of Elizabeth de Leon Bhargava, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, 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 Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 145 Ex.]

YEAS—61

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Risch
Booker	Hirono	Rosen
Brown	Inhofe	Sanders
Burr	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	King	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Leahy	Smith
Casey	Luján	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cramer	Merkley	Warner
Crapo	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	Young
Graham	Peters	
Hassan	Portman	

NAYS—35

Barrasso	Grassley	Moran
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Sasse
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Lummis	Toomey
Ernst	Marshall	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—4

Bennet	Shelby
Shaheen	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SINEMA). On this vote, the yeas are 61, the nays are 35.

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 Elizabeth de Leon Bhargava, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

RECESS

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:22 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON BHARGAVA NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, we yield back time, and I would ask for the yeas and nays.

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

All postcloture time is expired.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bhargava nomination?

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 146 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Baldwin	Heinrich	Portman
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Risch
Brown	Inhofe	Rosen
Burr	Kaine	Sanders
Cantwell	Kelly	Schatz
Capito	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Scott (SC)
Carper	Leahy	Sinema
Casey	Luján	Smith
Collins	Lummis	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tillis
Cramer	Menendez	Van Hollen
Crapo	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	Young
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—34

Barrasso	Grassley	Paul
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	Marshall	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	
Fischer	Moran	

NOT VOTING—4

Bennet	Shelby
Shaheen	Tuberville

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES RELATING TO ''VACCINE AND MASK REQUIREMENTS TO MITIGATE THE SPREAD OF COVID–19 IN HEAD START PROGRAMS''

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session, and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 360, S.J. Res. 39, with the time until 4:45 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, and that at 4:45 p.m., the joint resolution be read a third time, and that the Senate vote on passage of the joint resolution, with no intervening action or debate. Further, that upon disposition of the joint resolution, the Senate resume executive session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 39) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services relating to ''Vaccine and Mask Requirements To Mitigate the Spread of COVID–19 in Head Start Programs''.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

ECONOMY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about our Nation's economy. On Friday, we saw new inflation numbers, and we found inflation remains the worst that it's been in 40 years.

We also found out that in the first three months of this year, the American economy actually shrank.

Why did it shrink? Well, because of the inflation that is hitting hard every family in America. So now we have a terrible situation with soaring inflation and a stagnant economy—both at the same time. People are paying more and more, and they are getting less and less.

Now, the last time this happened, was in the 1970s. It was called ''stagflation.'' Back then, all the liberal economic experts said it was impossible, you couldn't have soaring inflation in a stagnant economy, but we did. And now here we are 50 years later, same thing again.

This is hitting American families like a sledgehammer, and the people are suffering all across this country. Inflation has been so high for so long, the experts tell us it might lead to a recession.

Now, a recession is when the economy shrinks for six months. We are already halfway there. Joe Biden, the other day, said everything was fine. He said he was not concerned at all about a recession.

He said no one is predicting a recession right now.

Well, that is just not true. Maybe he is not listening, but people within his own administration are predicting additional dire economic times ahead.

Look, our economy has underperformed projections in four out of the last five quarters since Joe Biden has become President. Joe Biden's own Labor Secretary admits a recession is a real likelihood. Last month, Deutsche Bank predicted a recession by the end of next year. Three days later, the Bank of America told investors inflation shock is worsening; interest rate shock is just beginning; and recession shock is coming.

Bank of America went on to say that ''inflation is out of control and inflation causes recessions.''

Last month, Larry Summers pointed out that the United States has never had the current inflation rate and the current unemployment rate without a recession coming within 2 years.

Larry Summers went on to say:

> Recession in the next couple of years is more likely than not.

More likely than not.

> I suspect that is how the consensus will evolve.

Well, Larry Summers is right. He has been right before. He has been right about inflation. This is economics 101. It is also American history 101.

High inflation brings about a change in the Federal Reserve, so they raise interest rates, and when they raise interest rates, the economy slows down. That is what we are seeing.

Inflation is the worst it has been in 40 years, and in March the Federal Reserve raised rates for the first time in 4 years. The Fed is widely expected to raise rates again very soon. It is easy to see where this is all going. Joe Biden's inflation will soon lead to Joe Biden's recession. Now, maybe Joe Biden is hoping that stagnation will be transitory, just like he said of inflation for month after month after month after month after month.

The American people have seen this before. Unlike Joe Biden, the American people are concerned about inflation and they are concerned about a stagnant economy and they are concerned about a recession.

Apparently, the President likes to laugh about it. In the last 12 months, we have seen the highest inflation ever recorded for household staples—chicken, lunch meat, baby food. It is hard to get infant formula now. There is a shortage of that all across the country. The American people are feeling stuck in place. They are very stressed, and they feel the squeeze every day.

One estimate says the typical family will pay $5,200 more this year than they did last year just to buy the same things. That is $100 a week. This is in addition to the inflation that we suffered last year. Add the two together, working families are paying much, much more to buy the same things that they bought 2 years ago.

The truth is painful, and the painful truth is that the average American family is poorer today than they were the day that Joe Biden took office. People have had to change so much in their lives because of this. They have had to change the way they drive, had to change the way they shop and eat, had to change the way they live.

A poll last week found that two out of every three American families have had to cut back on spending because of inflation. Half said they are struggling to pay rent. Nearly 90 percent of the American people said they want Congress to bring down inflation.

So what have Democrats had to do about this over the last 15 months? Well, last week, the Democratic leader said this: He said he wants to raise taxes. He said it is the only way to conceivably bring down inflation—raising taxes.

Well, that may be the only way that CHUCK SCHUMER knows, but I would just say that is not going to bring down inflation, and it is not going to help the economy.

Prices are up. Interest rates are going up. Now Democrats want taxes to go up on top of it. Energy prices are at record highs. You have to empty your wallet to fill your tank, and yet CHUCK SCHUMER's answer is higher tax rates.

With a recession ready to hit the country, Democrats want to take more money out of the pockets of hard-working people. Well, there is not a lot left to take, I would say to the majority leader of the U.S. Senate and to the President of the United States.

It is really no wonder, then, that two out of every three Americans disapprove of the way the President of the United States is handling the economy. The American people know that Democrats—every one of them voted in lockstep with Joe Biden for 15 months. They remember every single Democrat in the Senate voted with Joe Biden on his major spending bill. The American people remember every Democrat supported Joe Biden's economic priorities, which, of course, hurt the economy.

The results have been disastrous for the American people. We know what we need to do. We need to lower costs. We need to reduce these burdensome regulations. We need to get back to American energy—American energy, affordable energy, reliable energy—not going hat in hand to people around the world. We do much better if we are American energy dominant, selling energy to our friends rather than having to buy it from our enemies.

We have had the strongest economic times in the United States in my lifetime prior to the pandemic. We know what brought it to us. It was lower taxes, more American energy, limiting regulations. Those are the things that make a difference. Those are the things that Joe Biden has chosen to ignore.

The American people are struggling and suffering, and it is about time they get an administration focused on their needs, not on the needs of an administration which is woefully out of touch with the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, Americans across the country today woke up to a rare occurrence in the history of our American democracy.

The highest Court in our land is preparing to eliminate a federally protected constitutional right—a woman's right to choose. I am an amateur historian, but I can't think of a precedent in history where the Supreme Court has taken away a constitutional right after it has been in place for 50 years. Women in America may soon live in a country where they have fewer rights than their parents and grandparents.

Let me be clear. The leak of the majority draft opinion in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization is a breach of the Court's confidential deliberations. But the opinion which—draft opinion, which has been authenticated by the Chief Justice, is very real.

It is a peculiar political event this afternoon. Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, who has focused more of his energy and efforts on reshaping the Federal judiciary to reflect his political point of view, was virtually silent on the issue of this Alito draft opinion on the Dobbs case. He couldn't be pinned down as to whether he would acknowledge it or even say something good about it. Supposedly, it was the answer to his political prayer.

He went so far in trying to reach this goal as to protect a vacancy on the Supreme Court for almost 10 months. Antonin Scalia died while Barack Obama was still President, in his last year of his second term, and MCCONNELL—Senator MCCONNELL made the argument that he did not have the authority, since he was a lameduck President, in Senator MCCONNELL's words, to fill the vacancy.

So the Supreme Court was there with 8 members for 10 months until Senator MCCONNELL's political prayer was answered again and Donald Trump was elected President and could appoint a Justice of Senator MCCONNELL's political liking. So he has been very successful in his approach to filling vacancies on the U.S. Supreme Court with people who agree with his political philosophy.

Now, one of them, Justice Alito, is about to hand down an opinion which eliminates Roe v. Wade, a position which is consistent with Senator MCCONNELL's belief that has been stated on the floor many times. And yet, when he was asked today whether he was in favor of this opinion, he refused to even answer. He wanted to focus on

who leaked this opinion. Well, of course, that is an important question. The Court is working on it right now with the Chief Justice turning his U.S. Marshal on the case.

But he would—Senator MCCONNELL insisted on avoiding even taking a position on this draft opinion that has now been spread across America. It makes no sense at all.

Women across America are grappling with the very real concern and, yes, you could say fear, that they may lose access to reproductive freedom and choice in a matter of weeks. If true, this decision will end a 50-year guarantee that reproductive rights are protected by our Constitution.

If this radical decision becomes the law of the land, it would deny tens of millions of Americans their bodily autonomy. In an instant, abortion would be rendered illegal in more than a dozen States.

In this land of liberty, the government has no business interfering with a woman's right to her own reproductive healthcare. It is her right to choose, plain and simple. But for the past several decades, the far right has fought relentlessly to eliminate this constitutional right. They have waged a harsh campaign to, in some instances, actually punish the women seeking abortions.

Here is what I am describing: In Texas last year, lawmakers passed a law that has turned bounty hunters loose on anyone who even helps a woman receive an abortion.

And that Mississippi law that the Court is poised to uphold, it makes no exception for women seeking abortion in the case of rape or incest.

At a certain point, you have to ask: What is the real goal here? These restrictive laws won't stop people from getting abortions. We know that from history. They only make the procedure dangerously unsafe and, in some cases, prohibitively expensive for low-income Americans. Women's lives are literally at stake.

Furthermore, we have hardly begun to reckon with the consequences of this decision when it comes to other fundamental liberties.

I read Justice Alito's draft opinion. It is hard for me to describe it in a few words, but when it comes to issues as fundamental as privacy and personal choice, Justice Alito takes a pretty harsh point of view.

He acknowledges that cases that are often cited in the name of privacy, such as Griswold—I can vaguely remember that before the Griswold decision in the 1960s, the decision of selling contraceptives was subject to strict State regulation, and in many States, they prohibited the sale of any forms of contraception. It is hard for America to even believe that, when you see forms of contraception being advertised on television these days, but there was a time in the fifties and before when State regulations prevailed.

Griswold v. Connecticut was a Supreme Court case that took a look at the regulation in Connecticut and said: It is fundamentally wrong. We believe that individuals have a right of privacy to make their own decision on contraception.

That was a privacy right, which I respect. And yet, if you are careful and read every single word, you will never find the word ''privacy'' in the Constitution. The Supreme Court found the right to privacy by combining the rights of several other different amendments.

That wasn't good enough for Justice Alito on the basis of this draft opinion we have been given. He said since he can't find the word ''abortion'' in the Constitution, he doesn't believe there is a right to it. And he goes on to compare it to privacy rights, like the one I just described in Griswold v. Connecticut, and he said that is just a matter of saying privacy is your right to choose your own personal lifestyle, or words to that effect.

Well, it is more than that. It gets down to the fundamentals. And if you are going to be making a decision with something as basic as a family—a husband and wife deciding how many children and when you will have children—it really is one of the most basic things that frequently you would define freedom in this country.

That is not the way Justice Alito defines it in the Dobbs decision. If we apply Justice Alito's reasoning behind this draft decision to other rights, the implications are staggering. The Supreme Court could turn back the clock on a whole host of civil liberties.

What is next—the return of State bans on contraception? bans on same-sex marriage? bans on the permissible conduct of LGBTQ people and their different sexual orientation situation? All of that can be on the table.

Now that the Supreme Court has confirmed that this draft opinion is authentic, the Members of this Senate cannot delay. We need to hold a vote codifying the right to abortion into law. Let's show the American people where each Senator stands.

Senator MCCONNELL ducked the question at a press conference today. I still don't understand why. But he can't duck the vote. We are going to make sure that there is a vote and that his Members, as well as the Senator, have an opportunity to express themselves on the record.

Will we allow our children to inherit a nation that is less free than the one their parents grew up in? That is the question which presents itself to this Senate.

USICA

Mr. President, last month, on the evening of April 5, a drone whizzed through the skies of Shanghai, China. The city had been shut down for nearly a week following a recent uptick in COVID. China's government forced Shanghai's nearly 26 million residents into a strict lockdown. Nobody was allowed to leave their home, not even to buy groceries or medicine.

By the evening of April 5, many residents were running out of food. Panic was starting to set in. In one housing complex, the residents began shouting from their windows, demanding that the government provide them with the basics.

As they shouted, the drone stopped flying and began hovering over their housing complex. It blinked a white flashing light as a robotic voice issued a command—a command that would send chills down the spine of anyone.

The voice instructed the residents of that Shanghai apartment complex to comply with the lockdown and then said: ''Control your soul's desire for freedom.''

As government drones patrol Shanghai's skies, robotic dogs are patrolling the city's empty streets, barking commands for citizens to ''remain civilized.''

These methods of enforcement and control did not appear out of thin air. For years, the Chinese government has poured its treasure and talent into developing next-generation technology, like dystopian drones, robotic dogs, and the most sophisticated surveillance apparatus in the world.

Technology, of course, by itself is neither good nor bad. The same technology can be used to advance freedom and democracy as they use to suppress it. For instance, facial recognition technology is built into our smart phones to protect our sensitive data. In China, this technology is also used to monitor their citizenry and tabulate their ''social credit scores.''

The Chinese government also uses artificial intelligence, AI, for the troves of data it collects on its own citizens every day, particularly on ethnic minorities like the Uighers, against whom the Chinese government is committing human rights abuses.

Scientific and technological innovation are critical to America's future economic prosperity and standard of living, but innovation is also critical to our national security and to the future of our country.

Who do we want to take the lead in shaping the future, the United States or the other democracies of the world or authoritarian states like China and Russia?

China's technological clout is a product of decades of investment. This chart shows the annual growth of research and development expenditures since 1995. Note that leading the path is China; Korea is second, Taiwan is third, Israel is fourth, and the United States, five.

From 1995 to 2018, China increased its investment in research and development by more than 15 percent on average, reaching $463 billion in 2018. Since then, they have accelerated the pace. China's investments were nearly double the increase we have seen in Korea, which has the second highest R&D. During that same period, America grew by less than 5 percent, leaving it only $89 billion ahead of China.

Last December, a report from Harvard warned that China is now a ''full-spectrum peer competitor'' when it comes to advanced technology like AI and quantum computing.

For years, I have been working on the Senate Appropriations Committee to address this gap—to boost federal investments in science, technology, and medical R&D. For America to remain the scientific and technological leader of the world, we need to now act significantly to increase investment.

The U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, or USICA, will enable us to make these investments. It is a down payment on a more secure America. USICA will mark our Nation's largest investment in science and technology since Apollo 11. It will strengthen our national security in the age of cyber warfare. It will harness American innovation to drive economic growth.

It includes a provision I led with Senator SHAHEEN that requires the U.S. to increase exports by 200 percent to African, Latin American, and Caribbean markets where China is already making considerable investments. This provision is going to help American workers. And, importantly, USICA will also reinvigorate American manufacturing by bringing microchip production back to our shores. It devotes $50 billion to expand our U.S. microchip industry—a critical component in our future economy.

Microchips, computer chips—the small pieces of silicon that power everything around us from smartphones to appliances like refrigerators and microwaves—even our cars have dozens of microchips.

Right now, there is a serious global shortage. It has disrupted virtually every industry. It is leading to higher prices for all types of products. America actually invented the microchip, and we used to make them here, too—nearly 40 percent of the world's supply. But we let that manufacturing production get away. Now we have got to bring it home. Today, we produce only 10 percent of the world's supply of microchips. Also, microchip production has massive consequences for our economy. When a disaster like COVID hits that causes a microchip factory in Malaysia to halt production, American businesses and consumers suffer. We have become dangerously dependent on China and other competitors when it comes to securing our supply chain with microchips.

With USICA, we can rebuild America's manufacturing and solve supply chain shortages. It will incentivize American companies to hire more American workers to make their products right here at home. In addition to shoring up America's supply chain, USICA will help protect American consumers.

The House has a counterpart bill, the America COMPETES Act. Included in that is something known as the INFORM Consumers Act. I introduced this with Senator CASSIDY, a Republican from Louisiana, and it was led in the House by Congresswoman SCHAKOWSKY and Representative GUS BILIRAKIS. This bill will help prevent counterfeit goods from China and stolen goods from our retail stores from being hawked by shady sellers on online marketplaces.

It was 10 years ago or more, Home Depot came to see me and said: We got a problem.

And I said: What is it?

They said: Our drills are being sold on an internet marketplace.

I said: What is wrong with that?

They said: We are not selling them. They are the drills which are made in our sole manufacturing facility in China. Somewhere after they are made, they are stolen, and someone is stealing enough of them that they can offer them for sale on the internet.

I said: Well, that explains a lot of what is going on.

Go into a drugstore today and try to buy a deodorant, and you will find it is under lock and key. And you think to yourself: Wait a minute. That only costs a couple bucks. Why is it under lock and key? Because it is so frequently stolen and bought. Whether it is Home Depot's drills or deodorants sold at Walgreen's, people are stealing them in volume not for personal use or personal sale, but because there are gangs that are peddling these goods on the internet.

So we put together a bill, Senator CASSIDY and myself, that prevents these counterfeit goods and stolen goods from being sold without disclosing the name of the seller. We had some resistance from some of these internet marketplaces. They didn't want to disclose the name of the seller. We told them: That seller is selling stolen goods on your marketplace.

''Well, that is their business. They have a right to confidentiality.''

It took a long time to persuade them otherwise.

Our bill is being supported by a broad coalition: the National Association of Manufacturers, the Fraternal Order of Police, the AFL–CIO, and Consumer Reports.

I think it is about time. You look at these gangs that are running in and doing all this shoplifting in massive amounts and pulling it into garbage bags. It isn't for them to go out and sit on the sidewalk and try to sell what they have stolen. They have got a syndicate—a gangland operation which filters all these goods into an internet marketplace. Now, if we can start to identify the sellers of these illegal and stolen goods, perhaps we can start to bring justice to this situation.

Finally, USICA is going to make crucial investments in America's capacity to innovate and pioneer groundbreaking technology. It authorizes billions of dollars to the National Science Foundation to help America's scientists unlock the potential of AI, quantum computing, and other advanced technology. These investments will make a difference.

Just 2 weeks ago, I was at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where Dr. Panchanathan, who heads up the National Science Foundation, made a visit. I am proud to report that many universities in our State do Federal research, but the University of Illinois may do more than most, and they receive many grants from the National Science Foundation.

We welcomed the Director of that science foundation to Illinois, and he made a point of looking at the projects that were being funded.

I can't even start to describe to you what some of them are. I am just a liberal arts lawyer. I heard these descriptions about the next generation of computing and technology.

Let me tell you about one of the products which I did understand. It was led by Professor Girish Chowdhary, along with a CEO of his company, Chinmay Soman.

The project they started is called EarthSense. Picture this, if you will: Their goal is to combine machine learning with smart agriculture to build robots that our farmers can use to grow crops more efficiently and improve the environment.

So I watched the little robots go to work. They are powered by batteries, and if you can picture a cornfield—and we have got a lot of them in Illinois—these robots go between the rows of corn. And while they are going down the rows, they are gathering data and information: moisture in the ground; pictures of the soybeans and corn above them to determine whether or not they are being successful and most productive; and, at the same time, they are spreading seeds for a cover crop that is going to be growing following the harvesting of the corn. They are guided remotely by computer. And that is the future of farming, I believe.

I think getting a picture of a farmer on a tractor is something you want to hang onto as a souvenir. The farms of the future are going to be managed by autonomous machines—robots and the like—and it is going to be a lot more efficient. It kind of breaks the hearts of our farmers to talk in these terms, but that is the reality, and we better be on top of it. EarthSense at the University of Illinois is a good illustration. Every State is home to institutions that support researchers working. Let's give them the tools and resources they need.

Do we want a future in which flying drones overhead demand that hungry citizens suppress their soul's desire for freedom or a future in which robots help grow more food to feed the planet?

Which nations and which values shape the world's future will be informed by the decisions we make in Congress and in Washington.

Let's send this competitiveness package to President Biden's desk and invest in America.

I yield the floor.

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

REMEMBERING ORRIN G. HATCH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to speak about Orrin Hatch, whom many of us were fortunate enough to work with for many, many years. He had a tremendous impact on the U.S. Senate and, in turn, on America.

Barbara and I first want to express our condolences to Elaine, his wife, to their six children and their families, and to all of those who mourn the passing of this outstanding public servant and humble servant of the Lord.

Senator Hatch's funeral will be this Friday.

In December of 2018, as his incredible 42 years in the U.S. Senate were drawing to a close, Orrin Hatch delivered the usual farewell address of retiring Members here on the Senate floor.

Concerned about the direction that he had seen this institution take in recent years, he said:

> We must restore the culture of comity, compromise, and mutual respect that used to exist here—and still does, in some respects.

He also said:

> We must not be enemies but friends.

In his farewell address and in the quotes that I just read, Orrin's commitment to mutual respect and integrity is made very clear. It is also a charge to us to honor his memory by taking his words to heart as we go about our work here and in what we do across the country.

During Orrin's career, he served as chairman of the Finance Committee, the Judiciary Committee, and as President pro tem of the U.S. Senate. I have had the honor of doing those same three things. The Finance Committee and the Judiciary Committee are powerful committees that deal with matters of broad importance to America. Decisions are made there that directly affect the lives of all Americans. Many times, dearly held beliefs and principles held by different Senators come into conflict during long hours of work on important legislation or with high-level Cabinet and judicial nominations.

Many of the tributes to Orrin have already made an observation which I share from our decades of working together at the negotiating table.

Orrin was an unflinching, dyed-in-the-wool statesman who stayed true to his values and his convictions and finessed disagreements with a spirit of collegiality. He always remembered that he was working with friends and not enemies, and he always remembered why he was in the U.S. Senate—to represent the great people of Utah. Orrin's ability to disagree without being disagreeable was evident from his incredible level of productivity. According to the Orrin G. Hatch Foundation, when he retired, he had passed more legislation into law than any living Senator and had sponsored or cosponsored more than 750 bills that were enacted into law.

As anyone who has spent any length of time in the Senate knows very well, getting legislation enacted into law, especially any enduring legislation, requires the ability to develop relationships and build trust with Members of both parties. To be productive over the long term, those relationships need to be able to withstand the unproductive partisanship that tends to dominate the fleeting issues of the day.

Some of Orrin's most significant legislative accomplishments highlight his ability to work across the aisle.

A prime example is the Drug Price Competition and Patent Term Restoration Act, also known as Hatch-Waxman, stemming from his work with longtime Democratic Congressman Henry Waxman.

Another important piece of legislation is the State Children's Health Insurance Program on which he worked with the late Senator Ted Kennedy. Orrin regularly talked about working with his good friend Senator Kennedy. For many years, Orrin Hatch and Ted Kennedy appeared to be complete opposites. They couldn't imagine that those two Senators, with very different views, could even work together, much less be friends. People who say that don't understand how the Senate works.

Orrin's spirit of bipartisanship didn't come at the expense of his principles. Whether he was criticized for compromising with Democrats or for not compromising enough, Orrin stuck with what he believed was the right thing to do.

As chairman of the Finance Committee, during consideration of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Orrin took the lead in drafting the most important tax reform legislation to be enacted in more than 30 years.

When staff would discuss provisions to be included in the legislation, Orrin would repeatedly ask what the tax policy was. This was always his primary concern, not what was the most politically expedient policy or the best policy with which to win reelection. Orrin wanted to get the details right, and the rest of his decisions flowed from that perspective. I know because I worked with him for decades on that committee, particularly during that legislation.

Despite the criticism he would get from all sides, Orrin would never let that drive him off course from sticking with his values and from being civil with his colleagues. In his office, Orrin had a statue of a red-tailed hawk that staff had given to him. It had a plaque on it that said, ''Tough old bird.'' He adopted that phrase to describe himself to reporters and many who met him in his office.

His ''tough old bird'' status was fully evident one late night during the Finance Committee's consideration of that tax bill I have referred to—the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. When Republicans were accused of only being interested in looking out for the very rich, Orrin forcefully noted his own very humble beginnings. He shared how he had worked his whole career for ''people who don't have a chance.''

Another principle Orrin shared with me was the importance of staff. To be effective day in and day out and to sift through the avalanche of information that comes into every Senator's office, good staff is vital, particularly when a Senator has served for a lengthy period of time. Staff is important to preserving the institutional memory of a committee. From years of around-the-clock work, they become really a second family. They may not share blood ties, but they share loyalty and share service to dig down into the trenches when policymaking and politics become a blood sport. So having longevity and cohesion within a staff is very, very important.

A tradition that I believe was unique to the Hatch office was the election of a Pioneer Day's King and Queen from the people within that office. Now, Pioneer Day is a Utah State holiday that celebrates the entry of the first Mormon pioneers into Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. To recognize that holiday, everyone working for Senator Hatch, whether in his personal office or on a committee he chaired, would vote for a King and Queen from a slate of candidates from within that office. At a lunch attended by the whole office, Orrin would announce the winners and crown the King and Queen. The coronation was a salute to their service to the people of Utah, whose enduring pioneering spirit rings true to this very day.

Outside of ensuring his office was a place that good staff would want to work, Orrin was no aloof boss. His sincerity shined through with me and his Senate colleagues and then, of course, with his staff. He wanted to know what was happening in his staff's lives and made sure to say that he appreciated their advice even when he might not take that advice.

In closing, I return to what I said about Orrin and what he said in his farewell address. I associate myself with his remarks that we must be friends and not enemies. That is how we can honor Orrin Hatch and keep his spirit within this institution that he cared so much for and devoted much of his life to—here, right here, in the Senate.

Orrin's lifetime of public service helped generations of families in Utah achieve a better quality of life and made America and the U.S. Senate a better place.

Godspeed, my friend.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled vote: I for up to 15 minutes, Senator MURRAY for up to 5 minutes, Senator THUNE for up to 5 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this is my 283rd travel to the Senate

floor to ask that we wake up to the threat of climate change—an issue that demands, right now, American leadership. Over the recent recess, I traveled to parts of the world where climate catastrophe looms, and I saw firsthand what the absence of American leadership has cost.

My first stop was to the 2022 Our Oceans Conference in Palau, where I joined President Biden's Special Envoy for Climate, Secretary John Kerry, to discuss the state of our oceans. It was another productive Our Oceans Conference, leading to 410 commitments from around the world, worth $16.35 billion, to fund climate action, reduce plastic pollution, and reduce illegal fishing, among other things. These commitments are, indeed, a hopeful sign.

Palau is a tiny, beautiful ocean nation on the very far side of the Pacific Rim. This archipelago relies almost entirely on the ocean, with tourism as the dominant industry and fishing as a way of life. Palau has a front-row seat to the changes taking place in our ocean. Rising ocean temperatures and sea levels, acidification, disrupted fisheries, more frequent storms—they see and feel these every day.

I have spoken a lot about the amount of heat trapped by greenhouse gas pollution and then absorbed by our oceans. It is equivalent to multiple Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs being detonated in the ocean every second. That is the heat load that we are adding. In the last three decades, our oceans warmed eight times faster than in preceding decades. This is so much heat that you have to measure it using a special super unit of measurement—the zettajoule.

What is a zettajoule? A joule—J-O-U-L-E—is our standard unit of heat energy. A zettajoule is that unit with 21 zeros behind it. Here is a more practical reference: All of the energy used annually by all of the people in all of the world—all of it—adds up to one half—one half—of a zettajoule.

What does this mean for oceans? Scientists tell us that the top 2,000 meters of ocean absorbed a record 227 excess zettajoules of energy from 1981 to 2010. The current rate is to load 14 zettajoules of heat into our oceans every single year, which means we are loading into our oceans every year nearly 30 times more heat than the entire energy use of the entire species on the entire planet.

If you take a look at the segment of our energy use that is produced by fossil fuels, that segment, which is less than half a zettajoule, is creating this effect of 14 zettajoules of heat into the oceans every single year. We are pumping into the oceans nearly 30 times our total global human energy use.

This kind of heat is why coral reefs face mass bleaching and are dying, and, of course, dead reefs threaten the collapse of entire ocean ecosystems. It is not just dying reefs; when water warms, it expands, which means sea levels are rising and will rise by feet in the decades ahead—a big problem for coastal communities everywhere, including Connecticut and Rhode Island.

I landed in Palau on the heels of an unexpected tropical storm—unseasonal—that grew into a violent typhoon. Climate change makes these storms more frequent, more severe, and more unpredictable, putting coastal infrastructure everywhere under serious threat.

From Palau, I met up with a congressional delegation traveling to India and Nepal—two nations at the center of dire global security risks. Nepal's Himalayan glaciers are the source of much of Asia's freshwater. The Himalayan snowcap is so big, it is described as the Earth's third pole—the North Pole with all of its ice, the South Pole with all of its ice, and the Himalayan glacier with all of its ice. As the planet warms, those Himalayan glaciers shrink away.

Our 1.5-degree Celsius global warming target right now is, in effect, a 2.1-degree Celsius global warming target for the Himalayas. Himalayan glacier mass is expected to drop by more than a third by the end of the century. If the glaciers aren't there to feed the rivers, the rivers don't have the water to flow.

For India, the consequences are deadly serious. According to the U.S. Institute of Peace, losing that glacial flow will spell rampant sickness, hunger, and economic calamity downstream, which could, as they say—I quote them—''in turn, open the door to conflict.'' Well, obviously, if people don't have the water they need to live, they are going to fight over it.

A likely flashpoint is Kashmir, the region between India and Pakistan—two nuclear-armed adversaries. India's Parliament has reported on the challenge climate change poses for distributing scarce Himalayan water among Indian and Pakistani downstream regions. India plans new dams on the Chenab River in Kashmir. Pakistan fears that India will pinch off river flow into Pakistan, perhaps to put economic survival pressure on Pakistan in times of conflict. Suspicions between the two countries of riparian mischief run high, and long memories of conflict linger. Food security, electricity generation, and public safety are all at stake, giving nuclear-armed adversaries a lot to fight over.

So what did we see and feel in India? Scorching heat—109 degrees Fahrenheit at the Taj Mahal. Last week in Delhi, thermometers topped 110 degrees. In Nawabshah, Pakistan, temperatures hit 117½ degrees. In another area of Pakistan, temperatures exceeded 122 degrees. Try to walk around and work and live outdoors in 122 degrees. It doesn't work. This is the kind of heat where the human body no longer functions properly. It can't cool itself. And, of course, electricity grids fail, and lots of water evaporates.

We discussed these issues with the Nepali Prime Minister and Congress president. Their government is clear-eyed about this problem. Their glaciers are thinning before their eyes. They see it now, they feel it in river flow, and they see it in the risk of glacier collapse, which leads to catastrophic downstream flooding. They feel all these shocks to their region's food supply and every tremor from their neighbors' conflicts. Their message to us is really clear: ''Nepal is ready to join hands with the U.S. on the issue of climate change,'' one of the Nepali Parliamentarians told us, but the United States needs to step up.

Our last stop was Doha in Qatar, where I met with airmen of the Rhode Island Air National Guard and other servicemembers carrying out vital missions in the Middle East at Al Udeid Air Base.

The Defense Department is worried about climate heat compromising its flight operations in places as hot as Doha. It gets hard to operate out on the runways in the kind of heat that climate change is causing, and Doha is hot. You may recall the news a few years ago about Qatar considering air-conditioning the out of doors. DOD's October 2021 Climate Risk Analysis listed rising temperatures affecting flight operations and ''aircraft performance''—''loss of payload capacity, range, and loiter time''—as the military has to schedule for ''too hot to fly'' times of day. For the airmen I met with, out protecting our country, these are real issues now.

The world cries out for Congress to act, to reclaim America's place of leadership on this defining issue of our time. The people of Palau cannot fix the ocean heat on their own. The people of India, Pakistan, and Nepal cannot solve the disappearance of the Himalayan glaciers on their own. Our airmen cannot cool the temperatures disrupting their flight operations on their own.

President Clinton once said that the world is always ''more impressed by the power of our [American] example than by [any] example of our [American] power.'' If we are to remain Daniel Webster's city on a hill, we must reflect the power of that good American example beyond our borders. This goes beyond climate change; this goes to the heart of the integrity of the American brand.

At the end of an American century where we rebuilt Europe with the Marshall Plan and rebuilt Asia with the MacArthur Plan and set the stage for the freedom and peace and economic growth that this American century has produced, we are at risk of squandering that entire reputation as people from Palau to Nepal suffer and experience the consequences of climate change and know perfectly well that America could have and should have led, that America could have and should have done something about this, that America knew what the climate risk was and failed to act, and that the failure is explained by the worst of all possible

reasons: We got rolled by the special interests, the fossil fuel industry, whose conflict of interest is apparent but whose power through dark money and pressure and corruption in this body has disabled us for more than a decade from doing what everyone knows is right.

Our failure and the disgraceful reason for it will be a visible blot on America's standing for decades if we don't act. If we don't act, if we fail, don't think no one will notice. What we are doing is open and notorious, and it is a devastating failure of American leadership.

We must pass a real climate bill now. It is time, as I have said 283 times, to wake up.

I yield the floor.

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

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

S.J. RES. 39

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as I mentioned earlier today on the floor, President Biden has apparently decided that COVID is over at our southern border but not, apparently, for American toddlers.

While a court injunction has barred enforcement in a number of States, the Department of Health and Human Services has still not repealed its mask and vaccine mandate for Head Start Programs—a mandate that requires children as young as 2 years old to wear masks indoors and, incredibly, outside.

The scientific evidence for masking toddlers is shaky at best. The World Health Organization does not recommend masking for children under 5. The concerns about the effect on speech and children's development are real. But none of that seems to matter to the administration.

Despite the low danger of serious illness in children, apparently the Biden administration believes that toddlers should be masked in perpetuity—a position Secretary Becerra doubled down on in front of the Senate Finance Committee last month.

If the Biden administration isn't going to repeal its toddler mask mandate, it is time for Congress to step in and do it for them. The resolution of disapproval that I have introduced and which we are voting on in the next few minutes would end the administration's mandate, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting for this resolution. It is past time to call a halt to the Biden administration's outdated and unscientific mandate and ensure that our toddlers can run around the playground mask-free.

I yield the floor.

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.

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

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

S.J. RES. 39

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, what we are about to vote on is just another distraction while Republicans are taking away abortion rights.

I want to be clear: This coming vote is about more than just masks. The Congressional Review Act resolution could have hugely consequential and potentially damaging effects not just for the current pandemic but for the future as well.

Young children getting an early education through our Head Start Program are the only age group that cannot yet be vaccinated against COVID–19. That means parents of children under 5 are in a really difficult position right now. They don't have the choice to vaccinate their children. So they are dependent on the adults who care for them to do everything they can to continue protecting them.

But Senator THUNE's resolution fails to take into consideration the concerns of parents with young children, and I don't just mean masks. This resolution would also take away a tool for Head Start programs to ensure that adults are vaccinated when caring for kids who cannot get vaccinated themselves.

Now, once our youngest children can get fully vaccinated, it probably makes sense to revisit some of these requirements, but we are not there yet—something I know so many parents are worried about and frustrated by. Right now, we need to do everything we can to protect our children and give parents some peace of mind.

We also need to think about the dangerous repercussions this CRA could have in the future. This resolution would prevent HHS from implementing critical public health practices that keep our kids safe in the future. Enacting a CRA permanently constrains an Agency's ability to regulate again in that space, and I cannot overstate how serious such a step would be. What if there is a new threat but we can't implement the necessary public health measures which we know can keep kids safe because they have been blocked by the CRA?

We need to make sure that HHS and the Head Start Program can protect our most vulnerable children in case there is a new, more dangerous variant or even a new pandemic threat. Mr. President, when you get in from the rain, you may put your umbrella away, but you don't throw it out. And when it comes to this pandemic, some of us are safely inside; but for the young kids who cannot yet get vaccinated, they are still out in the storm, and their parents are still counting on having that umbrella. And when it comes to the future, there could be other rainy days. So let's not throw away this important tool to keep our kids safe.

I urge my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will read the joint resolution for the third time.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

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

VOTE ON S.J. RES. 39

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The yeas and nays have been requested.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

(Mr. MARKEY assumed the Chair.)

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 147 Leg.]

YEAS—55

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

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—4

Bennet	Shelby
Shaheen	Tuberville

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 39) was passed, as follows:

S.J. RES. 39

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services relating to ''Vaccine and Mask Requirements To Mitigate the Spread of COVID–19 in Head

Start Programs'' (86 Fed. Reg. 68052 (November 30, 2021)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session.

The Senator from Ohio.

UKRAINE

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today once again to talk about what is happening in Ukraine. This is the 10th time in the 10 weeks of session since before the invasion started that I have come to the floor to talk about the atrocities being committed in Ukraine by this brutal and unprovoked invasion from Russia and to talk about more effective ways for us to help the Ukrainian people.

I just spoke to the Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, Oksana Markarova. She started by thanking me on behalf of the Ukrainian people—really, thanking the American people—and saying that they appreciate all of the help, not just the funding and the weapons but the moral support that the people of Ukraine feel from the people of the United States of America. That made me proud.

She also talked about the desperate need right now to provide Ukrainian soldiers with the heavy weapons they need to confront the new fight in Ukraine—the need to confront Russia as Vladimir Putin continues his brutal campaign to kill Ukrainian citizens, to flatten Ukrainian cities.

Just today, Lviv, which is way over here in western Ukraine, was attacked again. So Russia says they are going to focus over here. Once again, they are lobbing missiles into Lviv. Once again, they have attacked Odesa in the south, hoping, I suppose, to flatten Odesa as well as they have done with Mariupol and kill there somewhere between 20 and 25,000 innocent civilians, according to the latest reports we have.

Ukraine has been an independent and sovereign country since 1991. They are not part of Russia. In 2014, the people of Ukraine made a very conscious choice to turn to the West, to get out from under the Russian thumb altogether. They wanted freedom and democracy, to move away from tyranny and corruption. They wanted to be like us here in America. That is one reason so much of the free world has rallied around Ukraine—because this is about a country that is seeking freedom, free enterprise, the ability to gather freely, free speech.

I was an election observer here in 2014 right after they made this decision, and we saw a fair election, where a President was elected by the people with huge voter turnout. Again, that is one reason we feel this connection to Ukraine, as does the rest of the free world.

Ukraine's armed forces continue to perform well, but as this map shows, the fight is fierce right now. The dark red here is Ukrainian territory that was taken by Russia back in 2014. This includes Crimea. It includes Donetsk, Luhansk. The lighter red is the Ukrainian territory that Russia has seized during this latest invasion during this war. And the light-blue area is where Ukrainian troops have effectively countered the Russian offensives and pushed Russian forces out of territory.

Ukraine won a decisive battle here, as an example, in Kyiv. You can see where they pushed the Russian forces out.

The Kremlin, at that time, had as a strategic objective, seizing Kyiv, which is the capital of Ukraine, and also other major cities all around the country. They wanted to force the government—the democratically elected government—out to overthrow the government of President Zelenskyy.

Instead, because of effective Ukrainian resistance, Russia has been forced to settle for these more limited objectives, even as they continue to bomb cities all around Ukraine.

They now want to consolidate the Donbas region and create a land bridge from Crimea up to Transnistria. They want to cut off one of the world's greatest exporters—Ukraine—from any access to the city, to make them landlocked so they cannot have an effective economy.

Our goal must be to stop Russia from achieving its invasion goals and push them out of the territory of this free and independent country, Ukraine, our ally. This is a very dangerous point in this battle.

While the Russians have made incremental gains in the east, they have not achieved the decisive breakthrough that they want, thanks to the toughness and tenacity of the Ukrainian forces. But it is a tough fight, and the Ukrainians are outgunned. We must do all we can to keep Russia from a breakthrough until heavier weapons pledged by the United States and other allied nations can reinforce Ukrainian positions—our howitzers, as an example. Artillery is starting to arrive but only starting.

My hope is that by reinforcing Ukrainian positions with these heavier weapons, that will allow Ukraine not just to defend itself but to be able to roll back this Russian invasion and reclaim this territory.

Late last week, I was pleased that the Biden administration formerly requested emergency supplemental funding that will provide needed military, humanitarian, and economic aid for Ukraine. This proposal, by the way, includes $6 billion for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative—a bipartisan initiative I have long spearheaded. Funding for this initiative is used to train, equip, and provide support for the Ukrainian Government and military. It was crucial to helping Ukraine prepare for the current fight, and it is crucial now.

As the President has requested, there is also drawdown authority in this legislation. Now, that is what the President is currently using to provide the howitzers I talked about and other military assistance. There is $5 billion of additional Presidential drawdown authority in this request.

The existing Presidential drawdown authority has been expended. I just checked with the Ambassador again just before making this speech. She indicates that out of the $3.3 billion that was in the previous Presidential drawdown authority to provide weapons to Ukraine, there is roughly $150 million left. In other words, they need this supplemental spending package now. It cannot wait, not at this crucial time in the battle.

I am encouraged by the administration's request for military assistance because I think—assuming we approve it and get this done quickly—it will send a very important message to the world and, most importantly, to Vladimir Putin, that America is in this fight for the long haul.

The humanitarian aid is also desperately needed to complement the remarkable work that is being done in Ukraine by so many great religious and nonprofit groups. Some of you know Samaritan's Purse, as an example.

Last night, Jose Andres, who is the founder of what is called the World Central Kitchen, told me that they have now provided 18 million meals to Ukrainian refugees both in-country and out of country, and they have 12,000 volunteers that have been engaged to do this. They are not asking for money from American taxpayers, but they are providing incredible help, so many of these great groups.

I am also encouraged that the administration heeded our bipartisan calls and appointed a Ukraine military assistance coordinator, LTG Terry Wolff. This followed a letter that I sent with Senators SHAHEEN, WICKER, and DURBIN, with the goal of cutting through the redtape to ensure the right weapons get to Ukraine and they get there quickly.

When I asked Secretary Blinken last week who Lieutenant General Wolff would be reporting to as the coordinator of the military assistance in order to make this whole process work more smoothly and help the Ukrainians more, he was uncertain.

I will state today that I hope that the coordinator, Lieutenant General Wolff, will be reporting directly to the Commander in Chief. Why? Because there are so many Agencies and Departments involved, and the whole idea is to have one person who has the President's ear who is able to get stuff done quickly, without the bureaucracy. And I know President Biden believes that we ought to get this military equipment and other assistance to Ukraine immediately.

In the context of this significant additional funding request for Ukraine to be able to defend itself, it is important to note that they are not just relying on us. We are not the only country providing military assistance to Ukraine.