do, everywhere you go, and who you associate with.

Well, this was a $600 annual transaction minimum, and, of course, that is for an entire year. It is easy to see how that would swoop up virtually everybody in this new government surveillance program. This obviously is not designed to catch billionaires evading their tax responsibilities. It is tough to imagine somebody who wouldn't get caught up in that threshold over the course of an entire year. A single month of rent is higher than 600 bucks in most Texas cities.

Well, we know what happened. The blowback was so fierce that our Democratic colleagues said: Well, it is not going to be $600 a year. We will up it to $10,000 a year. But, yeah, we will continue the surveillance of your personal private financial information just so we are sure we don't miss anybody.

Well, even at a threshold of $10,000, a widow who gets a monthly stipend from Social Security for $1,500 a month would obviously be a target of IRS snooping under this proposal.

It is pretty obvious this is a huge violation of personal privacy, and people are rightfully angry about it. I think people are angry because they don't want to be presumed to be a tax cheat by their own government. I have received letters from nearly 60,000 of my

constituents who are opposed to such massive government overreach and invasion of their privacy.

We know it is also an incredible financial and paperwork burden on financial institutions—community banks, credit unions, and the like. Imagine the time and the people and the hours necessary to comply with this new surveillance by your own government. Transmitting the sensitive financial information of almost every customer of a bank or financial institution to the IRS would involve a lot of time and a lot of money that these banks or credit unions may or may not have.

I have cosponsored a bill with Senator TIM SCOTT from South Carolina to prevent the IRS from monitoring American citizens' private financial information, and I was pleased to see our colleague from West Virginia, Senator MANCHIN, cast doubt on the future of this controversial and unnecessary provision.

The truth is, it doesn't matter if the pricetag of this bill is $5.5 trillion, $3.5 trillion, or $1.5 trillion; the goal is the same: to permanently transform America and the role that government plays in our everyday lives. Whether that is through the healthcare system, childcare, or through the IRS, there is no line too sacred to cross in pursuit of this ideological nirvana. Our colleagues continue working behind closed doors to determine just how much socialism they want to force on the American people.

We still don't know how much this bill will cost—again, nobody has seen it yet outside of the small group of Democrats who are actually negotiating—or how much harm it will actually inflict. But we do know one thing: This is not what the American people bargained for in the last election. The American voters elected a 50–50 Senate, reduced the Democratic majority in the House, and took President Biden at his word when he promised to work in a bipartisan fashion across the aisle. This is not what the American people bargained for. They did not vote to make Joe Biden the next FDR, and they did not vote to have this Build Back Better bill be the next New Deal.

We will continue, once we are able to find out precisely what is in this bill, to do everything we can to fight against this irresponsible taxing-and-spending bonanza.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

JOHN R. LEWIS VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2021

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to speak in favor of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021 in the expectation that the body will soon have a vote to proceed to debate on the bill, to proceed to debate in a forum before the American public, with an offer to our Republican colleagues to offer amendments, offer improvements, offer adjustments. This is incredibly important.

We had a vote on the Freedom to Vote Act last week, a bill that I am proud to be a cosponsor of, along with the Presiding Officer. And I am proud to be a cosponsor of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

What does the John Lewis bill do? It basically does two things. First, it restores a vigorous preclearance requirement that was part of the original Voting Rights Act, section 5, that was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2013 in the Shelby v. Mississippi opinion.

The Supreme Court in Shelby said that you could have a preclearance requirement but you couldn't apply that requirement only to the geographic jurisdictions that were covered in the original 1965 act; Congress would have to analyze and come up with a new set of criteria for who should have to get preclearance done.

The second thing the John Lewis bill does is it responds to a Supreme Court decision that was decided this summer, Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee, to specifically lay out the elements of a claim under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act—a claim that a local election practice or a State practice dilutes the strength of minority voting.

The preclearance requirement is the one that is the most important to me because, as a former mayor and Governor of Virginia, of Richmond and then the Commonwealth of Virginia, I lived under preclearance requirements, and I will spend a little bit of time talking about what that is like because it is actually pretty easy and pretty helpful.

But the way the John Lewis bill, in my view, very adroitly fixes the Shelby problem is it says: OK. Starting now, we are not going to treat the South differently than anywhere else in the country; we will treat every part of the country exactly the same. You are subject to a preclearance requirement as a State government or a local government if you have had a pattern of Voting Rights Act violations during the previous 25 years.

If you had just one, that isn't enough. This has to have been a pattern. And if there has been a pattern of Voting Rights Act violations, you are subject to preclearance. You have to submit proposed electoral changes to the Justice Department, and you have to keep doing that until you have had 10 years in a row where you haven't been subject to any voting rights violation.

So it doesn't penalize the South. Every ZIP Code in this country—North, South, East, West, Midwest—is only subject to preclearance if there has been a pattern of voting rights violations—a significant pattern—over the previous 25 years. And as soon as you have 10 years without a voting rights violation, you can ''bail out'' of preclearance, and you don't have to submit your electoral changes to the Justice Department anymore, unless you commit new violations.

How reasonable. How reasonable.

We would want to have additional scrutiny of jurisdictions' voting rights practices if they have committed voting rights violations.

I was a city councilman and mayor of Richmond from 1994 until 2001. And every time we changed a polling place or did redistricting after a census or contemplated new rules about the timing in primary elections, we had to submit it to the Justice Department for a preclearance because Richmond—the capital of the Confederacy—had a documented history of suppressing minority vote for a very long time.

I was the Governor of Virginia—Lieutenant Governor and Governor—from 2002 until 2010. And the same thing at the State level: when we did redistricting after censuses, when we contemplated in our legislature new voting rules, we had to submit to the Justice Department, preclearance requirement. We would send it to them 90 days before the proposed change would go into effect. The Justice Department would analyze the change. And then they, almost in every instance, in my experience, would reach back out and say: That is fine. Your change is fine. You can go ahead and implement it.

Sometimes they would reach out and say: We have a question or could you think about this; might you make an adjustment? So it was a dialogue. And that dialogue was productive.

And then the Justice Department would give Richmond or Virginia a green light and we would make those changes and we would make them with some assurance. It was actually helpful. It was helpful to run a change by the Justice Department and have it looked at by voting rights experts to make sure that we weren't unwittingly, we weren't intentionally—but that we weren't unwittingly doing anything that would suppress anyone's votes.

And once we got that preclearance green light, we would move ahead with the voting changes with confidence. It was simple. It was easy. It was a standard practice that we were all used to. It didn't impose any additional burden or time on the city government or the State government.

And so it deeply troubles me that colleagues of mine now are reluctant to go back to a vigorous preclearance requirement for jurisdictions that have had an established pattern of voting rights violations. This preclearance fix in the John Lewis Act is extremely important.

Two more points. I want to plead with my colleagues in the GOP—the Republican Party—on this bill, and then I want to express my sense of urgency about it.

By my reading of our history, the Republican Party throughout most of its life has been a great voting rights party—a great voting rights party. In the aftermath of the Civil War, it was the Republican-led Senate and House that passed the 15th Amendment—the

constitutional prohibition against any jurisdiction using race to disqualify a voter.

I would like to say that the Democrats in the late 1860s were supportive of those provisions; it was the Republican Party, frankly, that got the Constitution improved by passing the 15th Amendment.

The 19th Amendment, pages, guaranteed women the right to vote. Now, that was done in a Democratic administration, President Woodrow Wilson, at a time when Congress was majority Democrat, but it was done with the full support of the Republican Party. The 19th Amendment had strong Republican Party support.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, which the John Lewis bill goes in and amends—it was done at the time that Democrats had the majority in this body, but it would not have happened without Senate Republicans. In fact, Senate Republican were more supportive of the Voting Rights Act than were Senate Democrats in 1965.

So there has been a pattern—1870, 1919, 1965—of the Republican Party being a party through much of its life—being a party that was interested in expanding the franchise and encouraging more people to vote.

It happened again when Richard Nixon was President.

The 26th Amendment, pages, giving 18-year-olds the right to vote, changing the Federal voting age in Federal elections from 21 to 18, that was done under President Richard Nixon—again, with both Republican and Democratic support.

The Voting Rights Act, after it was passed in 1965, had to be reauthorized every 5 or 10 years. And it was often reauthorized by unanimous vote, with Republican Senators largely being on board.

It really only was about the time of the beginning of the Obama Presidency, frankly, that the GOP, which had been rock-solid stalwarts for expanding the franchise, began to change.

When the Shelby decision was reached in 2013, it was just a couple of years after the Voting Rights Act had been reauthorized with solid and overwhelming Republican support.

And this particular fix in the John Lewis bill to say, OK, preclearance; we are not going to put a scarlet letter on you if you are in a Southern State; we will have everyone precleared if you had a pattern of demonstrated voting rights violations—we went to Republican colleagues with that in a bill near immediately after the Shelby decision and were not able to find even one—even one—Republican in the House or in the Senate that would sponsor a fix to this bill.

It is my hope that when we call this vote up in the next couple of days that colleagues of mine in the Grand Old Party, who have had this more than century-long tradition of being a party willing to expand the franchise and encourage people to vote, will reclaim their own heritage and decide to be a pro-voting rights party.

Last thing, sense of urgency. I was not only the mayor of Richmond and the Governor of Virginia—a State with a significant African-American population and a State with a very notable history, a challenging history, a painful history, a triumphant history as well; like most history, Virginia history is so mixed; there is so much pain and tragedy and triumph and hard to make sense out of it—but I have always been passionate for voting rights because of my understanding of our history and, particularly, the disenfranchisement that African Americans, women, and others have faced.

One thing I have never faced, though, is I have never faced disenfranchisement. I have been a supporter of voting rights for those who have. I was a civil rights lawyer. I did voting rights cases. So I have been a supporter. I have been an ally. I have been an advocate. But never in my life—never in my life—did I feel like TIM KAINE, a Caucasian male born in 1958—that somebody was trying to disenfranchise me.

I had that experience for 1 day of my life. And as passionate as I was before that 1 day, I now understand this in a completely different way. That day was January 6, 2021. As we were here in the Capitol and the Capitol was under attack by people who were attacking to try to stop the certification of the November 2020 election, they were basically trying to disenfranchise 81 million people who had voted for Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS.

And my overwhelming reaction that day was complicated, and I was having a hard time figuring out what I was feeling. Even when we heard gunshots, even when we were being escorted and could see the rampagers not far from us, I was not afraid; I was furious. I wasn't feeling fear; I was feeling anger. And I realized later that that anger stemmed from the fact that at age 62, almost 63, for the first time in my life, just for a moment, I had a sense of what it meant to have someone else trying to disenfranchise me.

Many of my friends and constituents in Richmond—they have felt that sense for their entire lives. They felt it very personally. They feel it very personally. They hate that feeling. They want us to be that small ''d'' democracy, where everyone can participate. I had never felt that personally, but on that day, I did. And that day gave me just a glimpse—just a glimpse—of how devastating, demoralizing, frightening, angering it is to know that society is trying to keep you away from participation.

So that experience, which was just for a day because on January 7 I was back to my norm, where no one was trying to disenfranchise me—and yet those actions that are being taken in statehouses around this country to take away people's rights to participate, they mean something different to me than they did on January 5 because I had that one moment where I felt like this is me.

I sort of hated that day, but if it took that day to help me realize the importance of this issue, then that day had a purpose in my life that was not just a negative purpose, a positive one. And it is my deep hope that both parties, as we have before—Democrats and Republicans—will join together to protect people's rights to participate in this greatest democracy on Earth.

I look forward to this debate. I look forward to getting a voting rights protection measure that is meaningful through this body, as has happened before. If we can do it here, we will be honoring a history, where, even when it has been tough, we have been able to do it. And we can do it again.

And with that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, beginning in his first days in office, President Biden paused all oil and gas leasing on Federal lands and then killed the thousands of jobs supported by the Keystone XL Pipeline. Fast forward to today, prices at the pump are more than 40 percent increased from a year ago. Home heating costs have increased by more than 20 percent going into the winter.

Under President Biden's new policies, instead of reducing this burden on hard-working Arkansans, President Biden has made it clear that his agenda trumps the needs of American families and is doubling down with his new reckless, energy-destroying spending bill that will only increase these costs.

This far-left Democrat wish list makes the undeliverable promises, proposes to dramatically drive up costs for every American, would eliminate thousands of jobs in the energy sector, and would accelerate our already rapid inflation.

This is not a realistic approach to address our country's environmental energy needs. Heavyhanded rules that reduced energy supplies are likewise counterproductive.

We should not turn our back on the existing energy sources that we have in North America that lower gas prices and reduce our dependence on oil from unstable regions. American manufacturers need long-term access to affordable energy so our country can compete globally against nations with much lower environmental standards. Also, in the event of a national security or energy crisis, for example, access to our resources will be essential.

Bureaucratic overreach and unwarranted spending will not only drive up energy costs on consumers but will also do the most harm to low- and middle-income families. Think of the impact this would have on single moms and seniors on fixed incomes. These families are most affected by burdensome regulations and can least afford a costly, unworkable energy policy.

We must continue to use an all-of-the-above approach to diversify our Nation's energy portfolio. Working to increase exploration and production of natural gas and oil, continuing the development and use of coal, along with support for renewable and nuclear energy, should all play a role in our national energy strategy. America's energy supply should be diverse, stable, and affordable.

President Biden is pushing hard to get Congress to agree to his plans in time for this week's climate summit. It is fitting that the summit is in Scotland, as European nations have shown us the dangers in addressing climate change the wrong way.

Poorly conceived mandates to eliminate fossil fuels have resulted in a cavalcade of problems for agriculture across the continent.

Surging natural gas prices have resulted in fertilizer plants closing, created a food-grade CO_2 shortage crisis that is hurting pork and poultry processing. Beverage producers are also facing the same challenge getting CO_2, leading to the likely scenario of widespread disruption across the food and beverage sector.

Our friends in the UK went heavy on wind power only to have the wind stop blowing, forcing energy companies to scramble for gas reserves, and consumers to face much higher bills.

As ranking member on the Agriculture Committee, I take these warnings very, very seriously. The President's plan would be an absolute gut punch to our Nation's family farmers and rural America as a whole, especially as inflation continues to skyrocket under this administration's watch.

The cost of farming is on the rise. Land, fuel, seed, fertilizer, and livestock feed prices are all increasing. Soaring costs of inputs come at a time when the farm economy had only recently begun to turn a corner. Now with further increases, farmers, once again, face the possibility of a downturn in the farm economy as profits dwindle.

Propane—heavily relied upon in rural America for agricultural production and home heating—has seen prices almost double this year. In fact, market experts are predicting an ''Armageddon'' as we head toward the winter. Now President Biden and his allies in Congress would enact policies that double down on economic hardship by eliminating affordable sources of energy, particularly those relied upon in rural America.

Much of the President's agenda comes directly from the Green New Deal, a far-left agenda that most Americans have roundly rejected. Working with President Trump, we successfully fought off the Green New Deal. Now President Biden wants to resurrect it and rebrand it as ''Build Back Better.''

Given the troubles Democrats have had writing their bill, it seems that America doesn't want it either.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, a number of us are down on the Senate floor here talking about the disastrous Biden administration policies that from day one—day one—have sought to increase energy prices and put American workers out of work.

How have they been doing that?

Well, they are shutting down the production of American energy. All over the country, they are going after infrastructure, particularly pipelines, not allowing those to be built.

They have energy or climate czars not confirmed by the Senate—John Kerry, Gina McCarthy—who are going to financial intuitions in America saying: Don't invest in American energy.

And then we are hearing reports that John Kerry is going to countries in Asia, saying: Don't buy American LNG.

You can't make this stuff up.

Two days ago in the Washington Post, another story. John Kerry was saying to President Biden: Hey, we have to be softer on China so we can get them to maybe commit a promise that they will never keep in Scotland.

You can't make this up. Let's be soft. The Chinese are mad about us raising issues about Hong Kong and Taiwan. John Kerry is saying maybe we should tone that down to get the Communist Party of China to agree to some empty promises on climate. You can't make this up.

So what we are seeing is spiking energy prices at the pump for working families. Here is the question everybody should be asking—I hope our friends in the media ask it, certainly—of the Biden administration: Is this intentional? Are you really trying to drive up energy prices that is hurting working families?

My view is, I think the answer is yes.

The President had a townhall last week. He seemed to not have a clue about a bunch of issues, but particularly on energy prices.

And just yesterday, there was an article about how Gina McCarthy was quoted as saying there will be opportunities with these high energy prices:

> Soaring commodity prices stemming from a surge in energy demand and limited supply, should accelerate the move to renewables around the world.

This is a senior Biden administration official saying: Hey, we are actually trying to drive these prices up. Sorry, working families in America. Winter is coming. You are really going to be hurting. Maybe the world will move to renewables.

You can't make this up.

To me, this is one of the biggest betrayals of working families and working men and women in U.S. history: an administration coming in on purpose to drive up energy prices—Gina McCarthy says so—knowing it is going to hurt working families.

Heck, I wouldn't be surprised if President Biden will be calling on our citizens to wear a Jimmy Carter-style cardigan soon.

What they are doing is building back better to the seventies: high inflation; gas lines; high energy prices; empty shelves; lack of workers; energy-producing adversaries, like Russia, empowered; begging OPEC to produce more oil. That is literally what is going on.

Madam President, we have a much better plan. In the next few weeks, some of my colleagues—Senator CRAMER, Senator LUMMIS, and a number of others—we are going to be putting forward a plan on what is working. We need to build on what is working in America.

Let me give you a couple of statistics that matter. Since 2005, the United States has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by almost 15 percent, more than any other major economy in the world. That is a fact. You don't hear it from President Biden. Heck, the Secretary of Energy thinks we are the sinner. They don't recognize China as producing almost three times the amount of greenhouse gas emissions than we are. Estimates are that 100 percent of the increase in global greenhouse gas emissions are going to come from non-industrialized countries—China, India, others—yet they are putting all the pain on Americans.

If we export and continue to export clean-burning American natural gas as we currently do to India, to China, to Korea, to Japan, that could have a huge impact on reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

So what we are going to be doing is we are going to be working with others—we certainly want some of our Democratic colleagues to join this commonsense approach.

The American Energy, Jobs, and Climate Plan is focused on all-of-the-above energy using technology—yes, building out the renewable sector in conjunction with our other energy that we currently have; empowering American workers; not giving him and her pink slips, which is the Biden way; enacting reform; knowing that we need other resources, like critical minerals that we have in abundance in Alaska and America, for the renewable sector; permanent reform so we can bring all energy projects online—oil, gas, renewable, nuclear, all of the above. That is the power; and, of course, using our resources to leverage our foreign policy advantage over our allies.

As we start rolling out our plan, we need to compare it with the Biden Green New Deal. We need to compare it with the Biden Green New Deal. Just look at the comparison, what we are going to be doing over here in the blue with our plan and what the President and his team—no offense to some of my colleagues, led by a number of them—on the Green New Deal.

We will create millions of jobs. They are putting people out of work as we speak.

We have the ability to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. They are

going to China to get empty promises from dictators—not going to work, no matter how much John Kerry kowtows to the Communists.

We are going to restore energy dominance. They want to crush it.

We want to invest in manufacturing and other elements that will produce millions of jobs for working-class Americans. Right now, they want to rely on China to source everything we have in America.

And, of course, we want reasonable energy prices. And, as I already mentioned, Gina McCarthy and others are trying to drive up American energy costs on Americans' backs so they can go to Europe, drink a glass of wine, and tell them how well they are doing in terms of crushing our energy sector. The American people don't want that.

Our plan is what is supported by the American people, not these crazy Green New Deal policies that are hurting men and women, particularly working families and energy sector workers, more than any other policy of any administration in the history of the country.

I am glad a number of my colleagues are down here to continue this discussion. I look forward to participating with them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators CAPITO, BARRASSO, LEE, KAINE, and myself be allowed to finish our remarks before the previously scheduled rollcall votes.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I am pleased to be here and follow my good friend, the Senator from the great State of Alaska, a State that produces an incredible amount of energy, as does my State of North Dakota.

And, of course, we are here to talk about how this administration's policies are harming America's energy producers and leading to skyrocketing energy prices.

Americans are paying more for energy, whether it is at the gas pump or their monthly utility bills. This week, the average price of a gallon of gasoline in my home State of North Dakota is $3.19. That is up from $2.27 in January. That is an increase of almost a dollar—about a 50-percent increase. Every consumer pays that when they pull up to the pump. Of course, that hits low-income people disproportionately.

North Dakotans are also facing higher home heating costs for this winter with the price of natural gas having almost tripled. Same thing: think about hard-working men and women who now are paying that higher utility bill as a result of these policies. Higher energy prices drive up the costs of everything we consume, and lower-income Americans, as I say, are disproportionately impacted when a larger share of their paycheck must go towards covering higher energy costs.

Last week, the President blamed OPEC for higher gas prices.

Why is our country a global energy powerhouse in this situation?

Just a decade ago, North Dakotans helped crack the code on domestic energy production in the Bakken, helping the United States become the world's largest oil and gas producer. We unleashed the potential of our abundant energy reserves and, as a result, our country became a net exporter of energy in 2019.

Americans benefited from our energy independence through record low energy prices, as well as strengthen economic and national security. Energy security is national security, yet, since January, President Biden has been saying ''no'' to America's energy producers.

The President is blocking new energy leases on Federal lands, stifling the opportunity to harness our abundant taxpayer-owned energy reserves. The President also killed the Keystone XL Pipeline and is actively discouraging needed private-sector investment in new oil, gas, and coal production.

Yet this administration allowed completion of Russia's Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, which, of course, moves gas from Putin's Russia into Germany and Europe. And instead of supporting our own domestic energy workforce, the Biden administration is asking Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the OPEC nations to pump more oil.

Why on Earth are we asking foreign countries with less stringent environmental practices to produce more energy when our own domestic producers are ready and willing to answer the call?

Despite this administration's failed policy and corresponding higher energy costs, the President and Democrats are doubling down on their Green New Deal agenda.

The Democrats' reckless tax-and-spend bill will only worsen today's high energy prices by making American energy production more expensive and less reliable.

The President's policies will not only increase the pain at the pump, they are threatening the ability to keep the lights on. These climate policies will accelerate the grid's reliance on intermittent renewable sources of power at the expense of always-available baseload generation from sources like coal and nuclear power.

We need to maintain our baseload sources of electric generation that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, regardless of weather conditions, to keep the lights on and homes warm as we enter the winter months.

And rather than turning to OPEC with less stable places in the world—our adversaries, in fact, like Russia, an adversary—we should be empowering our American energy workers to develop our abundant energy reserves here at home using the latest and greatest technologies to do it with better environmental surge. More supply of energy means lower costs for consumers. It is as simple as that.

The President needs to work with us to support our domestic energy producers and their work to provide low-cost, dependable energy to our homes and businesses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, first, let me commend my colleague, the former Governor of North Dakota and now the senior Senator from North Dakota, for his very thoughtful comments with which I agree.

I come to the floor today, as well, to talk about energy prices, which we know are spiking all across the country. As the President is soaring off to a climate conference in Scotland, energy prices are soaring here at home.

This year alone, we have seen energy costs spiking for families all across this country. Energy prices have gone up not just a little; they have gone up a lot. The cost of filling your tank with gas is up about $1 a gallon today as compared to the day that Joe Biden was sworn into office. As a result, my constituents in Wyoming are paying about $25 to $30 more per tank every time they fill up—every time they go to the pump—than they would have done in January, when Joe Biden was sworn in.

It is not just gasoline prices that are up in our cars and trucks; it is natural gas prices that are way up—a 7-year high for gas at the pump and a 7-year high for natural gas. And all of these things are impacting people, especially as winter is coming. People use natural gas to heat their homes and cool their homes, and they use natural gas to cook.

Well, you know, it really shouldn't be this way wherein we see these skyrocketing prices because, in America, we have the largest energy resources in the world. Many of them are in my home State of Wyoming.

Under the last Presidential administration, America became the largest producer of oil and natural gas in the world, yet, in what we saw on the first day of his administration, President Biden declared war on American energy, on energy produced here at home in America.

On that very first day in office, he killed the Keystone XL Pipeline. That action immediately ended the jobs of thousands of individuals at the height of a pandemic.

President Biden didn't stop there. He went further when he shut down the exploration of oil and gas in the Arctic. He banned oil and gas leasing on Federal lands and in Federal waters. It was ruled illegal, and he did it anyway.

President Biden's radical, anti-American energy agenda is hurting our economy, and people in every State of the Union are paying the price and feeling the pain today. They are feeling it with higher energy bills. Anytime they pay an energy bill, they are paying more.

So what do the Democrats want to do about this?

Well, it is pretty obvious they want to make it worse. NANCY PELOSI and CHUCK SCHUMER are pushing a $3.5 trillion reckless tax-and-spending spree.

Last month, in the Energy Committee, of which I am the ranking member, one Commissioner of the FERC—the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission—had something to say about this $3.5 trillion spending bill. He said it would be like an ''H bomb''—an ''H bomb''—on America's electric markets. That is because the bill that the Democrats are trying to push through on a party-line vote is actually just the disastrous Green New Deal with a new name.

So what is in this bill?

Well, it would effectively kill coal, oil, and natural gas permitting on Federal lands. It would replicate California's unreliable electric grid, and it would do it on a national scale. The result would be what they have seen in California: rolling blackouts, service that is less reliable, and costs that are even higher.

The Democrats' bill would impose punishing new taxes on natural gas producers.

What happens to that?

Well, of course, these fees would be passed along to the consumers.

Where will they see it?

Well, in their energy bills.

It would create a new tax on mining firms based on how much dirt they moved. The Democrats literally, in their legislation, with 40 different taxes in it, now have a dirt tax.

The bill would waste $27 billion on a slush fund for environmental activists. Now, it is not clear exactly what all of this $27 billion would be used for—$27 billion—but we can be sure that taxpayers won't be getting their money back. Taxpayers will never see that money again.

How they actually dish out the money is completely open-ended, but what we do know is it can be used to hire environmental activists, armies of lawyers and mobs, to protest because their goal is to shut down energy and our industries and the energy economy, harming families and throwing people out of work.

Then, finally, this large bill would give huge tax breaks to rich people who want to buy electric vehicles. The Democrats' spending bill would give up to $12,500 to married couples who make as much as $800,000 a year. They would get a tax break. All they would need to do is buy a luxury electric vehicle.

The American people are already paying high energy prices. They are doing it because President Biden is blocking American energy. You know there isn't enough supply to meet the demand, and the Democrats have complained about it.

So how do they make the situation worse?

Well, they impose punishing fees; they waste billions of taxpayer dollars; they shut down the abundant and affordable energy sources that fuel our economy.

And, of course, all of these are good-paying jobs. American families can't afford the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending spree.

So here we are today with the President's going off to Scotland. He will be there for Halloween, and people around this country will be suffering the nightmare of high energy costs. Not that long ago, we were a nation of energy wealth and energy dominance, but this President and this administration have changed it to make us a nation of energy weakness and a nation that is now dependent upon others for energy.

The American people wouldn't believe that we are, today, using more energy and more oil from Russia than we are from Alaska, but that is what this President has brought to this country—a jackpot for Vladimir Putin—and energy workers who are out of work here at home. It is a disgrace.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, today, I join my colleagues to talk about highlighting some of the things that we see in the dubious environment and energy provisions included in the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending proposal and what that will mean to the American public.

This week, the U.S. Energy Information Administration, a nonpartisan governmental group, forecasted that the cost of Americans' natural gas bills will go up 30 percent this winter. We are getting ready to get into the cold winter season. That means American households will spend an average of $746 on gas heating in the months from October through March—30 percent more than last year.

Now, maybe to some people, $746 doesn't sound like much, but if you are on a fixed income and you have to pay that every month, that means having to make difficult decisions.

Also, with natural gas, which is the primary heating fuel for 48 percent of American homes, which is nearly half the country, this has huge implications for our families.

As I said, just think of retirees in West Virginia, who are on fixed incomes. That 30-percent increase is huge and unmanageable. People already struggle to pay their energy bills in normal times, but with this increase, difficult decisions will have to be made in many households.

Think of a family of four just trying to get through—trying to get through the school year—and they have just enough to buy the necessities for their children, and now their heating bill is 30-percent higher. That is a big hit to that family.

Americans who rely on propane will face an even greater price increase, and that is a lot of Americans. The EIA said it is expecting a 54-percent increase this winter.

So with Americans facing eye-popping increases in home heating, Congress should be considering legislation that lowers those costs by producing more energy here at home; but, instead, the House Energy and Commerce Committee reported legislation to impose a methane tax, which would really be called a natural gas tax.

This regressive provision would make already high heating costs even worse this winter and beyond, and low- and middle-income families would suffer because we know those costs always get passed on. The natural gas tax would put jobs in the energy sector in my home State at risk. This week, we saw reports that this tax may drop out of the reconciliation package. Good news for me, and it would be good news for States like ours.

But even without a natural gas tax or the devastating Clean Electricity Payment Program, which also is rumored to be on the chopping block, the remaining provisions in the Democrats' legislation wastes taxpayers' dollars and includes broad, new regulatory policies that would change this country.

For example, there is the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. It is a $27.5 billion slush fund for Democratic States and progressive organizations to finance whatever so-called green projects they may want.

Apparently, our colleagues are concerned that the over $200 billion we have in renewable energy tax credits is not enough to encourage the private sector to finance projects. Therefore, billions of tax dollars are required to provide even more public financing for their wish list.

Two other provisions tucked into the House bill that have not received much attention could have major policy implications.

First, the House bill includes a $50 million fund to create a new greenhouse gas emissions regulation at the EPA, like President Obama's Clean Power Plan.

My question would be, if the EPA is funded, why they would need another $50 million to create a program.

But this provision directs the EPA to develop overly burdensome regulations. At the request of 26 States, the U.S. Supreme Court stayed President Obama's Clean Power Plan because the EPA lacked the statutory authority.

Yet this $50 million provision, tucked into the $3.5 trillion behemoth bill, isn't only about giving more money to the EPA; it is designed to give the administration the ability to say that future climate rules were specifically authorized by the Congress. These rules could regulate energy production, manufacturing, agriculture—really, any sector in the U.S. economy—and place countless jobs at risk.

Another separate $50 million provision directs the Federal Highway Administration to come up with a greenhouse gas emissions performance measure.

What is that?

States would then be required to set emissions reduction targets based on that performance measure. The Federal Highway Administration is also directed to impose consequences on States that fail to meet these targets.

How much of a reduction in emissions do States have to achieve to hit their targets? What actions will States have to take or not take in order to meet their targets? More importantly, what consequences will the Federal Highway Administration impose on our States that fail to meet their targets? Will they lose their Federal highway dollars? Will States have more restrictions on building new roads? Will there be new requirements to direct highway funding to other activities that reduce emissions?

All of those questions are left unanswered.

This $50 million open-ended provision, reported by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, could jeopardize the ability of States to build new roads and bridges.

These are just a few of the erratic environmental provisions in this reckless tax-and-spending spree. Their provisions have not had the careful consideration that they need to have, and they have not had the vetting that, I think, programs such as these would need.

The package is much broader than that. It is really a lot of wasteful spending. It is regulatory overreach that will make energy and goods more expensive. We have talked on and on about the rising costs of goods and, particularly, gasoline. It is a progressive wish list rolled into a $3.5 trillion bill that inserts the government into nearly every phase of American life from cradle to grave. The reconciliation bill should not pass.

I will continue to come to the floor, along with my colleagues, to shine a light on the harmful provisions and help inform the American people about what really is in this package.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2844

Mr. LEE. Madam President, in politics, on television, on social media, and pretty much everywhere, it seems that people are decrying the surge of ''misinformation.'' False information and dangerous ideas exist, but the cure to factions of falsehood and the kinds of harms coming from them was something that was prescribed in the very early days of our Republic.

James Madison wrote in Federalist No. 10 of the value that our large Union would always possess in defeating self-interested and dangerous ideas and philosophies and specifically factions. The answer is simple: Our free society, with free exchange of ideas, allows for a multiplicity of viewpoints, perspectives, and opinions to be heard, and then the true, correct, and useful ideas tend to rise to the top.

Madison wrote:

> The increased variety of parties comprised within the Union, increase . . . security.

At this point, I would add that the definition of ''parties'' here is best understood to encompass information, ideas, and opinions—all things that tend to unify people around one faction or another, one party or another, one group of people or another.

But, oh, how many have lost their way since then. Be it through mandates, censorship, cancel culture, or something else, it seems that this dialogue of ideas and information is being rejected by many segments of our society. What a shame that is. It is an even greater shame that, often, this is the result of government action.

Yesterday, I came to the Senate floor with one of my dozen bills to try to counteract President Biden's vaccine mandate. This bill that I offered up yesterday required only that the Secretary of Health and Human Services provide the information the Department already has on adverse COVID–19 vaccine effects to the public. We have already got this information. We just wanted them to share it with the public, with the American taxpayer—those who have been footing the bill all along. Regrettably, the senior Senator from Washington objected to the bill and described it as a waste of time and one that would somehow undermine trust.

My response to that is simple: Why would we ever want the Federal Government to hide any health information from Americans? If we want to build confidence in these vaccines, and we do—I certainly do—then the Federal Government must get out of its own way and build trust and confidence with concerned Americans by sharing information.

Allow me to be abundantly clear. I am very much against the vaccine mandate, but I am for the vaccine. I have been vaccinated. I have encouraged others, including my family, to be vaccinated, and they have done so. I believe these vaccines are miracles. They are helping many millions of Americans to avoid the harms of COVID–19. But there are many Americans who are deeply concerned with the vaccine. They are not going to be people who are simply convinced by cruelty or by extortion.

I have heard from over 300 Utahns who are at risk of losing their livelihoods due to this damaging, senseless, and immoral mandate. These are not our enemies. They are mothers and fathers. They are neighbors. They are military servicemembers. They are our friends. They deserve more respect than being fired, brushed aside, and permanently relegated to unemployable, outcast status, which is the inevitable consequence of this mandate. This is where it naturally leads.

Now, many of these people would appreciate more information from the COVID research that their taxpayer dollars are already paying for. One would expect that the amount of research should be pretty darn extensive considering that as of May 31, 2021, just a few months ago, Congress had supplemented the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with approximately $484 billion in COVID–19 funds. That is a lot of money. That is almost half a trillion dollars.

Keep in mind that a trillion dollars represents, last I checked, roughly $3,000 for every man, woman, and child in America—not every taxpayer; not every worker; but every man, woman, and child in America. This is roughly half a trillion, so we are talking somewhere in the neighborhood of $1,500 for every man, woman, and child in America.

This is their money. These are their funds. This is money that they worked really hard to produce. So it should be their information that they have access to. But, lamentably, as recent news has shown, the National Institutes of Health often feels the need to hide information about its activities from the public. So, today, I have come to the Senate floor for now the 10th time on the vaccine mandate with a solution that should be entirely noncontroversial.

My bill, the Transparency in COVID–19 Research Act, would simply require that the Secretary of Health and Human Services publish all the studies and findings that the Department has supported regarding COVID–19. The bill provides for the privacy of researchers and study participants. The bill would better inform Americans about the COVID–19 vaccines. The American people deserve to have this information. After all, they have paid for it, and after all, they are now routinely being subjected to it whether they want it or not.

Again, this whole exercise should be about building trust and confidence in the COVID–19 vaccine. That is, after all, what we want. You are never going to get that through threat, intimidation, extortion. In any event, it is immoral action. That is not something we can justify. That is not the way to treat our friends, our neighbors, our servicemembers.

I am grateful to my colleagues, Senators BRAUN, LUMMIS, and TUBERVILLE, who agree and have joined me as cosponsors of the bill.

Look, if we want the American people to be comfortable with the COVID–19 vaccines, we should be more than comfortable providing the research that led to their development and their approval. If we want Americans to trust their government, we should be clear that it does not hide important health and research information from them. If we want our Republic to function properly, just like James Madison hoped for, then we need to have an open dialogue with all the information. The bill would be a positive step toward each of these ends, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

So, Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent

that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 2844 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, 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?

Mr. KAINE. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, reserving the right to object, we need to leave the science to scientists and researchers. Our public health Agencies, including the CDC and NIH, already release their studies publicly, and it is important that they have control over the release of this information.

Forcing researchers to put out studies on an arbitrary timeline—this bill requires all studies to be released within 14 days from the passage of the bill—could force the release of studies before data collection is complete, before they are done analyzing and reviewing the data, before it is peer reviewed. It might force them to put out studies that were funded that came to inconclusive results that might be confusing to the public.

So I think having a bill that would force release of material based on a date when a particular bill passed rather than when the science is done and it is ready to be released could be a recipe for disinformation and distrust.

The bill seems to imagine a scenario where there is critical science being hidden away or stonewalled, and I have no reason to believe that is true. That would be a dangerous suggestion at a time when we are trying to encourage people to follow the guidance of these Agencies, and the Agencies are working around-the-clock to provide lifesaving cures and up-to-date information about how people can keep their families safe from COVID.

Based upon those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, it is disappointing that we weren't able to take this step today to restore trust and confidence with the American people in research that they have now spent half a trillion dollars conducting.

I understand the impulse to—as my friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator from Virginia, put it—to let scientists handle science. That doesn't mean, that shouldn't mean, that must never mean that we exclude the American people from the right to access the findings of their own government—a government that has used their own taxpayer dollars to the tune of half a trillion dollars just through HHS and through trillions more on other COVID–19-related efforts. We should be able to trust the American people to access that information, and when we hide it, it erodes trust and confidence in the very vaccine that President Biden is trying to force on all Americans, even at the pain of losing their jobs.

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 assistant bill 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. 347, Matthew G. Olsen, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Charles E. Schumer, Robert Menendez, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell, Sheldon Whitehouse, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow, Catherine Cortez Masto, Christopher A. Coons, Ron Wyden, Margaret Wood Hassan, Edward J. Markey, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Elizabeth Warren, Angus S. King, Jr.

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 Matthew G. Olsen, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Sentator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Sentator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Sentator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER, (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yes and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 438 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—4

Cruz	Rounds
Feinstein	Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Matthew G. Olsen, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

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. 263, Christopher H. Schroeder, of North Carolina, to be Assistant Attorney General.

Charles E. Schumer, Ben Ray Luján, Richard J. Durbin, Elizabeth Warren, John Hickenlooper, Jacky Rosen, Brian Schatz, Tammy Baldwin, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard Blumenthal, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Cory A. Booker, Raphael G. Warnock, Alex Padilla.

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 Christopher H. Schroeder, of North Carolina, to be Assistant Attorney General, 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 California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays—41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 439 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Baldwin	Booker	Carper
Bennet	Brown	Casey
Blumenthal	Cantwell	Collins
Blunt	Cardin	Coons