



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

No. 148

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, Lord of hosts, we praise You for choosing to make Yourself known to us in the unfolding of Your loving providence. Our hearts expand with joy because of Your presence. Empower us to keep our minds steadfastly on You.

Lord, use our Senators to make a better Nation and world. Give them an openness of mind and heart that they may receive the fullness of Your grace. Consecrate them to the laudable task of permitting Your kingdom to flourish in this generation and beyond.

Lord, make our lawmakers instruments of Your peace.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 14, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lara E. Montecalvo, of Rhode Island, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

ABORTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, was truly a tale of two parties. While one party—the Democrats—gathered at the White House to celebrate the passage of our job-creating agenda, the other party—the MAGA Republicans—spent their day introducing a nationwide ban on abortions.

If the American people want to know what the difference is between the two parties, look no further. One party is

focused on jobs—that is us; the other is focused on nationwide abortion bans—that is the extreme MAGA Republicans.

One party wants to lower inflation and help families make ends meet, to tackle the generational challenges we face and has passed major legislation to that effect, now law. The other party, apparently, wants to eliminate women's autonomy over their own bodies.

Here is how you know Republicans are dangerously out of touch. Months after women had their freedom of choice taken away by the MAGA Supreme Court, a nationwide abortion ban was actually their attempt to seem more mainstream. Can you believe it? To seem more mainstream? Heaven help us. Heaven help us. It shows just how extreme they are.

The core problem is that far from being mainstream, a large portion of the Republican Party harbors truly extreme views on a woman's right to choose. In the few months since the Dobbs decision, Republican State legislatures in places like Indiana, South Carolina, and others have either introduced or enacted new abortion restrictions, with alarmingly few exceptions of rape or incest.

In this Chamber, Senate Republicans spent years confirming judges hostile to freedom of choice, including three sitting Supreme Court Justices who joined with the majority in overturning Roe. And the then-majority leader, now minority leader, Leader McCONNELL, has repeatedly said his greatest accomplishment is putting these judges on the Court. His greatest accomplishment is putting judges on the Court who overturned Roe v. Wade. Do the American people want that? I don't think so.

And for all the hemming and hawing we heard yesterday from Republicans about where they really stand on the issue, they cannot run away from their

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



Printed on recycled paper.

record. Setting aside yesterday's proposal, the fact is that 45 Senate Republicans—including Leader MCCONNELL—remain cosponsors of another nationwide abortion ban previously introduced by the Senator from South Carolina.

Leader MCCONNELL himself told USA Today earlier this year that without Roe, proposals for a nationwide ban on abortions were now "possible,"—his words—"possible" if Republicans controlled the Senate. Do the American people want that? Do they want MCCONNELL, Leader MITCH MCCONNELL, to be majority leader and work to impose a nationwide ban on abortions? I don't think so.

Now, they are sort of running away from what their real beliefs are, but they are like the dog who caught the bus. For years they pushed to make this happen, unfortunately, to the detriment of over 100 million American women. It happened, and now they don't know quite what to do.

They are not backing off their horrible MAGA principles, but they want to hide from it at the same time because they know how unpopular it is.

And to show you just where the party is at, almost immediately after the Court overturned Roe, Mike Pence, former Republican Vice President, now running for President possibly in 2024 said Republicans "must not rest" until abortion is illegal everywhere. That means a nationwide ban. That doesn't leave it up to the States.

In fact, he doubled down on just this last night, saying a national abortion ban "is profoundly more important" than Republicans' short-term interests. That is one of the leaders of the Republican Party, which has moved so far to the right that even someone like Pence, who doesn't always go along with Trump, feels compelled to take that extreme position.

And lest we forget, folks, nearly every Senate Republican—nearly every Senate Republican—already voted to push national abortion bans in 2020, in 2018, and 2015. During one of these votes, the Senator from South Carolina, who introduced the nationwide ban again yesterday, said:

These pieces of legislation will continue to be advanced until they pass.

How do we know that Republicans will put a national abortion ban on the floor if they control the Senate? Not only has Senator GRAHAM committed to doing it, they have done it before, three times. And they will do it again if they get the majority. America, beware. America, beware.

So the truth is not hard to grasp. Republicans do not care about leaving abortion in the hands of the States. No way. They do not care that a majority of Americans supported Roe and support abortion rights.

What MAGA Republicans care about deep down is eliminating freedom of choice across America, period. And they are already at work right now on legislation, as we heard yesterday, that

will take us down that terrible, terrible path.

Well, it is my view that the American people aren't going to be fooled by Republicans' desperate attempts to seem mainstream. You can't fake your way through an issue so personal and so important as a woman's right to make her own healthcare choices. They are not going to be able to run and duck and bob and weave and tie themselves in pretzel knots. Everyone knows where they are at. LINDSEY GRAHAM made it clear again yesterday. And people will know the Republican view: abolish abortion everywhere. That is not going to change no matter what some on the other side might think.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT OF 2022

Mr. President, now, on the positive impacts of the Democratic agenda, a much happier note. As I said a moment ago, while MAGA Republicans spent yesterday touting their extreme agenda, Democrats focused on the things that matter most right now to the American people: lowering costs, creating good-paying jobs, and protecting our planet for future generations.

The Inflation Reduction Act has not been law for even a month—not just a month—and already it is spurring new investments that will generate years, if not decades, of robust economic activity, in industries that will stay here in America—here in America, not in China, not anywhere else—for a very long time.

A remarkable number of companies in the energy, automotive, and clean tech sectors have announced that they are either approving or accelerating new plans to grow their businesses.

One of the most significant areas of activity is happening in EVs and battery manufacturing, so crucial to meeting our country's growing demand for electric vehicles. China has dominated battery manufacturing for too long, and we are bringing these jobs back to America—not just talking about it, doing it.

Honda and LG, for instance, have teamed up to invest \$4 billion for a new battery plant with an annual production of 40 GWh.

Hyundai, meanwhile, has announced they might actually accelerate their timetable for building new state-of-the-art EV and battery plants in Savannah, GA. Plans called for getting started early next year, and now they are saying it could happen sooner. And it is the votes of people and the activity of people like RAPHAEL WARNOCK and JON OSSOFF that have made that happen.

Of course, the benefits of our bill extend well beyond EVs and batteries. Solar Energy Industries Association projects that by 2027, the U.S. solar market will grow 40 percent more than expected thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act. And numerous companies focused on renewables, carbon capture, and heat pumps are announcing a flurry of investments, very often citing our bill—now law—the IRA.

All of these examples share something important: These are the jobs of tomorrow. These industries are going to stick around for decades as our country makes the transition away from fossil fuels and towards cleaner forms of energy. The impacts will be felt everywhere. It is going to take millions of workers to build these vehicles, reshape our infrastructure, and install these technologies in our homes and offices.

And because so much of this will be done by union labor, these will be good-paying jobs, at good wages, with good benefits, lifting up the middle class, keeping those who are in the middle class there and allowing many others who are climbing that ladder to get into the middle class and stay there. It is a wonderful and beautiful thing. In a certain sense we did the right thing making sure our planet doesn't burn up, but it had so many other effects, like good-paying jobs and strengthening the middle class.

And had we not taken action to encourage these investments, it is likely many of these jobs would end up going overseas to Asia, to Europe. America would have lost out. Instead, we have a real chance to lead the way again.

This is the result of Democrats leading the way here in Congress. We are proud, every one of us is proud of the steps we have taken to lower energy costs, to create jobs that have a real future in this country, and to give working families a chance to climb up those ladders and get into that middle class.

It is all about restoring that sunny American optimism that has been at the core of our economic prosperity for so long, that some felt had passed us by; but, no, we Democrats said it hasn't passed us by. The best of our future is yet to come.

RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT

Mr. President, on marriage equality, over the past few months, both sides have engaged in good-faith conversations about how to pass marriage equality into law. I truly hope, for the sake of tens of millions of Americans, that there will be at least 10 Republicans who will vote with us to pass this important bill soon.

Democrats are ready to make it happen and willing to debate reasonable compromises on the specifics, so I urge my colleagues on the other side to join us. Around the country, the feeling is sinking in that this is a dark time for individual rights, so codifying marriage equality is one of the best things we can do to provide peace of mind to millions of Americans who are gay Americans, LGBTQ Americans who are married, and to their families, to their friends. It extends way beyond the individual couple who is married. It is an issue that hits home for many of us in this Chamber, including me.

If we ever find ourselves in the awful situation of having marriage equality overturned by the Supreme Court, I dare say the vast majority of us would

see impacts in our own personal lives or the personal lives of our close family and friends in one way or another.

It would be risky and perhaps foolish to think that such a day could never come. Maybe a few months ago people would think that, no more. Justice Thomas put his cards on the table. He said that he is very open that the Supreme Court's decision protecting same-sex marriage should, in fact, be reconsidered. And often when Justice Thomas says it, his other four MAGA Republican Supreme Court colleague Justices are thinking the same thing.

To anyone who says that the High Court would never be so reckless as to overturn a decision that has protected this fundamental right of millions of people, all I say to this is: Wake up. Look what they did in the Dobbs decision.

Passing marriage equality in the Senate is all about making sure such a danger never—never—materializes. Millions of Americans, tens of millions of Americans will breathe a huge sigh of relief if we do this. And it is the right thing to do.

We know that America has trod on the long path towards greater equality. We know that when the Constitution was written, millions of Americans were enslaved. In many States, you had to be a White male Protestant property owner to vote, that would leave the presiding officer and me out. They know that, and they know that most Americans are proud that we have made progress.

There are some dark forces encapsulated, embodied in the MAGA Republicans, so many of whom are in this Chamber, who want to take steps backward. We are not going to let it happen. We shouldn't let it happen.

So I truly hope, for the sake of tens of millions of Americans, that there will be at least 10 Republicans who will vote with us to pass this very, very important bill.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

INFLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the American people's No. 1 priority is runaway inflation that is smashing their family budgets and crushing our economy.

Yesterday, the latest inflation report showed that soaring prices are still completely out of control. Inflation has totaled 13.2 percent since the day President Biden took office. We just had the worst 12 months for both food inflation and electricity inflation since the fallout from the Carter administration.

President Biden and our Democratic colleagues chose to celebrate—celebrate—this awful inflation report with a so-called inflation reduction party yesterday at the White House. While the Dow Jones plummeted over 1,000 points, while the S&P 500 lost more

than 4 percent of its value in 1 day, while American families can't afford gas, groceries, or electricity, Washington Democrats partied on the White House lawn to celebrate their policies. That is what happened yesterday.

This is what Democrats do while our economy crumbles. They subsidize luxury electric cars; they make plumbers and retail workers eat the graduate school debt of doctors and lawyers; and they throw a party for themselves on the White House lawn.

CRIME

Mr. President, now on an entirely different matter, when you combine the border crisis and the violent crime crisis, law and order ranks as the American people's No. 2 priority, second only to the inflation crisis.

While Democrats' economic policies have waged war on working families' financial security, their soft-on-crime policies have eroded America's physical security. Cities, towns, and neighborhoods across the country are reeling from a wave of violent crime. Just last weekend my State, Kentucky, experienced a spate of murders and attempted murders that rattled residents and literally overwhelmed the police.

Lexington saw four separate shooting incidents on Saturday night alone, leaving nine hurt, some with life-threatening injuries. A Lexington Police Department veteran described it as "a pretty much unprecedented night in my 20 years." Officers were so tied up that they were unable to respond to other crimes and disorder.

Louisville also saw a flurry of violence: the second highest number of homicides in one weekend this year; six people murdered in just 3 days.

Both cities documented record homicide numbers last year, and Lexington is on track to do so again. For Louisville, this is the third consecutive year of triple-digit killings.

Now, of course, this crisis isn't just hitting Kentucky. These trends are nationwide.

For years, the far left has impugned the motives and honor of police officers and taken aim at their funding.

For years, top liberal donors have poured money into campaigns of radical district attorneys from big cities whose whole stated agenda is to not prosecute crimes.

For years, Democratic elites have pushed for letting violent criminals out of prison. Democrats just nominated and confirmed a Supreme Court Justice who argued as a DC district judge that COVID justified—listen to this—letting every single prisoner in Washington, DC, custody out of jail and back on the streets.

This has been an intentional, strategic campaign from the far left, and now Americans are being robbed, carjacked, assaulted, and murdered. Their families are being poisoned with illegal drugs.

Just weeks ago, Senator RUBIO gave the Senate a vote to increase funding for fighting crime and keeping dan-

gerous criminals locked up. Every Senator Republican supported this; every Democrat joined on party lines to block it.

Later today, our colleagues from Tennessee will hold a press conference to discuss the horrifying case of Eliza Fletcher, a 34-year-old mom and teacher in Memphis, whom a career criminal forced into an SUV and murdered while she was out for her morning run. The suspect had multiple violent crimes on his rap sheet dating back to age 14 and had just been let out of prison early for a prior kidnapping.

So there are far too many tragic stories like Eliza Fletcher's being written every day and every week all across our country.

Entire neighborhoods have become unwalkable. In many places, public transit has become nearly unusable.

A few months ago, the Washington Post profiled 1 day in the life of a female immigrant busdriver in Denver who gets screamed at and threatened by lunatics on a daily basis.

Just yesterday, a 49-year-old was stabbed in the back while riding the subway in New York City after he asked another passenger to just quiet down.

Our Democratic friends like to talk about fairness and compassion. There is nothing fair or compassionate about letting cities descend into violence and chaos. There is nothing fair or compassionate about legislating like career criminals deserve fifth and sixth chances more than young mothers deserve the right to go out for a morning jog and come home alive.

Stable prices, reliable energy, secure borders, and basic public safety are four of the most basic duties that any government in a civilized country owes its citizens. These things are the absolute minimum that American families ought to be able to count on—the bare minimum—and the Democrats' one-party government cannot deliver it.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, on another matter, it has been encouraging to see good news regarding the Ukrainian people's fight to defend or reclaim their sovereignty.

Latest reports indicate that Ukraine has recently liberated 2,400 square miles of their own territory from Russian hands.

The sight of a democratic nation beating back totalitarian aggression continues to inspire the free world. It should make other thugs think twice about following in Putin's footsteps. But, obviously, it is not nearly time to ease up. An axis of authoritarians is still pushing hard for Ukraine to fail.

Iran is equipping the Russian military with armed drones like the ones they and their proxies have used against American forces in Syria and Iraq and against our Israeli, Emirati, and Saudi partners.

North Korea is reportedly refilling Russia's artillery stockpiles, and the PRC has publicly supported Moscow's narrative through every Russian atrocity.

So our Ukrainian friends may still face a long, hard struggle to achieve victory as they define it, but Western countries can help by stepping up the pace of our collective assistance.

Ukraine's hard-won successes on the battlefield could have come actually even earlier if the Biden administration and European allies that take their cues from Washington had been quicker and more proactive to deliver the capabilities Ukraine actually needed.

Ukrainian forces are working wonders with Western equipment. They have quickly integrated cutting-edge systems like HIMARS and Javelin and Stinger missiles.

The West's hesitance to put these capabilities in the right hands has cost lives. Horrors could have been avoided if the Biden administration and our European partners hadn't been self-deterring from providing these tools sooner.

The Ukrainians need more of the weapons we have been giving them; they need to start getting them faster; and they also need new capabilities like longer range, ATACMS, larger drones, and tanks.

Not all of these weapons need to come from America. Make no mistake, our allies are looking to us for signals. President Biden should be clear with Western Europe about the need for them to make meaningful, specific contributions to Ukraine and to do it quickly.

He should be clear with our allies that our defense holiday is over. It is time for all of us to rebuild our militaries and defense industrial bases. This will take urgent investments, regulatory reform, and prioritization to expand our capacity to produce critical munitions and systems. These short- and long-term steps alike are in Europe's vital interests, America's vital interests, and the entire free world's.

Beijing, Tehran, and other authoritarian regimes cannot think for 1 minute that trampling free people's sovereignty will go unpunished.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF LARA E. MONTECALVO

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleagues who voted yesterday, on a bipartisan basis, to advance the nomination of Lara Montecalvo to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. I look forward to her confirmation later today.

She will soon fill the seat that is being vacated by Judge O. Rogeriee Thompson, who is a trailblazing and outstanding jurist whom I was proud to recommend and who is taking senior

status. She will continue to hear cases on a more limited basis, along with Judge Bruce Selya, another distinguished judge from Rhode Island who has taken senior status and who continues to hear cases on the First Circuit.

Like Judge Thompson and Judge Selya, Lara Montecalvo is someone with great integrity, intellect, and capacity for judicial independence. I am delighted that President Biden nominated her for Rhode Island's traditional seat on the First Circuit. I am pleased that the Judiciary Committee reported her nomination on a bipartisan vote. And I am grateful to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who voted yesterday to advance her nomination.

Her resume speaks for itself. As Rhode Island's chief public defender, Ms. Montecalvo has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to upholding our constitutional rights, including the Fifth Amendment right to due process and the Sixth Amendment right to counsel.

Ms. Montecalvo was a gifted student, who holds degrees from Swarthmore College and Boston College Law School, where she graduated magna cum laude in 2000.

After graduating from law school, she was immediately drawn to public service. She started her legal career at the Department of Justice for 4 years, focusing on civil tax matters in the Federal courts. In 2004, she joined the Rhode Island Public Defender's Office and has risen through the ranks to lead that office.

Ms. Montecalvo has more than 20 years of experience as a trial and appellate attorney. She has appeared in just about every court in Rhode Island, including in the State's highest court. Her extensive courtroom experience will add valuable perspectives to the deliberations of the First Circuit.

But it is more than her resume. Within the Rhode Island legal community, Ms. Montecalvo is known for her zealous advocacy for her clients and her keen sense of justice. She has won accolades from judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials. And individuals across the political spectrum have endorsed her nomination, including five Rhode Island attorneys general and two former U.S. attorneys, one appointed by President Obama and one by President Trump.

I know Ms. Montecalvo will serve on the First Circuit with honor and distinction as she has at every step of her legal career.

I urge my colleagues to confirm this highly qualified nominee to serve as a judge on the First Circuit.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AGRICULTURE AND INFLATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon, Democrats and the President gathered at the White House to celebrate their so-called Inflation Reduction Act—a bill that will do absolutely nothing to reduce inflation.

You don't have to take my word for it. The nonpartisan Penn Wharton Budget Model said this about the bill's impact on inflation:

The impact on inflation is statistically indistinguishable from zero.

“[S]tatistically indistinguishable from zero.”

Or you could take the word of the Democrat chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, who admitted on the Senate floor right here that the so-called Inflation Reduction Act would not reduce inflation. That is right.

To describe yesterday's celebration at the White House as tone deaf would be putting it mildly. Democrats had a big party to celebrate a bill that may fulfill some of their Big Government fantasies but will do nothing to fix the inflation crisis facing our country. Meanwhile, Americans were dealing with the release of August inflation numbers, which were even higher than expected and made it very clear that the soaring prices will continue for the foreseeable future.

One of President Obama's top economic advisers noted yesterday:

Today's CPI report confirms that the US has a serious inflation problem. Core inflation is higher this month than for the quarter, higher this quarter than last quarter, higher this half of the year than the previous one, and higher last year than the previous one.

That is from one of President Obama's top economic advisers, who made that statement yesterday.

Yet Democrats and the President somehow thought yesterday was a good day to celebrate fulfilling some of their Big Government fantasies.

I guess Americans struggling to afford their soaring grocery bills can be comforted by the fact that, thanks to Democrats' legislation, their tax dollars will now be going to fund electric vehicle tax credits for wealthy Americans, not to mention road equity and identifying gaps in tree canopy coverage—yes, provisions in the bill that they were celebrating yesterday. Meanwhile, the pain of inflation is permeating every aspect of our economy.

During the month of August, I spent a lot of time traveling around South Dakota, and naturally I spent a lot of time talking to farmers and ranchers. One thing I heard over and over is the toll that inflation is taking on agriculture.

In addition to the normal challenges every American is facing from inflation, like high utility bills and high grocery prices, farmers and ranchers are facing massive increases in the price of essential inputs like fertilizer

and fuel. Under the Biden administration, farm production expenses will reach a record high this year. Fertilizer prices are on track to increase by 84 percent—84 percent. That is a staggering increase. Fuel prices are on track to increase 65 percent. And there is no end in sight.

Farmers are facing a huge increase in interest costs thanks to a combination of higher interest rates and record-high farm debt. Gross farm income is actually supposed to reach a record level this year, but those gains are expected to be entirely wiped out by inflation—and then some. Thanks to inflation, net farm income is expected to decrease. At a time when gross farm income is expected to reach a record level—14 percent higher year over year than last year—net farm income, inflation adjusted, is actually going to go down because of the impact of inflation.

Meanwhile, Democrats were at the White House celebrating a bill that will not only do nothing to address our inflation crisis but will drive up energy bills for American farmers and American families.

Agriculture is the lifeblood of my State of South Dakota, and addressing the needs of farmers and ranchers is always one of my top priorities here in the Senate. While it is, unfortunately, going to be difficult to stop Democrats from prolonging our inflation crisis as long as they are in charge in Washington, in the meantime, I am doing everything I can to make life easier for our farmers and ranchers.

One of my top priorities right now is preparing for the 2023 farm bill, to make it as effective as possible in addressing the challenges that are facing our farmers and ranchers. I have been holding roundtables in South Dakota to hear directly from producers about their priorities for the farm bill. So far, I have held roundtables covering row crops, conservation, and livestock. I also participated in a farm bill panel at Dakotafest and an Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce farm bill discussion at the Brown County Fair.

I look forward to continuing to receive input from producers as the time to draft the farm bill approaches. I have also begun introducing legislation—based on my conversations with farmers and ranchers—that I will work to get included in the farm bill.

In March, I introduced the Conservation Reserve Program Improvement Act, which would make CRP grazing a more attractive option for farmers and ranchers by providing cost-share payments for all CRP practices for the establishment of grazing infrastructure, including fencing and water distribution. It would also increase the annual payment limit for CRP, which has not changed since 1985, to help account for inflation and the increase in land value.

In May, I joined Senator KLOBUCHAR to introduce the Agricultural Innovation Act. Currently, the U.S. Depart-

ment of Agriculture collects reams of data on conservation practices. The problem is that a lot of this data is often not analyzed and presented in a way that would be useful for farmers and ranchers.

The legislation Senator KLOBUCHAR and I introduced would provide for better processing and development of the data that the USDA collects so that farmers and ranchers can evaluate the impact of conservation and other production practices on things like soil health, crop yields, and profitability. Our bill would make it easier for farmers and ranchers to decide what conservation practices to adopt by, among other things, helping producers identify the ways that adopting conservation practices can improve their bottom line.

In the next couple of weeks, I will be introducing another piece of legislation for the 2023 farm bill to improve the effectiveness of livestock disaster assistance for producers. Too often, producers find that accessing disaster relief programs at the Department of Agriculture is an arduous and lengthy process. I am working on legislation that would make it easier for farmers and ranchers to access the Livestock Forage Disaster Program and the Emergency Conservation Program so that producers can receive timely assistance in the wake of natural disasters like drought and flooding.

The U.S. Drought Monitor plays a critical role in triggering USDA disaster assistance, and I am working to build on my previous efforts to improve weather monitoring and the accuracy of the Drought Monitor.

This isn't a farm bill issue per se, but I am also introducing legislation today to prevent Democrats from using funding in the recently passed and misnamed, as I pointed out earlier, Inflation Reduction Act to monitor livestock methane emissions.

It is very clear that elements of the radical environmental left would like to see U.S. livestock producers out of business entirely. My legislation is designed to forestall future attempts to curtail beef production by preventing the Biden Environmental Protection Agency from using funds in the Democrats' bill to monitor livestock emissions.

Agriculture is a challenging way of life. In addition to backbreaking work in all weather, our Nation's farmers and ranchers have to contend with the uncontrollable whims of the weather, which can wipe out a herd or a crop in a day. And as if the actual challenges of the job weren't enough, over the course of the Biden administration, our Nation's farmers and ranchers have had to deal with soaring inflation.

I am incredibly grateful for all the South Dakota farmers and ranchers and all of our Nation's farmers and ranchers who continue to persevere during these difficult circumstances. I will continue to do everything I can in Washington to make their jobs easier

and to support them as they do the essential work of feeding our Nation and the world.

NOMINATION OF LARA E. MONTECALVO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Lara Montecalvo to serve on the First Circuit Court of Appeals. Ms. Montecalvo has significant litigation experience at both the trial and appellate level and will be an outstanding addition to the bench.

She attended Swarthmore College and Boston College Law School. Ms. Montecalvo then worked in the Justice Department's Tax Division as a trial attorney. In 2004, Ms. Montecalvo began working in the Rhode Island Public Defender's Office. She became the Rhode Island Public Defender in 2020.

As a DOJ trial attorney and as a State public defender, Ms. Montecalvo gained experience in both State and Federal court. She has tried more than 20 cases to verdict, including 15 as sole counsel. In addition, she has personally handled more than 80 appeals. The American Bar Association rated her "well qualified" to serve on the First Circuit, and she has the strong support of Senators Reed and Whitehouse.

Ms. Montecalvo has shown that she is committed to equal justice. I will be supporting her and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTE ON MONTECALVO NOMINATION

Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

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

Ms. ERNST. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 335 Ex.]

YEAS—52

| | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Baldwin | Collins | Heinrich |
| Bennet | Coons | Hickenlooper |
| Blumenthal | Cortez Masto | Hirono |
| Booker | Duckworth | Kaine |
| Brown | Durbin | Kelly |
| Cantwell | Feinstein | King |
| Cardin | Gillibrand | Klobuchar |
| Carper | Graham | Leahy |
| Casey | Hassan | Luján |

Manchin
Markey
Menendez
Merkley
Murkowski
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla

Peters
Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Sinema
Smith

Tester
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—47

Barrasso
Blackburn
Blunt
Boozman
Braun
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Ernst
Fischer

Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Inhofe
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
Moran
Paul
Portman

NOT VOTING—1

Stabenow

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). 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 action.

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. 1032, Sarah A.L. Merriam, of Connecticut, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit. Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Tammy Baldwin, Tina Smith, Jeanne Shaheen, Chris Van Hollen, Elizabeth Warren, Catherine Cortez Masto, Raphael G. Warnock, Tim Kaine, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher Murphy, Maria Cantwell, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Gary C. Peters, Tammy Duckworth.

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 Sarah A.L. Merriam, of Connecticut, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit, 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 Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 336 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—47

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barrasso | Grassley | Risch |
| Blackburn | Hagerty | Romney |
| Blunt | Hawley | Rounds |
| Boozman | Hoeven | Rubio |
| Braun | Hyde-Smith | |
| Burr | Inhofe | Duckworth |
| Capito | Johnson | Durbin |
| Cassidy | Kennedy | Feinstein |
| Cornyn | Lankford | Gillibrand |
| Cotton | Lee | Shelby |
| Cramer | Lummis | Sullivan |
| Crapo | Marshall | Tillis |
| Cruz | McConnell | Toomey |
| Daines | Moran | Tuberville |
| Ernst | Paul | Wicker |
| Fischer | Portman | Young |

NOT VOTING—1

Stabenow

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 47. The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Sarah A. L. Merriam, of Connecticut, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

CONFIRMATION OF E. MARTIN ESTRADA

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the confirmation of Martin Estrada to be U.S. attorney for the Central District of California.

The Central District of California is the largest Federal judicial district in the country. It serves over 19 million Californians, almost twice as many people as the next largest district, and it serves about half the population of the State of California.

It spans from San Luis Obispo County, home of Los Padres National Forest, all the way to Riverside County and the Mojave Desert. It spans from the Pacific Ocean to the eastern border with Arizona and Nevada. And it is home to some of the most diverse communities in the country.

So having painted that picture of the district that it serves, you can imagine that to effectively serve as the chief Federal law enforcement officer for such a large and diverse district, you need someone with a proven track record of experience, of credibility with the community, and the character to fight for truth and fairness in our judicial system.

Martin Estrada is exactly the right person for the job. He is a proud son of immigrants from Guatemala. Martin has spent most of his life in and around the Central District community that he will now serve as U.S. attorney.

He was raised near Costa Mesa in Orange County and earned his undergraduate degree at the University of California, Irvine. After earning his law degree at Stanford Law School, Martin returned home to the Central District, where he clerked for Federal District Judge Robert Timlin and then later for Judge Arthur Alarcon for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

After spending time as an associate at the highly regarded Los Angeles law firm of Munger, Tolles & Olson, Martin served for 7 years as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Central District, working to protect communities from major crimes. Now, since 2014, he has been a partner at Munger, Tolles & Olson, and he has represented clients from before both Federal and State courts in a diverse array of legal practice areas. Meanwhile, he has maintained a significant pro bono practice, fighting for equal justice and equal access to justice for Dreamers, Latinos, Native American students, students with disabilities, and more. He has excelled at every stage of his career, and he is more than qualified to serve as U.S. attorney for California's Central District.

I have no doubt that he will bring a temperament, intelligence, and work ethic worthy of the community he will now once again serve.

I want to thank all of you, colleagues. I want to thank you for supporting his confirmation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4845

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, in the last few weeks, students in Uvalde and the rest of Texas started a new school year. Three and a half months ago, on May 24, 19 innocent children and 2 teachers were murdered by a deranged, evil gunman.

There are no words to describe a monster who enters a school and murders little children—19 children, 19 families in Uvalde who lost their little boys and their little girls, 2 teachers who are no longer here with us.

I was in Uvalde the day after the shooting. I sat down with local officials and law enforcement. I went to the prayer vigil that night where the entire Uvalde community came together, praying, weeping, and mourning the unbelievable loss of those 19 precious children and 2 teachers.

The Uvalde shooting was the deadliest school shooting in Texas history. Before that, I was in Santa Fe, where yet another evil madman killed eight students and two teachers. I was also at Sutherland Springs, the worst church shooting in U.S. history. I was in El Paso. I was in Midland-Odessa. I was in Dallas.

There have been too damn many mass shootings. With kids going back to school all across the country, we need to again revisit what we can do to keep them safe from mass shooters.

Many students, especially in Uvalde, are scared. Their parents are scared, and they have expressed concerns that the security measures at schools in Uvalde haven't improved enough to make them feel safe.

Today, I want to put forth two bills that would address this problem.

Inevitably, when a mass murder occurs, Democrats in this Chamber and the media implore Congress: Do something.

Well, in just a moment, the Senate can do something. The first bill I am going to ask this body to pass is the Secure Our Schools Act, which would spend unused COVID education funds on hiring police officers in schools and hiring school-based mental health professionals. This bill would be the most serious, the most significant, the most major investment in school security Congress has ever enacted. This bill would double the number of police officers on campus. So if, God forbid, the next deranged madman shows up trying to commit murder, before that madman gets into the school, into the classroom, he would encounter an armed police officer who could stop him outside the school before he commits murder.

This bill also funds \$10 billion for 15,000 new mental health counselors in schools. So many of these deranged killers have a long and horrifying descent into mental illness before they commit their crimes. We see the pattern of the lone, alienated, angry, deranged, young man who seeks to commit the most unspeakable evil. If we had additional mental health resources on campuses, they would be in a position to spot the warning signs, to see the young man heading down that dangerous path, and to intervene and stop them.

Recently, the National Center for Education Statistics, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education, found that 88 percent of public schools did not "strongly agree" when asked whether they had the funding and the mental health professionals they needed in the schools. Eighty-eight percent said: We need more mental health professionals in schools and more funding to hire them.

My bill would address both of these problems by ensuring that we are doubling the number of police officers so there are armed police officers to protect our kids and keep them safe and so there are mental health counselors to spot a dangerous young man before he goes down the road of committing a horrific mass murder.

This bill is common sense, and in a sane political environment, it would be passed 100 to nothing.

My colleague Senator BARRASSO wants to make some additional remarks on our bill. So I yield the floor to Senator BARRASSO.

(Ms. ROSEN assumed the Chair.)

Mr. BARRASSO. Well, Madam President, I come to the floor today to join my colleague and friend from Texas in support of this very important piece of legislation.

What happened in Uvalde was a tragedy. It was horrendous. I commend the citizens of that community for their strength in a time of heartache.

Every Member of this body agrees that we need to find the best way to protect children who go to school. Whether in Washington, DC, or Wheatland, WY, we need to find a way to protect those students.

That is why Senator CRUZ and I have introduced the Safe Kids, Safe Schools, Safe Communities Act of 2022. Our bill provides the kind of safety and the kind of security that our children, our schools, and our communities desperately need. And we do this while always protecting the constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans.

Now, as a doctor who served in our State legislature in Wyoming and now in this body, I have seen the devastating impact of mental health challenges, and Senator CRUZ talked specifically about those, and that is why we addressed them in this bill. I have seen how much those challenges contribute and what we have seen in these terrible acts. Our bill would make a difference—make a difference by providing mental health professionals with the resources they need to identify and to address these behavioral health needs of our students.

Our bill would hire 15,000 more mental health professionals at middle schools and high schools.

It also significantly increases the physical safety of our schools. Our bill would double the number of police officers in our schools. It would help schools buy more security equipment and metal detectors, door locks, and alarms.

Our bill also would do all of these things at no cost to the taxpayer. It wouldn't add to inflation. People might ask, how? Well, it is because our bill would redirect money that has already been allocated in the Democrats' spending bills. Our bill would work, and it wouldn't cost taxpayers a dime.

School is back in session now all across the country, and now is the time to take the real action that we need to keep our kids and our schools safe. No child should live in fear of going to school. No parent should live in fear of sending their child to school. And no law-abiding gun owner should be denied his or her constitutional rights.

So I want to thank my friend and colleague from Texas for introducing this vital piece of legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4845, which is at the desk; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and

passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, what we just saw on this floor was stunning. I am genuinely at a loss for words.

This bill is common sense. There is not a constituent in Texas or Nevada or Connecticut who, if you asked: Would it be a good thing to have more police officers keeping our kids safe, wouldn't say: Of course it would. There is not a constituent of ours who, if you asked: Would it be a good thing to have more mental health counselors on campus to stop people from committing crimes, wouldn't say: Of course it would.

I was informed a few days ago that when I was going to seek unanimous consent, the Senator from Connecticut was going to object. Now, the Senator from Connecticut styles himself the leading advocate of gun control in the U.S. Senate.

I was asked by reporters: Why are the Democrats objecting to this?

I will tell you what I told reporters: I have no idea. They haven't said. They haven't told me why they object to it.

So I was genuinely looking forward to seeing the Senator from Connecticut's remarks. I was sitting here waiting to see, why do you oppose more police officers to keep our kids safe? Why do you oppose mental health counselors in schools?

I have been in the Senate 10 years. The Senator from Connecticut and I were elected at the same time. I have engaged in many debates on this floor, including with the Senator from Connecticut. The fact that he chose not to say a word about why he objects is stunning. I find myself genuinely flabbergasted.

I will say that one of reasons I think the Senator from Connecticut feels content not only not to argue but now to walk off the floor and not even listen to the debate he is ostensibly participating in, one of reasons he feels free to do so is, if you look up in the Senate Gallery—I can count them—there are precisely zero reporters in this Gallery. Not a single one of the corporate media will report on this, and I think the Senator from Connecticut feels absolutely certain, when he walks out, he will have reporters that will say: Tell me how terrible Donald Trump is.

He will lean in and say: Oh, Donald Trump is really terrible.

But not one of the reporters will ask: Hey, wait a second, why don't you want police officers keeping our kids safe?

None of them will. The Democrats are protected by a dishonest army of propagandists in the corporate media.

CNN will not have a panel sitting around discussing why is it that the

Democrats simply do not care to defend their positions.

Let me tell you, when there is a mass murdering and the Democrats stand up and give speeches and they point at Republicans and say: Blood is on your hands, it is great political rhetoric. It is dishonest, but, boy, it gins up their donors. It gets people to go and write checks to Democrats and fund their campaigns.

What we just saw reveals that Democrats have one objective when a mass murder happens, and that is to take away the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens. That is always, always, always their solution. Never mind that it doesn't work. Never mind that it doesn't stop violent crime. Never mind that if you look at the jurisdictions across the country with the strictest gun control laws, almost every single one of them consistently has among the highest crime rates and murder rates.

Earlier this year, the Senator from Connecticut authored his big gun control package, rammed it through this body—a package which will do nothing, zero, to stop mass murders. We will see another mass murder. I pray that we don't, but evil exists in the world, and if another lunatic attacks a school, and there is not a police officer at the front door to stop him, remember right now. Remember this moment when the Democrats said: No, we will not protect our kids.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4586

Madam President, there are lots of arguments the Senator from Connecticut could have made. He chose to make none of them.

If he does not like how the money in this bill is specifically spent, I am now going to propound a second unanimous consent bill.

There is right now \$135 billion in unspent COVID relief funds to schools. Under the rules the Democrats have put in place, those funds cannot be spent on school security.

The second bill that I am going to ask this body to pass is a bill that is very simple. It is one page. It says schools can spend some of that \$135 billion on school security. They can decide what to spend it on, but if they decide they want to hire an additional police officer, they can spend the money on that. If they decide they want to enhance the physical security of their campus to make their students safer, they can spend it on that. They can invest in school security. Right now, the Democrats have blocked them from doing this.

These are funds Congress has already appropriated that haven't been spent. And this bill is unbelievably simple. It says the schools can choose to invest in school security.

Therefore, 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. 4586 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate

consideration; further, 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. MURPHY. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, the Senator is right—I am not going to engage in a colloquy on the merits of this request or the previous request. This isn't real. This is a TV show. This is click bait. This is theater. This isn't an actual attempt to pass legislation.

Senator LANKFORD approached me about this particular bill on the floor a week ago and asked to engage in a dialogue with me about it. I thought it was a legitimate request, and I set my team to the task of trying to work something out with Senator LANKFORD. And now there is a unanimous consent request to pass a bill that is under negotiation and discussions between serious legislators who actually want to find a result.

So, no, I am not going to debate the merits of these UCs. This isn't real.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, the Senator from Connecticut just gave us the sum total of his wisdom as he walks off the floor again, which is, he says this isn't real.

The Presiding Officer is well aware of how the Senate operates. When a Senator arises for a unanimous consent request, one of two things happens: A Senator objects, or the bill passes.

I have stood on this floor and passed unanimous consent requests because our colleagues chose not to object.

One of the more notable instances was following multiple instances in the House of House Democrats making anti-Semitic comments. The House tried to pass a resolution condemning anti-Semitism. Sadly, the radical left in the Democratic caucus objected, and the House Democrats couldn't pass a resolution condemning anti-Semitism.

I joined with our colleague Senator KAINES from Virginia, a Democrat. We authored a resolution, the Cruz-Kaine resolution—a bipartisan resolution that was a clear and unequivocal condemnation of anti-Semitism. It condemned BDS as anti-Semitism. It condemned explicitly the anti-Semitic comments made by those House Democrats at the outset of the dispute.

When Senator KAINES and I came to the Senate floor, we did not know if a Senator would object. There were numerous Senators in this body who did not join the resolution and could easily have walked out on the floor and objected. We stood up and asked unanimous consent, and much to our very pleasant surprise, the opposing party chose not to object, and the resolution passed. It passed 100 to nothing.

When the Senator from Connecticut says this isn't real, the only reason this bill has not passed the U.S. Senate is because the Senator from Connecticut stood up and uttered two magic words: I object. Had he done something really simple—just shut up, just shut his mouth, just sat there—we would be standing in a position where both of these bills would have passed into law.

What does it say about the Democrats' view of the American people that they don't engage in debate, they don't engage in discussion, they don't defend their positions? They, instead, arrogantly say no and have full confidence that their compliant cheerleaders in the media will never even tell anyone about it.

I don't know how you defend the position he just took. I was genuinely looking forward to hearing some form of an argument.

I can tell you, when I forced a vote on the Cruz-Barrasso bill on this floor and the Democrats voted, party line, no, we don't want more police officers in school; no, we don't want more mental health counselors in school; no, we don't want additional funding for school safety, to the best of my knowledge, no reporter asked a single Democrat: Why are you leaving our kids vulnerable? Why aren't you acting to protect children in school? Because, you know what, there is no money on the left for actually stopping these crimes. The money is for disarming law-abiding citizens. It is a narrow-minded, political focus.

We could have just passed the most significant school safety legislation ever passed by the Federal Government. Why didn't we? Because the Democrats objected. That objection is wrong, it is irresponsible, and it shows a willingness to play political games while demonstrating contempt for our constituents.

Today, the U.S. Senate failed the American people. Today, the U.S. Senate failed the schoolchildren of America. And I pray that the consequences are not truly horrific. I pray that this body will show up and do its damn job: Debate real issues and pass real legislation that will actually stop crime rather than the empty political gestures of the left.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, "Help Wanted." I see the signs in nearly every county I visit in Iowa on my 99-county tour. Small businesses and public services are struggling to maintain the workforce that is vital to our communities. The Des Moines Public School District, for example, has over 100 vacancies and is providing \$50,000 incentives for retiring teachers, nurses, and administrators to stay in school.

Faced with a declining number of soldiers, the Iowa National Guard is offering signing bonuses to new recruits,

along with other incentives to encourage current members to reenlist.

Police departments across the State are also facing recruitment challenges so the Iowa State Patrol is raising salaries and starting outreach efforts with kids as young as the sixth grade to get them to start thinking about careers in law enforcement.

And this need for essential workers, well, it isn't limited to just Iowa. America is facing a shortage of teachers, doctors, nurses, childcare providers, construction workers, truck-drivers, pilots, and even accountants.

And with the Democrats' latest tax-and-spend spree, a shortage of accountants is something taxpayers everywhere now need to be concerned about. The Democrats' response to the nationwide need for essential workers is to hire 87,000 new IRS agents. The reckless tax-and-spending bill passed by DC Democrats last month more than doubles the size of the IRS, which already has nearly 80,000 full-time employees.

So what are the new IRS agents being hired to do? Well, audit America, of course—and very aggressively, if a recent job announcement on the Agency's website is any indication. The IRS says it is seeking armed accountants willing to participate in "life-threatening situations on the job."

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says, with the supersized staff, the IRS audit rate "would rise for all taxpayers," regardless of income. CBO warns it will also result in audits of innocent Americans who have paid all of their taxes and don't owe the IRS a cent. That is right. Even if you have paid your taxes, you still could be subjected to an unfair and costly audit by the Biden administration's army of IRS agents.

Folks, Washington doesn't need any more tax collectors; it needs to simplify the Tax Code. If it wasn't so complicated to calculate your tax bill, it would be a lot easier to complete your return and avoid making mistakes.

Ironically, hundreds of employees at the IRS itself may have willfully failed to pay their own tax bills, including tax collectors and even a criminal investigator. In total, 1,250 IRS employees were identified who had not paid their tax bills in full or on time by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. More than 300 of these employees were repeat offenders. Yet the tax-collecting Agency did little to discipline the tax evaders on its very own payroll.

The IRS staffers gave a variety of excuses for not paying their taxes, including forgetting to report all of their income or being unable to use TurboTax. Yep, folks, you heard that right. We have a real problem if the IRS staff who enforce the tax law aren't paying their own taxes and can't even understand how to properly fill out their own tax forms.

I have heard enough of the excuses and these Washington double standards. That is why I have asked the in-

spector general to audit the IRS to ensure that the tax collectors themselves are paying the taxes they owe, and, on behalf of taxpayers in Iowa and the rest of the country, I am grateful that the IG has agreed.

Before Biden's army of auditors starts harassing innocent taxpayers, let's first make sure that tax collectors have paid their own taxes.

And if the threat of being audited wasn't bad enough, the reckless tax-and-spend bill also increases taxes, which will further add to the burden of small businesses already struggling with the higher costs resulting from Bidenomics. And that is the real issue. Washington's misplaced priorities are creating problems for the rest of America.

No one in Iowa whom I talk to is begging for more IRS auditors, but I do hear about the urgent need for more teachers and daycare providers because these folks are absolutely essential to communities across Iowa. The childcare staffing crisis has an even bigger ripple effect on families because it can determine where, when, and even if a parent can work. Yet four in five childcare centers across the country are understaffed. This is particularly pressing for my home State because we lead the Nation in the percentage of families where both parents work away from home.

Gov. Kim Reynolds is working hard to increase the availability and affordability of childcare, and part of her plan is to pay recruitment and retention bonuses to childcare providers to recognize them for their hard work.

In addition, most of Iowa's restaurants and bars are also shortstaffed, which is resulting in reduced hours of service for customers and also longer shifts for current employees. To retain and attract employees, restaurants are increasing benefits like free meals, more flexible schedules, paid time off, and retirement contributions. And, folks, that is great news for these hard-working Iowans, but it also increases the cost of doing business.

So instead of increasing taxes on Iowa's small businesses to pay for the IRS's new army of auditors, Washington should allow job creators to keep more of their own earnings which can be put toward hiring more of those essential workers—whether that be childcare providers, construction workers, or food service employees—whom we all rely upon. That is the help that America really wants. And while my Democratic friends are working overtime to audit Americans, you can rest assured that Republicans—we are auditing the IRS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask to speak as if in morning business.

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

ABORTION

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, yesterday, my Republican colleagues

introduced a national abortion ban and made it clear that they are coming after the rights of my constituents and they are coming after the rights of people across the country.

This atrocious bill threatens the people of Kansas who just voted overwhelmingly to protect abortion rights. It threatens the hundreds of thousands of people in Michigan who just signed a petition for a referendum vote to protect abortion and States like mine which already have strong abortion protections on our books.

Up to now, Republicans have tried to play down their abortion extremism. They have tried to run away from the consequences of their extreme agenda, even as patients have been denied prescriptions that they need, even as doctors have been forced to wait until patients' lives are in danger before they can take action, even as healthcare crises they have caused spill across State lines to disastrous effect.

But despite their empty rhetoric about leaving it to States, the truth has been painfully clear: They think they know better than women when it comes to reproductive healthcare decisions. They have shown, again and again, they do not trust women to have full control over their own bodies, and they are also willing to go after doctors.

They have blocked the most basic bills like Senator CORTEZ MASTO's bill that would have made sure people can still travel to other States for legally available care or my bill making sure that doctors in States where abortion is legal cannot be punished for doing their job.

Over and over, they have stood in the way of Democrats' efforts to protect women's abortion rights, and it is crystal clear why. This bill shows the true Republican position. They want to ban abortion for everyone, in every single State, and they want to punish doctors. They want to put them in prison for doing their jobs.

So, to anyone who lives in a blue State like mine, anyone who thinks they are safe from these attacks, here is the painful reality: Republicans are coming after your rights, and you don't have to take my word for it. The Senator from South Carolina said yesterday:

If we take back the House and the Senate, I can assure you we'll have a vote on our bill.

There it is. It couldn't be clearer. That is the MAGA agenda for all 50 States: rights stripped away and doctors in prison.

Regardless of your circumstances, regardless of what is best for your health, regardless of your family plans—or your hopes or your fears or your dreams for your future—Republicans want to control your personal decisions. They don't trust you to have full control over your own body. This is horrifying.

When he unveiled the bill yesterday, the Senator from South Carolina also said

I'll make a prediction: we stay on this and we keep talking about it, maybe less than a decade from now, this will be law.

"This will be law." This is the future that they want—a national abortion ban.

Well, let me tell you something. The Senator from South Carolina may not have been paying attention, but Democrats are already talking about this issue every week, every day, every opportunity. And women across the country have been with us, fighting for the right to abortion and fighting back against Republicans' harmful attacks. We saw it in Kansas. We are seeing it in Michigan. And I am seeing it everywhere I go in Washington State.

I have been talking to doctors and patients and women and men across our country, and they are outraged—outraged—that Republicans want to take away their rights, that Republicans want to put doctors in prison. And I am too. I have never been madder.

So here is my message to Republicans: If you want to go after my constituents' rights, if you want to go after women's bodies and futures, if you want to pass a national abortion ban like this extreme bill, you are going to have to go through me because Democrats are going to keep standing up for women and men across the country who do not want their rights taken away.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The senior Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, we are here today because Republicans are seeking a national ban on abortion. And if we say it once here, we should say it 10 times, 100 times, because literally months ago it would have been virtually unimaginable—first, that *Roe v. Wade* would be struck down and, second, that Republicans would propose a national ban on abortion.

Women across Connecticut and the country are scared and angry. And to those who say those fears and outrage are illusory or unjustified, all you have to do is read their words. Listen to what they say. They are promising the American people that there will be a national ban on abortion.

And to the people of Connecticut who think we have a safe haven because our legislature and Governor have courageously established protections for *Roe v. Wade* and for women who come to Connecticut seeking abortion services and for doctors who depend on our safeguards, there will be no safe haven in this country—none, nowhere—if Republicans go where they say, explicitly, they are heading.

I trust women with their doctors and their clergy and their family to make decisions about when and whether to become pregnant, whether to have children, and when to terminate a pregnancy short of term. I trust women—not the government, not politicians—to make these preeminently important decisions.

And I promise the people of Connecticut I will not back down. I will not stand for this kind of national ban on abortion.

Republicans have said, historically: We will let the States decide. It should be a matter of State legislatures making these decisions.

This ban on abortion takes away power from women and from States, contrary to their promises over years and years about States' rights. But more than a theoretical or hypothetical argument about the powers of State legislatures or the allocation of responsibility in our Federal system, this law will have destructive and catastrophic consequences for millions of women. It will impair the everyday lives of women and families across America.

It is not just a woman's issue. It is on all of us to say we will not back down; we will not stand for a national ban on abortion.

It is part of a tireless and seemingly boundless campaign against women's rights, but these attacks on reproductive rights and personal freedom apparently know no limits. Remember, first, Republican-controlled State legislatures moved to outlaw abortion entirely, forcing women suffering from ectopic pregnancies to bleed out in hospitals and refusing to care for child rape victims. But now Republicans are moving forward with plans to ban abortion everywhere, under any circumstances, and they are wresting a woman's right to make her own personal healthcare decision, sometimes a decision made during a devastating medical diagnosis out of her hands, putting those decisions into government's hands.

Make no mistake, the 15 weeks—all of the technical stuff that Republicans invoke, doesn't take away from the fact that it is a national ban that will eviscerate Connecticut's law. Congressional Republicans will decide whether or not women can access this vital help.

Eliminating access to abortion services as a result of the *Dobbs* decision has already caused devastating consequences. The loss of reproductive services in some States has caused a ripple effect for healthcare providers across the United States, which proves, for anyone who doubted, that banning reproductive services doesn't stop women from seeking those services. It just adds additional barriers and danger. In fact, it unnecessarily puts their lives at risk.

This bill would place a ban on abortion across the country, and it would include New York and Massachusetts, not just Connecticut and Delaware. Go across the country and pick those States where these rights have been protected.

When I was in the State legislature, and then as attorney general, I helped write the law that incorporates and

codifies *Roe v. Wade* in Connecticut statute. And now Connecticut has moved beyond that statute to provide a safe haven. But all of it would be gone. All of it would be overwritten by this law.

Americans should have no doubt about where Republicans stand now on this issue. They want to punish women. They want to punish doctors. They will do it at the State level. They will do it at the national level. No State, not even Connecticut, is safe from this threat. They are coming after our laws in Connecticut. They are coming after women in Connecticut and men who believe in the rights of women as a matter of constitutional and personal freedom to make these decisions.

Our laws should protect the rights of women seeking to make their own personal decisions about their reproductive health in consultation with medical providers, and I will fight tooth and nail this effort and any other effort that seeks to control, criminalize, and dehumanize women making this choice and the healthcare providers compassionately giving them care.

The American people are in our corner. American people—whatever they may think about abortion in their own lives, for their own family, for their daughters or wives or others—they support the rights of those women to control their own healthcare decision. It is an intensely personal decision, when it has to be made, and sometimes a threat of life, something going horribly wrong in a pregnancy, is the reason for it.

I will continue to fight for all in Connecticut who believe in this fundamental right. It is a matter of our constitutional DNA in Connecticut, beginning with *Griswold v. Connecticut*, which laid the groundwork for the right of privacy which is the underpinning for that constitutional freedom. And all of us, I hope, will reject this effort to ban abortion in the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, in June, as we are hearing, the Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade*, reversing nearly 50 years of law that recognized a woman's fundamental right to reproductive freedom. We also know that Justice Kavanaugh's concurring opinion repeatedly insisted that the Court's decision would return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives in the States. But this was never about States' rights, really, to my rightwing colleagues who want to restrict a woman's fundamental rights, and we know that because now they are pushing for a national abortion ban.

Yesterday, as we have heard, Senator GRAHAM introduced a strict national abortion ban with criminal penalties for doctors who provide critical care. If it passes, this bill will preempt the laws in States across the country

where abortion is still legal, including my own State of Nevada. In Nevada, our voters approved a ballot initiative in 1990 to enshrine a woman's right to choose in our State laws.

So what happened to my colleagues' claims of respecting the rights of States to make that decision? Well, apparently it wasn't enough to pack the Court with Supreme Court Justices who would vote to deprive women of the right that they have held for 50 years, under the guise of States' rights. Now, when far-right Republicans disagree with a State's decision, like mine, they plan to impose their own laws.

The current legislation introduced by Senator GRAHAM stops the people in pro-choice States—like mine, like Nevada—from choosing to protect the rights of women. At the same time, it leaves in place stricter abortion bans in 14 States.

What these far-right Republicans are effectively saying now is this: Anti-choice States, you are free to choose however harsh you want your abortion bans to be. But you pro-choice States, you are out of luck. Whatever the voters want in your States, it really doesn't matter because we are going to impose our own laws.

Look, Nevadans, as I have said, in 1990, we worked to codify *Roe v. Wade* because we know that it is impossible to walk in another woman's shoes. We know that for each woman, this is an important decision for each individual woman to make with her doctor, with her loved ones, about her healthcare, about her family planning.

I do not know what another woman is going to go through, and I do not want to restrict her access to any type of care, nor should any of us be imposing our beliefs, our experiences, our religion on someone else.

That is what this is about, and that is why Nevada voters voted in 1990 to codify *Roe v. Wade* and give women the right to make this decision.

Right now, we are seeing some politicians once again declare that they know what is best for every family in this Nation. They want to force the State of Nevada and other States like Nevada to limit women's freedoms, even though voters in my State voted to legally protect the right to choose that Nevada women have had for 50 years.

I have been saying for months now that some of my colleagues would never be satisfied with just overturning *Roe* and that they wouldn't rest until there was a national abortion ban. This bill shows every American that not only are women's rights under attack, but so is the democratic process in States like Nevada. If we don't have an abortion ban on the books, our State rights don't matter. That is just unacceptable. We can't let our nieces, our daughters, our granddaughters grow up in a world where they have fewer rights than we have had in the past.

So I, for one, will keep fighting back because this is about a fundamental

right for American women and the will of people in States like Nevada to make that decision and help and vote for the right of women to choose.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, when the extreme far-right Supreme Court overturned *Roe*, my Republican colleagues lauded this horrendous decision, claiming that a woman's right to an abortion should be left to the States. But now they are admitting what we knew all along: that this was never about States' rights. This has always been about Republicans using their power to control women and our bodily autonomy.

Despite the fact that the vast majority of the American public supports reproductive freedom and despite the fact that voters across the country are overwhelmingly voting to protect this freedom, Republicans are pandering—I think that is a really good word, apt word—pandering—to the extreme MAGA base and have now introduced a nationwide ban on abortion after 15 weeks.

Why 15 weeks, you ask? Because that is what the senior Senator from South Carolina who introduced this legislation said he would "feel comfortable at." So we now have a Republican Senator attempting to restrict the bodily autonomy of women across the country because that is what he feels comfortable at. It is not enough that the overturning of *Roe* has created fear and confusion all across the country. We now have the introduction of a nationwide abortion ban further adding to the chaos.

This is not some sort of hypothetical debate or "hysteria," as some of my Republican colleagues have claimed. If Republicans take control of the Senate, we now know what they will do. They will work to pass a national abortion ban, which would mean even in my home State of Hawaii, which was the first State in the country to decriminalize abortion even before the *Roe* decision—we did this in Hawaii in 1970. And for voters in States who are pushing back against their radical legislators and exercising their right to bring the issue of abortion to the ballot, including States like Kansas and Michigan, this bill would overrule their efforts.

But, of course, to add to their utter hypocrisy, if States like Texas or Mississippi want to be even more restrictive, even more harmful to women than a 15-week ban, that would be A-OK, according to the Senator from South Carolina and his extreme bill.

Allowing Republicans to regain control of Congress would be catastrophic not only for women, but for our entire country because when we women can't control what we do with our bodies, of course this impacts our families, our communities, our economy.

So this November, people are going to have a choice: Do you want to let

extreme MAGA Republicans tell you what you can and can't do with your own body, or do you want to hold these politicians accountable for pushing their far-right extreme agenda and perpetuating the chaos, confusion, and fear of women, families, communities, and our healthcare professionals? Let's not forget all the doctors who are out there wondering how they can provide the kind of care that they are trained to do right now, how they can do that in the face of this kind of ban in so many States across the country, not to mention a nationwide abortion ban. The chaos and confusion being experienced all across the country following the *Dobbs* decision has only multiplied by this nationwide abortion ban bill.

Talk about government overreach. I hear my colleagues talking about how it should be States' rights or government should not be telling us what to do. The word "hypocrites" doesn't even go far enough to call them out on what they are doing. This is an outright attack on women in this country. That is how I see it. That is how more and more women and those who support our right to make decisions about our own bodies, that is how we see it. And why? Because that is what is happening. This is literally a call to arms in our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I come to the floor to discuss the new Graham legislation to create a national abortion ban. The centerpiece of the Senator's argument is that Senator GRAHAM wants our country to believe that his national abortion ban is a moderate proposal—his words. Wrong, wrong, wrong.

A moderate bill would not institute criminal penalties for doctors providing lifesaving medical care. That is what this so-called moderate bill does. A moderate bill would not take rights away from American women, no matter where they live. That is what this so-called moderate bill does. A moderate bill would not create a presumption of women's guilt by requiring them to report a rape or seek counseling before they get an abortion. This so-called moderate bill does that, too.

Just think about that last point. If you are trying to assess our colleague from South Carolina's argument that his bill is moderate, under Senator GRAHAM's new restrictions, a 12-year-old rape victim, regardless of the terror she feels or the danger she faces, would have to find a way to report her assault to police before she could get the care she needs. That is a stunning overreach and there is absolutely nothing that is moderate about this proposal. The reality is this is not a moderate proposal. It is an extreme proposal, way out of step with the overwhelming opinion of the American people.

The other important argument I wanted to discuss was this whole matter of how so many of my colleagues on

the other side of the aisle have pledged loyalty—pledged loyalty—to the importance of States' rights that they are going to leave the decision on abortion to the States. But Senator GRAHAM has shown us that all his talk about States' rights means that the States have to agree with Senator GRAHAM. That is what his idea about States' rights is all about.

His bill tramples, for example, on the rights of Oregonians, who sure don't share Senator GRAHAM's view on this, and people in many other States, women and men who voted to protect abortion, women's healthcare, and women's individual freedom.

Senator GRAHAM's bill is about control. It is about government—government—mind these words—government having control over women's bodies rather than women having control over their bodies.

It is also clear that what has always been envisioned is not just a nationwide ban on abortions but criminalizing this with women and doctors at some point, I gather, possibly locked behind bars.

It is election season and Senator McCONNELL wants everybody to forget the Republicans' top priorities include passing these extreme restrictions through Congress and the courts. I believe that Americans know better. When it comes to this kind of legislation that is so far removed—from the moderate claim of its sponsor, I think we ought to recognize what we are looking at is a total national abortion ban, criminalization, and the rights of women curtailed and the power of government over them increased.

Senator GRAHAM's bill is the next step in that direction for Republicans. Introducing his proposal, Senator GRAHAM basically confirmed that:

If [we] take back the House and Senate, I can assure you we'll have a vote [on our bill].

Madam President, I think we have a lot of speakers coming, but I think the American people ought to take Senator GRAHAM at his word. This is what his agenda is about. This is what he is going to be championing from sea to shining sea. I just hope we do everything we can here in the Senate—in this country—to make sure that the Graham bill does not see the light of day.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

INFLATION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, yesterday, new data showed what Texans have known and felt for months: that inflation simply is not letting up. Last month, prices were up 8.3 percent from a year ago.

Economist Larry Summers, a well-known former president of Harvard University and member of Presidential Cabinets, said that this CPI report, Consumer Price Index report, confirms that the United States has a serious inflation problem.

Rent is up 6.7 percent. If you go to the grocery store to feed your family, groceries are 13.5 percent over what they were last year. If you are a senior citizen suffering through the hot Texas summer and need your air-conditioner to work overtime, electricity to make that air-conditioner run is up 16 percent. Of course, that is just since last August, just a year ago, when we were already battling runaway inflation.

But here is an even more shocking figure: Since President Biden took office on January 20, 2021, prices have risen 13 percent. So 13 cents out of every dollar that you earn—poof—has gone away. You are that much poorer. Your standard of living has been decreased by 13 percent.

Inflation, of course, far outpaces wage growth, meaning the average American has effectively been handed a pay cut. A single paycheck doesn't go nearly as far today as it did a year ago.

This is exactly what was predicted by leading economists when our Democratic colleagues ran off with the taxpayer credit card at the end of last year. They abused the rules of the Senate to spend an additional \$2 trillion in the name of COVID relief even though less than 10 percent of the money was directly related to the pandemic.

I want to differentiate between what we did together on a bipartisan basis to deal with COVID when we spent nearly \$5 trillion on a bipartisan basis. There is no doubt this was a grave emergency, a public health emergency, economic emergency. We did what we had to do, and we got through it. But even after that, our Democratic colleagues couldn't seem to kick the spending habits and unilaterally spent an extra \$2 trillion. As I said, even though 10 percent of that money was related to the pandemic, 90 percent, then, was unrelated.

Then the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, which the President was celebrating yesterday when the stock market fell 1,200 points—this partisan bill amounts to another \$240 billion in unnecessary spending, while raising taxes at the same time.

As I said, our colleagues ironically call this bill the Inflation Reduction Act, and the White House chose yesterday—the day that the latest disappointing inflation figures were released—to celebrate its passage.

Inflation Reduction Act is false advertising. The Penn Wharton economic review of the Inflation Reduction Act said there is no reduction of inflation for at least 2 full years, and, indeed, it may actually get worse. But we all knew this intuitively, that if you keep spending this much money, you are basically pouring gasoline on the inflation fire. It is going to get worse and

worse and worse, and middle-class working families all across this country have gotten hurt as a result.

Since our Democratic colleagues took control of both Houses of Congress and the White House, Texans' lives have gotten harder, not easier. Inflation I have spoken to has skyrocketed, real wages have fallen, and our economy has fallen into a recession.

Now, this is one of the other curious things about defining terms. Our Democratic colleagues want to argue about whether two consecutive quarters of negative GDP are actually a recession or not. Well, they were when Republicans were in charge, but apparently when Democrats are in charge, that definition doesn't apply.

Much as they tried but failed to convince the American people that the Inflation Reduction Act would actually reduce inflation, it didn't, and it won't anytime soon.

Well, we know that the response to inflation by the Federal Reserve has been to raise interest rates, and they are projected to raise them at least three-quarters of 1 percent or 75 basis points, which will also slow down the economy and hurt job creation. So it looks like even more pain is coming.

RAILWAY LABOR MANAGEMENT DISPUTE

Madam President, well, unfortunately, we are also told that there is a looming rail strike that will have a tremendously negative impact on our economy. Our economy, as we all know, depends on a network of tractor-trailers, planes, trains, and cargo ships to transport products around the United States and beyond. These are the very same transportation modes that make sure that your grocery store is fully stocked, that the manufacturing plants have inventory they need in order to make their products, and that, yes, our packages that we order show up on our front door step on time.

But a massive disruption in rail transportation is likely to occur in less than 2 days' time. The unions that represent more than 115,000 rail workers have not been able to reach a contract agreement with railroad companies. Unless they reach a breakthrough soon, rail workers will go on strike this Friday, causing a national rail shutdown.

If you don't think that will have a negative impact on our economy on top of what we have already mentioned, think again. The rail system carries nearly 30 percent of America's freight, everything from agriculture to retail products, heavy equipment, automobiles, coal, lumber. We are talking about the critical products that impact virtually every sector of the economy.

It is tough to overstate the negative impact this will have. Just look at agriculture. On the front end of production, farmers and ranchers need fertilizer, seed, animal feed, and heavy equipment, all of which are likely to travel by rail at some point. Then, at harvest time, our producers rely on

timely rail service to transport their products to processing plants and then communities across the country.

If this strike goes into effect, all of those shipments will be stalled, and this comes right as we are heading into the fall harvest. Farmers and ranchers will be left with huge amounts of products they can't even transport or sell, many of these perishable products, which will simply spoil. The consequence for consumers is we will continue to see empty shelves at the grocery stores, along with higher prices due to inflation and short supply.

But this won't just impact us in the United States. Railroads move roughly a third of U.S. grain exports, which are desperately needed in global markets, particularly with what is happening in Ukraine, with Russia impeding the growing and transportation of grain to places like Africa, where people are literally starving for lack of food. The war in Ukraine has exacerbated this food insecurity. If this shutdown here in America goes into effect, the squeeze will be compounded and will be even tighter.

Of course, this is just a snapshot of the impact a shutdown will have on one sector of the economy, but the same struggles will play out when it comes to energy, rail, manufacturing, automotive, and literally just about every other sector of the economy.

This massive logjam will take a serious toll on our economy on top of inflation and the recessionary pressures we are already feeling. The freight industry estimates that a rail shutdown could cost the U.S. economy more than \$2 billion a day—\$2 billion a day.

Our country is hurtling toward a logistical nightmare, and unfortunately the Biden administration appears to be frozen and undecided about what to do. For years, our Democratic colleagues who depend on organized labor for a major part of their political support have put the demands of labor unions ahead of the needs of consumers and the rest of the American people. They have romanced the powerful labor lobby at every turn, and one of the fiercest union defenders now occupies the Oval Office.

Now, I am not opposed to people joining unions. They are entitled to collectively bargain and try to advance their livelihood and their family's way of life. But to let one special interest group basically create a logistical nightmare with this looming rail strike is just indefensible.

Well, we are seeing the consequences of this kowtowing to organized labor above the interests of any and all other Americans.

To hopefully prevent this looming crisis, President Biden has established an emergency Board to help reach a resolution and prevent this strike, if possible. The Board released its recommendations to resolve this dispute nearly a month ago, but a deal is still nowhere in sight.

In recent weeks, a number of administration officials have joined the

unions and freight companies at the negotiating table. The Secretaries of Labor, Transportation, and Agriculture have all tried to help resolve the impasse, but they have not moved the needle at all.

I don't know how much havoc is in store, but it is not looking good. Many shipments have already stopped out of fear that the operations will stop midjourney. I read that even commuter trains like Amtrak have already canceled some of their routes because they know what sort of impact this strike will have if no deal is reached by Friday.

Inflation has already sent prices to an untenable high. The supply chain breakdown is sure to send those prices even higher.

Families can anticipate product shortages across the board from grocery stores to car lots. Shoppers can expect packages that they have ordered to be delayed for days or even weeks on end. And drivers should expect to see more trucks on the highway to fill the gap when the railroad shuts down.

This is just another example of the failure of the Biden administration to anticipate and to address the problems that the American people are facing. It seems there is a huge disconnect between what is happening here in Washington among our Democratic friends and the Biden administration and what I hear from my constituents back home. And I think that is true largely across the Nation; that the elites in Washington have become completely decoupled from the rest of the country.

What that produces is special interest legislation that pleases some constituents: labor unions, climate activists, and open borders advocates.

The Biden administration and our Democratic majority have used their power in Washington to spend trillions of dollars on things that the American people don't want while compounding the problems that they are facing day in and day out: inflation, a recession, a paralyzing supply chain shutdown on the horizon, a spike in crime, and then, of course, an open border, which has allowed enough illegal drugs to be imported into the United States that it took 108,000 American lives last year. And 71,000 of those 108,000 lives were as a result of synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

Synthetic opioids are raging like a brush fire across the entire country, and we are seeing, for example, at middle schools and high schools in places like Hays County, right outside of Austin, TX, where I live, that young people, unbeknownst to themselves, ingest small amounts of this fentanyl and ultimately end up overdosing and dying from it.

So there are huge challenges facing our country. We need to do our job. We need to work together. No one is suggesting that we give up our principles. Republicans are Republicans and Democrats are Democrats for a reason—because they view the role and

the size of the government differently. Our Democratic colleagues seem to think that Washington and government is the answer to every problem. Republicans and conservatives, on the other hand, tend to favor individual initiative and entrepreneurship and investment to create jobs and an opportunity for people to get jobs and provide for their family and pursue their dream.

But there is plenty of overlap where we can agree, but we have to fight inflation. We have to deal with things like the paralyzing supply chain and the threat from a rail strike that appears now to be imminent.

We have got to do more to support our men and women in uniform—the police—as they battle crime in our neighborhoods and our communities, which seems to have gone up exponentially in recent years.

And then, of course, there is the one big, gaping, open sore that our Democratic colleagues have ignored completely, and that is our open border.

I mentioned the drugs, but in addition to the drugs, we have seen 2.3 million migrants show up at the border just since President Biden became President because they know they are going to be able to get into the country.

And they are probably going to be able to stay because the Biden administration simply does not have any plan in place to decide asylum claims—who has legitimate claims and who does not—so they engage in a program of catch-and-release. With the litigation backlogs in our immigration courts, it is no surprise that when years go by and your ticket comes up and you are told to show up in immigration court, that people simply fade into the great American landscape and avoid detection.

The only people benefiting from this, beyond the occasional migrant, are the drug cartels and the transnational criminal organizations that network people from around the world.

I know of many people who aren't from a border State like I am who think that these migrants are just from Mexico or Central America. But if you talk to the Border Patrol sector chiefs in Del Rio or the Rio Grande Valley, they will tell you they are detaining people from as many as 150 different countries.

Now, surely, the majority are from Mexico and Central America, but it ought to cause us a lot of concern when somebody can get to our back door from another country and then falsely claim asylum only to be released into the interior of the United States and never heard from again.

These are all fixable problems if we will work together, but so far, while the American people may have thought they elected Joe Biden, a moderate, they basically have seen BERNIE SANDERS' agenda.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4483

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, have you ever gone out to eat at a restaurant with a group of people, but your order was cheaper than everyone else's? Maybe you weren't as hungry or the restaurant the group picked was more expensive than you could afford so you were selective about what you ordered. Then, when the check comes, someone suggested the group split it evenly.

Now, what is your immediate reaction? You are upset, of course, because you ordered the salad not the filet mignon or you drank water, not the expensive bottle of wine. You ordered what you wanted, and they ordered what they wanted; you shouldn't be on the hook for their cost.

Sadly, this illustration is far too real, as last month, Joe Biden announced that he would cancel billions of dollars in student loans.

Now, let's be clear. He isn't canceling student debt. No, he is transferring that debt to every American taxpayer. Now a construction worker in Florida is having to foot the bill for the loans of a Harvard grad, which they voluntarily accepted for an education they received.

So here is what Democrats are trying to say to that construction worker: You didn't go to college; Democrats don't care. You will pay the debt of lawyers and doctors, and you will pay for those who want Ph.D.s in poetry. Talk about poetic injustice. You went to community college or a State school and worked to graduate debt-free. Tough luck. Joe Biden wants you to pay for the advanced degrees of the privileged few. Your tax dollars are now the money pot for other people's student debt.

Of course, Joe Biden's plan doesn't even begin to address the real reason for rising higher education costs. That is universities' decades-long practice of unnecessarily raising tuition.

As Governor of Florida, I addressed that problem and challenged our universities to keep education affordable.

Look at the University of Florida. Undergraduate tuition and fees for this academic year are less than \$6,500. It is the fifth best public university in the country. You will get a fantastic education there. Meanwhile, at Harvard, tuition fees for an academic year cost more than \$57,000.

There are ways to make education affordable, but the Democrats and elites aren't interested in those solutions. That is why Joe Biden is engaging in this reckless move even though it doesn't solve the real issue and even though he lacks the proper constitutional authority.

Everybody knows this. That is why, in July of last year, NANCY PELOSI herself denied that the President had such power.

She said:

The president can't do it . . . That's not even a discussion.

Yet now the Department of Justice is engaging in interpretive gymnastics to co-opt legislation that was passed to help our servicemembers in the aftermath of 9/11. It is a desperate attempt to stretch a good law well beyond its intent so that Joe Biden can give handouts to his liberal voters and Harvard pals.

Biden wants to spend money that Congress has not appropriated for a loan forgiveness that Congress has not authorized. It is illegal. It is unconstitutional. It is a gross abuse of authority, and I won't stand for it. Congress must assert its authority here. We have the power of the purse, not the President.

That is why I have introduced the Debt Cancellation Accountability Act. My bill would require the Department of Education to get an express appropriation from Congress before they could propose waiving, discharging, or reducing student loan debt to two or more borrowers in an amount greater than \$1 million. If we want to transfer the debt of some and make everyone pay for it, then Congress has to make that decision.

We should simply put it up for a vote. Of course, the Democrats here in the Senate won't do that. Surely, they could have passed a bill by now if they had really wanted to, but they wanted Biden to do it alone. It is easy to see why. In just the past few weeks, we have heard families from across the country speaking out against Biden's unfair and disastrous proposal. I am hearing about it from Floridians every day, and I know my colleagues are too.

I would like to thank Senators BARASSO, LUMMIS, and BRAUN for supporting my Debt Cancellation Accountability Act and for choosing to stand with me against Biden's overreach.

Let's pass this bill today to reverse Joe Biden's unlawful decision and force Congress to decide this issue.

Before I ask for unanimous consent, I would like to turn to my colleague Senator BRAUN from the great State of Indiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. I thank Senator SCOTT.

Mr. President, President Biden's student loan debt transfer does not cancel or forgive anything. These debts will still be paid. It is not like they go away.

What else does it say about the whole idea that, when you take on an obligation and you agree to it, you can just shirk it or get rid of it? There are many people across the country who would want to be in on that gambit as well. He has simply shifted the cost of repayment on to everyone, including to the 65 percent of American workers who chose not to get a college degree.

What about the aspiring plumber or electrician who borrowed \$20,000, \$30,000, or \$40,000 for his or her own business? There would be no end to it.

We should focus on getting more value out of colleges rather than giving them another reason to hike prices. Sadly, the only place where that has been focused on is in my own home State, where Mitch Daniels, the ex-Governor of Indiana, froze tuition into 10 years. That is getting more value out, and that is why their enrollment has gone way up.

With a national debt of nearly \$31 trillion, we can't continue to pile on more debt. When Senator SCOTT and I got here just a little over 3½ years ago, we were \$18 trillion in debt. We throw "trillions" around now like we used to "hundreds of billions," and it is on the backs of our kids and grandkids every time we do it.

Today, Federal Student Aid owns \$1.6 trillion in outstanding Federal assets—in other words, student loans. The loan program needs to be completely redone so that colleges will be motivated to lower costs. This is an excuse to do the opposite.

Finally, President Biden's actions are illegal in the first place. The President doesn't have the authority to cancel all of this debt. I am hoping it gets taken to court, because what does it say, again, for future generations or anyone who makes a commitment to take on debt who can shirk it with the stroke of a pen?

Even Speaker PELOSI agreed on this point, saying she didn't think it was legal. Yet it doesn't make any difference in this day and age as we plow forward.

This is why the Debt Cancellation Accountability Act requires the Department of Education to get express appropriation from Congress to pay for any Federal student loan the Department proposes to waive, discharge, or reduce.

I yield the floor to Senator SCOTT.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I am so thankful for Senator BRAUN's support on this bill and for all of the work he has done to raise awareness about Biden's reckless spending agenda and to stand for fiscal sanity.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 4483 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this is a shameful attempt by the Republicans to keep working Americans buried under mountains of student debt.

President Biden's decision to cancel up to \$20,000 of Federal student debt for as many as 43 million Americans with incomes under \$125,000 a year is a historic step to delivering life-changing relief to working families and to helping rebuild America's middle class.

Senator SCOTT's bill is just one of the Republicans' desperate efforts to block cancellation for millions of Americans. Now, the Republicans are happy to pass out tax breaks and regulatory loopholes for billionaires and giant corporations, but they are fighting tooth and nail to keep working families from getting a penny of relief.

Evidently, Senator SCOTT believes that \$2 trillion in Republican tax cuts that were not paid for is fine so long as those tax cuts are aimed mostly at millionaires, billionaires, and giant corporations. But a program that costs a fraction as much and for which 90 percent of its benefits go to people earning less than \$75,000 a year is now somehow a moral outrage.

Today, he claims to worry about those taxpayers who he says will shoulder student loan cancellation, but where was Senator SCOTT, or then-Governor Scott, when Donald Trump and the congressional Republicans handed out \$2 trillion in tax breaks to billionaires and giant corporations, not a penny of which was paid for? Where was he then?

Well, he endorsed the Trump administration's plan to cut taxes for corporations, and he celebrated those tax breaks for the richest among us. He wasn't worried about how taxpayers would pay that off—not a word about the fairness for all of the people who would bear that burden, so long as the benefits went mostly to the rich and powerful.

Senator SCOTT has basically laid it all out there for America to see, and that difference—helping billionaires or helping working families—pretty much sums up Republican and Democratic differences across the board. If we are cutting a break for the rich and the powerful, the Republicans are on board. If we are trying to help out working people, congressional Republicans take to their fainting couches and claim to be so worried about the national debt.

Student loan cancellation is very popular in America, including with a majority of people who have no student loan debt. That is because there is scarcely a working person anywhere in America today who does not know someone who is choking on student loan debt. Yet, evidently, the Republicans in Congress live in bubbles that prevent them from meeting any of the millions of people out there who have busted their tails, who have worked multiple jobs, who have made their payments, and who still watch their debt loads continue to climb.

So let me just set the record straight here. I want to repeat an earlier point. Nearly 90 percent of relief dollars from President Biden's cancellation will go to Americans earning less than \$75,000

a year, and none—none—of the help goes to people making more than \$125,000 a year.

Now, actually, those numbers shouldn't be shocking. Think about who owns student loan debt. Senator SCOTT talked about Harvard multiple times in his speech, but it is not the wealthy people who go to Ivy League schools who end up with the student loan debt. It is middle- and working-class Americans who were born into families who couldn't afford to pay out-of-pocket. In fact, 99.7 percent of borrowers did not attend an Ivy League school. So that would mean—what?—three-tenths of 1 percent of people who went to Ivy League schools borrowed money.

By comparison—I just looked it up while the Senator was speaking—at the University of Florida, 15 percent have to borrow in order to make it through to graduation. At Florida State, 26 percent—that is one in every four people at Florida State—has to take out money in order to be in college. At Florida A&M, the numbers are even higher: 68 percent. More than two-thirds of the people who are in school have to take out money in order to make it through college. This is true across the country. At State schools, about half of all students have to borrow to make it through. At historically Black colleges and universities, the number is about 90 percent.

So let's be really clear about who exactly congressional Republicans are trying to take relief away from. It is not Ivy Leaguer doctors and lawyers. Who are the people the Senate Republicans say aren't worthy of the kind of help that billionaires and giant corporations could get in their big tax package? Who do Senate Republicans think should be squeezed harder? Who do Senate Republicans say should simply be left behind?

Well, the Senate Republicans want to leave behind the 42 percent of borrowers who do not even have a 4-year college diploma. These are folks who took out money—loans—in order to become a nurse's aide, to become a mechanic, to go to beauty school, to get a commercial driver's license to drive a truck, and, too often, the wages that they were promised never materialized.

Senate Republicans say: Let them struggle. Leave them behind.

Who gets the most help under President Biden's cancellation? Senator SCOTT said this is all about doctors and lawyers. Let's take a look at that.

The share of student loan borrowers who earned a cosmetology certificate is about double the share of borrowers who got professional degrees in law and medicine combined.

Senate Republicans say: Let those cosmetology certificate holders struggle. Leave them behind.

Similarly, there are more student loan borrowers who took out debt to earn a certificate for driving trucks and working on the railroad than those who did so to become dentists and optometrists.

Senate Republicans say: Let those truckdrivers and railroad workers struggle. Leave them behind.

It is not just the people who have 2-year degrees or certificates who get help under President Biden's cancellation. It is the people who don't have any degree at all. These are people who did everything our country asked them to do by graduating from high school and advancing their educations, but life happened: They got pregnant or they had to take care of a sick family member, and they had to leave before finishing their degree.

Senate Republicans say: Let them struggle. Leave them behind.

Who gets help? It is women, who hold nearly two-thirds of all outstanding student loan debt. Black women, in particular, shoulder a disproportionate amount of the student loan debt burden—Black women, who hold more debt than any other group.

Senate Republicans say: Let them struggle. Leave them behind.

Who gets help? It is Black Americans, who borrow more money to go to college, borrow more money in college, and have a harder time paying it off after college. They are the ones who will see their debt eliminated under President Biden's cancellation plan. Senate Republicans say: Let them struggle. Leave them behind.

Who gets help? It is the 50 percent of Latino borrowers with debt who will see their student loan debt completely eliminated. Senate Republicans say let them struggle. Leave them behind.

Who gets help? It is the millions of people who couldn't save for retirement, or buy their first home, or start a family because of student debt. Senate Republicans say let them struggle. Leave them behind.

We are living in a moment when the President of the United States has reached out, literally, to tens of millions of families and said: I am putting government on your side. But the congressional Republicans are determined to make this country work even better for the rich and the powerful. That is why they are trying to pass the bill that Senator SCOTT has advanced.

These Republicans are all for giving handouts to giant corporations and billionaires. But the minute—the minute—that our country creates a little breathing room for the millions of hard-working people whose biggest sin is they tried to get an education and they grew up in a family that just couldn't afford to pay for it, those Senate Republicans are right here on this Senate floor trying to undo it.

I want to take a minute and just look at the bigger picture to see how we got here.

We have a student debt crisis because our government stopped investing in higher education and began shifting the costs of college onto working families.

I went to a great public university that costs \$50 a semester—a price I could pay for on a part-time

waitressing job. I got to become a teacher, a law professor, and a U.S. Senator because higher education opened a million doors for a kid like me. But that opportunity no longer exists in America.

Today, college costs thousands, even tens of thousands, of dollars. And instead of investing taxpayer dollars to help bring down those costs, the State governments reduced their financial support, and the Federal Government told everyone to borrow the money they needed to cover the rising costs of going to school. That has left millions of Americans drowning in student loan debt.

What is worse, families have had to navigate a broken student loan system riddled with bad actors who are trying to take advantage of and profit off keeping them in debt.

During the Trump years, Betsy DeVos, the Secretary of Education, threw in with the for-profit schools. And when students who had been cheated asked for some help, she turned her back.

I have long pushed for more accountability and more oversight to bring down the cost of college and to make higher education and training programs more accessible. I have a plan for that. In fact, I have more than one plan for that, and I welcome any Republican to join me in helping make any of these options reality.

But cancellation is the first step to fixing a broken student loan system and to delivering relief to families who have been trapped in it for far too long.

One final point: The President's plan to cancel student debt will make a huge difference for tens of millions of Americans in their day-to-day lives. But it will do so much more. Debt cancellation is about strengthening our whole economy. Better educated workers make us a wealthier nation and one with more opportunity, not just for those at the top but more opportunity for everyone.

Just consider one example. Following World War II, a grateful nation said to returning GIs that taxpayers would pick up the cost of college and technical training. More than 2 million veterans went to college or graduate school and nearly 6 million used this opportunity to pursue vocational training to become construction workers, electricians, mechanics, and other careers. Together, these men—and they were nearly all men—built America's middle class.

Taxpayer investments in post-high school education meant that millions of people were better educated, and they helped fuel an economic boom that lasted for decades and lifted this entire Nation. And it was a bargain. Every dollar that was spent on educating our veterans generated \$7 to taxpayers. That is not even counting for the significant boost to productivity from a more educated population. Just think about that: a 7-to-1 payoff for investing in higher education for all our people.

President Biden saw something that he could do to help tens of millions of Americans struggling under the weight of student debt and invest in the future of our economy, so he did it. Debt cancellation was the right thing to do. That is why the majority of Americans—with or without loans—support cancellation.

I am celebrating because cancellation will provide life-changing relief for working families across this country. That is why I object to the Senate Republican's shameless attempt to deny people the relief they need.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. So the plan that the Democrats are going to give you, not only on this, was put out clearly in President Biden's blueprint for our country to put us \$45 trillion in debt in 10 years, where we will be paying as much on interest as we do on discretionary spending domestically or the military budget. That is no business plan.

How do you think they are going to pay for the debt forgiveness? They are going to borrow the money to do it, to backfill to pay the people who are owed the money.

One other point of clarification. When you had a practical bill—the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which was done before Senator SCOTT and I got here—it was a plan to grow economic activity, a way to pay for it. Had COVID not come along, the CBO was ready to say that it was paying for itself because we were growing the economy at 3 percent. And the \$150 billion per year over 10 years, which is chump change now compared to the \$3 trillion the Democrats have put us in debt over the last year and a half, was growing the economy with zero inflation, raising wages in the toughest spots for those wage earners. We have always tried to do it without borrowing it from our kids and our grandkids.

I yield back the floor to Senator SCOTT.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, so let's remember what we are talking about here. We are not canceling debt; we are transferring debt. We are transferring the debt because this obligation doesn't go away. Somebody still owes this money.

What we are saying is, people who decided—they made the choice—to go to college or go to some higher education, they are not going to have to pay their debt. And people who didn't and already paid off their debt, they are going to pay for it.

My colleague from Massachusetts never acknowledged the example. We all remember when we went out to dinner and we didn't spend the most money and how somebody suggested that, oh, let's just share it. So we paid for the expensive wine, and we paid for the expensive meal. That is not fair.

When you talk to Americans around the country, and they say: Would you like to forgive all the debt? Absolutely. Free is great.

But when you say: You are going to pay for it, they say: Absolutely not. Why would I pay off the debt for somebody else?

Let's remember just what my bill does. It doesn't say we can't forgive student loans; it says that Congress ought to decide if we do it. This is going to cost up to \$1 trillion.

I don't think we ought to, so-called, transfer this debt, but my bill will at least give us a chance to have a debate on it. But that is not what my colleague wants to do.

I hope my colleague understands that her objection is absolutely a slap in the face to all those workers in Massachusetts and around the country who didn't go to college: construction workers, small business owners, chefs, flight attendants, firefighters, landscapers, and so many other groups of people who have made the decision not to pursue a higher education for whatever reason.

There are many others who worked hard to get scholarships or those who worked part time to afford college or plenty others who took the time to pay off their loans. I am going to stand with those people, working-class people—people who are responsible, hard-working Americans who absolutely are willing to pay off their obligations.

I think about people like my dad. My dad had a sixth grade education. He was a truckdriver. He worked his tail off. I can't imagine what he would think about working hard every day, then being forced to pay for some other person's degree as a doctor or a lawyer. He would be beside himself. He would think it was so unfair.

It is not how the real world works. It is a Democrat fantasyland that Joe Biden is trying to turn into reality.

People used to take pride in paying off their debts and working hard to see their commitments come through. Democrats want to destroy that and destroy ideas of fiscal responsibility. They want to forget that we are \$30 trillion in debt. They want to forget that we still have record-high inflation as a result of wasteful spending.

My colleague wants to pretend that we are in this fantasyland because objecting to my bill is an endorsement of Biden's reckless plan and his unconstitutional debt transfer, from the overachiever, to the Harvard grad, to the working class.

As Members of Congress, we should be interested in checks and balances and the separation of powers. We should guard the powers of the Constitution that is especially reserved for the legislative branch. Spending a trillion dollars with no congressional oversight is wrong. That is not exactly how our Constitution was set up. This shameless decision to block my bill is just another example of how far Senate Democrats will go to appease the radical left.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. So I am still waiting for an answer to the question: Where were these Republicans who were talking about fiscal responsibility and what is fair in terms of transferring costs, when it was the billionaires and the giant corporations who were getting a \$2 trillion tax break?

Let us remember—because I was here when that happened—even the conservative economists and think tanks were saying this is going to go on the debt balance because it is not paid for.

No. At that moment, they were willing to say: But it is going to produce all kinds of wonderful benefits—which, of course, did not come to pass.

What about the example I gave, the example about the investment that we made as a country in our returning veterans; the fact that we invested so 2 million of them could get college diplomas, so that millions more could get technical degrees? What about the fact that the numbers show American taxpayers got a return on that investment of 7 to 1? This really is about who we invest in.

It seems that what Senator SCOTT is saying is people shouldn't go to school. If you are in a family that you can't guarantee that you are going to have some assets to back you up, if you ever have to think about the fact that you might get sick, you might fall down, you might get hurt, and you might not be able to finish, or you might not be able to turn that degree into a high-paying job, or you might graduate at a moment when the economy is in a slump, what Senator SCOTT seems to be saying is: Don't order off that menu. Don't go to school. Don't try to get a post-high school certificate in cosmetology. Don't try to get a certificate for truckdriving school. Don't try to get a 2-year diploma. Don't try to get a 4-year diploma. That is not going to make America a better or richer country. That is not going to be an America that is going to open opportunities.

The next time Senator SCOTT or any other Republican talks to me about fair, I would ask them to explain to me what is fair that the daughter of a janitor a half a century ago could go to a good 4-year college on \$50 a semester? Why? Because American taxpayer invested in those public colleges and universities. And today that opportunity is not there for a single one of our kids.

When you want to talk about who has college debt, instead of talking about the three-tenths of 1 percent of Ivy League grads who have college debt, look at the 68 percent of Florida A&M grads who have college debt. That is shameful. We need to be an America that is about creating more opportunities, not closing them off for tens of millions of people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, first off, my colleague never addressed

the issue that this is a transfer of obligation. I mean, you can have a conversation about what we should have done with regard to tax cuts in the past, but this is a transfer of obligation. This is a transfer of obligation of people who decided to go to school.

We should do everything we can to help people, but we are not addressing the problem here. I addressed it when I was Governor. When I became Governor in January of 2011, tuition in Florida was going up 15 percent a year, plus inflation. I stopped it. We didn't see tuition increase while I was Governor, and we became the No. 1 higher education system in the country according to U.S. News & World Report.

We solved the problem of the cost of higher education to make sure people could afford education. We did it because we invested, we kept tuition low, and we paid our universities based on three things: do you get a degree, how much money you make, and what does it cost to get a degree. So, guess what, all of our universities became more efficient and more accountable.

That is how you fix the problem. This does not fix the problem. This does nothing to reduce tuition. This does nothing to hold our universities accountable. This does nothing to stop our universities from raising tuition. This does nothing to require our universities to make sure our kids get a job. This does nothing to make sure our kids get good-paying jobs.

So I am very disappointed in my colleague in that she would still not address the issue that that is a complete transfer of obligation from some people who decided to go get a higher education to people who decided not to.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, would the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I yield the floor.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to ask the Senator if he believes that the 68 percent of students at Florida A&M University who have student loan debt should never have gone to college because it turns out their families couldn't afford to pay for college in Florida.

Should they just never have tried?

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Are you finished?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Absolutely. I did everything I could to make sure all of our students had the opportunity to go to school. We made sure that they could afford to go to school.

What I have said in my bill today is this ought to be done by Congress. And let's don't just do some blanket transfer of obligations here. Congress should be doing this. This is going to cost us up to \$1 trillion, and we are going to have people like my dad, if he was still

alive—a truckdriver with a sixth-grade education—pay for some Ivy League kid to go to school, and that is wrong.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, can I ask for a clarification of that answer?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. So, among the 68 percent of Florida A&M students who have student loan debt—I believe I heard the Senator say he made it possible for them to afford college, and I am wondering if he could explain how they could have afforded college without taking on that whole student loan debt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I am not suggesting you shouldn't borrow money, but what I am suggesting is, if you do borrow money, you made that decision, all right? You shouldn't transfer it to somebody like my dad, who had a sixth-grade education, couldn't afford to go to school, didn't go to school. There shouldn't be a transfer to make sure they pay off your debt. That is a decision you make. You should pay it off.

Now, if you have an issue because you can't pay it, let's deal with that issue. That is not what this does. This says, whatever your issues, Joe Biden says, by himself, without any act of Congress—he gets to make a decision by himself: Poof, your debt goes away; somebody else picks it up. That is not right.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I am really delighted that my colleague from Florida is suddenly concerned about transfers of wealth—I really am—because, as he may or may not know, over the last 30 years, there has been a massive transfer of wealth. The problem is, it has gone in the wrong direction.

We are talking about the shrinking of the middle class. We are talking about trillions of dollars going to the top 1 percent. And we are ending up in a situation today where you have billionaires and you have large corporations that don't pay a nickel in Federal taxes.

I always find it interesting that whenever Congress does something—ever so rarely—that benefits working people and low-income people, there is an uproar: Oh my God, you are helping young people and working people; you are helping poor people. What a terrible thing to do.

But there is massive silence when you give gigantic tax breaks to the 1 percent or large corporations that are now doing phenomenally well.

So my colleague from Florida is interested in the transfer of wealth? Let's work together. Let's make sure that the working class in this country—not just the billionaires—get a fair shake. Let's help young people. Let's start canceling the student debt that we should have done years ago.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, well, first off, let me make sure my colleague from Vermont knows my background. I actually grew up in public housing, born to a single mom. I do care about people, making sure you can get an education. That is why I did exactly what I did in Florida. I made sure people had the opportunity to get ahead.

The 4 years before I became Governor of Florida, the State lost 832,000 jobs. By cutting taxes and reducing the regulations and streamlining things, we added 1.7 million jobs so people all over my State could get a job. That is how people get ahead. You don't get ahead by just somebody transferring obligations from one person to somebody else. That improves a few people's lives, but that is completely unfair. That is not how this country was set up, that some people are going to pay for somebody else's obligation that they decided to pick up, and that is all I am talking about.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, you know, I really do think about this transfer question, and I find myself asking: Who paid for Jeff Bezos's yacht? Is it the taxpayers who said: Now, we—America's middle class, America's working class—are actually going to have to pick up the slack. And they will be the ones who have to pay to keep the military. They are the ones who will have to pay for roads and bridges. They are the ones who will pay for investment in science. But the billionaires can get richer and richer and richer and pay little or nothing in taxes. That is a giant transfer, and yet none of our Republican colleagues seem interested in talking about that transfer and just putting a stop to the outflow from hard-working, middle-class families over to the billionaires and the giant corporations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I think who paid for Jeff Bezos's yacht is all the people who bought packages from Amazon. And by the way, if you do get one that says "Made in China," I hope everybody will send it back.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S.J. RES. 61

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, in a few minutes, I am going to ask unanimous consent for the passage of the bill. In the interim, I would like to yield some time to my good friend Senator WICKER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I seek recognition to speak on the same matter that Senator BURR has raised and will raise on the unanimous consent request.

Think of the economy right now, Mr. President. Inflation is at 8.3 percent or higher, our GDP is shrinking, and supply chains have not recovered from the pandemic. The last thing we need is a shutdown of this Nation's rail service, both passenger and freight. Yet that is what we are facing in less than a day and a half from this moment: a massive rail strike that will virtually shut down our economy.

Now, this didn't have to happen, but I will tell you, it has been going on since 2019. So we are in our third year of this matter. There has been negotiation among the rails, some 37 companies—including 7 major freight carriers—and 12 unions. They reached an impasse. So, pursuant to statute, the President of the United States, President Joe Biden, appointed a PEB, a Presidential Emergency Board, to help resolve this issue. They brought the parties together and have worked with the suggestions from both sides—both labor and management—and come up with their recommendation, which the President of the United States has endorsed in full.

We are now at the point where we are asking both labor and management to agree to this recommendation of the PEB. One hundred percent of management has agreed to this recommendation of the Biden-appointed Presidential Emergency Board. Of the 12 unions, 8 of the unions have agreed. So we have an overwhelming majority of the unions agreeing to this and 100 percent of management agreeing to it, but under the law that Congress, in its wisdom, passed years and years ago, we have to have 100 percent of the 12 unions, and there are 4 holdouts at this point.

Pursuant to the statute, when we get to a situation like this, Congress can step in, and that is what my friend is going to ask us to do in just a few minutes. Congress can pass the recommendation of the PEB in full. The Senate can pass it, send it over to the House, send it to the President, who has endorsed the recommendation in full, and we can avoid this strike. And that is what we ought to be doing.

So I want to commend my friend from North Carolina for his leadership in this case. If the trains stop running, our economy grinds to a halt. And that is the very reason this law is in place, and it is the very reason why it is incumbent on us as Senators and Representatives to pass a resolution implementing the PEB.

I yield to my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Mississippi.

There are going to be some who say this is unprecedented by the Congress. In fact, under the Railway Labor Act, Congress is allowed to intervene. In fact, Congress has intervened 18 times in the past, imposing PEB recommendations in whole or in part 4 times.

If we don't do it, if we do not force this issue, at 12:01 tomorrow night, the railroads will shut down, and the economic impact on the American people is \$2 billion a day—\$2 billion.

The Senator from Mississippi and I have introduced a bill that will adopt the Biden administration recommendations—recommendations that include a 24-percent increase in pay, paid retroactively to 2020; annual bonuses of \$1,000; and additional paid leave. This is what has been negotiated by the PEB board, but, as Senator WICKER said, there are holdouts from a standpoint of some of the major unions even though eight have agreed to it.

Now, as I said, Congress has taken this action 18 times to intervene in 12 different rail disputes. It spans back to 1982, and the latest was in 1991. So I dare say there are only a few that are in this body who were here when that happened.

Now, Senator SANDERS is on the floor, and I know he is going to object. I know he is going to object because I read his tweet this week. It said this:

Congress shouldn't stand in the way of railroad workers going on strike. The rail companies have avoided bargaining, abused their workers, and allied with the same forces who killed the Biden agenda in 2021. Now they want Congress to support their greed. Don't.

It sounds similar to the argument he was just making to Senator SCOTT about student loans. It sounds very similar to every argument he uses. It is that there is this thing in America where nobody is speaking up for something.

Listen, this is the President's bipartisan emergency Board that he set up that came back with a recommendation to the Biden administration and said: Here is the solution to this. It should be adopted.

This is really weird that Senator WICKER and I were on the floor introducing legislation that supports the President's position and supports the position of the Presidential Emergency Board.

Now, here is the key thing. This is the takeaway. We don't have to be here. Senator SCHUMER at any point can place this legislation on the floor. Clearly, Senator SANDERS would object then. But let me make a promise. If Senator SCHUMER needs votes, I can deliver 48 Republican votes to implement the PEB recommendation and the Biden-endorsed position.

Let me say that again because I want to make sure Senator SCHUMER's staff understands. This is about how you get to 60. I don't want to give a 101 of the U.S. Senate, but 60 votes, as the President knows, is required. I am offering him 48. He only needs to get 12 on his side to have 60 votes, take this up, pass it, to have this over with. And there is no interruption.

Not only is it \$2 billion a day in economic impact; this is 160,000 trainloads of agricultural product at a time of harvest to cross this country.

There are some who say: Well, this isn't going to affect me. They haul coal. They haul gas. They haul petroleum. They haul gases like helium that are required for manufacturing businesses. They haul auto parts, which means you are going to see auto assembly plants that shut down not because of China but because we let the railroad workers go on strike and did not support the President's position.

This is not political. This is Republicans supporting the President's position and only asking 12 Democrats to support this action.

I ask my colleagues: Drop this concern that you are representing one side or the other. Ask yourself what is best for America.

We just got a report that inflation is 8.3—8.3; food up 7; housing up 6; gasoline was down, and I think everybody expected inflation numbers to go way down. So 8.3 percent—wages aren't keeping up with that.

Every American family is losing money every month. And now you are going to tell them you are going to be paying more because food is going to be scarce. Commodities are going to be scarce. Some things aren't going to be delivered.

If we thought that the port chaos that we saw last year was bad, we are going to see a complete shutdown of rail, and we are just a matter of months away from Christmas, when most retailers are counting on that product to come in.

There are ports like Seattle and L.A., what are they going to do with the containers? You talk about ships staying out at ocean. Amtrak canceled their east-west rail coverage today going forward. Carriers have already stopped hauling hazardous waste because they didn't want to get halfway down a line and not be able to secure the hazardous waste.

We are at a real tipping point on this. And this can all be solved by either no objection to the unanimous consent request or by Senator SCHUMER bringing this to the floor, knowing that he has 48 Republicans, and he only needs to produce 12 to get to 60. This is a really easy thing. It is an easy lift.

Well, my hope is that we will take one of the two paths. But do understand that in less than 48 hours, at 12:01 Friday morning, the likelihood is that without action by Congress, there will be a strike, and rail traffic will stop. Period, end of sentence.

At this time, Mr. 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.J. Res. 61 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the joint resolution 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. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. And I will object. Let me thank Senator BURR for actually reading my tweets. Much appreciated.

Just a correction of the record. I think Senator WICKER mentioned before that a number of unions had approved this agreement. As I think everybody knows, there cannot be an approval of a union agreement unless the workers themselves vote on it. They have not voted on it. So, in fact, there has been no approval by any union of the agreement. But before I go to the rail situation, I did want to say a few words and put this issue into a broader context, and then I will get to the rail situation.

As I think most Americans know, today we have more income and wealth inequality than at any time in the history of our country. People on top are doing phenomenally well while working people are struggling to keep their heads above water.

During the pandemic, while essential workers, like those employed at the railroads—while these people put their lives on the line and died by the thousands, the billionaire class—the people on top—saw a \$2 trillion increase in their wealth. Workers died by the tens of thousands. People on top became much richer.

Further, as healthcare costs soar, we have over 70 million Americans who are either uninsured or underinsured, and, in addition, the United States remains the only major country on Earth not to guarantee paid family and medical leave. That is the broad issue that we have got to look at as we look at the situation in the rail industry.

As I understand it, it is not accurate to say that the President of the United States has agreed to what the PEB has come up with. They have come up with a proposal. But right now, as we speak, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh is currently meeting with the rail union's end management in trying to forge an agreement. And I happen to wish them well. And I hope that those meetings lead to an agreement that is fair and that is just.

But let us make no mistake about what is happening in the rail industry right now—and I did not hear one word of that from my Republican colleagues—and that is that the rail industry has seen huge profits in recent years and last year alone made a record-breaking \$20 billion in profit. Last year, the rail industry made \$20 billion in profit.

And let me also mention that the CEOs of many of these rail companies are enjoying huge compensation packages. For example, last year, the CEO of CSX made over 20 million in total compensation while the CEOs of Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern made over \$14 million each in total compensation.

In other words, what is happening in the rail industry is what is happening all over this country. Corporate profits

are soaring, and CEOs are making incredibly large compensation packages.

I would also add that the parent company of BNSF—one of the largest freight rail companies in America—is Berkshire Hathaway, owned by Warren Buffett. Mr. Buffett is the fourth wealthiest man in America, worth nearly \$100 billion. During the pandemic, as railworkers risked their lives to keep the economy going, Mr. Buffett became \$33 billion richer.

In the midst of all of those profit increases for the industry, in the midst of huge compensation packages for the CEOs of the industry, in the midst of increased wealth for those who own these companies, what is going on for the workers? I think that is a fair question to ask, if we are in the midst of negotiations. What is going on for the workers? How are they doing?

It turns out that the key issue in the current negotiations is not about salaries. Apparently, there is an agreement on that. The key issue that is being contested is about the working conditions in the industry which are absolutely unacceptable and are almost beyond belief.

Right now, if you work in the freight rail industry—one of the most grueling and dangerous jobs in America—you are entitled to a grand total of zero sick days.

In case you missed it, let me repeat it: You are entitled to zero sick days.

What that means is that if you as a worker get sick, if your child gets sick, if your spouse gets sick and you need to take time off of work, not only will you not get paid, you actually could get fired. And that is precisely what is happening today in the rail industry. How crazy is that?

Let me remind you of what you undoubtedly know, that hundreds of Americans are still dying every day from COVID and tens of thousands are being hospitalized as a result of this deadly virus. What the freight rail industry is saying to its workers is this: It doesn't matter if you have COVID. It doesn't matter if you are lying in a hospital bed because of a medical emergency. It doesn't matter if your wife just gave birth to your child. It doesn't matter. If you do not come into work, no matter what the reason, we in the industry, we the bosses, have the right to fire you.

Really? Do these conditions really exist in the United States of America, the wealthiest country on Earth in the year 2022?

I do wonder if the CEO of the railroad or other top executives at that railroad—I wonder if they would get fired if they got sick or if they had a medical emergency in their families. I doubt very much that they would get fired.

Further, I should add, that quite sensibly the Federal Government guarantees 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave to its workers. That is what we do as a Federal Government. So if you are an employee at the Department of Transportation in the United

States, sitting behind a desk, you are, appropriately—I believe in this very much—guaranteed 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave. That is if you work at the Department of Transportation. But if you are an engineer running a train with tons of freight behind you—a very dangerous job—you get zero sick leave.

Now, that may make sense to somebody, but it doesn't make sense to me. As a result of this reactionary policy of denying workers sick time, rail conductors, engineers, and other rail employees are coming into work sick and exhausted, which is a danger not only to themselves but to their coworkers and everyone else who is around them.

As part of the contract negotiations, the railworkers are asking for 15 paid sick days. This is not a radical idea. We are the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee paid sick days.

In Germany, workers are entitled to 84 weeks of paid sick leave at 70 percent of their salary. In Norway, workers are entitled to 1 year of paid sick leave at 100 percent of their salary. In the UK, workers are entitled up to 28 weeks of paid sick leave.

The railworkers in the United States are not asking for 1 year of paid sick leave. They are not asking for 6 months of paid sick leave. They are asking for 15 days—15 days. The rail industry has said, as I understand it, that they just cannot afford to do that, just don't have the money. They say it would cost too much money to provide their workers with any paid sick days. They just can't afford to do it. Well, let's see. They made over \$20 billion in profits last year, and they provide their CEOs with huge compensation packages.

And here is something else that everyone should know who is getting involved in this issue: Last year, the rail industry spent over \$18 billion, not to improve rail safety, not to address the supply chain crisis in America, but to buy back its own stock and hand out huge dividends to its wealthy stockholders. In fact, since 2010, the rail industry has spent over \$183 billion on stock buybacks and dividends.

So here is where we are. It turns out that guaranteeing 15 paid sick days to rail workers would cost the industry a grand total of \$688 million a year. That is less than 3.5 percent of their annual profits. It seems to me if four major rail carriers can afford to spend over \$18 billion a year on stock buybacks and dividends, please, please don't tell me they cannot afford to guarantee 15 paid sick days to their workers and allow these workers to have a reasonable quality of life, which they don't enjoy today.

If the Burr-Wicker resolution passed, railworkers would be entitled to zero paid sick days and zero unpaid sick days. That is clearly unacceptable.

The outrage over the lack of paid sick leave is not the only issue being negotiated. The railworkers of this country are sick and tired of unreliable

scheduling, which is having a horrendous impact on their personal and family lives. In America today, railworkers are on call for up to 14 consecutive days, 12 hours a day. In fact, it is not uncommon for many railworkers to be on call virtually 24 hours a day with the requirement to report to work within 90 minutes for shifts that can last nearly 80 hours.

My office has heard from railworkers who received calls from management at 2 in the morning requiring them to show up for work at 4 a.m. Again, this is not only unacceptable; it is dangerous, and it has led to a substantial increase in the rate of injuries in the freight rail industry.

If the Burr-Wicker resolution were to pass, these unfair and unsafe working conditions would be allowed to continue, threatening the safety not only of the workers, but of passengers, as well.

Finally, the Burr-Wicker resolution could allow the freight rail industry to substantially increase the cost workers would have to pay for healthcare.

Let us be clear. We are talking about an industry that not only made \$20 billion in profits last year and spent over \$18 billion on stock buybacks and dividends, we are talking about an industry that has slashed its workforce by nearly 30 percent over the last 6 years, leaving its remaining workforce woefully understaffed and overworked. We are talking about an industry that has seen its profit margins nearly triple over the past 20 years.

Today, what Congress should be doing is not passing the Burr-Wicker resolution and forcing railroad workers back to work under horrendous working conditions. What we should be doing is telling the CEOs in the rail industry: Treat your workers with dignity and respect, not contempt. Do not fire workers for the “crime” of going to a doctor when they are sick. Make sure that your workers have 15 paid sick days and adequate time off to rest and spend with their families. At a time when you, the industry, are making record-breaking profits, do not increase the cost of healthcare for your employees.

The CEOs in the freight rail industry need to understand that they cannot have it all. The rail industry must agree to a contract that is fair and that is just, and if they are not prepared to do that, it is time for Congress to stand on the side of workers for a change and not just the head of large multinational corporations.

Railworkers have a right to strike for reliable schedules. They have a right to strike for paid sick days. They have a right to strike for safe working conditions. Railworkers have a right to strike for these benefits. The Burr-Wicker resolution would take these fundamental rights away from workers. We cannot allow that to happen. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, the objection has been heard and the Senator from Vermont has that right.

I wonder if the Senator would yield for a question concerning some assertions that he has made. It is my understanding—and the Senator is correct in this regard—only two of the unions have actually voted in favor of this plan. Six others have—their leadership has agreed, and we have tentative agreements with six of those. So six plus the two is the eight I mentioned.

Also, the Senator, I think, is mistaken in saying that there is no sick leave policy. That would be unbelievable for the rail industry in this day and age. It works a little differently for the rail. Railroad employees operate trains and have a leave policy under which they first indicate unavailability for work, and when that unavailability is the result of illness, then they receive sick pay through a sickness benefit under a statutory scheme.

The Presidential Emergency Board heard arguments on both sides, recommended an additional paid leave day. And, again, I would stress that this comes on top of a 24-percent wage increase.

But the thing that really strikes me about what my friend from Vermont said is he seems to cast doubt on whether President Biden is actually for this PEB recommendation, and that needs to be cleared up. If the Senator from Vermont is suggesting that President Biden is not behind this, then the White House needs to let us know immediately because when the PEB report was issued, the clear message from the White House is that President Biden was in favor of this and endorses this.

So if there are people in the White House listening to this, if the President of the United States is following this debate, then he needs to clarify this. If he is backing out on his support for the PEB, we need to know that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. My understanding, I say to my colleague from Mississippi, is that as we speak, the Secretary of Labor is in a room—or has been today, with management and labor in trying to forge an agreement. So what is going on right now is they are trying to reach an agreement which is amenable to both sides, so that is a work in process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, it is clearly apparent by listening to this debate, if Senator SANDERS had been on the PEB board, the PEB board wouldn't be making a recommendation and the President wouldn't be behind it. But that is where we are, short of a breakthrough in the negotiations that are occurring and going on.

I grew up listening to Paul Harvey. Paul Harvey had a show, the rest of the

news, the stuff you didn't hear. Let me do Paul Harvey on Senator SANDERS.

The railroad workers today get 3 weeks paid leave on average, plus 11 paid vacation days. PEB made a recommendation that they get 1 additional paid leave day. We will add that in. That is almost a month of paid leave. Regardless of what you call it, there is a month there.

You now mentioned this wasn't as lucrative as Germany and UK. I was home all of August. Nobody was asking: Geez, can you pass legislation that makes us look more like the UK or Germany or the rest of Europe? And I would be willing to bet that 27 paid leave days probably is more than some of the European countries.

Mr. SANDERS. Would you like to bet on that?

Mr. BURR. I will turn to you when I finish, how about that? I gave you a gracious amount of time.

The PEB board determined this was a good solution. And Senator SANDERS says he is here looking out for the middle class because nobody does that. Tell me this: How are you looking out for the middle class when you are risking losing \$2 billion a day in economic activity? Some of those people that you are talking about standing up for, if this rail strike continues, they are going to lose their job because of you. They are going to lose their job because the President took a position and you didn't support him.

I have been amazed with this administration. I find it pretty difficult sitting up here taking the President's position because the CDC today, 78 percent of the CDC workforce does not show up at the office more than 2 days a month. We are in the middle of COVID. We have a monkeypox national medical emergency, and 78 percent of CDC employees—Centers for Disease Control—do not go to the office in Atlanta. As a matter of fact, by, I think, the New York Times report, even the Secretary doesn't go into the office. At a time where you ought to have leadership, the leadership is gone.

Let's give the President a little bit of credit. He is showing some leadership. He realizes this is not good for every American. It doesn't matter whether you are rich or poor or in the middle. Having \$2 billion a day of negative economic impact is not good. It will ruin people's lives, just like COVID, just like monkeypox has done to some Americans.

I am not sure how in good conscience you can roll the dice and say: Boy, 24-percent increase in pay retroactive to 2020—not 2022, 2020—\$1,000 bonus, and 27 paid leave days per year, somehow we are cheating them. It is beyond me.

But an objection has been heard, and now it means this is in Senator SCHUMER's hands. He is the majority leader. He can bring this legislation up on the floor. All he needs is 60 votes because I am convinced, after hearing Senator SANDERS, he is not going to have an epiphany tonight and wake up tomorrow and say: I was wrong, I am for this.

But here is the promise I will make to Senator SCHUMER. If he will bring it to the floor, I will produce 48 Republican votes for it. That means Democrats only need to produce 12 people to support it to keep the American people from having a \$2 billion-a-day economic impact negatively impacting them. It will keep the flow of goods from the east coast to the west coast, and Amtrak will open up again. Christmas that comes in from overseas will hit L.A., Seattle, everywhere, and it will make it to its retail location where my wife can buy it. You could probably squeeze 12 Democratic votes just out of coastal communities that have ports that are going to be the real loser in this.

Remember, not long ago we had a port problem. We had ships that were sitting off L.A. that couldn't unload, and we felt the impact of it. Well, if you thought that was bad, wait until there are no trains because then they will be unloading no ships. They are all going to sit off the shore. When they back up like that, that backs up further and further when these goods are going to come in because once they unload here, they are going to go back and get more.

It also means that what we export in this country, there are no containers and no ships coming in to export those goods. If you are in agricultural territory at harvest time, this is going to be devastating to you. There are 160 million freight cars of agriculture transported every year, and it happens in this period.

So I say to my colleagues, let's all hope that Senator SCHUMER will bring this up, that he will take Republicans up on their position of supporting the President and a solution to this problem, and that all he needs to do is produce 12 folks, and at any point, we can pass this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I was not aware Senator BURR was a railroad worker, so let me, just to set the record straight, tell you what the railroad workers themselves understand the situation is. We might want to listen to those who live the experience. So let me very briefly quote you a statement from Jeremy Ferguson, president of SMART Transportation Division, and Dennis Pierce, president, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Teamsters Rail Conference.

This is what they say about their working conditions:

Penalizing engineers and conductors for getting sick or going to a doctor's visit with termination must be stopped as part of this contract settlement. Let us repeat that, our members are being terminated for getting sick or for attending routine medical visits as we crawl our way out of a worldwide pandemic. No working-class American should be treated with this level of harassment in the workplace for simply becoming ill or going to a routine medical visit.

That is from the unions themselves.

So let us be clear. I don't think anybody wants a strike or wants a lockout. We hope that a settlement will be reached in the next day. But, in my view, if we are going to reach a settlement, I would hope that the railroads, which are making huge profits, start treating their workers with the respect that they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I appreciate the debate on this. Here is where we are on this issue. We are going to have a nationwide strike within a day and a half from now, midnight, 12:01 a.m., Friday.

There are two things that could stop this. The distinguished majority leader can bring this PEB recommendation to the floor, and we will produce the Republican votes to get President Biden's administration's recommendation enacted. Send it to the House. The other thing that can happen is for President Biden to do as I have called on him to do just a few moments ago—to make it clear that this is, in fact, his recommendation, his endorsement of the plan that has been put forward by the Board he appointed; make that clear and exercise the Presidential leadership that is needed at this point to persuade his friends and the four holdout unions that this is what needs to be done.

But that is where we are. If we don't have one of those two actions, then we will have done nothing, and we will see a strike and the economic devastation that the distinguished Senator from North Carolina has described. It is really up to the Democratic leader and the President of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I am very pleased to be on the floor today with my colleague Senator HIRONO to express our strong support for the nomination of Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta to be Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues at the Department of State.

The position that Dr. Gupta has been nominated for leads the Office of Global Women's Issues, which is charged with advancing the rights and empowerment of women and girls around the world through U.S. foreign policy, so looking at our foreign policy through a gender lens that recognizes that women are half of the world's population.

Not only does the Office of Global Women's Issues prioritize policies and programs to advance the status of women around the world, it ensures that U.S. policies incorporate a gender lens at all levels of policy and decision making.

The last 2½ years of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated why this office is more important than ever before. Around the world over those last

2½ years, the gender gap has grown as a result of the pandemic. Girls are dropping out and staying out of school at a higher rate than boys. The female labor force participation rate has declined, with women not only holding less secure jobs but also taking on more unpaid work at home with childcare and housing.

Gender-based violence has increased to such an extent that UN Women, the U.N. body charged with advancing the rights of women globally, now warns of what they call a “shadow pandemic” of violence.

These are issues of great consequence to half of the world’s population. They cannot be an afterthought. Gender equity, equality, and the empowerment of women and girls must be a focal point of U.S. foreign policy, and that is exactly what the Ambassador at Large is intended to facilitate.

Unfortunately, this position has been unfilled for too long. Over the past 5 years, beginning in the Trump administration, the position of the Ambassador at Large for Global Women’s Issues has been filled for only 1 year, so 20 percent of the time over the last 5 years.

During that time, we have endured an unprecedented global pandemic. We have ended a 20-year war in Afghanistan. We have watched as Vladimir Putin launched an unprovoked attack on Ukraine. We have experienced a supply chain crisis and suffered a global food shortage. And in every single one of these crises, women have been more acutely affected than men and affected in a different way than men.

During the pandemic, women, who make up almost 70 percent of the healthcare workforce, have been those who have been on the frontlines of providing care for the sick and vulnerable.

With the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, women’s rights have been rolled back at an unprecedented rate, and we have seen—90 percent of the households in Afghanistan have food insecurity, and women are experiencing the greatest part of that.

Displacement from the war in Ukraine has left millions of women vulnerable to human trafficking, even as Russia continues to shell their homes and communities.

The food insecurity from the supply chain crisis and global food shortage has reinforced our understanding of what we have seen for too long: that in times of hunger, it is women who eat last and who eat the least.

Through all of these crises, the Office of Global Women’s Issues has been without a leader to spearhead its work to ensure that women’s needs are incorporated in every aspect of the U.S. response to these crises. Now, why does that matter? Well, not only do women make up 50 percent of the world’s population, but what we know is that where women are empowered, they contribute, give back more to their families. They give back more to their communities. The countries that empower women are more stable; they are more economically secure.

This is a policy that is important not only to our foreign policy writ large but to our national security. That is why we need to fill this position and why we urgently need to confirm Dr. Gupta.

Dr. Gupta has spent her career in service to gender equality and women’s empowerment. She knows better than most the impact that unfair gender norms and inequalities have on women and the importance of prioritizing women’s leadership.

What is so unfortunate is that Dr. Gupta is being punished for her personal views on women’s reproductive choices. As the result of those personal views, those groups who oppose women’s reproductive choices are spreading falsehoods instead of facts. They are doing that, and unfortunately, too many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been willing to listen to those falsehoods without really looking at the facts. This sets a very dangerous precedent for all future nominees.

Let me be clear. The Office of Global Women’s Issues does not lead on sexual and reproductive health and rights, nor does it provide information about abortion services.

When former President Trump nominated someone to lead the Office of Global Women’s Issues, I and my pro-choice colleagues in this body didn’t ask her what her position was on choice because we knew that was not the mission of the Office of Global Women’s Issues, and she was confirmed. And I think by all accounts, people thought she did a good job in the short time that she was there.

So why are my Republican colleagues spreading these falsehoods? They have said that Dr. Gupta has advised the World Health Organization to support abortion as a human right. They have alleged that Dr. Gupta gave a speech saying that abortion should be an essential service. They have alleged that the administration has plans to include abortion in the mandate of the Office of Global Women’s Issues. Let me be clear. There is no truth behind those allegations.

If you missed it, let me say it again. There is no truth behind those allegations.

We cannot let this idea that because somebody has a personal position on an issue that affects them, that that means they cannot be considered for a position within the government. You know, based on that criteria, I wouldn’t be able to be considered for any position.

So for the sake of Dr. Gupta’s nomination today and for the sake of all of those qualified women candidates who are going to come before the Senate in the future, we can’t let this divisive move become the status quo. We have to correct the record. We need to approve Dr. Gupta, and we need to get the Office of Global Women’s Issues back operating at full capacity.

With that, let me yield to my colleague from Hawaii, Senator HIRONO.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. I rise today in support of Dr. Gita Rao Gupta’s nomination to serve as Ambassador at Large for Global Women’s Issues, and I am glad to be here with my friend from New Hampshire to argue for her confirmation.

As head of the State Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues, the Ambassador at Large leads our diplomatic efforts to promote the rights and empowerment of women and girls around the world. Who can argue with that kind of a mission?

From supporting women’s economic participation to combating domestic and gender-based violence, this work is critically important, and Dr. Gupta is well-suited to take on this important task. Dr. Gupta has spent her life working to empower women across the globe. She has led several nonprofit organizations focused on advancing gender equity and has served as cochair of the World Bank’s Gender-Based Violence Task Force.

But for months now, Republicans have blocked consideration of her nomination. Why? Not because she is unqualified. Dr. Gupta’s record is impeccable, and her qualifications are clear. No, Republicans are blocking her nomination simply because she supports the fundamental right of all women to make decisions about their bodies and their futures, including the decision to get an abortion.

Apparently, it is no longer enough for my Republican colleagues to push their extreme anti-abortion agenda. Now that they have overturned *Roe v. Wade*, they are opposing anyone who expresses support for abortion access even if it is their personal view and not one they are going to be pushing forward in the position that we are being asked to confirm them for.

Last year, the Republicans did the same thing to President Biden’s nominee to be Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration, SBA, opposing his nomination because of their opposition to SBA’s totally lawful PPP loans to Planned Parenthood clinics providing critical healthcare to communities across the country.

The Republicans, I have to say, have been on a tear about “How dare SBA provide these lawful PPP loans to Planned Parenthood?” Apparently, it escapes their notice that these are lawful loans.

So Republicans’ opposition to Dr. Gupta’s confirmation is a dangerous position and one that threatens the health, safety, and prosperity of women here in the United States and around the world.

For example, my Republican colleagues raised concerns about the state of women and girls in Afghanistan, and yet in another example of their hypocrisy, they are opposing a nominee who would be in a position to actually help support these women.

As Ambassador at Large for Global Women’s Issues, Dr. Gupta will bring

decades of experience to empower women, improve their economic security, and end violence against women and girls.

There is no legitimate reason for anyone to not support her nomination to this important role. The chaos and fear across the country generated by the Supreme Court's Roe decision is spilling over to block this nomination.

I thank Senator SHAHEEN for her focus on Dr. Gupta's nomination and her dedication to women and girls at home and abroad, and I urge my Republican colleagues to do the right thing for a change and end their bad faith obstruction of Dr. Gupta's nomination.

I yield back to my colleague from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Thank you, Senator HIRONO, and thank you for your eloquent remarks about Dr. Gupta's qualifications and the importance of having someone who has those kinds of qualifications at the Office of Global Women's Issues.

At this time, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee be discharged and the Senate proceed to the following nomination: PN1578, Geeta Rao Gupta, to be Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues; that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; and that any related statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAGERTY. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. HAGERTY. Dr. Gupta received a tie vote in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There is a Senate process that has been agreed to by both parties by which the leader can discharge a nomination with a tie vote from this committee to bring it before the full Senate, if he so chooses.

I am saying this as a person who has been put through 30 hours of cloture himself when I served in the executive branch and went through this very process.

We should not break from Senate process and procedure with regard to Dr. Gupta's nomination. Members should have the opportunity to vote, and the majority leader can schedule it.

Additionally, I think the vast majority of Senators from both sides value the economic empowerment of women everywhere around the globe. The previous administration made economic empowerment for women worldwide one of its signature initiatives.

I served as a diplomat at that time in the previous administration, and the senior Senator from New Hampshire was a valuable partner in many of our efforts, which I very much appreciate.

So I think that there is a goal we share, but there are valid concerns on our side that the current administration is tainting this worthy goal and dismantling the bipartisan achievements of the previous administration. We deserve to have a better understanding of what this administration is doing before we rush ahead and totally bypass the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to confirm the person who will be the chief implementer of this administration's policies.

I am not comfortable giving consent to expedite consideration of this nominee.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I can buy that answer. Senator HAGERTY and I have worked together on the Foreign Relations Committee. I voted for you to be an Ambassador. I thought you did a good job in that role, and I think you are doing a good job now.

But the fact is that taking up floor time to deal with qualified nominees at a time when we have limited floor time, when we have a position that needs to be filled, when we have a minority position on the Foreign Relations Committee in opposition to authorizing permanently the Office of Global Women's Issues tells me it is something more than that, and I think Dr. Gupta's stalled nomination is emblematic of the intransigence on confirming President Biden's nominees for the Department of State.

That obstructionism is undermining our diplomatic efforts. It is demoralizing to employees at the Department of State who have dedicated their lives to U.S. foreign policy, and I know you understand that because you headed an Embassy. You know how critical our employees are who manage our foreign policy.

Eric Rubin, a former Ambassador to Bulgaria, recently spelled out what this means for U.S. diplomacy and national security, and this is the concern that we all ought to have.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this article from Puck News.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[Sept. 6, 2022]

WASHINGTON'S NEW CRISIS OF DIPLOMACY

(By Julia Ioffe)

As of this writing, it has been 593 days since an American ambassador has inhabited the Villa Taverna, their official residence in Rome. Ever since the financier and Republican donor Lewis Eisenberg moved out at the end of Donald Trump's administration on January 21, 2021, no one has replaced him. President Joe Biden never nominated anyone, which raised eyebrows both in American foreign policy circles and in Italy. The Romans I've spoken to are furious and see it as a sign of unprecedented disrespect, especially at a time when Washington is asking its European allies—including countries dependent on Russian gas, like Italy—to hold

the line on anti-Russian sanctions. "It's the only G7 country with no U.S. ambassador," one American diplomatic insider told me. "I know the Italians are unhappy and they should be, given the situation politically and what's going on with Russia." Given that Russia is rumored to have had a hand in the collapse of Mario Draghi's sanctions-friendly coalition government this summer, the fact that Washington doesn't have a representative on the ground is more than embarrassing. It's downright negligent.

Currently, the United States is represented in Italy by Shawn Crowley, who is the chargé d'affaires. That's fine, but a chargé doesn't have the same rank and status as an ambassador, and receiving countries have all kinds of protocols and rules about who can meet with whom. Usually, a chargé has a much lower ceiling for whom they can meet than an ambassador; the rank itself can be quite limiting. "The Italians," noted the diplomatic insider, "are very protocol conscious." As are the Ukrainians—so much so that, despite all the aid the U.S. has poured into his country, President Volodymyr Zelensky refused to meet with the American chargé d'affaires until a real American ambassador, Bridget Brink, arrived in Kyiv this May.

Why has Biden left the post in Rome unfilled for so long? It's been an open secret in Washington that the president is holding the spot for Nancy Pelosi, the first Italian-American Speaker of the House and a minor celebrity in Italy. The idea, apparently, was to give her a nice, cushy retirement gig after Republicans take over the House. But why not nominate someone, like a career foreign service officer, to serve in the post, and then shoo them out once Pelosi ripens to the idea? All ambassadors, after all, serve at the pleasure of the president. I asked spokespeople at both the State Department and the White House about this, but they wouldn't—and couldn't—explain to me, even off the record, what the hell is going on there, not even after Fox News published its own story about the Pelosi rumors on Tuesday.

Pelosi's people, meanwhile, offered a familiar line: Why would Pelosi go get another job when she could just retire to Napa, and play with her grandkids? "Fox is just trying to start shit," one source close to the speaker told me. "There are no conversations with the White House. And I've just heard [Pelosi] say 'S.F. is heaven on earth' one too many times to believe that she would realistically want to spend her post-Speaker life anywhere but home with family." Which is also the exact kind of thing you might say before you take a job like that.

The Italian imbroglio is just the tip of the diplomatic iceberg. Over a year and a half into Biden's administration, more than 20 percent of American ambassadorships remain unfilled. Nearly 40 of them have a nominee that is pending confirmation, including for strategically vital posts, like the Czech Republic, Latvia, and the Netherlands—all crucial allies in holding the line against Russia on Ukraine. There is no American ambassador in Saudi Arabia, a fraught but important ally, and there hasn't been one since Biden's inauguration. India, the world's largest democracy, hasn't had an American ambassador since then either. The current nominee, L.A. mayor Eric Garcetti, has been in confirmation purgatory for more than a year, held up over allegations that he knew about his chief of staff's alleged sexual predations. In limbo, too, is the nomination for the ambassador to the U.N.'s Conference on Disarmament. Apparently, the U.S. Senate does not consider nuclear disarmament a pressing matter.

Fifteen more posts are completely vacant, with no nominee anywhere in sight. The abandonment of some places, like Cuba and

Afghanistan, make some sense. Other places, like Ethiopia, or Estonia, which is a crucial NATO ally, do not. “There is no reasonable explanation for why more than 20 percent of our ambassadorships overseas remain unfilled,” said Eric Rubin, president of the American Foreign Service Association, which tracks such things. “This is not a world in which we can coast and assume that the rest of the world will wait for us to sort out our parochial difficulties. No other country leaves key diplomatic posts vacant so frequently and for so long.”

The problem, though, is that there is an explanation. In fact, there are several. It began with Trump gutting the State Department and the career foreign service. The people he had nominated to represent the United States were comically unqualified if not outright problematic. Once Biden came in, Washington expected him to right the ship. He had been, after all, an old member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a vice president that had handled some of the most complex foreign policy matters under President Barack Obama. He boasted about his foreign policy chops as well as the coterie of smart, experienced advisors he was bringing in with him: the best and the brightest.

And yet, here we are, more than a year and a half later, and one-fifth of the president’s ambassadors remain unconfirmed or even unominated. The first problem for Biden was the Presidential Personnel Office, which, in true Democratic fashion, decided that if the previous administration was going to nominate people with criminal records or ongoing lawsuits for ambassadorships, they were going to do things with extra diligence. Chief of staff Ron Klain also decided he had to vet every single nominee, too, slowing the process even further. Meanwhile, over in Foggy Bottom, the State Department decided that its people also had to be extra vetted for diplomatic security, because everyone now had a digital footprint and social media presence.

Then, last July, Texas Senator Ted Cruz took it upon himself to wage a one-man campaign to kill the Nord Stream II project by putting a blanket hold on all the Biden administration’s State Department nominees unless the White House got the German government to kill its pipeline. Since the Biden administration was not about to do so, this created a massive backlog—and that was before Missouri’s Josh Hawley instituted his own blanket hold, in September 2021, on State and Defense Department nominees unless Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan resigned for, in his view, bungling the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Needless to say that never happened. By the time these holds were lifted early this year, the backlog had grown massive. And time on the floor of the Senate of the 117th Congress, which will gavel out on January 3, 2023, had grown ever more precious.

But before that, let’s pause to talk about how ambassadorial nominees get to the floor of the Senate for a vote.

First, they have to be approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is currently headed by New Jersey’s Bob Menendez, a Democrat, and Idaho’s Jim Risch, a Republican. Both men are steeped in foreign affairs and appear to all outside observers as serious thinkers about world events. But according to people who have regular dealings with the Foreign Relations Committee, they have a relationship that is closer to something out of *Mean Girls*. They are, as one source familiar with the committee described them to me, “like oil and water.” They have been known to be so laser-focused on messing with each other, in

fact, that they regularly inhibit the functioning of the Committee. Said one Senate staffer familiar with the workings of the Committee, “It’s an open secret that the challenges in their working relationship often impedes us from working together constructively on foreign policy and national security issues.”

But there are other issues for ambassadorial nominees to navigate inside the Committee, especially if they’re female. There is only one woman senator on the committee, New Hampshire’s Jeanne Shaheen, and so the women Biden has nominated often run up against the proclivities of the old men of the Senate, especially of the Republican persuasion. “There is certainly a layer of unconscious bias that is holding back a number of women, that isn’t there for the male nominees,” said the Senate staffer. This includes “spouses saying things about Trump” or “the way in which women talk and represent themselves, where Republicans have been viscerally opposed to just how the women communicate.” According to two sources, Sarah Margon, who had run the Washington office of Human Rights Watch and was nominated to lead the State Department’s Office of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, ran into trouble when she met with Senator Risch, who pressed her repeatedly on her position on the BDS movement. She opposed it, she said repeatedly. Afterwards, Risch told colleagues he didn’t like Margon’s tone. (A committee spokesperson contended that, “The issue was not and has never been her ‘tone,’ it was her answers to the questions themselves.” The spokesperson did not, however, explain what was wrong with the answers.)

Other women have been pressed by Committee Republicans on their stances on abortion, even if the position they are nominated for has nothing to do with women’s health, let alone abortion. This happened, for example, with Dr. Geeta Gupta, who was nominated to be the Ambassador to the Office of Global Women’s Issues. The post, and the office, deals with women’s security and economic empowerment, and has nothing to do with women’s health, let alone reproductive rights. Yet Gupta was held up by Republicans on the Foreign Relations Committee over her alleged support of abortion, sending Shaheen into a righteous fury. “Republican grandstanding that held Geeta Gupta’s nomination from advancing in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in July is a pivotal example of this gross display of partisan politics,” Shaheen said in an email. “Republicans prevented her nomination from proceeding to fill the urgently needed role as Ambassador at Large for Global Women’s Issues because of their obsession over women’s health and access to abortion—neither of which are under the jurisdiction of this role. Senate Republicans are putting our security in danger and our credibility on the world stage at risk—it needs to end now.”

The guiding assumption seems to be that if they are women and Democrats, then they are automatically rabid abortionists and will use whatever diplomatic role to advocate for it, from Kyiv to Kinshasa. “Women nominees tend to face more rigor from Senate Republicans and are frequently questioned about extraneous issues like their views on abortion,” another Senate Democratic aide told me. “Some of this happens in public during hearings, but the majority of times it takes place behind closed doors when there are no cameras around to catch a senator and his staff go after women over issues well beyond the scope of the position for which they were nominated.”

Once upon a time, ambassadorial nominees could count on cruising through the Senate on a vote of unanimous consent. They would

be advanced as a block of nominees and voted through as a block, and people would only get singled out if they had truly bungled their meetings with senators. The feeling at the time was that the President of the United States deserved to pick his cabinet secretaries and the Senate was there only to weed out the truly rotten apples.

No more. If a nominee even makes it out of committee for a floor vote, they are voted on individually, it takes several hours, and any senator can use the opportunity of their nomination to extract something from the administration. Some, like Hawley, have asked for the resignation of cabinet secretaries. Others have asked for small, stupid things like, for example, a visa for a friend in exchange for waving a nomination through. That is to be expected of Republicans who will do whatever they can to impede Biden’s agenda, but even some Democrats have caught on to the game. They have also learned that they can use any nomination to extract some choice morsel from the administration, whether it’s a pet issue or something they can flaunt to constituents back home.

As a result, every single State Department confirmation hearing, ambassadorial or otherwise, now resembles a hostage negotiation. “This is not how the system is supposed to work,” said one insider in the process. “You’re not supposed to negotiate for individual unrelated reasons. But people have started treating this as normal. I think nominations will look like this forever from now on.”

Because of this, and because there are only four working weeks left on the Senate calendar before the midterms, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has made it crystal clear to his conference that ambassadorial nominees are now at the very back of the line. Why spend hours on the ambassador to Azerbaijan when you can ram through another lifetime judicial appointment to balance out the work done by Mitch McConnell when he had the majority? “You only have a certain number of hours a week,” one Senate aide familiar with the process told me. “The more we’re spending it on ambassadorial nominations, the less we’re spending it on judges.” Added a Senate Democratic staffer, “It has been made clear that, through the midterms, the floor will be tied up with judicial nominees.”

After the midterms, whether the Democrats hold the Senate or not, it will be a new, 118th Congress and that means all the ambassadorial nominations now floundering in senatorial purgatory will have to be resubmitted, and the process will begin again, from scratch.

Both the White House and State, in their official statements to me, emphasized the number of ambassadors they were able to confirm, despite the unprecedented obstruction they’re facing in the Senate. Things are actually going pretty well, they say, all things considered. But privately, the tone is very different. People worry about recruiting and retention. Who in their right mind would want to go through a process like this? Others worry about the irreparable harm this is doing to our relationships with allies and adversaries abroad, especially after the calamity that was the Trump presidency.

“It’s baffling to our foreign interlocutors because they don’t have these confirmation processes, and our inability to field ambassadors when there are so many crises around the world is unbelievable to them,” one former State Department official told me. “It’s also having a huge impact at State on morale and retention. I think because there’s so much uncertainty over how long it takes to get confirmed, the currency of an ambassadorship is being devalued. You have people

waiting for a year or more to get confirmed. People have quit jobs for these posts. Others are waiting inside State, stuck in limbo forever. I heard of someone who considered retiring while waiting to be confirmed."

Eric Rubin, himself a former ambassador to Bulgaria and deputy chief of mission in Russia, is worried about what message this is sending to the two countries most eager to weaken and replace America on the world stage: Russia and China. "The U.S. no longer has the largest diplomatic service, China does," Rubin told me. "The U.S. no longer has the most embassies and consulates abroad, China does. We have to stop tying one hand behind our backs in our efforts to represent our country and advance its security and prosperity."

Or, in the words of the diplomatic insider, "It's malpractice."

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Ambassador Rubin put it very starkly. He said:

The U.S. no longer has the largest diplomatic service. China does.

He concluded by saying:

We have to stop tying one hand behind our backs in our efforts to represent our country and advance its security and prosperity.

It's malpractice.

It is malpractice.

The fact that too many people in this Chamber are dragging their feet on allowing Ambassadors to be confirmed, on allowing diplomats with the Department of State to be confirmed, on allowing other high level people throughout government to be confirmed because, only, of their opposition to the Biden administration is just untenable, and it is against our national security.

So I think it is time now for the Senate to do its job to confirm Dr. Gupta. So let's move forward. Let's get our foreign policy with respect to gender throughout the world back on track.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. HAGERTY. Madam President, I have great respect for my colleague from New Hampshire. I worked very hard on the WGDP initiative that was put in place by the previous administration. It has the potential to do so much good.

I am very concerned about elements of that being dismantled right now, and I would like to remind my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that this is a matter of priorities.

Again, I will reiterate that I was put through 30 hours of cloture. The rules have been improved since then to reduce that amount of time. I think it would be a total of 4 hours in this case, yet the priorities set by the leadership of the other side indicate that they don't care as much about these positions because they won't even schedule it.

It is certainly within the Senate majority leader's power to do that. Rather, the Senate majority leader would rather prioritize seating the Postal Board of Governors than putting Ambassadors into place.

So I have difficulty with this argument, and, with all due respect, my objection stands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, my colleague from Tennessee was just talking about priorities of this administration and this Senate, and I want to continue on that area of focus, relating to what many of us believe is probably the most important priority we have in the U.S. Senate, and that is defending our Nation.

Budgets are a reflection of an administration's values and an administration's priorities. And as I mentioned, many of us—and I believe on both sides of the aisle—see that the No. 1 priority we should have in the U.S. Senate is making sure we are a strong nation, to defend this great country of ours and to make sure we have the most lethal, well-trained military anywhere in the world, and that we take care of our troops and their families.

But this is not what this administration—the Biden administration—believes at all. In fact, President Biden's budgets clearly not only do not prioritize our military; they put them consistently last. And that is not a one-time thing. This is a pattern with this administration.

Here was the President's proposed budget last year. Take a look at it. We all know it was trillions and trillions. Department of Commerce, 28 percent increase. EPA, 21 percent. Interior, 16 percent—on and on. There are double-digit increases everywhere except—except—in the two Agencies that actually protect the Nation: the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security.

Last year, the Biden budget put forward a budget that, if it was adjusted for inflation, was almost a 3-percent cut to the Department of Defense.

Priorities matter. This administration has not prioritized our military at all.

Guess who was really pleased by that budget, by the way? The dictator in Beijing and the dictator in Moscow. No doubt when they saw that, they loved it.

Thankfully, the Armed Services Committee, on which I sit, said: Do you know what, Mr. President? With all due respect, this is nuts. We are not going to stand for this.

We put forward in the National Defense Authorization Act last year a 3-percent real increase to the Department of Defense budget. It was very bipartisan in the committee, a complete rebuke to the President of the United States, saying: We don't believe in cuts. We are going to increase. The appropriators, thankfully, did the same.

So that was the Biden administration's prioritization of our military last year.

Now, what happened between last year and this year, when the most recent budget came out? Well, I think a lot of us know, but I am going to talk a little bit about it.

Russia invaded Ukraine, and at an April Armed Services hearing, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

General Milley, said that the invasion was "the greatest threat to the peace and security of Europe and perhaps the world in any of my time of 42 years in uniform."

So this is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff saying we are likely seeing one of the most dangerous periods anywhere in the world in terms of national security in the last four decades.

That was testimony from the President's own Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

That is Russia. And, of course, their ally China is also taking incredibly aggressive actions all around the world. They are beginning to outcompete our country on many fronts—critical minerals, energy, technology.

Certainly, Xi Jinping, the dictator of Beijing, has increased China's aggression all around the world—in India, threatening to invade Taiwan, economic aggression toward Australia, snuffing out liberty in Hong Kong.

What else has China done? It is dramatically increasing its defense spending—more than 7 percent this year—increasing a navy that is almost becoming larger than ours.

This is how General Milley, again, put it in a hearing last April:

We are now facing two global powers, China and Russia, each with significant military capabilities, both of whom intend to fundamentally change the current rules-based global order. We are entering a world that is becoming more unstable and the potential for significant international conflict between great powers is increasing, not decreasing.

So that is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, again.

Now, what do you think the President did, seeing we had this incredibly dangerous period internationally, with his next budget? Last year, as I mentioned, he cut the Pentagon defense budget by almost 3 percent and dead last with Homeland Security in terms of Agencies.

So did he listen to his Chairman? Does he really think it is that dangerous? Let's see.

This is this year's defense budget and other priorities from this administration's multitrillion dollar budget, and, once again, you see the EPA coming in at a 24-percent increase. Commerce, HHS, and Labor are all double-digit—Interior, DOJ.

What about the Department of Defense? It is a 4-percent increase with almost 9-percent inflation. We are talking close to a 5-percent real cut to the Department of Defense. This is outrageous.

Last year, the President put forward almost a 4-percent cut to defense spending. In the interim period, we had one of the most dangerous wars that has happened—certainly in Europe and maybe in the world—in a generation. The President's own Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff come before the Senate Armed Services Committee and say it is an incredibly dangerous time—a period, maybe, in almost 50 years in

which we haven't seen so many threats to the international order. And the President does what? He, once again, prioritizes our defense almost dead last—almost dead last. Adjusted for inflation, it is a 5-percent cut.

Now, with this posture hearing for the Secretary of Defense and Chairman Milley, I asked the question: Gentlemen, with all due respect, you just said it is the most dangerous period in almost the last 50 years. How can you come before this committee and put forward a budget that is almost a 5-percent cut to the Department of Defense and our troops?

They didn't have a good answer. The truth of the matter is, I am quite certain that the uniformed military and probably even Secretary Austin do not support this budget, but they are good soldiers. They had to salute the Commander in Chief and try to support it. But we don't have to support it, and I know the American people certainly don't support it. Once again, I do know two people who support it. Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping look at this, and this is something they are very pleased with.

Once again, the Armed Services Committee, when we met to mark up the NDAA, voted in an overwhelming bipartisan fashion—23 to 3—to, once again, dramatically rebuke the President in a bipartisan way and significantly increase the top line for the Department of Defense to make sure we have a strong nation and that our troops are taken care of and their families by almost \$45 billion over what the President requested. It was a bipartisan rebuke, once again, of this administration that won't prioritize our national security and that keeps putting forward budgets that prioritize the defense of our Nation last.

We also started in this NDAA to course-correct, which we need to do dramatically at the Pentagon. We have had civilian leadership, primarily driven by the Biden administration's far-left nominees, who have not been focusing the Pentagon on its top priority, which is to win our Nation's wars and to make sure we have the most lethal military of any country in the world. So I was able in this NDAA to put forward some amendments that I was glad to get bipartisan support on, that are in the current NDAA, to start a course correction.

First, one of my amendments directs the Pentagon to discontinue any further investment in the DOD-wide effort to root out so-called extremism within the ranks. This has been an obsession of the civilian leadership at the Pentagon, many of whom know nothing about the military. It is an obsession, given the incredibly low rate of extremist activity in our military as determined by the Secretary of Defense's own working group on this topic.

The press didn't write about that because they love to kind of weave into the story that somehow our military is full of extremists. Unfortunately, some

of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle play that up too. One Senator, at one point, said 10 percent of the military might be extremist—a ridiculous besmirching of the men and women in our armed services. The actual report from the Secretary of Defense's office found fewer than 100 cases of extremist activity in a total military force of over 2 million people. When you do the math, that is less than .005 percent.

So let me be clear: Extremism has no place in our military and must be rooted out when discovered, but these numbers simply don't warrant the time and investment that our senior military has put into this issue. So, in the NDAA, we have said we are not funding it anymore.

There is a second issue in the NDAA for which I was able to put forward an amendment. The Department of the Army and the Department of the Air Force, according to press reports, were starting to devise a policy that would allow each servicemember to veto their duty assignment if they disagreed with the laws and regulations in a State or in a community where they were going to be assigned by the military.

Could you imagine the chaos that would result if every soldier, marine, sailor, or airman could say: "You know, I don't want to go to California; its regulations on the Second Amendment are overly burdensome on my Second Amendment right," or for any other reason?

So we said, in the NDAA, a policy that gives service men and women the ability to veto their assignments based on whether they want to go somewhere or not is not the way our military is going to operate. That has been nipped in the bud.

Finally, there is a very simple amendment that I put forward that just provides clarity to the men and women of the Department of Defense. All it does is remind them of what their job is. The military is too often asked to do so many different things—to focus on climate change and to focus on so many other issues. The military has one job: to provide combat-credible military forces needed to deter our adversaries, to protect the security of our Nation, and to win our Nation's wars when called upon to do so.

I put forward an amendment that said just that: Here is your priority, and here is what you are supposed to do. It is needed because of all of the things that our top civilian leaders are now telling the troops they should be focused on. They should be focused on prevailing in a war if they are called on to do so, and that is what my amendment did. Believe it or not, a number of Senators voted against it, but that also made the Defense Authorization Act this year.

In addition to significantly increasing the Department of Defense's authorized budget, we are starting to, once again, get the military focused on their primary job: lethality and winning wars.

So we need to bring the NDAA to the floor. We have passed it 66 years in a row. As I mentioned, the administration's priorities are clearly not with regard to national defense and our military. We can tell by the budget that has been put forward. In the Senate, priorities are often determined by the time on the floor to get a piece of legislation moving. It is clear to everybody who has been here that the majority leader does not prioritize the military in the same way that the President of the United States doesn't.

We passed the NDAA in June—the Armed Services Committee did—in a huge bipartisan vote. The House passed its NDAA in the House in July. So we are waiting to bring up one of the most important pieces of legislation we work on every year: the legislation that sets the policy and funds our troops and their families.

Where is it?

Senator SCHUMER, where is it? When are we going to bring it up?

You have Democrats and Republicans who are looking at this floor time in September, saying: We need to bring up the NDAA.

The rumor, right now, is that the majority leader plans to bring it up in December.

Think about that, America.

I don't even know what we are doing right now on the Senate floor—minor nominations. We should be bringing up the NDAA to protect this country and to make sure the men and women in our military know we have their backs. Right now, nobody has any idea—maybe the majority leader does—as to when we are actually going to bring this most important bipartisan piece of legislation to the floor.

This is why I joined in a letter that we sent out today, led by Senator TUBERVILLE, who serves on the Armed Services Committee with me, signed by 20 of my colleagues. By the way, I know it would have been signed by some Democratic colleagues as well. They didn't want to put their names on the letter, but they feel the same. It says to the majority leader: You control the Senate. You control the priorities of this body. Bring up the NDAA by the end of September.

Here is the letter. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, September 13, 2022.
Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

LEADER SCHUMER: At the founding of our nation, then-General George Washington penned, "When the civil and military powers cooperate, and afford mutual aid to each other there can be little doubt of things going well". Two centuries later, that still rings true. Yet should this body fail in its top Constitutional responsibility of providing for a common defense, our armed services will be left directionless, lack stable

funding, and be devoid of civilian Congressional oversight.

Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Inhofe saw to it that the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act remained bipartisan and the result safeguards the United States. Additionally, the bill invests in technology advancements and procurement through a \$45 billion budget topline increase, provides service members with a 4.6 percent pay raise, and strengthens our forces in cybersecurity, space, the Indo-Pacific, personnel management, and many other areas.

Members of the House passed their NDAA on July 14th, by a vote of 329–101. For the bill to go to conference and make it to President Biden's desk, our colleagues must have the opportunity to debate the Senate version with an open amendment process. As such, we the undersigned respectfully request that you call the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 to the Senate floor before the conclusion of the September work period.

Respectfully,

Tommy Tuberville, John Cornyn, Todd Young, Charles E. Grassley, Mike Braun, Joni K. Ernst, Thom Tillis, Roger W. Marshall, Roger Wicker, Tom Cotton, Kevin Cramer, Rick Scott, Deb Fischer, Marsha Blackburn, M. Michael Rounds, Dan Sullivan, Cynthia M. Lummis, Michael S. Lee, James E. Risch, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Mike Crapo, Ted Cruz, Ron Johnson, U.S. Senators.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, the letter says:

At the founding of our nation, then-General George Washington penned, “When the civil and military powers cooperate, and afford mutual aid to each other there can be little doubt of things going well.”

As General Milley said, at one of the most dangerous times in recent history, it is vital that our civil and military powers cooperate.

What we need to do in this body right now is get back to the important work of bolstering our economy, of fighting inflation, of bringing down energy costs, of unleashing American energy, and, most importantly, of passing the NDAA so we can bolster the national security of this great Nation in very dangerous times.

I call on the majority leader, along with 20 of my colleagues and some of my Democratic colleagues, to bring the NDAA to the floor and not wait until the end of the year, which is what we hear he is planning to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Ossoff). The Senator from Minnesota.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 1137, 1138, and 1108; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Travis LeBlanc, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board for a term expiring January 29, 2028 (Reappointment); Richard E. DiZinno, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board for the remainder of the term expiring January 29, 2023; and Shefali Razdan Duggal, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NATIONAL PRISONERS OF WAR AND MISSING IN ACTION RECOGNITION DAY

Mr. KING. Mr. President, Friday, September 16, 2022, marks the National Prisoners of War and Missing in Action Recognition Day. On this day, we join together to honor the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who have been prisoners of war and for those who remain missing in action, including the 477 Mainers still unaccounted for. This solemn day is a painful, important reminder of the sacrifices endured by servicemembers and the immense, incalculable loss and uncertainty borne by their families and communities. Let us renew our commitment to bring answers and closure to the loved ones of those missing in action and to care for all those who have endured the painful silence of these losses.

Today, I join people across Maine and our Nation in saying, “You Are Not Forgotten.” The phrase is reminder of our duty to leave no American servicemember or veteran behind, no matter where they may be. I stand humbled and grateful to those who answered the call of their Nation to protect our way of life. We also pay tribute to those who have been POW/MIA and have returned to their loved ones. We have a solemn obligation to take care of them and their families so that they can enjoy the freedoms they sacrificed for.

To the families who have lost their sons and daughters and to the comrades who have lost their friends and companions, know that today and every day we stand with you through your hardships and in honoring the selfless service of America's POW and MIA.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CURTIS D. ROBINSON

- Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize Mr. Curtis D. Robinson, a long-time resident of Connecticut and outstanding entrepreneur and philanthropist who turns 80 on September 21, 2022.

As a teenager, Mr. Robinson left Birmingham, AL, and the segregation of the Jim Crow South, arriving in Hartford, CT, in 1958 with little more than the clothes on his back. Mr. Robinson began working two full-time jobs and one part-time job and, after several years, was able to purchase a grocery store at the age of 18. By the time he was 22, Mr. Robinson also owned a restaurant, a cleaning service, an apartment building, and a construction supply company. He used this experience to start the Small Business Development Program in 1969, creating over 100 small businesses in the Hartford and Springfield areas. This remarkable success is a testament to Mr. Robinson's extraordinary industrious spirit and tremendous work ethic.

Today, Mr. Robinson is the owner, operator, and president of C&R Development Company, the largest minority construction management company on the east coast. He also owns several shops within Bradley International Airport and runs other businesses, including R&G Services, which operates the shuttle bus service at the airport, and R&G Parking, which operates one of the largest parking lots in downtown Hartford.

In addition to his entrepreneurial endeavors, Mr. Robinson is also an advocate for health equity. As the co-founder and chairman of the Curtis D. Robinson Center for Health Equity—CDRCHE—he expands the provision of critical health services in underserved communities, serving over 10,000 people since 2010. Expanding on this firsthand experience in addressing health inequities, Mr. Robinson sits on the boards of Trinity Health of New England, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, and the Connecticut Hospital Association.

Mr. Robinson is also an extraordinary philanthropist and has contributed greatly to the civic life of Connecticut. Along with his wife, Mr. Robinson founded the Curtis and Sheila Robinson Foundation, which provides financial support across a variety of areas—offering assistance with food, rent, clothing, transportation, and scholarship funds for individuals in need. Over the years, they have championed many worthy causes, including efforts to combat food insecurity, domestic violence, and poverty. The Robinsons have also assisted individuals with medical and hospital care, donated buses to churches and schools, and adopted a homeless shelter for displaced children. Their charitable contributions are truly too numerous to list, and I applaud their remarkable efforts to give back to their community.

Mr. Robinson's incredible achievements—building a life for himself through hard work and determination—truly embody the American dream. His willingness to use his hard-earned success to give back to others serves as a model for all of us. I applaud his many accomplishments and hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Mr. Curtis Robinson on this milestone of his 80th birthday.●

RECOGNIZING THE AL J. SCHNEIDER COMPANY

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Al J. Schneider Company for 75 years of service and contribution to the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

On September 30th, 1947, the Al J. Schneider Company began its service by building barracks and other military facilities on Fort Knox. The company has since built and owned four of the largest hotels in Louisville, including the Galt House Hotel, the Executive Inn and Executive West—now known as the Crowne Plaza Louisville Airport—the Waterfront Office Tower, and One Riverfront Plaza, as well as many other commercial properties throughout Louisville.

The Al J. Schneider Company was founded with the belief that great things in great cities are done by the people in the city, including the \$80 million reinvestment of the Galt House Hotel and the employees who serve our community.

The Al J. Schneider Company has also taken great pride in supporting the local community with devout support of the Catholic Church, investment in the University of Louisville, Simmons College of Kentucky, Louisville Metro Police Foundation, King Solomon Missionary Baptist Church, and many other nonprofits throughout the Commonwealth.

I am proud to salute the Al J. Schneider Company for their 75 years of service and accomplishments and have no doubt they will continue to play an integral role in bettering the Commonwealth.●

RECOGNIZING MCCALL LAKE CRUISES

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each month I recognize and celebrate the American entrepreneurial spirit by highlighting the success of a small business in my home State of Idaho. Today, I am pleased to honor McCall Lake Cruises as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for September 2022.

For the last 10 years, McCall Lake Cruises has operated *The Idaho* on Payette Lake, sharing with visitors and locals alike a history of the area, the ship, and Sharlie, the lake monster. *The Idaho* is a 62-foot, 85-passenger cruise vessel built in northern

Idaho in 1983. Its 360-degree view allows passengers to take in the scenic views and landscape that surround Payette Lake on both afternoon and sunset cruises throughout the summer.

McCall Lake Cruises was acquired by Kyle and Jade Enzler, Steven and AJ Lee, and Ryan and Kelsey Parke at the start of the 2022 cruise season. All three couples have a deep love of McCall and, over the years, have translated that love into various ventures in the area, from renovating and running the Scandia Inn, to coordinating beautiful McCall mountain weddings. This group of self-proclaimed Idaho enthusiasts knew a great opportunity when they saw one, so when the prospect of purchasing McCall Lake Cruises came about, they jumped at the chance. With the generous guidance of the previous owners and the help of *The Idaho*'s knowledgeable captains and crew, these six enthusiastic entrepreneurs kept this special Payette Lake tradition alive.

Congratulations to McCall Lake Cruises for being selected as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for September 2022. Thank you for serving Idaho as small business owners and entrepreneurs. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to your continued growth and success.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:37 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 3103. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to eliminate the statute of limitations for the filing of a civil claim for any person who, while a minor, was a victim of a violation of section 1589, 1590, 1591, 2241(c), 2242, 2243, 2251, 2251A, 2252, 2252A, 2260, 2421, 2422, or 2423 of such title.

S. 4785. An act to extend by 19 days the authorization for the special assessment for the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1066. An act to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide flexibility with the cost share for fire management assistance, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5315. An act to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish in the Department of Transportation a drone infrastructure inspection grant program and a drone education and training grant program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5650. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16605 East Avenue of the Fountains in Fountain Hills, Arizona, as the "Dr. C.T. Wright Post Office Building".

H.R. 5952. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 East Main Street, in Vergas, Minnesota, as the "Jon Glawe Post Office".

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and

were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-207. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to review and reform the National Flood Insurance Program's pricing methodology known as Risk Rating 2.0; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 84

Whereas, various scientific studies have reported climate change as having an impact on the current increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters; and

Whereas, various scientific studies predict continued increases in the frequency and severity of natural disasters; and

Whereas, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has reported that flooding is the most common and most expensive type of natural disaster in the United States; and

Whereas, FEMA has reported that one inch of water pooled in a single-story, one thousand square foot home can cause approximately eleven thousand dollars worth of damage; and

Whereas, a home is the most valuable asset owned by many families; and

Whereas, flood insurance is a product designed to mitigate the cost of repairs needed due to flood damage by offering coverage at a rate based on certain risk factors; and

Whereas, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) offers a maximum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars of flood insurance coverage for residential structures for families of one to four; and

Whereas, beginning October 1, 2021, new flood insurance policies issued by NFIP are subject to the rating methodology known as Risk Rating 2.0; and

Whereas, all flood insurance policies issued by NFIP that are renewed on or after April 1, 2022 are subject to Risk Rating 2.0; and

Whereas, the flood insurance rates for certain families are increasing up to eighteen percent per year; and

Whereas, citizens of the town of Jean Lafitte have elevated their homes but will nevertheless pay higher flood insurance rates under Risk Rating 2.0; and

Whereas, the language used to explain Risk Rating 2.0 in correspondence with policyholders is unclear to laypersons and difficult to understand; and

Whereas, policyholders should receive correspondence explaining Risk Rating 2.0 that utilizes language a policyholder can understand without the assistance of legal counsel; and

Whereas, increased residential flood insurance rates may discourage people from purchasing homes in south Louisiana; and

Whereas, a decrease in demand, as a result of increased flood insurance rates, may discourage individuals and property developers from building new homes in south Louisiana; and

Whereas, increased flood insurance rates may result in homeowners opting to not purchase flood insurance, which would expose them to bearing the full expense of repairing their home if it is damaged by a flood; and

Whereas, many homeowners would be unable to afford to repair their home if it were damaged by a flood and they did not receive flood insurance proceeds; and

Whereas, flood insurance should be affordable to all citizens of Louisiana, including residents of coastal communities in south Louisiana; and

Whereas, congress has oversight authority over federal administrative agencies, including FEMA and NFIP; and

Whereas, the members of the Louisiana congressional delegation have an obligation

to effectuate federal legislative changes for the benefit of the citizens of Louisiana.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to review and reform NFIP's pricing methodology known as Risk Rating 2.0; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-208. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging and requesting the President of the United States, the Governor of Louisiana and the Louisiana Congressional Delegation to do everything in their power to halt federal actions resulting in the delay or cancellation of offshore oil and natural gas lease sales and strongly urge the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Biden Administration to expedite actions necessary to comply with the order by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to resolve Lease Sale 257 and finalize a new five-year plan for oil and gas leasing on the outer continental shelf; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 43

Whereas, the Gulf of Mexico produces approximately seventeen percent of the U.S. crude oil and five percent of U.S. natural gas while contributing five to eight billion dollars to the federal treasury each year and sends hundreds of millions of dollars to coastal states for coastal restoration and hurricane protection projects; and

Whereas, the oil and gas industry directly supports two hundred forty-nine thousand eight hundred jobs in Louisiana and the oil and gas industry activities represent twenty-six percent of Louisiana's Gross Domestic Product, accounting for nearly four and one half billion dollars in state and local tax revenue in 2019 alone, with fourteen and one half percent of total state taxes, licenses, and fees collected; and

Whereas, according to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) which regulates offshore lease sales, the Gulf of Mexico continues to be the nation's primary offshore source of oil and gas, generating about ninety-seven percent of all U.S. outer continental shelf (OCS) oil and gas production; and

Whereas, since 2017, Gulf of Mexico lease sales have generated more than one billion dollars from offshore leasing; and

Whereas, since 1953, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior has been required by law to prepare a five-year plan to set a schedule for oil and gas leases in U.S. offshore waters; and

Whereas, it is a lengthy, multi-year regulatory process with multiple stages for public comment, input, and consultation; and

Whereas, the Obama Administration issued a five-year-plan for oil and gas leasing that expires on July 1, 2022; and

Whereas, there are two remaining lease sales for the Gulf of Mexico authorized under the current five-year plan, including Lease Sale 259 and Lease Sale 261; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) missed the deadline to issue a notice of sale for Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 259 in order to meet the expiration of the current five-year plan; and

Whereas, President Biden signed Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, on January 27, 2021, declaring a pause on leasing on federal lands and waters, including the OCS of the Gulf of Mexico; and

Whereas, the U.S. District Court ordered a preliminary injunction on the leasing pause and ordered federal oil and gas lease sales to proceed on June 15, 2021; and

Whereas, the DOI held Lease Sale 257 on November 17, 2021; however, on January 27, 2022, a ruling by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia invalidated Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 257 requiring the DOI to reassess the environmental impacts of Lease Sale 257; and

Whereas, the DOI is not appealing the court ruling and therefore there is no indication that leases will be awarded to the offshore companies; and

Whereas, there is no indication that the federal government will hold another Gulf of Mexico offshore lease sale for the duration of President Biden's term; and

Whereas, there is no indication that the DOI is working on the next OCS five year plan; and

Whereas, since December 2019 crude output fell slightly, with a drop of nearly thirteen and one half percent in offshore Gulf of Mexico production; however, demand for oil has climbed nine and eight-tenths percent in the same period; and

Whereas, the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA), which allows Gulf states to share in offshore revenue generated from offshore oil activity including bonus bid revenue, is the only reliable source of funding for Louisiana's coastal programs; and

Whereas, over the past five years Louisiana has received between one hundred sixty million and four hundred seven million dollars from bonus bids alone; and

Whereas, it is estimated that the state of Louisiana lost approximately twenty to forty million dollars in 2021 due to the cancelled lease sales and lost bonus bid revenue; and

Whereas, Louisiana depends on GOMESA revenues to fund a fifty billion dollar coastal restoration plan; and

Whereas, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior is required by law to prepare a five-year plan to set a schedule for oil and gas leases in federal offshore waters; and

Whereas, delaying or canceling Gulf of Mexico leasing negatively impacts federal and state revenue, as well as Louisiana businesses and jobs; and

Whereas, drilling contractors will see impacts dropping as many as one quarter of the remaining Gulf of Mexico rigs over the next several years; and

Whereas, every drillship maintains an entire network of staff, supply boats, and other vendors that support roughly one thousand jobs per rig; and

Whereas, the Gulf of Mexico is the safest and cleanest oil produced anywhere in the world; and

Whereas, halting domestic energy development in one of the lowest carbon intensive energy producing regions in the world will shift production and capital investment overseas and undermine decades of environmental progress; and

Whereas, a 2016 Obama Administration study conducted by BOEM concluded that America's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will be only slightly affected by leasing decisions on BOEM's offshore leasing program and could result in an increase of GHG emissions in the absence of new OCS leasing due to an increase in importing foreign oil; and

Whereas, the current administration is pursuing a policy that places the U.S. at the mercy of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia to meet our domestic needs, harming our national and economic security; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the president of

the United States, the governor of Louisiana and the Louisiana congressional delegation to do everything in their power to halt federal actions resulting in the delay or cancellation of offshore oil and natural gas lease sales and strongly urge the U.S. Department of Interior and the Biden Administration to expedite actions necessary to comply with the order of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to resolve Lease Sale 257 and finalize a new five-year plan for oil and gas leasing on the outer continental shelf; and be it further

Resolved, That all efforts should focus on mandated lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico; and be it further

Resolved, That the clerk of the House is hereby directed to forward a copy of this Resolution to the president of the United States, the secretary of the interior, the secretary of energy, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the White House national climate advisor, the speaker and clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the president pro tempore and secretary of the United States Senate, and the members of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-209. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Colorado concerning support for Ukraine against Russian aggression; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 22-004

Whereas, The post-war international security order, led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), has relied upon diplomacy, peace, and open communication over armed conflict to ensure prosperity and stability for over one billion people for more than 70 years; and

Whereas, Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian people voted overwhelmingly to form a nation independent from Russia, building a democracy and a thriving country grounded in the rule of law; and

Whereas, In 2014, the pro-Western Euromaidan protest movement in Ukraine led to the resignation of authoritarian president Viktor Yanukovych, a brutal ally of Vladimir Putin, ushering in democratically elected leaders who have sought closer ties to the European Union and the United States; and

Whereas, The Russian Federation, seeking to block the free will of the Ukrainian people in their pursuit of security, peace, and prosperity through closer ties to the European Union and the United States, annexed territory from Ukraine in 2014 and instigated, supported, and supplied a deadly separatist war in Eastern Ukraine that has destabilized the region and killed thousands of civilians; and

Whereas, The Russian Federation deployed military assets to support the separatist militias in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, resulting in the reckless missile attack that downed Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and killed 298 innocent civilians in 2014; and

Whereas, Vladimir Putin intentionally lied to his own people and to the global community to create a false pretext to invade and occupy Ukraine based on lies that Ukraine posed a threat to Russians and that falsely connected Ukraine and its political leaders to Nazism; and

Whereas, The Russian Federation violated international peace and security agreements that sought a peaceful solution in Eastern Ukraine and instead amassed hundreds of thousands of troops on Ukraine's border; and

Whereas, Vladimir Putin has now launched an unjust and unwarranted invasion upon the peaceful nation of Ukraine; and

Whereas, Russian soldiers are currently sweeping through the country, inflicting violence and terror upon millions of civilians and destroying homes, businesses, and properties; and

Whereas, Ukraine is a proud and honorable nation under siege, and the brutality of this unnecessary and violent war is an affront to both international law and common decency; and

Whereas, Ukraine has been a bulwark against Russian military aggression in Europe, and Vladimir Putin has said that his goal is to recreate the Soviet Union and may have intentions to threaten NATO allies with military force; and

Whereas, Vladimir Putin has sought to destabilize countries across Europe and interfere in other countries' elections and democracies, including the United States; and

Whereas, The United States has galvanized the international community and our allies to impose the strongest possible sanctions on Russia and its financial institutions in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine; and

Whereas, Colorado is home to thousands of Ukrainian Americans and to millions who care deeply for and stand strongly in support of the Ukrainian people; and

Whereas, Ukraine deserves the support of every American and the entire international community as it defends itself from this unprovoked Russian invasion, the largest attack by one state against another in Europe since World War II; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the Seventy-third General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein: That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly:

(1) Proudly stand alongside Ukraine, its people, and its leaders during this horrific and unnecessary war and vow to support Ukraine and hold Russia fully accountable for its catastrophic decision to invade;

(2) Condemn, in the strongest possible terms, Vladimir Putin's violent attack on the people of Ukraine and strongly endorse the swift and severe economic sanctions and stringent export controls that President Biden's administration has imposed on Russia; and

(3) Urge Russia to immediately cease its violent, illegal, and immoral assault upon Ukraine, end the needless bloodshed, and return to diplomacy and the rules-based international order that has ensured peace and prosperity for so many. Be it further

Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Minority Leader of the United States Senate, and all members of Colorado's Congressional delegation.

POM-210. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana encouraging the United States Congress and the President of the United States to take proactive measures to stand firmly against the totalitarian efforts of the world Marxist/communist movement to protect the citizens of our great state and this nation from the Leviathan and evil that is the Chinese Communist Party; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 13

Whereas, the initial global Marxist/communist movement was directed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and had as its declared objective, world control; and

Whereas, world hegemony was to be accomplished through aggression, force, violence, and tactics that included fraud, espionage, sabotage, infiltration, subversion, propaganda, terrorism, and treachery; and

Whereas, since the 1991 collapse of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact the hegemonic and totalitarian nation-state of China has become the focal point for the spread of dangerous and tyrannical Marxist, communist, and socialist influences around the globe and has recently aligned with the Russian Federation to act in concert against the West and the rest of the free world, and together they champion tenets of the former Marxist/communist movement; and

Whereas, the direction and control of the world Marxist/communist movement is now vested in and exercised by the People's Republic of China (PRC); and

Whereas, the PRC, subject to the dictatorial authority of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), is actively and surreptitiously furthering the purposes of the world Marxist/communist movement; and

Whereas, the CCP has established or caused the establishment of various action organizations and "front" companies, which are entities that are not free and independent but components of the PRC's apparatus and that are controlled and directed by and subject to the discipline of the dictatorship in the CCP; and

Whereas, the CCP conducts predatory trade practices and is suspected of facilitating the shipment of pirated and stolen goods and technologies, all of which harms Louisiana and American businesses and workers; and

Whereas, the state of Louisiana, as a sovereign political entity under the Constitution of the United States and as a functioning representative state government that is responsible solely to the people of this state under the constitutions of this state and nation, is a most probable and obvious target for those who seek by force, violence, subterfuge, and other unlawful means to overthrow constitutional government, so Louisiana is in perpetual danger of Marxist/communist espionage, infiltration, subversion and sabotage, which would put at risk the state's economy, the international waterway that is the Mississippi River which runs through Louisiana, and these actions will put at risk critical transshipment routes for oil, gas, grain, coal, and chemicals that are all linchpins of the state and nation's economy; and

Whereas, Marxist/communist expansion and ultimately control of a country is characterized by an absolute denial of the right of self-government and by the abolition of those personal liberties which are cherished and held sacred in the state of Louisiana and in the United States of America; and

Whereas, the Legislature of Louisiana highlights the deaths of over seventy million Chinese citizens at the hands of its own state apparatus and dictators, the enslavement and on-going efforts to exterminate the Uyghur people and install Gulag-comparable oppression in the Xinjiang region, the maltreatment of minority citizens including peoples of color, maltreatment of homosexuals, the lack of religious and press freedoms, the persecution of people of faith, and draconian population control measures as the heinous benchmarks of the CCP that must be illuminated as actions the United States and Louisiana will not allow to endanger our great nation and state; and

Whereas, communist action organizations and front companies, as established and utilized in the United States, act under control, direction, and discipline of the CCP and endeavor to carry out the objectives of the world Marxist/communist movement under

the guise of legitimate businesses and academic and political entities; and

Whereas, the world Marxist/communist movement, which, emanating from the CCP and extending to all corners of the globe, aims to bring about the destabilization and subjugation of legitimate and free governments by any available means, including force when called for, and to set up totalitarian dictatorships that suppress liberty and eradicate human rights; and

Whereas, those who unwittingly and/or sophomorically aid the advancement of these aims of the world Marxist/communist movement and who participate in the subversive work of the movement in effect aid in the growth, influence, and detrimental presence of this cancer on liberty that extends from the CCP and are themselves victims of the world Marxist/communist movement; and

Whereas, by insidious and ruthless tactics such as predatory economic actions, infiltration of institutions of higher learning, sabotage, political party infiltration, propaganda, and subversion, the agents of the world Marxist/communist movement are attempting to lay the groundwork for the dissolution of the free society that is the United States of America and the state of Louisiana; and

Whereas, by dangerous experiments, including the possible release of deadly pathogens, and the testing and employment of balance-of-power changing weapons, the CCP puts the health and stability of the entire earth at risk; and

Whereas, the world Marxist/communist movement is not a legitimate political effort but is in fact a tyrannical criminal conspiracy with an end goal of the ruination of western civilization and liberal democracy; and

Whereas, because the world Marxist/communist movement constitutes a clear and present danger to the citizens of the state of Louisiana and is an unequivocal enemy of this state and nation, the Congress of the United States and the president of the United States, in order to protect the people of the country and state, to preserve the sovereignty of the state under the Constitutions of the United States and the state of Louisiana, and to guarantee to the state a republican form of government, should enact appropriate legislation recognizing the existence of the Marxist/communist movement and preventing it from accomplishing its purposes in the state of Louisiana and throughout these United States; and

Whereas, the guarantees of sovereignty and freedom enjoyed by this state and its citizens are certain to vanish if the United States and its constitution are minimized, degraded, or destroyed by the Marxist/communist movement. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby encourage the Congress of the United States and the president of the United States to take proactive measures to stand firmly against the totalitarian efforts of the world Marxist/communist movement and to protect the citizens of our great state and this nation from the Leviathan and evil that is the Chinese Communist Party; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-211. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana commending and honoring the pregnancy care centers of Louisiana; encouraging the United States Congress and federal and state

government agencies to grant assistance to pregnancy care centers for medical equipment and abstinence education in a manner that does not compromise the centers' mission or religious integrity; expressing the sense of the legislature regarding actions of any national, state, or local groups attempting to prevent pregnancy care centers from effectively serving women and men facing unplanned pregnancies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 93

Whereas, pregnancy care centers have a considerable and growing impact on the women, men, children, and communities they serve; and

Whereas, pregnancy care centers serve women in Louisiana and across the United States with integrity and passion; there are more than two thousand five hundred pregnancy care centers across the United States that provide comprehensive care to women and men facing unplanned pregnancies by providing resources that meet their physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs; and

Whereas, pregnancy care centers offer women free, confidential, and compassionate services including pregnancy tests, peer counseling, twenty-four hour per day telephone hotlines, childbirth and parenting classes, community health care referrals, and other support services; and

Whereas, many medical pregnancy care centers offer ultrasounds and other medical services and provide information on adoption and adoption referrals to pregnant women; and

Whereas, pregnancy care centers encourage women to make positive life choices by equipping them with complete and accurate information regarding their pregnancy options and the development of their unborn children; and

Whereas, pregnancy care centers provide women with compassionate and confidential peer counseling in a nonjudgmental manner regardless of their pregnancy outcomes; they also provide important support and resources for women who choose childbirth over abortion; and

Whereas, pregnancy care centers ensure that women receive prenatal information and services that lead to the birth of healthy infants, and many centers provide grief assistance for women and men who regret past choices; and

Whereas, many pregnancy care centers also work to prevent unplanned pregnancies by teaching effective abstinence education in public schools; and

Whereas, the federal government and state governments have increasingly recognized the value of the services offered by pregnancy care centers and have designated public funds for such organizations; and

Whereas, pregnancy care centers operate primarily through reliance on the voluntary donations and time of individuals who are committed to caring for the needs of women and promoting and protecting life, and the centers operating in Louisiana are most deserving of the highest recognition for their efforts. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and honor the pregnancy care centers of Louisiana and does hereby strongly support the positive contributions pregnancy care centers make to the lives of women, men, and babies; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the tens of thousands of volunteers and paid staff at pregnancy care centers in Louisiana and across the United States for their compassionate work; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana encourages Congress and federal and state government agencies to grant assistance to pregnancy care centers for medical equipment and abstinence education in a manner that does not compromise the mission or religious integrity of these organizations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature disapproves of the actions of any national, state, or local groups attempting to prevent pregnancy care centers from effectively serving women and men facing unplanned pregnancies; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the governor, the president of the United States, the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America, and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-212. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to support the Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Prevention Act and to take such actions as are necessary to compel the United States Food and Drug Administration to fulfill its duties regarding inspection and testing of imported seafood; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 78

Whereas, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in 2019 the United States imported six billion pounds of edible seafood products, including one and one half billion pounds of shrimp, an increase of nearly six and one half million pounds more than the shrimp imported in 2018; and

Whereas, the 2019 shrimp imports alone, valued at six billion dollars, accounted for twenty-seven percent of the total value of imported seafood that year, which reached twenty-two billion dollars; and

Whereas, it is estimated that over half of the imported seafood consumed in the United States is from aquaculture, or seafood farming, rather than wild-caught; and

Whereas, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for the safety of all fish and fishery products entering the United States and sold in Louisiana; and

Whereas, the FDA's seafood safety program is governed by its Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point regulations, which address food safety management through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards from raw material production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution, and consumption of the finished product; and

Whereas, FDA regulations are supposed to measure compliance for imported seafood with inspections of foreign processing facilities, sampling of seafood offered for import into the United States, domestic surveillance sampling of imported products, inspections of seafood importers, foreign country program assessments, and the use of information from foreign partners and FDA overseas offices; and

Whereas, in 2011 the FDA was only inspecting two percent of the seafood imported into the United States; and

Whereas, unfortunately 2011 is the last year for which data regarding the percentage of imports inspected is available due to a lack of transparency and inadequate assessment measures; and

Whereas, in 2011 the Government Accountability Office (GAO) noted that the FDA's assessments of foreign aquaculture operations was limited by the FDA's lack of 1 procedures, criteria, and standards; and ten years

later, a 2021 GAO report found that the agency was failing to monitor the effectiveness of its own enforcement policies and procedures; and

Whereas, in contrast, the European Union regularly conducts physical checks of approximately twenty percent of all imported fish products that are fresh, frozen, dry, salted, or hermetically sealed, and for certain fishery products, physical checks are conducted on approximately fifty percent of imports; and

Whereas, the Louisiana State University School of Renewable Natural Resources published a 2020 paper titled "Determination of Sulfite and Antimicrobial Residue in Imported Shrimp to the USA", which presented findings from a study of shrimp imported from India, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Bangladesh, and Ecuador and purchased from retail stores in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and

Whereas, a screening of these shrimp for sulfites and residues from antimicrobial drugs found the following: (1) five percent of the shrimp contained malachite green, (2) seven percent contained oxytetracycline, (3) seventeen percent contained fluoroquinolone, and (4) seventy percent contained nitrofurantoin, all of which have been banned by the FDA in domestic aquaculture operations; and

Whereas, although the FDA requires that food products exposed to sulfites must include a label with a statement about the presence of sulfites, of the forty-three percent of these locally purchased shrimp found to contain sulfites, not one package complied with this labeling requirement; and

Whereas, the drug and sulfite residues included in this screening can be harmful to human health during both handling and consumption and have been known to cause all of the following: liver damage and tumors, reproductive abnormalities, cardiac arrhythmia, renal failure, hemolysis, asthma attacks, and allergic reactions; and

Whereas, the results of this study confirm that existing screening and enforcement measures for imported seafood are insufficient; whatever the percentage of imports inspected may be, seafood is currently being imported that contains unsafe substances that put American consumers at risk; and

Whereas, because imported seafood is not held to the same standards as domestic seafood, domestic fishing industries are put at a distinct and significant disadvantage commercially; and

Whereas, according to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the average value of Louisiana shrimp fell from three dollars and eighty cents per pound in 1980 to one dollar fifty cents per pound in 2017; and

Whereas, this unfair competition allows foreign competitors to flood the United States market with seafood harvested under intensive farming practices using antimicrobial drugs, while devastating local industries and the coastal communities built around them; and

Whereas, proposed federal legislation co-sponsored by Representative Garret Graves of Louisiana titled the Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Prevention Act, originally filed as H.R. 3075 and as incorporated into H.R. 4521 of the 117th Congress, seeks to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing practices in the international seafood supply chain which contribute to the foregoing inadequacies; and

Whereas, the proposed legislation seeks to enhance monitoring, inspection, data collection, labeling, and transparency related to imported seafood; to improve the ability of United States regulators to enforce these measures; to increase outreach regarding seafood safety and fraud; and to appropriate

additional money for improved traceability; and

Whereas, if enacted, the Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Prevention Act could be an essential step towards improving the safety of consumers and the market for domestic fishing industries; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to support the Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Prevention Act and to take such actions as are necessary to compel the United States Food and Drug Administration to fulfill its duties regarding inspection and testing of imported seafood; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-213. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to invest future supplemental funding in the communities of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point located in Jefferson Parish aiding in flood protection and preventing future losses and damages; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 20

Whereas, the population in Jefferson Parish is approximately 429,711; and

Whereas, Jefferson Parish is the third largest parish in Louisiana; and

Whereas, there are approximately 100,179 properties in Jefferson Parish that have a greater than twenty-six percent chance of being severely affected by flooding; and

Whereas, flood risks have increased in Jefferson Parish, and there is an extreme risk of flooding over the next thirty years; and

Whereas, Jefferson Parish has greater overall flood risk than ninety-nine percent of counties across the country; and

Whereas, the Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded a grant to aid in flood mitigation in Jefferson Parish; and

Whereas, the United States Congress and the president of the United States did not include the communities of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point; however, the state of Louisiana received supplemental funding for the parishes of Lafourche, Terrebonne, Orleans, East Baton Rouge, Tangipahoa, and parts of Jefferson; and

Whereas, continued investments in flood mitigation are needed to prevent future loss and damage resulting from natural disasters in the communities of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point; and

Whereas, the communities of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point have suffered the adverse effects of the West Closure Complex drainage system and the one hundred-year levees three miles north of the area; and

Whereas, the communities of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point have suffered the adverse effects of the sediment diversion on United States Highway 90 and will suffer from the proposed mid-Barataria sediment diversion; and

Whereas, the extreme risk of flooding in Jefferson Parish has shown the urgent need to invest resources for the communities of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point as a means to protect life and property in the future, as citizens are continuously impacted by the flooding and rebuilding of their homes and lives; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to invest more resources into the

communities of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point to aid in future flood damage mitigation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to include the communities of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point in any future supplemental funding and pre-mitigation funding to provide flood protection and to prevent future losses and damages; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-214. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Michigan urging the United States Congress to pass legislation that would allow farmers, along with coalitions and trade associations representing farmers, to petition the U.S. International Trade Commission to temporarily waive tariffs on imports of fertilizer and fertilizer ingredients imported from Morocco; to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 139

Whereas, Michigan's agricultural industry is vitally important to the state economy. As our nation's second most diverse agricultural system, it contributes more than \$104.7 billion in economic activity annually to the state. More than 800,000 people work in Michigan's agricultural industry, and care for nearly 10 million acres of land; and

Whereas, Fertilizer is a critical agricultural input that is utilized by farmers to provide nutrients to their land and maximize the productivity of their farms. Michigan farmers require access to fertilizers in order to nourish their land and maintain production levels; and

Whereas, The International Trade Commission (ITC) determined that the import of foreign fertilizers injured U.S. manufacturers. As a result, the ITC decided to impose a nineteen percent tariff on imports of fertilizer and fertilizer ingredients from Morocco. The tariffs, which were implemented in early 2021, significantly increased fertilizer prices; and

Whereas, Fertilizer prices in the United States are now at an all-time high. Fertilizer prices had already been increasing due to factors such as rising costs of raw materials and increased demand for inputs. With these tariffs in effect, farmers who were already struggling to compete with rising costs are now faced with an increased financial burden and uncertain future; and

Whereas, Meanwhile, the U.S. continues to rely on imported fertilizer and fertilizer ingredients. For example, more than 95 percent of potash, one of the key components found in fertilizer, is currently imported from outside the U.S.; and

Whereas, Michigan contains the only commercial deposit of natural potash in the U.S. and the highest quality natural potash deposit in the world. The Michigan Legislature recently provided an investment of \$50 million to establish potash extraction infrastructure in Michigan. Once completed, this project will help increase domestic supply of this critical mineral, thereby strengthening and securing the supply of high-quality potash for Michigan farmers, in addition to providing hundreds of full-time jobs and boosting Michigan's economy. This will be crucial for the Michigan agricultural industry, as significant supply shortages and skyrocketing costs continue to burden Michigan farmers; and

Whereas, Legislation has been introduced in Congress that would allow a process for

individual farmers, along with coalitions and trade associations representing farmers, to petition the ITC to temporarily waive tariffs on imports of fertilizer and fertilizer ingredients. With the price of fertilizer on the rise, this would help alleviate costs for farmers, as Morocco is one of the top five exporters of fertilizer to the United States; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge Congress to pass legislation that would allow farmers, along with coalitions and trade associations representing farmers, to petition the ITC to temporarily waive tariffs on imports of fertilizer and fertilizer ingredients imported from Morocco; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM-215. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona urging the United States Congress to allow the participation of Romania in the Visa Waiver Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL NO. 2008

Whereas, Romania has been a stable and flourishing multiparty democracy since the end of communism in 1989; and

Whereas, Romania has a fast-growing, market-oriented economy and is a major economic partner of the United States; and

Whereas, Romania is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), meets its defense spending benchmarks and is an active player in regional security; and

Whereas, Romania is an important United States regional security ally and is a close partner in the areas of intelligence and joint security; and

Whereas, Romania has been described as a "stalwart NATO ally" by United States Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and called a role model ally by senior defense officials; and

Whereas, the Visa Waiver Program allows citizens of approved countries to travel without a visa to the United States for stays of up to 90 days; and

Whereas, despite the close United States-Romanian relationship, Romania remains one of only three European Union countries that are not in the Visa Waiver Program; and

Whereas, Romania's exclusion from the program hampers closer economic, cultural, political and security ties between our two countries. Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress make changes to the Visa Waiver Program to allow Romania to become a participating country.

2. That the Secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security work closely with Romanian officials to quickly bring Romania into the Visa Waiver Program.

3. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this Memorial to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona and the Secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security.

POM-216. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Wisconsin applying to the United States Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the United States Constitution, for the calling of a convention for the limited purpose of proposing an

amendment to the United States Constitution to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States House of Representatives or as a member of the United States Senate; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18

Whereas, the United States and its citizens would be best served by limiting the terms of members of the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate; and

Whereas, under Article V of the Constitution of the United States, the Congress, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several states, shall call a convention for proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States; and this application shall be aggregated with the applications from other states to Congress to call a convention to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected to the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate for the purpose of attaining the two-thirds of states necessary to require Congress to call a limited convention on this subject, but shall not be aggregated with any other applications on any other subject; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the legislature of the State of Wisconsin herewith respectfully applies to Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a convention for the limited purpose of proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to set a limit on the number of terms that a person may be elected as a member of the United States House of Representatives or as a member of the United States Senate; and, be it further

Resolved, That the secretary of state of the State of Wisconsin be, and is hereby, directed to forward a proper authenticated copy of this resolution to the President of the Senate of the United States, and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States; and, be it further

Resolved, That this resolution constitutes a continuing application for a convention for proposing an amendment in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States until such a convention is convened on the same subject or until the legislature of the State of Wisconsin rescinds this resolution.

POM-217. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of New Jersey urging the United States Congress to pass a resolution condemning violence against historically Black colleges and universities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 69

Whereas, In January and February of 2022, at least 30 historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were the targets of bomb threats; and

Whereas, On February 7, 2022, House Concurrent Resolution 70 was introduced in the United States House of Representatives condemning the violence and threats of violence against HBCUs; and

Whereas, HBCUs were established throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in response to discriminatory practices that prevented Black Americans from pursuing higher education; and

Whereas, Quality higher educational opportunities are central to economic prosperity and social well-being in the United States, and dedicated educational opportunities for Black Americans are critical to the pursuit of economic and social equality for Black Americans; and

Whereas, HBCUs are a symbol of independence and resilience for the Black community

and provide important opportunities to uplift Black Americans; and

Whereas, in 2020, enrollment at HBCUs totaled more than 275,000 students, and HBCUs continuously produce a significant share of the country's Black leaders, innovators and artists, including Vice President Kamala Harris, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Toni Morrison; and

Whereas, Bombings were a common tactic during the Civil Rights Movement to terrorize Black institutions and members of the Black community; and

Whereas, The bomb threats against HBCUs in the initial months of 2022 have disrupted campus environments, obstructed educational opportunities, increased anxiety, and instilled fear in students, faculty, and staff; and

Whereas, in 2019, among single-bias hate crime incidents in the United States, 57.6 percent of victims were targeted due to racial, ethnic, or ancestry bias, and among those victims, 48.5 percent were victims of crimes motivated by the offenders' anti-Black or anti-African-American bias, according to the FBI; and

Whereas, The United States has a duty to protect citizens targeted by race-related hate crimes and prevent the continued perpetration of these crimes; and

Whereas, It is altogether fitting and proper for the United States Congress to pass House Concurrent Resolution 70 and thereby vociferously condemn the threats of violence against HBCUs; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:

1. This House supports, and respectfully urges the United States Congress to pass, House Concurrent Resolution 70, condemning the violence against historically Black colleges and universities and reaffirming the commitment of the federal government to combat violence against students, faculty, and staff at historically Black colleges and universities.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and every member of the New Jersey Congressional delegation.

POM-218. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Colorado concerning the designation of March 8, 2022, as "Colorado Aerospace Day"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 22-005

Whereas, Our nation and the world have significantly benefited from technological and scientific advances resulting from space exploration and aerospace activities; and

Whereas, Colorado ranks first in the nation for aerospace employment concentration; and

Whereas, There are over 34,000 Coloradans who are directly employed in aerospace, with the aerospace cluster supporting over 240,000 jobs; and

Whereas, Colorado is home to the nation's top aerospace companies, including Ball Aerospace, Boeing, L3Harris, Lockheed Martin Space, Maxar Technologies, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Sierra Nevada Corporation, and United Launch Alliance, and close to 500 additional companies that support the aerospace sector by providing services and developing products, including spacecraft, launch vehicles, satellites, command and control software, sensors, and navigation operations; and

Whereas, Colorado is a strategic location for national space and cyber activity, with

five key military commands—North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the United States Northern Command, the United States Strategic Command's Joint Functional Component Command for Space Missile Warning Center, the United States Space Command, and the United States Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command—and three space-related United States Space Force bases—Buckley, Peterson, and Schriever; and

Whereas, The United States Air Force Academy, along with Colorado's colleges and universities, including the University of Colorado Boulder, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, Colorado School of Mines, Colorado State University, Metropolitan State University of Denver, University of Denver, Colorado Mesa University, and Fort Lewis College, provides access to world-class aerospace-related degrees and offers aerospace companies one of the country's most educated workforces; and

Whereas, Various organizations are key to Colorado's prominence in aerospace, such as the Colorado Space Coalition, a group of industry stakeholders working to grow and promote Colorado as a center of excellence for aerospace; the Colorado chapter of Citizens for Space Exploration, in partnership with the Colorado Space Business Roundtable, whose mission is to promote better understanding of aerospace and its importance in our economy and daily lives, as well as promoting the importance of human space exploration; and the Colorado Space Business Roundtable, an organization that works to convene stakeholders from industry, government, and academia to advance aerospace business and workforce opportunities throughout the state. Together they form the Colorado chapter of the Aerospace States Association, a nonpartisan organization of lieutenant governors and associate members from aerospace organizations and academia who represent states' interests in federal aerospace and aviation policy development.

Manufacturer's Edge is a statewide manufacturing assistance center that encourages the strength and competitiveness of Colorado manufacturers by providing on-site technical assistance through coaching, training, consulting, collaboration-focused industry programs, and leveraging government, university, and economic development partnerships; and

Whereas, The Colorado Air and Space Port seeks to serve as America's hub for commercial space transportation, research, and development; this horizontal launch facility will have the potential to become the foundation for a global suborbital transportation network connecting Colorado globally; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the Seventy-third General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein: That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly:

(1) Strongly urge and request the government of the United States of America to take action to preserve and enhance American leadership in space, spur innovation, and ensure our continued national and economic security by increasing funding for space exploration and activities, including aggressively pursuing sending United States astronauts and the first woman onto the Moon in the next few years under the Artemis program, which will have its uncrewed test flight this month, sending along with it the Callisto payload, which uses Amazon Alexa and Webex by Cisco to test and demonstrate commercial technology for deep space voice, video, and whiteboarding communications. The Callisto technology demonstration will be integrated

into NASA's Orion spacecraft for the agency's Artemis I uncrewed mission. Lockheed Martin Space, which designed and built the Orion spacecraft for NASA in Colorado, is leading the development and integration of the payload;

(2) Recognize and appreciate Colorado's space and aerospace companies and organizations, especially the growing membership and activities of the Colorado chapter of Citizens for Space Exploration, in partnership with the Colorado Space Business Roundtable, whose activities to promote space exploration are helping to increase public understanding and enthusiasm for exploration funding;

(3) Recognize and support our congressional delegation in urging the Department of Defense to reestablish the United States Space Command in Colorado;

(4) Recognize and appreciate the contributions of Colorado's universities, colleges, and national research laboratories to the space and aerospace industries, including their expertise in exploration of the planets and the universe and their space-based Earth observation, like the GOES-T weather satellite that launched this month;

(5) Express our most sincere and deepest appreciation to the men and women working in our military installations in Colorado; and

(6) Hereby declare March 8, 2022, to be "Colorado Aerospace Day". Be it further

Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to President Joseph Biden, Jr.; Vice President Kamala Harris; Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi; House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy; Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer; Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell; Senator John Hickenlooper; Senator Michael Bennet; Congresswoman Diana DeGette; Congressman Joe Neguse; Congresswoman Lauren Boebert; Congressman Ken Buck; Congressman Doug Lamborn; Congressman Jason Crow; Congressman Ed Perlmutter; Bill Nelson, NASA Administrator; Bradley Mims, Deputy Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration; Governor Jared Polis; Lieutenant Governor and Co-chair, Colorado Space Coalition, Dianne Primavera; Brigadier General Laura Clellan, The Adjutant General, Colorado National Guard; General James Dickinson, Commander, U.S. Space Command, and Commander, Air Force Space Command; Colonel Marcus Jackson, Buckley Garrison Commander, Buckley Space Force Base; Dr. Christopher Scose, Director, National Reconnaissance Office; Ross B. Garelick Bell, Executive Director, Aerospace States Association; Thomas E. Zelibor, Chief Executive Officer, Space Foundation; Dr. Ronald M. Segal, Co-chair, Colorado Space Coalition; Michael Gass, Co-chair, Colorado Space Coalition; Bob Cone, Chair, Colorado Space Business Roundtable; Stacey DeFore, Chair, Colorado Citizens for Space Exploration; Jeff Kloska, Director, Colorado Air and Space Port; and Debbie Brown, President, Colorado Space Business Roundtable.

POM-219. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Wisconsin applying to the United States Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the United States Constitution, for the calling of a Convention of the States limited to proposing amendments to the United States Constitution that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials and for members of Congress; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

Whereas, the Founders of our Constitution empowered state legislators to be guardians

of liberty against future abuses of power by the federal government; and

Whereas, the federal government has created a crushing national debt through improper and imprudent spending; and

Whereas, the federal government has invaded the legitimate roles of the States through the manipulative process of federal mandates, most of which are unfunded to a great extent; and

Whereas, the federal government has ceased to live under a proper interpretation of the Constitution of the United States; and

Whereas, it is the solemn duty of the States to protect the liberty of our people—particularly for the generations to come—by proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States through a Convention of the States under Article V for the purpose of restraining these and related abuses of power; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the legislature of the State of Wisconsin hereby applies to Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a Convention of the States limited to proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials and for members of Congress; and, be it further

Resolved, That for purposes of this joint resolution, the phrase "limit the power and jurisdiction" means to restrict and constrain the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and that this joint resolution does not authorize a convention for proposing any amendments that expand federal power or jurisdiction, or that legitimize any current use of federal power that is unauthorized by the original Constitution; and, be it further

Resolved, That the secretary of state is hereby directed to transmit copies of this application to the president and secretary of the United States Senate and to the Speaker and clerk of the United States House of Representatives; to transmit copies to the members of the said Senate and House of Representatives from this state; and also to transmit copies hereof to the presiding officers of each of the legislative houses in the several States, requesting their cooperation; and, be it further

Resolved, That this application constitutes a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States until the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several States have made applications on the same subject.

POM-220. A memorial adopted by the Senate of the State of Colorado urging the United States Congress to adopt comprehensive voting rights legislation to protect the integrity of American democracy and the sacred right to vote; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

Senate Memorial No. 22-001

Whereas, Every January we honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his heroic efforts to advance voting rights and we aspire to follow in his footsteps; and

Whereas, No one did more to promote the right to vote for disenfranchised Americans than the civil rights leaders of the 1960s, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Congressman John Lewis, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Ella Baker; and

Whereas, Until the United States Congress passed the federal "Voting Rights Act of 1965", people of color in the United States were frequently subject to poll taxes, literacy tests, and fraud and intimidation, preventing them from exercising their right to cast a ballot; and

Whereas, The United States Senate is considering critical federal elections reform and long overdue updates to the federal "Voting Rights Act of 1965" to preserve voting rights for generations to come, in honor of the legacy of the late Congressman John Lewis; and

Whereas, Colorado's electoral system serves as an example to the rest of the nation, and in fact the world, of how to expand voter access while protecting electoral integrity through safeguards including risk-limiting audits and signature verification; and

Whereas, In the 2020 election, Colorado had the second highest voter turnout of any state in the nation, and Colorado's largest voting bloc—young people ages 18 to 34—turned out in record numbers; and

Whereas, Efforts to suppress the vote and disenfranchise Americans who historically have had the least access to the ballot have been on the rise across the country in recent years; and

Whereas, Last year, more than 440 bills with provisions that restrict voting access were introduced in 49 states, including here in Colorado, where legislation was introduced to restrict voters' access to Colorado's vote by mail system, a national model of excellence for election access, security, and integrity; and

Whereas, Last year, 19 states passed 34 laws restricting access to voting, including Georgia's Senate Bill 202 and Texas' Senate Bill No. 1, both of which made it more difficult for voters to exercise their fundamental right to vote enshrined in the United States Constitution and the federal "Voting Rights Act of 1965"; and

Whereas, Falsehoods and conspiracies regarding the integrity of the 2020 election have run rampant in our media and public discourse; and

Whereas, The months-long, coordinated attempt to interfere with the democratic process following the November 2020 election and prevent the peaceful transfer of power by overturning the legitimate results of the presidential election, which culminated at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, serves as a violent reminder of the fragility of our democracy; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the Seventy-third General Assembly of the State of Colorado: That we, the members of the Colorado Senate:

(1) Reassert the validity of the 2020 presidential election results as legitimate and verified;

(2) Offer Colorado's premier electoral system as a model for states across the country to adopt in order to increase voter participation while ensuring electoral integrity; and

(3) Call on the United States Congress, and specifically members of the United States Senate, to pass comprehensive voting rights legislation to protect the fundamental right to vote, which has been the cornerstone of our democracy since the founding of our republic. Be it further

Resolved, That copies of this Memorial be sent to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Minority Leader of the United States Senate, and all members of the Colorado Congressional delegation.

POM-221. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to reject the recommendation to close the Alexandria Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in Pineville, Louisiana, as recommended by the

United States Department of Veterans Affairs' report to the Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 27

Whereas, the Alexandria Veterans Affairs Medical Center provides inpatient medical and surgical, inpatient mental health, community living centers, and outpatient services to veterans in the surrounding area; and

Whereas, the Alexandria Veterans Affairs Medical Center serves thousands of veterans a year, including a potential population of more than one hundred thousand veterans and an active patient roster of more than thirty-seven thousand veterans; and

Whereas, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs recommends closing the Alexandria Veterans Affairs Medical Center facility and relocating services to community providers; and

Whereas, the closing of the Alexandria Veterans Affairs Medical Center will leave veterans with fewer care options; and

Whereas, Alexandria and Central Louisiana have a long history of support for the military and serve as an ideal location for veterans in surrounding communities to receive treatment; and

Whereas, the Alexandria Veterans Affairs Medical Center is a critical institution that should remain operable to better serve the veterans of Louisiana; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to reject the report recommendations by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and support the continued operation of the Alexandria Veterans Affairs Medical Center; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-222. A resolution adopted by the Council of the County of Maui, urging the United States Navy to permanently remove and relocate the Bulk Fuel Storage Facility underground storage tanks located at Kapukaki (Red Hill, Oahu); to the Committee on Armed Services.

POM-223. A resolution adopted by the Alpena County Board of Commissioners, Alpena, Michigan, supporting the Line 5 tunnel; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM-224. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas opposing any government's actions related to nuclear testing, storage, and waste disposal in the Pacific, and reaffirming everyone's fundamental right to a safe and healthy living environment; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

POM-225. A resolution adopted by the City Commission of the City of Kalamazoo, Michigan, supporting the Medicare for All Act of 2021; to the Committee on Finance.

POM-226. A resolution adopted by the Lauderdale Lakes City Commission, Lauderdale Lakes, Florida encouraging the United States Congress to enact the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019; providing for the adoption of recitals; providing for instructions to the City Clerk; providing an effective date; to the Committee on Finance.

POM-227. A resolution adopted by the City of Oshkosh Common Council, Wisconsin, urging the United States Congress to enact the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act; to the Committee on Finance.

POM-228. A resolution adopted by the Council of the Village of Yellow Springs,

Ohio, supporting a prompt and meaningful shift away from fossil fuels in the United States as a necessary cornerstone to any meaningful response to climate change; and further supporting the proposed Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 2307); to the Committee on Finance.

POM-229. A resolution adopted by the City Commission of Miami, Florida, declaring Vladimir Putin and all his allies, oligarchs, and supporters war criminals and personas non grata in the City of Miami; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

POM-230. A resolution adopted by the Council of the County of Maui, Hawaii, condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and supporting peace; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

POM-231. A resolution adopted by the Council of the County of Maui, Hawaii, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Patsy Takemoto Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

POM-232. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to amending federal laws regarding "hate crime" statutes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM-233. A resolution adopted by the Council of the County of Maui, Hawaii, urging the United States Secretary of Homeland Security to temporarily waive Jones Act requirements for oil imported to Hawaii; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MENENDEZ for the Committee on Foreign Relations. Nathaniel Fick, of Maine, to be Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy.

Nominee: Nathaniel C. Fick.

Post: Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace & Digital Policy.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: \$2,900.00, April 11, 2021, Committee to Elect Jared Golden (Maine); \$2,800.00, October 9, 2020, Biden for President/Biden Victory Fund; \$250.00, March 10, 2020, Sara Gideon for Maine.

2. Spouse: Margaret Angell: \$1,000.00, September 14, 2020, Elissa Slotkin for Congress (Michigan); \$1,000.00, February 16, 2020, Sara Gideon for Maine; \$250.00, November 19, 2019, Joe Kennedy for Massachusetts; \$25.00, April 7, 2019, ActBlue.

Rolfe Michael Schiffer, of New York, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Patrick Leahy, of Vermont, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventy-seventh Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

James E. Risch, of Idaho, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Seventy-seventh Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations I report favorably the following nomination list which was printed in the RECORD on the date indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the ex-

pense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that this nomination lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Donald R. Alderman and ending with John M. Grondelski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 19, 2022, (minus 1 nominee: Noah A. Klinger)

By Mr. WARNER for the Select Committee on Intelligence.

* Terrence Edwards, of Maryland, to be Inspector General of the National Reconnaissance Office.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 4844. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to support and stabilize the existing nursing workforce, establish programs to increase the number of nurses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 4845. A bill to provide for safe schools and safe communities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KALINE (for himself, Ms. BALDWYN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 4846. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1985 to require institutions of higher education to have an independent advocate for campus sexual assault prevention and response; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 4847. A bill to develop a scenario-based training curriculum for law enforcement personnel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 4848. A bill to provide for the designation of the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 4849. A bill to require the Commandant of the Coast Guard to establish a process to update the vessel response plan program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Ms. ERNST):

S. 4850. A bill to amend Public Law 117-169 to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from using funds for methane monitoring to be used to monitor emissions of methane from livestock, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 4851. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a national project to prevent and cure Parkinson's, to be known as the National Parkinson's Project, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 4852. A bill to permanently authorize the SBIR and STTR programs; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 4853. A bill to require a study of the programs, acquisitions, and budget of the Department of Defense; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 4854. A bill to amend title 36, United States Code, to repeal the Federal charter of the National Education Association; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WICKER:

S. 4855. A bill to protect the rights of student athletes and to provide for transparency and accountability with respect to student athlete name, image, and likeness agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. HAGERTY, Ms. ERNST, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 4856. A bill to require the denial of admission to the United States for individuals subject to sanctions pursuant to Executive Order 13876, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S.J. Res. 62. A joint resolution approving the location of a memorial to commemorate the commitment of the United States to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that cause; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. Res. 763. A resolution establishing a Senate Select Committee on the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. Res. 764. A resolution designating September 2022, as “National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month”; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 190

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 190, a bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to require the safe storage of firearms, and for other purposes.

S. 344

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 344, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans’ disability compensation and retirement pay for disability retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and a combat-related disability, and for other purposes.

S. 445

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 445, a bill to amend section 303(g) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823(g)) to eliminate the separate registration requirement for dispensing narcotic drugs in schedule III, IV, or V, such as buprenorphine, for maintenance or detoxification treatment, and for other purposes.

S. 564

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 564, a bill to prohibit Members of Congress from purchasing or selling certain investments, and for other purposes.

S. 1673

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1673, a bill to preserve access to Federal land, control fires, and for other purposes.

S. 1947

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSBOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1947, a bill to authorize the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism, to statutorily establish the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, and for other purposes.

S. 2172

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2172, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve grants, payments, and technical assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2192

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2192, a bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits be calculated using the value of the low-cost food plan, and for other purposes.

S. 2340

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2340, a bill to improve the safety and security of the Federal judiciary.

S. 2798

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2798, a bill to amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to improve compensation for workers involved in uranium mining, and for other purposes.

S. 2952

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO)

was added as a cosponsor of S. 2952, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow manufacturers and sponsors of a drug to use alternative testing methods to animal testing to investigate the safety and effectiveness of a drug, and for other purposes.

S. 3018

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3018, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish requirements with respect to the use of prior authorization under Medicare Advantage plans, and for other purposes.

S. 3071

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3071, a bill to protect our Social Security system and improve benefits for current and future generations.

S. 3909

At the request of Mr. KAINES, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3909, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make employers of spouses of military personnel eligible for the work opportunity credit.

S. 3938

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3938, a bill to reauthorize the READ Act.

S. 4120

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 4120, a bill to maximize discovery, and accelerate development and availability, of promising childhood cancer treatments, and for other purposes.

S. 4169

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4169, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide assisted living services to eligible veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 4592

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 4592, a bill to encourage the migration of Federal Government information technology systems to quantum-resistant cryptography, and for other purposes.

S. 4690

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the names of the Senator from Ohio

(Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 4690, a bill to provide grants for fire station construction through the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes.

S. 4702

At the request of Mr. Kaine, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 4702, a bill to impose limits on excepting competitive service positions from the competitive service, and for other purposes.

S. 4739

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 4739, a bill to allow additional individuals to enroll in stand-alone dental plans offered through Federal Exchanges.

S. 4815

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4815, a bill to clarify regulatory certainty, and for other purposes.

S. 4817

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 4817, a bill to prevent the use of additional Internal Revenue Service funds from being used for audits of taxpayers with taxable incomes below \$400,000 in order to protect low- and middle-income earning American taxpayers from an onslaught of audits from an army of new Internal Revenue Service auditors funded by an unprecedented, nearly \$80,000,000,000, infusion of new funds.

S. 4840

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4840, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 61

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 61, a joint resolution to provide for the resolution of issues in a railway labor-management dispute, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 321

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSBOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 321, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to reduce traffic fatalities to zero by 2050.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Ms. ERNST):

S. 4850. A bill to amend Public Law 117-169 to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from using funds for methane monitoring to be used to monitor emissions of methane from livestock, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 4850

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

SECTION 1. METHANE MONITORING.

Section 60105(e) of Public Law 117-169 is amended—

(1) by striking “In addition to” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) PROHIBITION.—Amounts made available under paragraph (1) may not be used to monitor emissions of methane from livestock.”

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 4853. A bill to require a study of the programs, acquisitions, and budget of the Department of Defense; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to print my bill for introduction in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The bill requires a study of the programs, acquisitions, and budget of the Department of Defense.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 4853

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “American Defense Programs, Logistics, and Acquisitions for our Nation’s Security Act of 2022”, or the “American Defense PLANS Act of 2022”.

SEC. 2. STUDY OF THE PROGRAMS, ACQUISITIONS, AND BUDGET OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall seek to enter into an arrangement with a federally funded research and development center under which the center will—

(1) conduct a study of the programs, acquisitions, and budget of the Department of Defense; and

(2) make recommendations with respect to how the Department can ensure that program development cycles and acquisition of new technologies within the Department can best keep pace with the increasing rate at which technologies acquired for programs of the Department become outdated or are replaced by new technologies.

(b) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the study required by subsection (a).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 763—ESTABLISHING A SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE UNITED STATES WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

Mr. HAWLEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 763

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This resolution may be cited as the “Senate Select Committee on the Afghanistan Withdrawal Resolution”.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE.

There is established a select committee of the Senate, to be known as the Select Committee on the United States Withdrawal from Afghanistan (referred to in this resolution as the “Senate Select Committee”), to investigate and report on the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan.

SEC. 3. MEMBERSHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Senate Select Committee shall be composed of 20 Members of the Senate appointed according to the following:

(1) The majority leader of the Senate shall appoint 2 members.

(2) The minority leader of the Senate shall appoint 2 members.

(3) The chairman of the Committee on Armed Services shall appoint 2 members.

(4) The ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services shall appoint 2 members.

(5) The chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations shall appoint 2 members.

(6) The ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Relations shall appoint 2 members.

(7) The chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs shall appoint 2 members.

(8) The ranking member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs shall appoint 2 members.

(9) The chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence shall appoint 2 members.

(10) The ranking member of the Select Committee on Intelligence shall appoint 2 members.

(b) APPOINTMENT OF CO-CHAIRS.—The majority leader and the minority leader of the Senate shall each appoint 1 co-chair of the Senate Select Committee from the members appointed to the Senate Select Committee.

(c) DATE.—Members of the Senate Select Committee shall be appointed not later than 14 calendar days after the date on which the Senate agrees to this resolution.

(d) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT.—Members of the Senate Select Committee shall be appointed for the life of the Senate Select Committee.

(e) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Senate Select Committee—

(1) shall not affect the powers of the Senate Select Committee; and

(2) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

SEC. 4. INVESTIGATION AND REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Senate Select Committee shall investigate and, not later than 1 year after the date of agreement to this resolution, shall submit a report to the Senate on the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall address the following:

(1) Intelligence products available to the United States Government over the course of the withdrawal, including as related to—

(A) anticipated timelines for a Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, especially as the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan districts and provinces, often without fighting, in early to mid 2021;

(B) the ability of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces to prevent a Taliban takeover of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the United States Armed Forces and associated combat, logistical, and other support;

(C) the willingness of then-President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani and other Afghan political leaders to remain in Afghanistan as the military situation deteriorated, including any plans such leaders may have made to escape Afghanistan as the Taliban advanced;

(D) any other intelligence that may have informed decisions by the United States Government regarding the timeline for the withdrawal of its forces, moving of its embassy in Kabul, initiation of a noncombatant evacuation operation, force requirements for a noncombatant evacuation operation, or related matters; and

(E) any dissenting views shared in writing or other formats, including verbally, by United States diplomats, military commanders, or other government officials regarding the topics described in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

(2) The failure to secure Hamid Karzai International Airport, relocate the United States Embassy in Kabul, and initiate a noncombatant evacuation operation prior to Kabul's imminent collapse, despite warnings by military commanders on the ground that such a collapse was increasingly likely and could occur rapidly, including—

(A) the failure by the United States Government to accelerate the fortification of the Hamid Karzai International Airport, the relocation of the United States Embassy in Kabul, or the initiation of the noncombatant evacuation operation in response to warnings that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was increasingly likely to collapse and could do so rapidly;

(B) the development of a “trigger assessment tool” or other conditions-based planning aids to support monitoring of and timely response to the deteriorating security environment in Afghanistan, including use of such aids by Department of Defense and Department of State officials in Afghanistan;

(C) table-top exercises or other planning events held at agency or interagency levels, with particular focus on planning assumptions, associated timelines, and participant reactions to the planning events;

(D) any decision by the Department of State or other Federal agency to delay or deprioritize planning for a noncombatant evacuation operation, including for the purpose of demonstrating confidence in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan;

(E) any suggestion by Department of State or other United States Government officials that executing a noncombatant evacuation operation would constitute failure for the United States in Afghanistan, as reported by the United States Central Command investigation of the Abbey Gate bombing; and

(F) any orders, instructions, or other guidance provided to Department of Defense officials to prevent such officials from planning for a noncombatant evacuation operation with multinational partners, as reported by the United States Central Command investigation of the Abbey Gate bombing.

(3) The decision to prioritize evacuating as many individuals as possible over protecting members of the United States Armed Forces and thoroughly vetting all prospective evacuees, as reported by the United States Cen-

tral Command investigation of the Abbey Gate bombing, including—

(A) force protection measures, including obstacles, barriers, and other measures, implemented at the Hamid Karzai International Airport prior to and during execution of the noncombatant evacuation operation; and

(B) force protection measures not implemented at the Hamid Karzai International Airport, with an explanation for why such force protection measures were not implemented and implications of the failure to implement such measures for risk to force during execution of the noncombatant evacuation operation.

(4) Threat reporting prior to the suicide bombing at Abbey Gate, additional force protection measures implemented in response to such threat reporting, and additional force protection measures not implemented in response to such threat reporting, with an assessment of why certain additional force protection measures were not taken.

(5) The failure to thoroughly vet evacuees prior to their transfer to United States territory, military installations, or other locations outside of Afghanistan, including detailed descriptions of—

(A) any delays by the Department of State to send adequate numbers of consular officials to Hamid Karzai International Airport to facilitate thorough vetting of prospective evacuees;

(B) any changes to guidance issued by the Department of State regarding the vetting of prospective evacuees over the course of the noncombatant evacuation operation;

(C) any guidance issued by the President or other United States Government officials to reduce standards for or expedite vetting of prospective evacuees prior to their removal from Afghanistan;

(D) any failure by the United States Government to utilize all existing biometric databases or proper identification standards when processing individuals to be removed from Afghanistan; and

(E) any criminal incidents involving evacuees following their transfer to United States territory.

(6) The total number of United States nationals left in Afghanistan following the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the knowledge on the part of United States Government officials of the total number of United States nationals left in Afghanistan when such officials informed Congress that the United States Government had not left Americans behind in Afghanistan.

(7) Equipment provided by the United States to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces and recovered by the Taliban following the collapse of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, including the type and amount of such equipment recovered by the Taliban as well as the manner in which the Taliban has been able to use such equipment.

(8) Detailed descriptions of—

(A) orders issued by the President related to the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan, including with regard to the relocation of the United States Embassy in Kabul and the initiation and execution of the noncombatant evacuation operation;

(B) analysis or recommendations provided by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commander of United States Central Command, and other national security leaders related to the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan, including as related to—

(i) the deteriorating military situation in Afghanistan; and

(ii) the consequent need to accelerate the relocation of the United States Embassy in Kabul and the initiation of the noncombatant evacuation operation; and

(C) requests for forces or other requests for additional authorities or resources made to the President by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, or other national security leaders during the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the President's responses to any such requests.

(9) Any other matters identified by members of the Senate Select Committee.

(c) FORM.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

SEC. 5. MEETINGS, HEARINGS, AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION.

(a) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Senate Select Committee shall meet at the call of the co-chairs or at the request of at least 3 members.

(2) QUORUM.—Half of the members of the Senate Select Committee shall constitute a quorum.

(3) VOTING.—Proxy voting shall be allowed on behalf of the members of the Senate Select Committee.

(b) HEARINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Senate Select Committee shall, for the purposes described in section 4, hold such hearings, compel attendance of such witnesses, take or compel such testimony, receive or compel such evidence, and administer such oaths as the Senate Select Committee considers advisable.

(2) FREQUENCY.—The Senate Select Committee shall hold an open hearing no less frequently than once per month until it has received open testimony from all of the witnesses listed in paragraph (3).

(3) WITNESSES.—The co-chairs shall hear testimony from the following before the Senate Select Committee in open session, even if the person holds a different public office or no longer holds public office at the time of the hearing:

(A) Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Jake Sullivan.

(B) Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

(C) Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

(D) Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas.

(E) Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines.

(F) Director of the Central Intelligence Agency William Burns.

(G) Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley.

(H) Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl.

(I) Former United States Ambassador to Afghanistan Ambassador John Bass.

(J) Former United States Ambassador to Afghanistan Ambassador Ross Wilson.

(K) Former Commander of United States Forces Afghanistan – Forward Rear Admiral Peter Vasely.

(L) Former Commanding General of Joint Task Force – Crisis Response Brigadier General Farrell J. Sullivan.

(M) Former Commanding General of 82nd Airborne Division Lieutenant General Christopher T. Donahue.

(N) Any other individuals, including former United States Government officials, identified by the co-chairs or a group of 3 members of the Senate Select Committee.

(4) TRANSPARENCY.—The Senate Select Committee may receive classified testimony in a closed session, but any witnesses questioned in a closed session shall also testify in an open session, in the interest of public transparency.

(5) QUESTIONING.—Co-chairs shall permit members of the Senate Select Committee to question witnesses at a hearing for periods

longer than 5 minutes or multiple periods of 5 minutes, at the request of a member.

(6) PROCEDURES.—

(A) ANNOUNCEMENT.—The co-chairs of the Senate Select Committee shall make a public announcement of the date, time, place, and subject matter of any hearing to be conducted, not less than 7 days in advance of such hearing, unless the co-chairs determine that there is good cause to begin such hearing at any earlier date.

(B) WRITTEN STATEMENT.—A witness appearing before the Senate Select Committee shall file a written statement of proposed testimony and respond in writing to any advance questions from the Senate Select Committee at least 2 calendar days before the appearance of the witness unless the requirement is waived by the co-chairs.

(C) COOPERATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Upon written request of the co-chairs, a Federal agency shall provide technical assistance to the Senate Select Committee in order for the Senate Select Committee to carry out its duties.

(2) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—The National Security Council, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of National Intelligence, the heads of the elements of the intelligence community, and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies shall expeditiously provide information requested by the Senate Select Committee related to the investigation and report under required under section 4, and in no case later than 3 weeks after a request by a member of the Senate Select Committee.

(3) LIMITATION ON EXCLUSIONS.—Federal agencies shall not withhold information from the Senate Select Committee, including for reasons of classification, executive privilege, or attorney-client privilege.

(d) SUBPOENA AUTHORITY.—Members of the Senate Select Committee are authorized to—

(1) compel by subpoena the furnishing of information by United States Government officials and other individuals, including former United States Government officials; and

(2) take or order the taking of depositions, including pursuant to subpoena, in the same manner as a standing committee of the Senate.

SEC. 6. ADMINISTRATION.

(a) FUNDING.—There shall be paid, out of the contingent fund of the Senate from the appropriations account “Miscellaneous Items,” such sums as may be necessary for the expenses of the Senate Select Committee, subject to the rules and regulations of the Senate.

(b) EXPENSES.—In carrying out its functions, the Senate Select Committee is authorized to incur expenses in the same manner and under the same conditions as the Joint Economic Committee is authorized under section 11 of the Employment Act of 1946 (15 U.S.C. 1024).

(c) STAFFING.—

(1) STAFF DIRECTOR.—The co-chairs, acting jointly, shall hire the staff director of the Senate Select Committee.

(2) OTHER STAFF.—The co-chairs, acting jointly, may employ such additional staff as they determine necessary for the Senate Select Committee to carry out its duties.

(3) COMPENSATION.—The co-chairs, acting jointly, may appoint and fix the compensation of the staff director and additional staff as they determine necessary, within the guidelines for employees of the Senate and following all applicable rules and employment requirements of the Senate.

(4) ETHICAL STANDARDS.—Members and staff of the Senate Select Committee shall comply with the ethics rules of the Senate.

(d) FACILITIES.—The Senate Select Committee shall have priority access to—

(1) rooms of the Senate for purposes of meetings, hearings, and other Senate Select Committee functions; and

(2) secure facilities for purpose of receiving classified testimony and handling other classified materials.

(e) TERMINATION.—The Senate Select Committee shall terminate on the later of the following:

(1) 30 days after the submission of the report required under section 4(a).

(2) 30 days after the Senate Select Committee has held open hearings with all of the witnesses listed under section 5(b)(3).

(3) The expiration of the Congressional session during which the Senate agrees to this resolution.

(f) DISPOSITION OF RECORDS.—Upon the termination of the Senate Select Committee, the records of the Senate Select Committee shall become the records of the Committee on Armed Services.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I have eight requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive session.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed business meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND BORDER SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and Border Safety of the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PRIVACY, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE LAW

The Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law of the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 4 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Republican

SENATE RESOLUTION 764—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2022, AS “NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 764

Whereas approximately 299,000 individuals in the United States live with spinal cord injuries, which cost society billions of dollars in health care costs and lost wages;

Whereas there are approximately 18,000 new spinal cord injuries in the United States each year;

Whereas more than 42,000 individuals with spinal cord injuries are veterans;

Whereas motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of spinal cord injuries;

Whereas nearly half of all spinal cord injuries to individuals 30 years of age or younger occur as a result of a motor vehicle accident;

Whereas the average remaining years of life for individuals living with spinal cord injuries has not improved significantly since the 1980s;

Whereas there is an urgent need to develop new neuroprotection, pharmacological, and regeneration treatments to reduce, prevent, and reverse paralysis; and

Whereas increased education and investment in research are key factors in improving outcomes for individuals living with spinal cord injuries, enhancing the quality of life of individuals with spinal cord injuries, and ultimately curing paralysis: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2022, as “National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month”;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month;

(3) continues to support research to find better treatments, therapies, and a cure for spinal cord injuries;

(4) supports clinical trials for new therapies that offer promise and hope to individuals living with paralysis; and

(5) commends the dedication of national, regional, and local organizations, researchers, doctors, volunteers, and people across the United States who are working to improve the quality of life of individuals living with spinal cord injuries and their families.

Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117-81, in consultation with the House Minority Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as co-chair of the Afghanistan War Commission: Dr. Colin Jackson of Rhode Island (co-chair).

**STRATEGIC EV MANAGEMENT ACT
OF 2022**

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 465, S. 4057.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4057) to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan for Federal electric vehicle fleet battery management, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Strategic EV Management Act of 2022”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of General Services.

(2) **AGENCY.**—The term “agency” has the meaning given the term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

(3) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Oversight and Reform of the House of Representatives.

(4) **DIRECTOR.**—The term “Director” means the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

SEC. 3. STRATEGIC GUIDANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with the Director, shall coordinate with the heads of agencies to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan for Federal electric vehicle fleet battery management.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—The strategic plan required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) maximize both cost and environmental efficiencies; and

(2) incorporate—

(A) guidelines for optimal charging practices that will maximize battery longevity and prevent premature degradation;

(B) guidelines for reusing and recycling the batteries of retired vehicles; and

(C) any other considerations determined appropriate by the Administrator and Director.

(c) **MODIFICATION.**—The Administrator, in consultation with the Director, may periodically update the strategic plan required under subsection (a) as the Administrator and Director may determine necessary based on new information relating to electric vehicle batteries that becomes available.

(d) **CONSULTATION.**—In developing the strategic plan required under subsection (a) the Administrator, in consultation with the Director, may consult with appropriate entities, including—

(1) the Secretary of Energy;

(2) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency;

(3) the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality;

(4) scientists who are studying electric vehicle batteries and reuse and recycling solutions;

(5) laboratories, companies, colleges, universities, or start-ups engaged in battery use, reuse, and recycling research;

(6) industries interested in electric vehicle battery reuse and recycling;

(7) electric vehicle equipment manufacturers and recyclers; and

(8) any other relevant entities, as determined by the Administrator and Director.

(e) **REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator and the Director shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that describes the strategic plan required under subsection (a).

(2) **BRIEFING.**—Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator and the Director shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the implementation of the strategic plan required under subsection (a) across agencies.

SEC. 4. STUDY OF FEDERAL FLEET VEHICLES.

Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on how the costs and benefits of operating and maintaining electric vehicles in the Federal fleet compare to the costs and benefits of operating and maintaining internal combustion engine vehicles.

Ms. SMITH. I further ask that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

Ms. SMITH. I ask unanimous consent that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The bill, as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Ms. SMITH. I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is, Shall the bill, as amended, pass?

The bill (S. 4057), as amended, was passed.

Ms. SMITH. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

GUIDANCE CLARITY ACT OF 2021

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 346, S. 533.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 533) to require a guidance clarity statement on certain agency guidance, and for other purposes.

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

had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Guidance Clarity Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. GUIDANCE CLARITY STATEMENT REQUIRED.

(a) **REQUIREMENT.**—Each agency, as defined in section 551 of title 5, United States Code, shall include a guidance clarity statement as described in subsection (b) on any guidance issued by that agency under section 553(b)(3)(A) of title 5, United States Code, on and after the date that is 30 days after the date on which the Director of the Office of Management and Budget issues the guidance required under subsection (c).

(b) **GUIDANCE CLARITY STATEMENT.**—A guidance clarity statement required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) be displayed prominently on the first page of the document; and

(2) include the following: “The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and do not, of themselves, bind the public or the agency. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.”.

(c) **OMB GUIDANCE.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue guidance to implement this Act.

Ms. SMITH. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 533), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

AMENDING THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT TO FIX A TECHNICAL ERROR IN THE DEFINITIONS

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 4235 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4235) to amend the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

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

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

The bill (S. 4235) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4235

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

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT.

Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (58) as paragraph (59);

(2) by redesignating the second paragraph designated as paragraph (57) (relating to the definition of “serious drug felony”) as paragraph (58); and

(3) by moving paragraphs (57), (58) (as so redesignated), and (59) (as so redesignated) 2 ems to the left.

FISCAL YEAR 2022 VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY AUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 7500, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7500) to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2022, and for other purposes.

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

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask for a third reading, and I know of no further debate on the bill.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate on the bill, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 7500) was passed.

Ms. SMITH. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 764, submitted earlier today.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 764) designating September 2022, as “National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month”.

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

Ms. SMITH. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 764) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

**ORDERS FOR THURSDAY,
SEPTEMBER 15, 2022**

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, September 15, and that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Merriam nomina-

tion postclosure; further, that all postclosure time on the Merriam nomination be considered expired at 11:30 a.m. and, following disposition of the Merriam nomination, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the Pekoske nomination; further, that the Senate vote on confirmation of the Pekoske nomination at 1:45 p.m. with all other provisions remaining in effect; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday’s session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

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

**ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW**

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:06 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 15, 2022, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate September 14, 2022:

THE JUDICIARY

LARA E. MONTECALVO, OF RHODE ISLAND, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIRST CIRCUIT.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SHEFALI RAZDAN DUGGAL, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS.

PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD

TRAVIS LEBLANC, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 29, 2028.

RICHARD E. DIZINNO, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 29, 2023.