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Senate

(Legislative day of Tuesday, January 3, 2023)

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the Earth belongs to You and everything in it. We look to You in every season of life's pilgrimage because You remain the champion that initiates and perfects our faith.

Lord, help us to maximize today's possibilities with humble and grateful hearts. Forgive our past faults and failures and empower us to press forward with faith toward a productive tomorrow.

Bless our lawmakers and the members of their staffs. May the words of their lips and the meditations of their hearts bring glory to You. Let not life's weariness or this world's confusion rob them of their trust in You.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with

Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

RECOGNIZING THE NEW PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, just a few moments before you assumed the Chair, Senator MURRAY opened the Senate as President pro tempore for the first time. Kudos, congratulations.

She is a great, great Member. She is the chair of Appropriations and now PPT, and it was a wonderful thing to see her open up the Senate for the first time as PPT. So congratulations to Senator MURRAY and to all of us for having such a good President pro tempore.

HOUSE REPUBLICAN AGENDA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on to business, in no time at all, the House Republicans are off to the rockiest start of any new majority in recent memory. Have you ever seen anything like this? We aren't even a month into the new Congress, and already the House GOP has shown the

American people they have been consumed by chaos, paralyzed by division, and held captive by the most extreme elements of their conference.

On their first day of voting—the very first day—House Republicans decided their first order of business as the new majority was to pass legislation making it easier for ultrarich tax cheats to escape accountability. Amazing. That is their first thing. At the same time, as they did that, they would blow a hole—a \$100 billion hole—in the deficit because according to CBO, the amount of money brought into the Federal Treasury by closing some of these loopholes against tax cheats—very wealthy tax cheats—would far exceed the expenditure made for the new IRS agents. The deficit would come down if we passed this legislation. For all the talk on the other side about we have got to bring down the deficit—not when it comes to closing loopholes of the ultrarich and corporations that pay a smaller percentage than most Americans, uh-uh. Wow. Apparently, cutting taxes for megacorporations and the 1 percent was not enough for Republicans 5 years ago. They did that in the Trump tax bill. Now they want to make things even easier for tax cheats.

Then, a few days later, the House Republicans doubled down on their war on women by passing measures that will undermine women's freedom of choice.

Make no mistake, these bills will never see the light of day in the Senate. But again, the extreme—the extreme—MAGA fringe element of the Republican Party seems to be controlling the whole entity. We hope that doesn't last for long.

We in the Senate will serve as an extinguishable firewall and stop the anti-woman, anti-health, anti-choice bills in their tracks. So, right off the bat, the House Republicans are showing us exactly whose corner they are

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



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in: the ultrarich and the fringe elements of their party.

Now, make no mistake, Democrats want to work with a competent and capable Republican Party wherever possible to make life better for average Americans. Democrats are united in this commitment because we all saw firsthand how bipartisanship was the key to so many of last year's successes. Later today, in fact, I will join President Biden, Leader Jeffries, and a number of Senate and House colleagues precisely to talk about how we can turn our unity into action to help the American people.

House Republicans, meanwhile, seem trapped in a cycle of extremism so powerful that now they are even giving proposals like a national sales tax—a national sales tax—serious consideration. According to some House Republicans, House leadership has agreed to give GOP radicals a vote on a 30-percent national sales tax on all goods across the board. That means, right now, with inflation finally beginning to drop, Republicans are looking to make Americans pay 30 percent more for everything they buy.

Look, if Republicans want to have a debate with Democrats on their national sales tax bill, we will be happy to have it. We would love to hear Republicans explain to the American people why it is a good idea to send prices skyrocketing on everything from cars to groceries, to diapers, and everything in between. We would love to hear Republicans tell seniors why their expenses would go up by a third after they have spent a lifetime for retirement. And we would love to hear Republicans explain to middle-class families why their taxes would increase by thousands of dollars a year while the ultrarich see their taxes go down. If Republicans want to push this terrible proposal, they are welcome to make their case. Make our day.

I think many within the Republicans own ranks recognize that a national sales tax is an especially dimwitted idea. Even Grover Norquist, whose ideas on tax are far away from most Americans—and he is one of the most conservative voices out there—called it “a terrible idea.”

Even Steve Forbes said this would make the average new home in this country cost \$100,000 more.

Young families, do you want to buy a home? Some of our Republican friends want to add \$100,000 to the cost of buying that home, and of course it would raise bills by thousands more. And yet—yet—despite the insanity of this idea, the House Republican leadership is bent to the MAGA wing of the Republican Party and have promised a vote.

If this is how House Republicans want to spend their time—taxing middle-class families, attacking women's freedom of choice, giving cover to tax cheats—be our guest.

Once again, this is the central quandary of the new Republican majority.

By bending to the demands of the MAGA hard right, Speaker MCCARTHY has guaranteed that Republicans will have to constantly cater to the whims of the MAGA wing at the expense of the American people.

Now, we will be a firewall against all of these things, and I am sure the American people are glad that we have a Democratic majority in the Senate to stop some of these rather insane proposals because when extremists run the show, as seems to be happening in the House, it makes it nearly impossible to have serious-minded, constructive conversations on the big issues that matter.

No issue, of course, will matter more in the coming months than raising the debt ceiling. Over the next few months, we are going to hear more about the debt ceiling in Congress, maybe more than any other issue. But the matter is very simple. If the United States is allowed to default on its debt for the first time, the consequences will be severe and every single American will pay the price.

A default means interest rates will spike on everything from car loans to credit cards, to mortgages. It means that Americans will have to pay thousands of dollars more on regular expenses. Homes will lose their value. Homes, the average middle-class person's piece of the rock that they struggled and saved for so that they could own a home and so they don't have to pay rent and can pay a mortgage where they get equity—those homes will lose their value if we default, God forbid, on the debt because mortgage interest rates will soar. That means people will have less money to pay for a home and supply and demand just sits. The price goes down. The value goes down.

Meanwhile, the millions of Americans who have saved for retirement will see their retirement plans, like 401(k)s, lose their value, robbing retirees of their hard-earned livelihoods.

So the dangers of default are not abstract. Oh, no, this is not some academic argument up there in the clouds. This affects every American family, and we are going to make sure that they hear all about it. The consequences are as real as they get, and the entire world is watching what we do here in Congress.

But, rather than work with Democrats in a productive, constructive way to raise the debt ceiling, the House GOP has immediately resorted to brinksmanship and hostage-taking. They say they will not raise the debt ceiling unless we give in to their demands for draconian spending cuts that would impact just about every American—again, in a very bad way.

Well, I say to my Republican colleagues, if you want to talk about deep cuts, then you have an obligation—an obligation—to show the American people precisely what kind of cuts you are talking about.

Are Republicans going to hold Social Security hostage in exchange for the

debt ceiling or pay raises for our troops or support for veterans or funding for police and fire and first responders or Medicare funding that millions of seniors rely on?

Republicans, you owe the American people answers on what you mean by spending cuts.

Remember, the House rules that the GOP approved are clear. They need to bring a debt ceiling bill to the floor, let the entirety of the House debate it and vote on it, and let the American people see and assess the cuts for themselves.

So, once again, to my House GOP colleagues, if you are serious about spending cuts, show us the math. Show us why you think it is worth risking a global financial crisis just to pass an extremist agenda, because, inevitably, what you are saying are cuts are vital to so many Americans—so many Americans. Being in the majority means that it won't be enough to hide behind time-worn rhetoric about wasteful spending. When it comes to the debt ceiling, the substance counts; the details count; and the consequences are very, very real.

Unless the Republicans can resolve their own chaos and beat back their own extremism, I fear that every day that passes without action on the debt ceiling will increase the risk of default and risk the great harm it will do to the American people. And, should that happen, Americans will see that the fault lies entirely in the hands of the radical GOP.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Biden administration has spent 2 years turning its back on the proven tools and policies that Republicans used to strengthen our southern border—2 years of a functionally open borders policy from Washington Democrats and 2 years of chaos and suffering as a result.

Last week, Customs and Border Protection announced that an already recordbreaking year ended on a particularly catastrophic note. Illegal immigration apprehensions clocked an all-time high of more than 2.7 million during the last fiscal year—by far the highest annual total ever recorded. But then December set an astonishing

record all by itself at over 250,000 apprehensions. Last month was CBP's busiest month ever recorded.

The American people are outraged at this willful failure. They rate immigration and the border as one of the single biggest problems facing our country, second only to the economy.

Two-thirds—two-thirds—of the country disapprove of President Biden's handling of immigration and the border. That is a 67-percent supermajority of Americans who believe this administration is failing on border security.

Our Democratic friends tie themselves in knots making excuses for why they can't simply do their job, enforce Federal law, and secure our border. Their far-left base makes them pretend that we can't enforce the laws on the books unless—unless—we find new ways to be even more generous to people who come here illegally. It is nonsensical.

Even local officials who belong to the Democratic Party are rapidly losing patience with the Biden administration's border incompetence.

The Democratic mayor of New York, Eric Adams, has spent months sounding the alarm on the catastrophic effects of this administration's functionally open borders.

He said:

This is a national crisis.

He said:

There is no more room in New York.

Yet the far left attacks him, the mayor of New York, for pointing out the problem.

The Democratic Governor of Colorado is taking a cue from Governor Abbott and Governor DeSantis and arranging transportation for illegal immigrants to various liberal jurisdictions that have self-identified as so-called sanctuary cities.

There is a growing bipartisan chorus that is begging—begging—President Biden to do his job and secure our Nation. It doesn't take new laws. It doesn't take some new, grand bargain or amnesty. The administration just needs to do its job: Secure the border, and let law enforcement enforce our laws. The Biden administration has all the tools and authorities it needs to tackle this crisis—if a solution were actually what they were after.

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, it has been a full year since Putin escalated Russia's brutal war against Ukraine and nearly 9 years since he began his military effort to take over the sovereign country in early 2014. Putin's nonmilitary efforts to meddle in Ukraine, undermine it, and control its population long predated even 2014. It has been 15 years since Putin invaded Georgia. A few years before that, he said publicly the breakup of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century."

The former KGB agent who has run the Kremlin for two decades has been very, very consistent: repression at home, aggression abroad, assassinations, invasions, poisonings, and political interference. And whenever the rest of the world responded with accommodation rather than with resolve, Putin drew the natural conclusion that he could do whatever he wanted.

But for the past 11 months, the brave men and women in Ukraine have defied the odds. They have endured tremendous hardship and stood their ground. They have fought bravely for their families, their freedom, and their country.

At every step of the way, investments from the United States and our allies have equipped the Ukrainian people to exact a heavy price from the Russian invaders. Western assistance has played a key role, but it has come too slowly and haltingly.

Despite my urging the Biden administration to act sooner, aid did not come early enough to help Ukraine deter Putin's escalation before it actually happened, nor to slow down Russia's brutal and rapid advance in the east and the south. It has not come quickly enough to help Ukraine sustain counteroffensives or fully defend its cities against missile and drone attacks.

The United States and our friends and our partners have done enough to prevent Ukraine from losing—from losing—but we have not yet done enough to help Ukraine actually win.

A protracted stalemate is neither in Ukraine's interest nor ours. The solution that is both the most humane and the most advantageous to America's interests is quite simple: Help Ukraine win this war.

We know what it will take to make this possible. As our colleague Senator WICKER said, "We can shift this war immediately in Ukraine's favor by providing a range of advanced weapons, including tanks, drones, and tactical missiles." And as Chairman MCCAUL from the House said this past weekend, it is not the United States that will be provocative if we send stronger assistance.

Mr. Putin is the provocative one. . . . He invaded a sovereign territory, aggressively [and] unprovoked.

Yet some of freedom's most powerful friends remain hesitant. For many months, Germany has not only resisted calls to send Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine but has actually also prevented other European nations from transferring their own German-produced Leopards to Ukraine. Time is short, and while Berlin agonizes over its own decision whether to provide Leopards to Ukraine, it should proactively and explicitly make clear that other allies are free to do so.

What about the Biden administration here at home? The administration's latest deliveries failed to include—failed to include—the longer range mis-

siles and more sophisticated munitions that Ukraine has been requesting literally for months—for months.

Ukraine's brave resistance deserves our continued praise, but more importantly, it needs our concrete and consistent materiel support. Ukraine's strengths cannot keep self-detering ourselves and letting the aggressors, the invaders, dictate the pace. So it is time—past time—for the Biden administration and our allies to get serious about helping Ukraine finish the job and retake their country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on Friday, as they have done for decades, Americans from around the country—many of them young people—took to the streets of Washington, DC, to march for life. This year, of course, was a little different because for the first time since the march began nearly 50 years ago, pro-lifers marched in a post-Roe America.

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and recognized that the Constitution does not contain a right to abortion, that our founding document does not confer a right to deprive one group of citizens of their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness simply because they are small and defenseless. The Supreme Court's decision marked the righting of a constitutional wrong, and it opened up the chance to right a great moral wrong: the legalized killing of unborn Americans.

The Dobbs decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* does not, of course, make abortion illegal, but it does allow State governments and the Federal Government to finally begin to establish meaningful protections for unborn children.

The Dobbs decision marked a major victory for the pro-life movement and for the babies whose lives are in jeopardy from abortion, but the Dobbs decision does not mark an end to the pro-life movement or the March for Life but a new beginning.

The legal fight turns from the courts to Congress and State legislatures—in other words, to the democratic process, where this issue belongs and has always belonged—and the work to change hearts and minds to support moms and babies continues.

The Dobbs decision may have opened the door to meaningful legal protections for unborn Americans, but abortion extremists, who unfortunately count the majority of the Democratic Party among their ranks, are doing everything they can to stand in the way

of these protections. To give just one example of how far the abortion-on-demand caucus has taken things, 2 weeks ago, the House of Representatives took up legislation to ensure that babies who survive abortions and are born alive are guaranteed medical care. Almost every single Democrat in the House of Representatives voted against the legislation. That is 210 men and women who apparently think that living babies who have already been born—already been born—can legitimately be left to die or, I suppose, be killed outright by the abortionist. That is a horrifying position.

There is much work to be done to get to a day when a country that is supposed to be dedicated to the protection of life and liberty actually guarantees the right to life of all Americans, including the most vulnerable and most innocent Americans—our unborn children.

So the March for Life today is more important than ever. The march, of course, is just one small facet of the pro-life movement, which works every day in every State around the country to help provide help and hope to moms in need, but it is nevertheless a vitally important facet because the March for Life provides a public witness to the humanity of the unborn child and to the great injustice that is happening behind closed doors. Abortion happens away from public view, so it can be all too easy to forget that every year in this country, hundreds of thousands of babies are being killed by abortion.

The Guttmacher Institute, a pro-abortion research organization, reported that there were more than 900,000 abortions in 2020—900,000. To put that number in perspective, 900,000 is roughly equivalent to the entire population of the State of South Dakota—the entire population of South Dakota. That is a lot of lives lost, a lot of love lost. Our society is a poorer place without those babies, and the March for Life reminds us of that. It reminds us that every day, thousands of babies lose their lives to abortion. It reminds us of our responsibility to confront this injustice and to work for a day when every child enjoys the right to life and the full protection of the laws.

I am profoundly grateful for all those who spent last Friday marching for life, and for all the men and women and young people in the pro-life movement who work every day around this country to help mothers and their babies and secure legal protections for unborn Americans. I know there are many days when it feels like an uphill battle, but you are all on the right side of history. And I am confident that in the end, life will prevail.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says: See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in Heaven always see the face of my Father.

And, again:

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

There is no greater work than standing up for these defenseless little ones. I pray that God will bless the efforts of all those marching for life and one day soon, every child, born and unborn, will enjoy the full protection of our laws.

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

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

The Senator from Texas.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we have seen this movie before. The Senate finds itself in familiar territory. The United States narrowly avoided hitting the debt ceiling over a year ago, but now we are staring down the barrel of another debt crisis.

The United States hit the debt limit last Thursday, according to the Secretary of Treasury, and now the Treasury is using what they refer to, euphemistically, as “extraordinary measures” in order to prevent the government from defaulting on its debts. Unless the Congress takes action in the coming months, the American economy will be confronted with an unprecedented crisis.

But here is what I find strange: Despite the fact that we are hurtling toward this disaster, the White House seems completely disinterested in finding a solution. President Biden has drawn a redline. He said: We are not going to negotiate on the debt ceiling. In other words, he expects Congress to raise the debt ceiling with no conditions attached and let this reckless runaway spending and outrageous debt continue to rise.

Now, I don't want to disparage drunken sailors, but it seems to me that that is the model for how the White House is responding.

It is as if you or I were spending beyond our means on our credit card, and then the issuer of the credit card said: You know, you are going to have to pay the money back at some point.

And you say: To heck with that. I want you to raise my credit limit even higher, without any demonstrated means or plan to actually pay the money back.

We know what would happen for you and me is the issuer of the credit card would cancel our credit card, as well it should, if we responded the way that the White House is responding.

So apparently what the administration plans to continue to do is continue this spending bender. It can't cover the current bills—now it is roughly \$30 trillion—and it expects somebody, anybody, maybe nobody, to pay the money back and to deal with this ever-growing national debt.

We know this is an even bigger problem in inflationary times because the more money the Federal Government continues to spend, it is like throwing gasoline on inflation, and consumers have already experienced sky-high prices—some of the highest prices in 40 years—on everything from gasoline to food, to housing, and to the essentials of life.

So why in the world does it make sense for the administration to say: We are not even going to talk; we are not even going to negotiate with the House when it comes to the debt ceiling. We are just going to keep spending as much money as we can, racking up more and more debt.

I know that President Biden has children and grandchildren. Is he concerned for their welfare?

We are writing checks that we are not going to have to pay back, Mr. President. You and I are at the age where this bird is not going to come home to roost in our lifetime, but it will in the lifetimes of our children and grandchildren, including those of President Biden.

So how responsible—or I should say how irresponsible—is it for the President to say: We are just going to keep on keeping on, and we are not even going to talk about what we need to do to deal with this mounting debt. We are not even going to entertain any reasonable ideas or suggestions about how we dig our way out of this hole.

Well, the American people witnessed our Democratic colleagues' wasteful spending over the last 2 years and chose a new direction in the midterm elections that gave Republicans the House after 2 years in which our Democratic colleagues spent \$1.9 trillion on the so-called American Rescue Plan and then another 700-or-so billion dollars on the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, which, by the way, doesn't reduce inflation, but that is what it is called.

In response, the voters gave Republicans the majority in the House. I can only imagine that part of that was a response to what they saw as a reckless spending binge that was going to continue without end if they maintained Democratic control of both Houses and the White House.

So the new reality of divided government means there is only one path we can take to avoiding a debt bomb: Republicans and Democrats have to reach a compromise.

I know the Presiding Officer believes that part of our responsibility is to negotiate and try to come up with common ground where we can and not simply to give the Heisman to one another and say we are not even going to talk.

I don't know why we are here as Members of Congress or why you would want to be President of the United States when you would see such a big problem growing bigger by the day and say: Forget it. I am not talking. I am not going to try to solve the problem. That is somebody else's issue; that is not ours.

I don't believe that is a responsible reaction, and I don't think most Members of Congress think it is a responsible reaction, but that is where we are today, but it needs to change.

As we know, the reality of Republican control of the House means that the negotiation on the debt ceiling—and there has to be a negotiation—in reality, has to be between the House and the White House. Nothing we do here that would get 60 votes would pass the House, I believe. I think that is pretty clear.

But in order to avoid a catastrophe, a bill not only has to pass the House, it needs to get 60 votes in the Senate and the President's signature. Those are the facts.

Now, drawing unreasonable lines in the sand and issuing ultimatums do nothing to solve the problem. Instead of doling out marching orders, the President needs to do his job and listen to what is being proposed and to negotiate a solution.

Nobody I know of thinks that breaching the debt ceiling is an acceptable outcome. If that is true, and I believe it is true, then there is only one alternative: try to work together to come up with some negotiated outcome that avoids breaching the debt ceiling but at the same time provides some answer to those people concerned—and I am one of them—about the ever-increasing debt and what high interest rates that are used to combat inflation are going to mean in terms of how much money we are going to have to pay to service that debt and where that will come—out of things like defense spending or other priorities.

President Biden served as a Member of the Senate for many, many years, and he ran on the promise of continuing his same approach as a dealmaker as President of the United States. In fact, he pointed to his record in the Senate and as Vice President as proof of his ability to reach across the aisle and to strike a compromise.

Now, I know in some quarters "compromise" is a dirty word these days, but there is no other way for us to function here because none of us is a dictator, none of us can say: This is the way it is and actually be able to accomplish what they seek.

Instead, the President does have some record—a good record, in one instance—of doing exactly what he refuses to do today.

As Vice President, Joe Biden helped negotiate the 2011 Budget Control Act, which was the last substantial and meaningful attempt to rein in wasteful Washington spending.

At that point, our economy was still recovering from a recession caused by the financial crisis in 2008. Federal spending soared, revenues plummeted, and it was clear that something—something—had to be done to stave off an even bigger economic crisis.

President Obama was in the White House, and Congress was divided; Democrats controlled the Senate, Re-

publicans controlled the House in 2011. And as it turns out, then-Vice President Biden was a key negotiator. He helped broker the agreement, working principally with then-Senator McCONNELL, the Republican leader, to come up with a bill that passed with strong bipartisan support.

So here we are, a dozen years later, and we find ourselves in a similar condition, without the solution.

Our economy is recovering from an unprecedented pandemic. Federal spending has soared. A large part of that was roughly \$5 trillion that Democrats and Republicans spent together because we saw no alternative but to try to respond to the COVID crisis in a way that addressed public health needs—like coming up with a vaccine—and helped sustain our economy during this crisis.

But then the wheels came off the bipartisanship over the last 2 years, as I mentioned, with the ARP and the IRA, to use a couple of acronyms.

But the American people have nowhere else to turn but here for to us address this problem.

Now, I think it is easy to engage in the blame game, and we do it here all the time. In fact, here in Washington, DC, it is a world-class sport, but at some point you have got to quit pointing the finger and you have got to try to step up and roll up your sleeves and try to solve the immediate problem.

I am not suggesting we can solve all of our problems or even do it permanently, but we can address this current crisis by doing what we are paid to do, what we are elected to do, what we took an oath to do, which is to represent our constituents to the best of our ability.

So this is the time for President Biden to step up. He is President of the United States, and he has done it before when he was Vice President in 2011.

All it would take to start this process is to invite the House, the Senate: Come. Sit around the table to discuss the problem and to try to listen to what potential solutions there might be, just as he promised to do on the campaign trail.

So it is time for him to do what he promised to do all along and lead. Presidents can't be a spectator. They can't sit on the sidelines. Nobody in America expects a President of the United States to do that. And the fact is, the President is not just a leader of the Democratic Party. He is the elected leader of the United States of America—all 330-plus million of us.

So taking a partisan position, knowing the challenges that the House is going to have dealing with a debt ceiling, and just sort of enjoying watching them struggle to deal with this is not an act of courage. It is not an act of leadership. We expect our Presidents to make tough decisions, just as we ourselves are expected to make tough decisions and to try to come up with solutions.

I can't imagine any responsible person in the country, much less in Congress, who would take the position that a clean debt ceiling increase is the way to go. I mentioned that a moment ago.

Who is going to pay the 30 trillion back we already owe? Is the idea that we can just continue to heap debt upon debt upon debt? Does anybody think that is a good idea? How, if we have another fiscal crisis like we had in 2008, would we be able to respond? How, if we had another pandemic, would we be able to respond with this debt handcuffing Congress when we need maximum flexibility to be able to respond?

And I mentioned the interest rates that are higher than they have been in a long time, which continue to eat up more and more tax revenue just to service that debt to pay their bondholders on their investment.

So this is not just a problem that can be punted. This does not call for partisan responses. This calls for statesmanship. It calls for leadership.

And as part of this, we have to look at what got us in this condition in the first place. Why it is that we need to raise the debt ceiling.

We know that America's debt crisis didn't appear overnight. It has been building for decades. And lest anybody believe that I am suggesting that this is strictly a Democratic problem, it has really been something that both political parties have contributed to over time. Somehow, we became anaesthetized or desensitized to the fact that we continue to spend borrowed money. It is true that we point to the various crises we have had, and we say, "Well, we really didn't have any other choice." But now we do have a choice. We can respond to this responsibly and do our jobs.

Well, we need to get out-of-control spending habits in check. No household, no city council, no county government, no State government could possibly do what the Federal Government is doing. They have to live with a balanced budget. They have to live within their means. I am not suggesting it is going to be easy—because it is not—but it is not optional.

One of the most important things we can do as part of this response is to return to a regular appropriations process in funding the government each year. The idea that we can do this through an omnibus appropriations process, like we were forced to do last year in backing it up to December 23rd, right before Christmas, and threatening a shutdown, is not the right way to do business.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have 12 separate bills to fund each of the different components of the Federal Government. These bills are supposed to pass both Chambers and be signed into law before the end of the fiscal year, which is September 30. That didn't happen in 2022 or 2021. The Democratic-led Senate did not pass a single appropriations bill,

and I understand why. The majority leader Senator SCHUMER and Speaker PELOSI realized that delaying the appropriations process and not going through this regular order gave them immense power because they could decide what went into that omnibus bill. They could say yes to some and no to others, and they knew that the only alternative would be a government shut-down and that rank-and-file Members of the Senate and the House would be left with no other choice than to vote yes or no.

Congress cannot continue to operate like this. We have to swear off this newfound habit of continuing resolutions and last-minute omnibuses and return to a regular, on-time appropriations process. It is more transparent. It allows every Member of the Congress to participate, to offer amendments, to debate, and to vote—something denied to rank-and-file Members of Congress when you do this through an omnibus bill at the end of the year. But we shouldn't stop there. We need to look at broader reforms to the government's spending habits. The good news is that there are a number of ideas that have been proposed.

Last Congress, Senator ROMNEY, the Senator from Utah, introduced something he calls the TRUST Act, which creates a process to save Social Security and protect this critical lifeline for Americans. Social Security, you might recall, is going to become insolvent in the coming years. This is a responsible way to save Social Security and to address what is, roughly, a part of the two-thirds of the Federal spending. In other words, about a third of it is discretionary spending we appropriate, and the other two-thirds is mandatory, or automatic, spending. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation, and would encourage the President and our Democratic colleagues to consider it as part of the debt ceiling discussion.

I am also a supporter of a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. As I said, Republicans and Democrats are responsible for where we are today, but it would finally make clear that we have to live under the same sort of spending limits that every family in America has to live under and that every local and State government has to live with—a balanced budget. Now, that is common sense. Families and businesses across the country have no choice but to operate within a balanced budget.

My State of Texas has a balanced budget requirement, and lo and behold, it just started the current legislative session with a \$33 billion surplus. We are looking at a \$30 trillion debt. My State has a \$33 billion surplus in part, I believe, because it is required by law to balance its budget each year.

I have introduced, cosponsored, and voted for balanced budget amendments in the past, and I plan on doing so again this year. That should be part of the conversation.

There is a wide range of ideas from our colleagues that would help the Federal Government get its financial house in order, and I would hope that the President would take these ideas and his responsibility seriously. No matter how inconvenient this may be for President Biden, we are operating under a divided government. The “drunken sailor” approach may have worked when the Democrats controlled both Houses of Congress, but it won't succeed now. It is time for the administration to sober up and get serious about bipartisan solutions. It is the only path out of this mess.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask for permission to complete my remarks before the recess.

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

ABORTION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 50 years ago this last Sunday, the Supreme Court ruled that reproductive healthcare in America is a constitutionally protected right and that Americans have the freedom to make the most personal decision imaginable: when—and whether—to start a family. The case was called *Roe v. Wade*.

For those who were alive when it was decided, we remember what it meant for millions of Americans: the freedom to make their own reproductive health decisions. Remember, at the time *Roe* was decided in 1973, our Nation had a long, long way to go in living up to the promise of equal justice under the law. As just one example, women were often required, at that time in history, to ask their husbands for permission to apply for credit cards. In many banks, widowers and divorced women had to bring along a man who would cosign for a credit card. Can you imagine that?

Fifty years later, we still have a long way to go, of course, but *Roe* was a breakthrough. It was a vision of an America that could be looking to the future of opportunity.

Well, today, sadly, marks a very different anniversary. You see, it was 7 months ago today when six rightwing, judicial activists on the Supreme Court sent us back in time. Of course, I am referring to the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*—the crowning achievement of the Republican-led, decades-long campaign to overturn *Roe* and abolish reproductive rights in America.

The *Dobbs* ruling is one of the most irresponsible and dangerous decisions

ever handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court. It ripped away a constitutional right from individuals, handing it over to politicians in suits.

With the *Dobbs* decision, the ultra-conservative majority not only overturned a nearly 50-year-old precedent that had been reaffirmed many, many times, they twisted the facts to reach the outcome they wanted.

What do I mean by that? Well, in his majority opinion, Justice Alito claimed that abortion cannot be constitutionally protected because it is not “deeply rooted in the Nation's history and tradition.” He is wrong because whatever you think about abortion, it has deep roots in our country. As the dissenting Justices in *Dobbs* wrote, “embarrassingly for the majority—early law in fact does provide some support for abortion rights.”

The dissent noted that common law authorities did not treat abortion as a crime before the point of fetal movement in the womb—also known as quickening. And as Justice Alito himself conceded, historians dispute whether prequickening abortions were punished before the 19th century.

So there is no credibility to Justice Alito's argument for overturning *Roe*. It wasn't originalism by any stretch. It wasn't textualism. It was an ideologically motivated outcome based on historical cherry-picking.

Someone asked the question the other day: After this decision, should the Justices be asked to wear red and blue robes instead of black robes?

Over the past 7 months, Republican lawmakers picked up right where the Thomas-Alito Court left off. In State after State, they have ripped away reproductive rights from millions of Americans.

Overturning *Roe v. Wade* has unleashed a healthcare crisis in our country. In just 7 months, 24 States have banned or severely restricted access to abortion or are preparing to do so. Many of these bans provide no exceptions, even for rape and incest victims, and many are insufficient in protecting the health and lives of mothers. And all of these bans have added layers and layers of government bureaucracy for women seeking emergency care.

If these Republican lawmakers have actually listened to all of the medical professionals who sounded the alarm on overturning *Roe*, if these lawmakers had actually listened to all of the Americans who took to the streets in protest or the millions of voters who rejected their radical agenda, then maybe you would understand the simple, indisputable truth: You cannot ban abortion out of existence.

The only thing these laws have changed, if anything, is pushing women into dangerous and deadly situations. We have already seen the barbaric consequences in these Republican abortion bans. And they haven't just endangered the lives of women living in red States; they have put every woman in danger.

Christina Zielke is one of those women. She recently shared her story

on NPR. This past July, Christina and her husband were overjoyed when they discovered she was pregnant. It was their first pregnancy. But that joy turned to sorrow after the first ultrasound. The doctors couldn't detect a heartbeat, and they concluded it was a miscarriage.

When Christina asked the doctor, "What do I do next," the doctor recommended giving her body time to pass the pregnancy tissue—a process that can take days or even weeks. So Christina and her husband decided to wait and move on with their lives.

Soon after that appointment, the two of them drove from their home in Washington, DC, to Ohio to attend a family wedding. But during the drive, Christina started bleeding. She assumed her body had finally passed the pregnancy tissue. But later, in the middle of the night, she started bleeding again. It was serious.

It was at that time that Christina and her husband, at the advice of a nurse, went to an emergency room in Painesville, OH. Now, remember, Christina's doctor had already told her that her pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. But when she arrived at that Ohio hospital, the medical staff refused to provide her any care because they were afraid of violating Ohio's new abortion ban.

So while Christina was still in danger, still bleeding, and carrying a fetus with no heartbeat, the hospital discharged her and refused to treat her. She objected, even showing them her records confirming the miscarriage. She was ignored and sent home.

Hours later, she returned to that same ER. By that point, she had lost so much blood she had lost consciousness. The paramedics had to use a sheet to pull her limp body out of a bathtub and onto a stretcher. Christina's family thought she was going to die. And let's be blunt: The only reason her life was in peril was because of Ohio's State law banning abortion.

This is America's post-Roe reality: women denied urgent care because doctors and nurses are afraid of breaking State laws. Ohio's abortion ban subjects healthcare providers who violate it to felony charges, up to a year in prison, loss of medical licenses, and fines up to \$20,000. The law is so unclear in Ohio that even medical professionals struggle to navigate its narrow exceptions.

When you hear stories like that by Christina, imagine if it was a member of your family—your wife, the mother of your children, people who want to live desperately and simply need the healthcare to make it happen—it is really no surprise that Americans are fleeing red States to access essential healthcare in blue States.

My State of Illinois, for instance, has become a leader on reproductive freedom—a so-called oasis. Every single State that we border has either restricted abortion or abandoned it outright. For women living in the Mid-

west, our reproductive health facilities are indispensable. Look at the numbers. Before Roe was overturned, only 6 percent of women seeking abortions at Illinois Planned Parenthood facilities traveled from out of State—6 percent. Since the Dobbs decision, that number has jumped to 30 percent.

And I want to commend our State's leadership because they stepped in to provide care for women who have been betrayed by their own States. Earlier this month, Governor Pritzker signed a bill into law protecting women traveling to Illinois for reproductive care. Sadly, these efforts to protect reproductive freedom have also made Illinois providers a target. Just 2 days ago, after Governor Pritzker signed a bill into law, someone firebombed a Planned Parenthood clinic in Peoria—a clinic that doesn't even perform surgical abortions.

In post-Roe America, the mere act of seeking reproductive advice and care—even for a procedure as simple as a Pap smear—has taken on new risks. Lawmakers on both sides need to condemn this and any form of politically motivated violence against any person or entity.

If there is any doubt that the Dobbs decision has unleashed chaos, consider the impact on maternal health outcomes. Even before Roe was overturned, our Nation had the highest maternal mortality rate in the developed world—America, the highest maternal mortality rate in the developed world. And as of 2020, those death rates are more than 60 percent higher in States with abortion restrictions.

This is not a problem without a solution: Studies show that more than four in five pregnancy-related deaths are preventable. These mothers can be saved. And one way to prevent them is by expanding access to postpartum health coverage. That is why I have worked with Illinois Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY to pass a law that gives States the option to expand health coverage under Medicaid from 60 days postpartum to a full year. We led this effort because in our State, one-third of pregnancy-related deaths happen after 60 days postpartum.

So for States that have now outlawed abortion, you would imagine the first thing they would do is to take advantage of this new benefit and expand health coverage for its expecting mothers on Medicaid. That sounds like a no-brainer, right? Apparently not. Today, there are 15 States that have not extended Medicaid postpartum coverage, and 12 of these States have also passed laws restricting abortion. If they are truly dedicated to the new mother and her baby, why wouldn't they give them healthcare coverage for a full year after the baby is born to save their lives and the babies' lives?

So if you are a woman living in a State like Idaho or South Dakota, you can be forced to carry a pregnancy to term, but once you have had your baby, those States—Idaho and South Da-

kota—refuse to cover your healthcare during the most critical, dangerous postpartum period.

Let's get real. There is no world in which this position can be described as "pro-life."

We in the Senate can make a difference for all the women in America who have been abandoned by their States, and we can do it by restoring and codifying the right to reproductive freedom by passing pro-family policies, like the MOMMA's Act, which mandates Medicaid expansion and postpartum coverage.

Unfortunately, it seems the new MAGA majority in the House has other plans in mind. Just this past week, Majority Leader STEVE SCALISE pledged to a group of anti-choice activists that the overturning of Roe was "only the first phase of this battle." Those are his words. His Republican colleagues have already made good on it. Less than 1 month into the new Congress, House Republicans have introduced a dozen anti-abortion bills.

Here is my promise: Every one of those bills is destined to fail if it comes to the Senate. They are going nowhere because this majority and President Biden understand that all Americans deserve reproductive rights. And until we have a Congress and Supreme Court willing to protect those rights, we need to do everything in our power to stand against this extremist, anti-choice agenda.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:47 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

(The remarks of Mr. BARRASSO pertaining to the introduction of S. 31 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. CARDIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 53 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CARDIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Mississippi.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, this past Friday, tens of thousands of pro-life Americans came to Washington, DC, to march for the 50th consecutive year to be a voice for the voiceless. They marched because the pro-life movement did not end with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* last summer. They marched because the end of *Roe v. Wade* represents a new beginning.

Thanks to the Supreme Court's decision in Mississippi's *Dobbs* case, for the first time in 50 years, the fate of the lives of millions of unborn children now rests not in the hands of unelected Federal judges but in the American people and their elected representatives.

I am grateful for the more than a dozen States that have answered the call, including my State of Mississippi, where babies in the womb are now legally protected even at their earliest and most vulnerable stages. But the fight for life also continues here in our Nation's Capital and here in the U.S. Senate. That is why it makes sense that, this year, the March for Life's route ended not at the U.S. Supreme Court, as in years past, but here in Congress.

As the chairman of the Senate Pro-Life Caucus, I am committed to fight for compassionate legislation to protect unborn children and their mothers. We will be a firewall against the radical abortion agenda of Senate Democrats and hold the Biden administration accountable for its reckless and illegal pro-abortion policies.

The contrast could not be clearer. Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation that would guarantee the same basic medical care to babies who are born alive after an attempted abortion as would be given to any other baby born in any other circumstance. I am appalled that 210 House Democrats voted against this humane legislation. Apparently, even infanticide is no longer a bridge too far.

In addition, this month, the Biden administration's FDA rubberstamped the reckless distribution of chemical abortion drugs by mail and telemedicine, as well as retail pharmacies, without ever seeing a doctor in person. This decision turns retail pharmacies and post offices into abortion clinics.

The FDA's action provides no safeguards to screen by ultrasound for dangerous ectopic pregnancies and abandons pregnant women to suffering life-threatening complications alone. These can include severe bleeding, infection, potential surgical intervention, and even death.

The FDA's promotion of dangerous do-it-yourself abortions is not only unsafe, it is illegal. Specifically, the decision violates longstanding Federal criminal laws that clearly prohibit the mailing of abortion drugs. This decision puts the profits and political agenda of the abortion industry over the science and clear evidence that abortion drugs present grave dangers to pregnant mothers and certainly their unborn babies.

Later this week, I will introduce the SAVE Moms and Babies Act to reverse the FDA's reckless and illegal action and, at minimum, restore the basic health and safety requirement for these dangerous abortion drugs, which should never have been approved.

The issue of abortion gets to the heart about what it means to be human. Who counts as one of us? Why can brutally killing a baby before birth be justified simply because the baby is inconvenient, imperfect, unwanted, unplanned, or dependent on her mother?

Rather than answer these questions about the humanity of the child in the womb—the child sucking her thumb, the child whose heart is beating, and the child whose sonogram pictures are cherished as proof of life—the abortion industry wants you to look away from the baby.

Over the past year, we have witnessed millions of dollars of political advertisement spent to promote lies and fearmongering about the pro-life movement and pro-life laws and that try to pit unborn children against their own mothers.

As a mother, a woman, and a Senator, I know we must refute these lies, because each unborn child is not a threat but a blessing, a unique and unrepeatable individual created in the image of God.

In addition, the pro-life movement cares for both pregnant moms and their unborn babies. More than 2,700 pregnancy centers across the country provide critical medical and material support for women and families facing unplanned pregnancies. Several of my colleagues have already introduced commonsense measures to support pregnant moms and families, including through pregnancy centers.

As we move on from this year's March for Life and into a post-*Roe* era, we will never rest and we will never stop fighting until every unborn child is protected under our laws from the lethal violence of abortion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we are in a historic season as a country. We are pausing to ask ourselves a question that quite frankly we have not really asked ourselves in a long time: When does life begin?

It is not just philosophical. It is not just theological. It is not just sci-

entific. It is personal, as each person has to come to a decision: When does life begin?

And when the Supreme Court made the *Dobbs* decision last summer, that actually put America back in the position that it had been in historically. Our Nation is 234 years old, and for 185 of those years, each State passed State laws to be able to determine the decision about this issue of when does life begin.

So the *Dobbs* decision was not a radical decision. It is the typical decision for Americans, quite frankly, for 185 of our 234 years. But it doesn't settle the issue of abortion. Abortion is still legal in America. As much as there is all the noise around the country right now that abortion has somehow gone away, it certainly has not. Abortion is still all over the country.

But it has pushed Americans, and it has pushed Americans specifically on this one issue: When does life begin?

Quite frankly, I have had fascinating conversations with people over the past 8 months that they had never actually contemplated this issue, that they had never stopped to be able to think about it. They just said: Abortion is legal. Abortion is legal. It is just a woman's choice, a woman's choice, a woman's choice, and I don't want to think about it.

But when the decision came down, a lot of people had to stop and say: When does life begin? Is it at birth? Is it after birth? Is it 10 minutes before birth? Is it a month before birth? Is it 2 months before birth?

Quite frankly, I have had this conversation with a lot of folks, and some folks have told me: Well, it is at viability.

And I say: OK. Define viability for me, because viability in 1973, when the Court was struggling with *Roe v. Wade*, was very different than viability now. Medical science has advanced tremendously. So is viability 26 weeks or is it at 21 weeks of gestation? And if it is at 21 weeks, what is the difference between 20 weeks and 19 weeks? What is the difference between 18 weeks?

I look at these two pictures right here of this child—this one is out of the womb, and this one is 5 months earlier—and I ask the simple question: What is the difference between these two pictures of this child?

The only difference between that sonogram picture in the womb and that child outside of the womb is time. That is it.

The same DNA is in this child as in this child—the same parents, the same development. Everything is the same. The only difference is time.

I am 5 months older than I was 5 months ago because I have aged 5 months. So did that child from that moment.

So my question is very simple: When is a child a child? When does life begin? Is this one not alive and this one is alive simply because he is 5 months older? When is a child a child?

For 50 years, there have been a group of folks—this year there were tens of thousands—who gather out on the Mall just to be able to celebrate every single child. They have done it now for five decades, since the *Roe v. Wade* decision came down. They have gathered on the Mall, and they just said: We believe every child is valuable—every child. There aren't some children who are disposable and some children who are valuable. We think every child is valuable.

Now, that is not a radical concept. I have folks who yell and scream at me, quite frankly, and say: A woman has the right to be able to choose.

And I ask just the very simple question of them, in great respect: Has the right to choose to be able to take the life of a child at what age?

Because that child is valuable and so is that child, because it is the same child, just at a different age.

I celebrate the folks who have for five decades gathered on The Mall and have marched for life and have said: We will not forget the value of every single child, because tens of millions of children have died in this country in the last 50 years after the *Roe v. Wade* decision.

While abortion is still available in America, everyone is having to pause and ask a simple question: What do I believe about life? Not what is convenient; what do I believe about life?

I have been very outspoken on this floor about my frustration with the Biden administration. I have not held back on this because they are the most pro-abortion Presidency in American history. They actively work on increasing the number of abortions in America, and I find that not only appalling, I find that painful, that we as a nation have a policy of finding ways to increase the death of children. That is not who we should be as a nation. We should be working to be able to protect the life of every single child.

The most basic science that anyone will work through is, if you look at this child in the womb, there is no difference in this child and this child outside the womb. That is the most basic of science.

If you want to look at science, look at science, but then ask yourself the personal question as well: When does life begin?

The argument about abortion—it is not just a legal argument. Everyone wants to take it to a legal issue, quite frankly, because this body is a legal body, but the issue of abortion is not just a legal issue, and it is not just about making abortion illegal in the country. I would tell you, I am working to make abortion unthinkable in this country because we look past the convenience and look at this child's face and say: Why does that child not deserve life like every one of us? Because at its most basic level, there is no difference between any one of us in this room and when we were at this stage right here in our mother's womb except for time.

So I ask this body a simple question: When does life begin, and are some children really disposable and some children are valuable? That is the question each of us needs to decide, and I am proud to stand with those who have marched for 50 years to say children are valuable, all of them—all of them. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The Senator from Kansas.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, last Friday, during the annual March for Life, it was once again encouraging to see tens of thousands of young Americans travel to the National Mall to show their support for the most important human rights issue of our time: the right to life.

This year, we celebrate the 50th year that the March for Life has taken place, marking a significant, multigenerational milestone for this celebration of the sanctity of life. The fact that this event is now in its 50th year is a testament to the truth and justice of our mission.

I thank and congratulate everyone who kept this movement alive for the past five decades, and I especially want to thank all the brave pro-life Americans who made their voices heard as part of the March for Life.

For half a century now, Americans have brought their voices to Washington to halt the mass elective abortions of perhaps a million unborn American lives every year in our Nation.

Abortion is not a political issue to me; it is a human rights issue. And this is not a political battle we fight but, rather, the tip of the spear in a spiritual battle for the heart and soul of this Nation.

This year's momentous March for Life truly was a celebration, as our Nation's Supreme Court has finally freed us from the undemocratic, pro-abortion decision forced on the American people in 1973. My prayer is that our God will heal the emotional and physical wounds that were ripped open across this Nation by this ruling.

As we celebrate this victory for life, all of us should pause and thank God for giving us a majority of Supreme Court Justices who had the courage to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. This Supreme Court, by an overwhelming 6-to-3 ruling, defied the left's mob-style intimidation tactics, and in too many extreme cases, they overcame even the vile threats on their lives as well as on their families' safety and privacy.

The Court's majority stuck to constitutional principles and cast aside the pro-abortion status quo even in the face of threats by the current Senate majority party and its current majority leader. The way our Justices stood up to the opposition represents true leadership and the very best of America.

Let us commend our Republican Senate leader and the Senators who fought

for the lives of the unborn, who, when we had control of the White House and the Senate, had the courage, the fortitude, the willpower, and the know-how to shepherd three principled Justices through the confirmation process and ascend to the highest Court in the land.

This tremendous lifegiving decision also would not have happened without Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch and her team, who championed their State's pro-life law. They forever etched their place in history.

The rights and lives of millions of American human beings are now protected as a result of the Dobbs decision.

As an obstetrician, I had the honor and privilege to deliver over 5,000 babies, and I want all those who stood tall in the March for Life last Friday to know that, just like I fought for those babies in the delivery room, I am going to continue the fight beside you to protect the sanctity of life and to show our Nation that Congress values these precious lives as well.

At the Federal level, we, of course, have much more work to do on this issue. We must continue to ensure taxpayer dollars do not fund abortions so millions of Americans are not forced to violate our own beliefs.

We must combat this administration's effort to remove conscience protections for medical professionals—doctors, nurses, ultrasound techs, and so many others—who object to participating in abortion.

Perhaps most urgently, we must reimplement safety restrictions on the abortion pill. This unprecedented mass distribution of this pill by mail and over the counter that this administration is pushing will lead to thousands of women using it incorrectly, causing medical emergencies, possibly deaths and fetal malformations. If you don't believe this can happen, I just encourage you to spend some time in our emergency rooms, where I and many other doctors treat numerous women suffering complications from the abortion pill. Most of these patients are completely unaware of the potential side effects. Many are misdiagnosed or perhaps victims of just a horrible guess at the gestational age of the unborn baby.

But I think it is also important that we as a party and Congress also work to further support legislation to provide resources to moms and babies in need. This help would include more access to long-term nutritional, educational, economic, and social support, as well as healthcare. We must find more compassionate and effective ways to better encourage pregnant women who are contemplating abortion to choose life instead. We need to open the doors to pregnancy crisis centers for assistance throughout and, very importantly, after the pregnancy. Despite violent attacks, acts of vandalism, and harmful misinformation directed at these centers, they continue to provide

critically needed services to women all across this country.

I am also committed to dispelling the left's malicious lies about ectopic pregnancies in the aftermath of the Dobbs decision. As someone who understands the science and practiced obstetrics for over 25 years and, frankly, treated hundreds of women with ectopic pregnancies, I want to state that I agree with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. We always have and always will support the treatment of women suffering from the always-life-threatening condition of an ectopic pregnancy. The radical activists, who wildly claim ectopic pregnancies will be left untreated because of this Court decision, are simply misinformed and dangerously practice fearmongering tactics. For a physician to not treat ectopic pregnancies would be, No. 1, unethical, as well as, No. 2, below the standard of care for every community in America.

Let me close by saying once again, thanks to all of you, the tens of thousands of Americans who participated in the 50th March for Life, for courageously and tirelessly fighting for life. Each and every one of you is my encouragement. You give me the strength and hope to wake up every day and join my fellow pro-life Senators and millions of pro-life Americans to fight to protect the sanctity of life. Your being here, praying together, marching side by side, arm to arm, you strengthen my resolve, and you can count on me to tirelessly fight to defend and secure the right to life for all human beings.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in a discussion about the right to life and what happened last week in Washington, DC, when tens of thousands of Americans of all ages, races, and religious backgrounds traveled to our Nation's Capitol to march for life.

This March for Life was particularly special since it was the first March for Life after the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision, which made this march a special celebration recognizing the unborn lives saved as a result of that decision.

I was proud to see many North Carolinians represent our State in the march by participating and fighting for the young babies who do not have a voice. But for the voices expressed in the March for Life, they would be unheard.

In January 1974, a brave group of committed pro-life leaders led the first March for Life to advocate for a solution to the Supreme Court's judicial activism, in my opinion, in the Roe v. Wade case.

This year, the March for Life was not only an event to advocate for the unborn, it was a celebration of the end of Roe and the return of pro-life policy-

making to the States and, I believe, to the Congress.

The Dobbs decision is historic and affirms my belief that all life is sacred. Each State government and its duly elected representatives now make the determination about what types of laws they wish to have in place. I, for one, continue to advocate for commonsense measures that the majority of Americans support, like protecting life at crucial points of development and prohibiting horrendous procedures like partial-birth abortion.

While it is good for us to celebrate the Dobbs decision, as Senators, we must remember that the fight for life in the United States is far from finished. Our work to enact pro-life policies must continue if we are to be a voice for the voiceless.

I believe Congress must vigorously pursue efforts to defend the sanctity of life. Some have said since the Dobbs decision that this is something that only States should weigh into, and I respectfully disagree.

Just 2 weeks ago, I was thrilled to see the House pass the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, which I am committed to supporting. This legislation would protect newborns who survive failed abortions, born alive, requiring the same degree of care as a newborn baby. I urge Leader SCHUMER to bring this commonsense bill up to the floor for a vote as soon as possible.

Last Congress, I cosponsored dozens of pro-life bills. This Congress, I joined multiple bills to shape Federal policies toward protecting life. This includes proposals that would prohibit the use of Federal funds for abortion and prohibit Planned Parenthood from using Federal funding for abortions.

When I served as speaker of the house in North Carolina, we passed several bills to protect the unborn and to defend life, and it was widely supported by the diverse State of North Carolina, which is by no means a red State. It is a blue State, maybe a purple State. But when you talk about what we were trying to accomplish, the majority of North Carolinians supported it.

I ultimately believe that the States are best situated to set policies to support mothers and to protect life. That is why it is critical that pro-life advocates contact their State legislators and their Governors to ensure that life-saving protections are enacted to defend the unborn in their respective States.

I am committed to continuing the effort to support life. I am a lifetime pro-life Catholic. I make no apology for it because we are the voice in the absence of that baby yet to be born, and we have to continue to fight for them. I encourage my Senate colleagues to join me in doing this.

Mr. President, I just want to say that I hope that on this issue, like so many that we tackled in the last Congress, thorny issues, that everybody thought nothing could get done—I really hope

that we can get people in a room and recognize that we can come together on some basic tenets, get rid of the voices at either end of the spectrum that are preventing us from making progress on this important issue, because, literally, the lives of the unborn—their lives, their opportunity is at stake.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, thank you for your leadership and your desire to continue to lead in our country.

Everything I do here, everything that most of us do here, I think, should come back to the dignity of work—the idea that hard work should pay off for everyone, no matter who you are, no matter whether you punch a clock or swipe a badge, no matter if you are management or labor, no matter if you are self-employed, where you live, what kind of work you do. When work has dignity—by definition, the “dignity of work,” brought to us originally by Leo XIII, “the labor Pope” of 120 years ago—with the Presiding Officer's faith, he knows about Leo XII—and brought to us by Dr. King—when work has dignity, people have a secure retirement. It means you count on Social Security and Medicare. It means we protect people's pensions. It means the VA continues paying benefits that you earned if you were exposed to Agent Orange or to these massive football field-size burn pits. It means people make enough money for retirement and for a rainy day.

It is why in this body, just 2 years ago—in March, slightly fewer than 2 years ago—we saved the pensions of 100,000 Ohioans, tens of thousands in Virginia, a million around the country, people who worked their whole lives. They earned the pension and the peace of mind in retirement for themselves and their families.

Think about what that means.

It is why we are still fighting for the Delphi retirees who, again, lost their pensions through no fault of theirs. It is why we will always—always, always—fight back against attacks on Social Security, attacks on Medicare, and efforts to privatize the Veterans' Administration.

A secure retirement should never be a partisan issue. On August 14, 1935, President Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act. Ever since that time, it should not—it was partisan then. Most Democrats were for it, and most Republicans were, I will just say, less for it. But it has become a partisan issue far too often.

Social Security and Medicare are two of the most popular, most unifying institutions of the country. It is our government's promise to working men and women, a promise that they will be able to retire with dignity. You pay in every paycheck—twice a month, whatever—and you are guaranteed that benefit.

Support for Social Security cuts across party lines. It cuts across racial lines. It cuts across geographic lines. Americans not only want to protect Social Security and Medicare—that goes without saying, although many of my colleagues want to undermine it—but they want to make these programs stronger.

But that is what Republicans—I don't want to make this into a partisan issue, but it has been, unfortunately. It is not what the Republicans in Congress want to do.

I want every American to understand that Republicans in Congress are planning to hold your Social Security hostage. They have done it several different ways over the years. So let's talk about it today.

They have threatened not to raise the debt limit. Raising the debt limit sounds complicated and sounds expensive. It is not. Raising the debt limit, said another way, is about paying our bills, paying the bills our Nation owes and keeping our word. We did this three times under Donald Trump with no drama. Their refusal to pay our bills undermines U.S. global leadership.

For seniors, it would be a disaster. It means that Social Security checks would stop going out. It would mean that seniors won't get their Social Security checks if we don't keep our promises and pay our bills. It is the first way this year that Republicans will attack Social Security.

Second, they want to take this country and the American economy to the brink of default and then leverage their fiscal lunacy to cut your Social Security. Ten years ago, 15 years ago, Republicans didn't act this way. It is this new—just going down the hall here, you can see the other place, the place where the other ones work. The people who are the most extreme in that body clearly are trying to bring this country to the brink. They are willing to take the U.S. economy hostage and only agree to pay our bills—bills we have all run up, including a huge part of that with President Trump and the Republican Congress with the big tax cut giveaway to the richest people in this country—they are willing to take the economy hostage and raise the debt limit if Congress cuts Social Security. The only way they are going to pay their bills is if Congress cuts Social Security. That is what they are saying.

Let that sink in. Congressional Republicans intend to use the fact that we need to pay our bills, pay our bills that already have accrued—to pay our bills is their tool for cutting Social Security. You might disguise their policy as a commission. Every time you hear the word “commission” and then they describe the next part of the sentence to reform Social Security, you know what it means. Their plan is to leverage this: We are going to not pay our bills to cut your Social Security.

Finally, there is privatizing Social Security. The details differ. The terms may change, but the goal is the same:

to kill off Social Security by shrinking it and privatizing it and undermining public support.

It doesn't matter if you voted for this Republican or that Republican who sits at these desks or Senator CASEY or Senator WYDEN or Senator KAINE. Overwhelmingly, people who go to the polls and vote support Social Security and don't want Social Security privatized.

What is happening is nothing less than an attempt to go back on the bedrock promise made to America's middle class that Social Security would be there for them.

On August 14, 1935, Franklin Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act. In 1940 or 1941, for a woman in New Hampshire, I think her first check was \$24. I believe she was a retired schoolteacher and got the first Social Security check.

It doesn't matter to them, to Social Security beneficiaries, about all the politics here. But we know that for Social Security checks, people paid into the program their whole entire working lives. Our government should work for people who paid into Social Security, not against them.

When work has dignity, we honor the retirement security people earned. I urge my Republican colleagues in this body—colleagues, I point out, with healthcare and retirement plans; all of us with healthcare and retirement plans paid for by taxpayers—our retirements aren't at risk. Why should it be for Social Security beneficiaries? None of my colleagues over here are saying: Let's privatize the retirement system for Members of Congress.

They never say that. They say: Let's privatize Social Security. Let's privatize the Veterans' Administration in Richmond or Cleveland or Cincinnati. Let's privatize Medicare.

They never talk about privatizing their benefits.

But think about the generations of Americans who have benefited from Social Security and the generations to come relying on the promise of Social Security and Medicare.

For the last part of my remarks, Mr. President, I introduced a resolution affirming the Senate's commitment, last year, to protecting and expanding Social Security.

Dozens of my colleagues got on this bill, including, I believe, the Presiding Officer—a resolution affirming the Senate's commitment to protecting and expanding Social Security. But you know what? Not one Republican signed onto this resolution; not one re-committed to the promise of the American people that if you work hard all of your life, Social Security will be there for you.

What is more American, what is more basic, what is more family-oriented than: I pay into Social Security my whole life, I pay into Medicare, and if I get prematurely sick or disabled or when I retire, why would we not honor that commitment? Why do some Mem-

bers of Congress want to privatize this program? Because we know what happens when they are privatized. The investors come in, the banks come in and end up undermining it, and there is less dollars—fewer dollars available and less public support.

Americans shouldn't have to worry that politicians secure with government pensions are going to try to take away their retirement benefits that they earn. I will again introduce that resolution—probably next month—affirming the Senate's commitment to protecting and expanding Social Security, opposed to privatization.

I will again ask all my colleagues to sign on. I assume we will get many. I am hopeful this time—hopeful—that some Republicans join us. Republican seniors in Ohio would support it. It is just, their elected officials so often don't.

People shouldn't have to worry if politicians who put our entire economy at risk by using this debt limit fight—this “are we going to pay our bills or not” fight—to cut social security, but here we are.

I urge my colleagues to do the patriotic duty to raise the debt limit, without condition, without threatening economic calamity. And I ask that you work with us to do what the American people overwhelmingly want: protect and expand Social Security and Medicare and VA benefits.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Georgia.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S.J. RES. 4 and H.R. 22

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I understand that there are two measures at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the measures by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 4) removing the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

A bill (H.R. 22) to prohibit the Secretary of Energy from sending petroleum products from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to China, and for other purposes.

Mr. WARNOCK. I now ask for a second reading, and I object to my own request en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard. The measures will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d-276g, as amended, appoints the following Senator as Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group conference during the 118th Congress: the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the provisions of 20 U.S.C., sections 42 and 43, appoints the following Senators as Members of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution: the Honorable CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO of Nevada (reappointment) and the Honorable GARY PETERS of Michigan.

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK LEAHY AND TIM RIESER

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an excerpt of this article by George Black, honoring the legacies of Senator Patrick Leahy and Tim Rieser, that was originally published in the *New Republic* on December 19, 2022.

I ask unanimous consent that the following excerpt honoring Senator Patrick Leahy and Tim Rieser be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the *New Republic*, Dec. 19, 2022]

FOR PATRICK LEAHY, THE VIETNAM WAR IS
FINALLY ENDING
(By George Black)

For 33 years, the retiring Vermont senator and a top aide have quietly but doggedly been working to bind the many wounds of a war that touched the lives of nearly every Vietnamese family. This is what public service is.

It was a late afternoon in mid-November, with the nip of early winter in the air, when I visited the Russell Senate Office Building to meet with Vermont Senator Pat Leahy in his spacious yet surprisingly intimate office, with a sofa and chairs arranged near the fireplace. An aide squatted down beside us to add another log to the fire. Leahy's wife of 60 years, Marcelle, joined us, carrying a large bouquet of flowers. The couple still convey a strong sense of the people they were in the early years of their marriage—he a small-town lawyer, she a nurse at a local hospital. Leahy showed off photos of their three children and five grandchildren. “I’m not someone who wants to hang the walls with photos of 50 great and famous people I’ve known,” he said. “I’d much rather be surrounded by pictures of family.”

Leahy, who entered the Senate in 1975 and leaves it after 48 years in January 2023, is the body's longest-serving sitting member. To most Americans, he is probably best known for his decades on the Senate Judiciary Committee and his opposition to the drive by conservative activists to transform the federal courts into an instrument of their ideological agenda. But I'd come to talk to him about something different, something that rarely if ever makes the cable news circuit: the war in Vietnam, the wounds it had left, and the part he had played in healing them. He's never seen this as a partisan issue, just a matter of simple human decency, being one of those, like Joe Biden, who mourn a lost era of comity in the Senate, in which political adversaries could still reach with respect across the gulf of their disagreements. His work in Vietnam has always been underpinned by that vision, and I wanted to ask him whether, in our current divided state, he could imagine it continuing after his retirement from the Senate at the age of 82.

Vision alone doesn't get you far in Washington. It has to be turned into legislation, and legislation into dollars and cents. In addition to his role on the Judiciary Committee, Leahy also chairs the Appropriations Committee, which is where the purse strings are untied, and, as he wrote in his recently published memoir, *The Road Taken*, “few people really ever sifted through the line items to understand what we were doing was actually making American foreign policy.” It's also why you can't talk about his work in Vietnam without also talking about his senior aide, Tim Rieser, who has been with him since 1985, and who will retire from his current role in January. Despite his bland-sounding job title—Democratic clerk for the Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations—Rieser has been the master of its arcane mechanics. “A dog with a bone,” Leahy calls him. Given a problem to solve, “He would not stop until every last drop of marrow and morsel of sinew had been licked clean.”

Since 1989, as the United States and Vietnam were taking their first baby steps toward reconciliation, Leahy and Rieser have channeled hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Vietnam, forcing the United States to take responsibility for what former Senate leader Mike Mansfield once called the “great outflow of devastation” from the war: the bodies broken by unexploded bombs; the lives blighted by exposure to Agent Orange; the ongoing threat from “hot spots” contaminated by dioxin, its toxic by-product; and now, at last, some long-overdue aid to help Vietnam recover and identify the remains of its war dead. In the process, they have built the scaffolding of a new relationship, in which bitter enemies, in one of the stranger twists of geopolitics, have been transformed into close working partners and military allies.

Leahy and Rieser have faced no small number of obstacles along the way. For many years, embittered American veterans and recalcitrant anti-Communists in Congress opposed any hint of reconciliation with Vietnam. Progress was often slowed by suspicions on the Vietnamese side and by cumbersome bureaucracies in both governments, and State Department and Pentagon lawyers remain wary to this day of any humanitarian effort that implies an admission of liability. But as Rieser often says, when you run into an obstacle, you redefine it as a problem to be solved, and that process starts with all parties identifying their common interest in finding a solution. There are always common interests; you just have to look for them.

Full article at: <https://newrepublic.com/article/169542/patrick-leahy-vietnam-war-finally-ending>.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I rise to provide a brief statement on the vote on the confirmation of the nomination of Brendan Owens, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. I was unable to attend the vote because inclement weather in Maine caused my flight to be canceled. Had I been here on Monday, January 23, 2023, I would have voted in support of the nomination.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOXROFT ACADEMY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, Foxcroft Academy in Dover-Foxcroft,

ME, was established on January 30, 1823, with a mission of bringing quality education to pioneer families in our new State. On this 200th anniversary, it is a pleasure to congratulate this outstanding school for its dedication to excellence and opportunity.

The history of Foxcroft Academy demonstrates that commitment. It was the first school chartered in Maine after we achieved statehood 3 years earlier. It is one of the oldest private day and boarding preparatory high schools in America.

That charter was the result of extraordinary vision. The school's namesake, Colonel John Foxcroft, born to a prominent Massachusetts family, was successful in business and amassed a considerable fortune. His wealth enabled him to acquire thousands of acres of prime timberland in the wilderness of Maine. With the growing cities of early America nearby, he could have exploited this natural resource and added greatly to his fortune.

Instead, he chose to offer opportunity. He opened his land up to those less fortunate; he encouraged settlers to come to clear farmland, construct mills, start businesses, and build their homes and their futures. The people of the fledgling settlement raised \$100 to build a wood frame building to create a school and a true community.

Today, Foxcroft Academy sits upon a beautiful 125-acre campus with a full array of state-of-the-art academic, athletic, and residential facilities. More than 350 day students live in Dover-Foxcroft and neighboring towns, and an additional 100 international students come from 20 countries around the world.

Foxcroft Academy is renowned for high achievement in academics, athletics, and the arts. Its designation as an Apple Distinguished School recognizes its successful integration of technology into education, and its inclusion in the International Baccalaureate Program acknowledges its commitment to helping students become good global citizens.

The school's motto is “Knowledge is Power.” Whether graduates go on to college, the workforce, or the military, they leave Foxcroft Academy empowered to succeed.

Foxcroft Academy was founded with a pioneering, innovative spirit that is carried on today by students, faculty, administrators, and supporters. This bicentennial year is a time to celebrate a school that holds a special place in Maine's history and in its future.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DAVID HUDSON

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Sebastian County Judge David Hudson who recently retired after nearly five decades of service to the county and its citizens.

Judge Hudson grew up in Fort Smith. I have been blessed to know him since

our days at Darby Junior High School and he has been a dear friend ever since. He earned his bachelor and master's degrees from the University of Arkansas and started working for Sebastian County in 1976 as an administrative assistant. Two decades later, he was elected to his first term as the Sebastian County judge.

Judge Hudson spent his career improving the financial management of the county while continuing to implement critical projects. Without raising taxes, he led the renovation of the county courthouse, an expansion of the county jail, and construction of a new courts building, waterpark, and EMS facility, all of which have greatly served the county and its residents.

He was also a champion for the creation of the State's first crisis stabilization unit, which I had the privilege of visiting with Judge Hudson. He worked closely with law enforcement, prosecutors, and mental health professionals to see the completion of this project to provide an alternative to jail and emergency rooms for people experiencing a mental health crisis. Throughout his career, he has been a champion for law enforcement, the court system, and our first responders, and I appreciate his dedication to solving these important issues.

Judge Hudson distinguished himself as an advocate for the community and a champion of the people who call the region home. Before being elected as county judge, he managed the Sebastian County Emergency Medical Services for 15 years. He also served in a number of roles including as an educator at the former Westark Community College, as well as an active member and leader of numerous civic organizations and State and local boards and commissions.

I congratulate Judge David Hudson for his outstanding work and years of service to Sebastian County. I appreciate his friendship and excellent leadership which has resulted in improvement and growth throughout the county. I wish him all the best in his retirement.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:23 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 1928a, and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, the Speaker appoints the following Member on the part of the House of Representatives to the United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly to fill the existing vacancy thereon: Mr. TURNER of Ohio, Chair.

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 3003, and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, the Speaker appoints the following Member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Chair.

The message further announced that pursuant to sections 5580 and 5581 of the revised statutes (20 U.S.C. 42-43), and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska and Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 22. An act to prohibit the Secretary of Energy from sending petroleum products from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to China, and for other purposes.

The following joint resolution was read the first time:

S.J. Res. 4. Joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-1. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Tolerance Exemption: Iron Oxide (Fe₃O₄) in Pesticide Formulations Applied to Animals; Tolerance Exemption" (FRL No. 10458-01-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2. A communication from the Director of the Regulations Management Division, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "RESUBMISSION—Implementing Provisions of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018" (RIN0572-AC49) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3. A communication from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Cattle Contracts Library Pilot Program" ((RIN0581-AE22) (Docket No. AMS-LP-22-0065)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Simazine; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 9321-01-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extract of *Caesalpinia Spinosa*; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 10495-01-OCSP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-6. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Domestic Quarantine Regulations; Quarantined Areas and Regulated Articles" ((RIN0579-AE53) (Docket No. APHIS-2019-0035)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-7. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report and budget details relative to Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OSS-2023-0010); to the Committees on Armed Services; Foreign Relations; and Appropriations.

EC-8. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prohibition on Certain Procurements from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region" (RIN0750-AL59) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2023; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-9. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of six (6) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-10. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment to OFAC Sanctions Regulations" received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-11. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Illicit Drug Trade Sanctions Regulations" (31 CFR Part 599) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-12. A communication from the Program Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans Exemption Threshold" (RIN1557-AF17) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-13. A communication from the Acting General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Rules of Practice and Procedure; Civil Money Penalty Inflation Adjustment" (RIN2590-AB26) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2023; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-14. A communication from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Truth in Lending (Regulation Z) Annual Threshold Adjustments (Credit Cards, HOEPA, and Qualified Mortgages)" (12 CFR Part 1026) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2023; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-15. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance

Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2023-2024 Multi-family Enterprise Housing Goals" (RIN2590-AB21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-16. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13466 with respect to North Korea; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-17. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13405 with respect to Belarus; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-18. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13219 with respect to the Western Balkans; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-19. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the Department's activities during calendar year 2021 relative to the Equal Credit Opportunity Act; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-20. A communication from the Acting Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of the Comptroller's 2021 Annual Report on Preservation and Promotion of Minority-Owned National Banks and Federal Savings Associations; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

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. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. ERNST, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. LUMMIS, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 27. A bill to prohibit the Department of Defense from requiring contractors to provide information relating to greenhouse gas emissions; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 28. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a partially refundable credit against payroll taxes for certain restaurants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. LEE, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. PAUL, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. HAWLEY, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 29. A bill to provide remedies to members of the Armed Forces discharged or subject to adverse action under the COVID-19 vaccine mandate; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 30. A bill to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. DAINES, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mr. LEE):

S. 31. A bill to provide for the development and issuance of a plan to increase oil and gas production on Federal land in conjunction with a drawdown of petroleum reserves from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. MORAN):

S. 32. A bill to increase the number of landlords participating in the Housing Choice Voucher program; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 33. A bill to rescue domestic medical product manufacturing activity by providing incentives in economically distressed areas of the United States and its possessions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 34. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to provide loans to manufacturers of energy grid products and components; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. ROMNEY):

S. 35. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to make available parental leave benefits to parents following the birth or adoption of a child, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 36. A bill to review domestic biopharmaceutical manufacturing capabilities in order to improve public health and medical preparedness and response capabilities and domestic biopharmaceutical manufacturing capabilities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 37. A bill to require the Attorney General to make competitive grants to State, tribal, and local governments to establish and maintain witness protection and assistance programs; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Ms. ERNST):

S. 38. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 39. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to modify work requirements under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. KAINE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BROWN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 40. A bill to address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865 and

to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 41. A bill to reauthorize the READ Act; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 42. A bill to improve the management and performance of the capital asset programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs so as to better serve veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 43. A bill to repeal the provision of law that provides automatic pay adjustments for Members of Congress; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 44. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to incentivize investment in facilities that carry out the metallurgy of rare earth elements and the production of finished rare earth products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 45. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to simplify reporting requirements, promote tax compliance, and reduce tip reporting compliance burdens in the beauty service industry; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. RISCH):

S. 46. A bill to establish a small business and domestic production recovery investment facility, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 47. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 to modify a provision relating to acquisition of beach fill; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 48. A bill to amend title V of the Social Security Act to establish a grant program for community-based maternal mentoring programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 49. A bill to amend the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 to extend the moratorium on drilling off the coasts of the States of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 50. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to give priority consideration to selecting Pensacola and Perdido Bays as an estuary of national significance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ

MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 51. A bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, D.C. into the Union; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. LUMMIS, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 52. A bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to establish country of origin labeling requirements for beef, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 53. A bill to identify and combat corruption in countries, to establish a tiered list of countries with respect to levels of corruption by their governments and their efforts to combat such corruption, and to evaluate whether foreign persons engaged in significant corruption should be specially designated nationals under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KING (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HASSAN, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 54. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the limitation on the credit for biomass stoves and boilers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOOZMAN:

S. 55. A bill to limit the detailing of directors of medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs to different positions within the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 56. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish tax credits to encourage individual and corporate taxpayers to contribute to scholarships for students through eligible scholarship-granting organizations and eligible workforce training organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 57. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit kindergarten through grade 12 educational expenses to be paid from a 529 account; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 58. A bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to prohibit transactions involving certain financial instruments by Members of Congress; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. CARPER):

S. 59. A bill to implement merit-based reforms to the civil service hiring system that replace degree-based hiring with skills- and competency-based hiring; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 60. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to allow

parents of eligible military dependent children to establish Military Education Savings Accounts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. HAGERTY):

S. 61. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a strategy to combat the efforts of transnational criminal organizations to recruit individuals in the United States via social media platforms and other online services and assess their use of such platforms and services for illicit activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S.J. Res. 4. A joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment; read the first time.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 25

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 25, a bill to regulate assault weapons, to ensure that the right to keep and bear arms is not unlimited, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 10, a resolution memorializing the unborn by lowering the United States flag to half-staff on the 22nd day of January each year.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. DAINES, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mr. LEE):

S. 31. A bill to provide for the development and issuance of a plan to increase oil and gas production on Federal land in conjunction with a drawdown of petroleum reserves from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about the need for more American energy.

We are approaching the end of January. Winter storms have been covering the country from Colorado to Connecticut. We are seeing it everywhere: Temperatures drop. Energy prices go up. In a typical year, cold actually kills more Americans than extreme heat. This winter, millions of families are in danger of being left out in the cold because of the cost of energy. We know that more than 20 million households in America, right now, have fallen behind on their ability to pay their energy bills.

Record-high inflation has robbed the American people of more than \$10,000 for each and every family since Joe Biden has become President. Just look

at what people were paying for things before he came into office and what they are paying today. As a result, people are able to save less, and they are having to pay more. We know that about two out of three American households are living paycheck to paycheck. Personal savings in this country is now at a record low; household debt is at a record high. People are having to borrow more money and put things on the credit card at higher and higher interest rates.

At the same time, energy prices are dramatically higher than they were the day Joe Biden took office. The cost of heating oil is up by two-thirds. Natural gas is higher now than in a long time. Electricity is up by 20 cents on the dollar. As a result, there is actually the risk of people having their energy and their electricity shut off this winter. Some are doing it voluntarily because they don't want the big bill that is going to come.

It is hard to believe that it is happening here in the wealthiest country in the world. We have enough energy to keep every American warm this winter. Some of it, they won't let us get out of the ground, but we have it. So it is an absolute disgrace, with the energy resources we have in this country, that Americans are facing brownouts and blackouts from an energy standpoint because of the Biden administration's radical climate policies. Millions and millions of Americans are living with financial fear and with massive frustration at this administration for ignoring the needs of the people.

So what are the Democrats doing about it? Nothing. Joe Biden actually sold some of our emergency Strategic Petroleum Reserve to China. You wouldn't believe that; yet it happened. Our petroleum reserve is for America. It is for emergencies. It is for natural disasters. It is for war. It is not for China.

This week, I am introducing legislation to make sure this never happens again. The House has already passed this legislation. The vote was completely bipartisan, more than 100 Democrats voted for it in the House. There is no reason it shouldn't be bipartisan here in the Senate as well.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in this effort. The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is for us. It is not for our enemies.

Joe Biden has promised to use our tax dollars—I mean, it is astonishing. He went to the United Nations and said he was going to give \$11 billion a year to the United Nations for climate reparations—for energy we have used—giving away American dollars when Americans can't afford to pay for energy costs here at home. Why is he doing it? If you listen to his speech, it is because he wants to say he is sorry. That is what we have, a President who wants to apologize once again for America. He wants us to feel guilty about the fact that we have built the strongest economy in the world by

using oil, gas, coal—all of the energy resources that we have in this country.

The American people have nothing to apologize for. Joe Biden is wrong. We shouldn't apologize for being an energy superpower. We shouldn't apologize for using our energy resources. If he wants to apologize, he ought to be apologizing to the people of the United States for the policies he has put in place that have driven up costs and caused pain for families all across America. He should apologize for raising taxes on American energy. He should apologize for wasting tax dollars.

The Secretary of Energy—his Secretary of Energy—has given more than \$200 million in loans to companies in China. The Secretary of the Treasury is going to China soon. She met with China's Vice Premier recently in Switzerland. According to the Treasury Department, she agreed to "enhance cooperation [with China] on climate finance . . . as well as support for . . . developing countries in their clean energy transitions"—in other words, more American taxpayer dollars for other people in other countries.

Again, the excuse for all of this is climate.

The Democrats in Washington are utterly obsessed with the green dreams of the coastal elites who run the Democratic Party, who call the tune. Again and again, the Democrats side with the climate elites over the common folks. I hear it in Wyoming. I hear it no matter where I travel in the country. The Democrats are offering working families nothing more than higher taxes and higher prices, and they continue to raise taxes.

The Democrats just threatened to ban natural gas stoves. Nearly half of the homes in America use natural gas. This is the administration—a nominee by the President. That is what he said. He didn't say it once. He said it repeatedly. The Democrats also just raised taxes on coal by more than \$1 billion.

So what happens with all of these new taxes? They get handed down to working families in Wyoming and across America. What happens with higher taxes? It means higher prices and higher energy costs.

Janet Yellen is flying around the world and offering more of our tax dollars to these other countries. Last week, there was a large Democrat political rally held in Switzerland, at a place called Davos. The masters of the universe flew to Switzerland for the World Economic Forum.

From the television reports and the news reports, much of the conversation was about climate. The President's energy/climate czar, John Kerry, was there. He gave a speech. You talk about somebody with smug superiority; he just thinks he knows better than anybody else.

Here is what he said. This is from John Kerry:

It's extraordinary that we, a select group of human beings . . . are able to talk about saving the planet.

Thank you, John Kerry. You are going to save us all. I can hardly wait.

He added:

If you say that to most people, they think you're just a crazy, tree-hugging, lefty, liberal do-gooder . . . but that's where we are.

Well, John Kerry, you are right. Most people—certainly, anybody in Wyoming—who would listen to you would say you are just a crazy, tree-hugging, lefty, liberal do-gooder. That is who we have got from the President of the United States doing his climate bidding in Switzerland. This is exactly what people think about John Kerry and the climate crisis and the positions of this administration.

As if one failed Presidential nominee and candidate weren't embarrassing enough, then we had a real Vice President who came to speak, a former Vice President named Al Gore. Anyone watching Al Gore speak would say that, basically, he descended into an unhinged rant. About what? Well, climate of course. That is all he ever rants about. The former Democrat Senator and Vice President said we are "boiling the oceans." That is what we are doing, apparently, he said, if we don't obey his energy policies. Well, I am sure he and John Kerry have great times together. "Boiling the oceans." He even said we are creating what he called "rain bombs."

He wants to save the planet as well, and I would say: What planet is he on? That is what we are seeing coming out of this administration as their voice on the world stage.

When it comes to energy, what are the Democrats offering? A fairytale, a fantasy, and a fraud. That is what we hear from the Democrats. The Democrats' green dreams are causing nightmares for working families, who have to pay for all of this. The only green thing about the Democrats' energy agenda is how much green it costs American families.

John Kerry said it himself. He said:

How do we get there?

And he said:

Money, money, money.

That is his answer—American money, American dollars—and he is going to save the planet.

Europe has already tried its own Green New Deal. It has been a disaster for the working people of those countries. We can't let that happen here. We just cannot.

The International Energy Agency projects a record high demand for oil later this year. This is at a time when Joe Biden is making us keep it in the ground. Wyoming is the energy breadbasket of the Nation. We have it. It is affordable. It is available. It is reliable. That is not good enough for Joe Biden. No. He wants to go to Iran, go to Venezuela, go to Saudi Arabia, with hat in hand, and beg them to produce more and send it here. It is interesting listening to the climate elites as they are fixated on renewable energy regardless of the costs and regardless of the consequences.

The Democrats need to stop this science fiction. It is long past time for America to unleash our energy and stop this foolishness coming from the administration that has us buying energy from our enemies instead of selling it to our friends. We have an abundance of American energy, and the Democrats want to keep it buried in the ground. For every American family who is struggling to make ends meet and is falling further behind because of the inflation caused by the Democrats' spending, it is time to unleash American energy right now.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 41. A bill to reauthorize the READ Act; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam 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. 41

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 "READ Act Reauthorization Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 4(a) of the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act (division A of Public Law 115-56; 22 U.S.C. 2151c note) is amended by striking "during the following five fiscal years" and inserting "during the following ten fiscal years".

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. LUMMIS, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 52. A bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to establish country of origin labeling requirements for beef, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. THUNE. Madam 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. 52

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 Beef Labeling Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING FOR BEEF.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 281 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1638) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (7) as paragraphs (2) through (8), respectively;

(2) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as so redesignated) the following:

"(1) BEEF.—The term 'beef' means meat produced from cattle (including veal)."; and

(3) in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in clause (i), by inserting " , beef," after "lamb"; and

(B) in clause (ii), by inserting “, ground beef,” after “lamb”.

(b) NOTICE OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.—Section 282(a)(2) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1638a(a)(2)) is amended—

(1) in the paragraph heading, by inserting “BEEF,” after “FOR”;

(2) in each of subparagraphs (A) through (D), by inserting “beef,” before “lamb” each place it appears; and

(3) in subparagraph (E)—

(A) in the subparagraph heading, by inserting “BEEF,” after “GROUND”; and

(B) by inserting “ground beef,” before “ground lamb” each place it appears.

(c) MEANS OF REINSTATING MCOOL FOR BEEF.—

(1) DETERMINATION OF MEANS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the United States Trade Representative, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, shall determine a means of reinstating mandatory country of origin labeling for beef in accordance with the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) that is in compliance with all applicable rules of the World Trade Organization.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION OF MEANS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the United States Trade Representative and the Secretary of Agriculture shall implement the means determined under paragraph (1).

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) take effect on the earlier of—

(1) the date on which the Secretary of Agriculture publishes a determination in the Federal Register that the means determined under paragraph (1) of subsection (c) have been implemented under paragraph (2) of that subsection; and

(2) the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 53. A bill to identify and combat corruption in countries, to establish a tiered list of countries with respect to levels of corruption by their governments and their efforts to combat such corruption, and to evaluate whether foreign persons engaged in significant corruption should be specially designated nationals under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, President Biden, on June 3, 2021, issued a memorandum on “Establishing the Fight Against Corruption as a Core United States National Security Interest.” I want to quote from the President when he issued that memorandum. President Biden said:

Corruption threatens United States national security, economic equity, global anti-poverty and development efforts, and democracy itself. . . . [B]y effectively preventing and countering corruption and demonstrating the advantages of transparent and accountable governance, we can secure a critical advantage for the United States and other democracies.

Corruption is a national security core interest. Corruption is the source of Mr. Putin’s resources that he uses for his international activities, including the war in Ukraine and to try to bring down democratic states.

Today, the Atlantic Council is releasing a report—the report titled “Why

the kleptocrats still win: A strategy for the United States and Europe to address weaponized corruption.” The report points out how the kleptocrats hide their wealth in Western countries because they believe it is safer in Western countries to hide their wealth. And the report points out the need for us to coordinate efforts between the United States and Europe.

Today, I am filing legislation, the Combating Global Corruption Act. I am joined by my friend Senator TODD YOUNG of Indiana—bipartisan legislation—to deal with the U.S. leadership in fighting global corruption. It will give the State Department and the United States an important tool. It will give the United States leadership in showing the international community the steps that need to be taken in order to counter corruption. It would require the State Department to publish a list of countries in three tiers, the highest tier being those countries that are taking the steps necessary to fight corruption; the bottom tier would be those countries that are not making the required effort to deal with corruption in their country.

The State Department will be using internationally established standards for fighting corruption that the international community has already signed off on as being the proper way to fight corruption in your particular state.

For example, it references the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, the Organization of American States—the OAS—that was passed in 1996; acknowledged procedures in our hemisphere to deal with corruption. It references the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials, international business transactions of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development—the OECD—which was adopted in 1997.

It references the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime that was agreed to in 2000 and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which was agreed to in 2003.

These guidelines already exist and allow the United States to use those guidelines that have already been established by the global community to judge how every state is meeting their commitment to fight corruption.

Countries that are not meeting their commitment, we put a spotlight on them. That spotlight encourages them to do more. It points out ways in which they can take action to fight corruption in their own country.

Now, this is not a new strategy that we just came up with that we start giving a report on all countries on how well they are doing in fighting corruption. It is not a new concept. We have done that successfully in several other areas. One that we should take great pride in this institution—because we were ones who established this—is the Trafficking in Persons requirements.

Today, the United States files a report on every country as to how well

they are meeting their international responsibilities to protect the modern victims of slavery, trafficking in persons. It has been bipartisan. It has been very effective.

Secretary of State Blinken said, in releasing the report of this year, on July 19, 2022, he said:

Today we’re releasing the 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report. It assesses how 188 countries and territories, including the United States, are performing in terms of preventing trafficking, protecting victims, prosecuting traffickers. That makes this one of the most comprehensive sources of information anywhere on anti-trafficking efforts by government—what works, what doesn’t, and how we can continue to do better.

We do that in preventing trafficking. We can do that in stopping corruption.

We have a country report on human rights. Again, I will quote from Secretary of State Blinken when he released this report on April 2, 2022. This is a report that judges all countries on how well they are dealing with human rights. Secretary Blinken said, in releasing that report on April 2 of last year:

For nearly five decades, the United States has issued the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, which strive to provide a factual and objective record on the status of human rights worldwide—in 2021, covering 198 countries and territories. The information contained in these reports could not be more vital or urgent given ongoing human rights abuses and violations in many countries, continued democratic backsliding on several continents, and creeping authoritarianism that threatens both human rights and democracy—most notably, at present, with Russia’s unprovoked attack on Ukraine.

[A]nd using resources like the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, we can come closer to building a world where respect for human rights is truly universal.

That human rights report works. Putting a spotlight on what countries need to do brings about change. It promotes a core value in the United States, respect for human rights and good governance. We do that here in the United States to show global leadership.

I will mention one other report that is issued by our State Department, one on international religious freedom. Again, this was bipartisan. So on June 2 of last year, Secretary Blinken said, when he released the International Religious Freedom Report:

This report offers a thorough, fact-based review of the state of religious freedom in nearly 200 countries and territories around the world. We produced this document every year since 1998. . . . Now, more than two decades later, we have more than 35 governments and multilateral organizations that have created offices that are dedicated to this goal.

This year’s report includes several countries where we see notable progress thanks to the work of governments, civil society organizations, and citizens. For example, last year, the Kingdom of Morocco launched an initiative to renovate Jewish heritage sites like synagogues and cemeteries, and to include Jewish history in the Moroccan public school curriculum. . . . [T]his report is about

spreading that kind of progress to more parts of the world. . . . Unfortunately, the report also shows that we have more work to do.

There is value in what we do in showing the international community what works, what doesn't work, what countries are doing to make progress, whether it is on trafficking, whether it is on human rights, whether it is on religious freedom. And we need to do the same on fighting corruption. We had the model that works. And the legislation that Senator YOUNG and I have introduced today allows us to provide such a report in fighting corruption.

The legislation also gives the Secretary of State some additional tools that could be helpful. The bill directs the Secretary of State and Treasury to evaluate whether there are foreign persons engaged in significant corruption for the purposes of potential imposition of sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act in the countries listed in tier 3. That is the lowest performing tier.

I mention that because the Magnitsky Sanctions have had a proud history in this Chamber. We initiated the Magnitsky Sanctions originally against Russia because of the torture and death of Sergei Magnitsky. We then made it global for those that are perpetrating gross violations of international human rights.

I introduced the legislation with my partner who was the late Senator McCain. The two of us said we need to include corruption as one of the basic human rights violations that would be eligible for individual sanctions. And we did.

In the last Congress, we made the Global Magnitsky Sanctions permanent. And I was proud that we were able to do that in the National Defense Authorization Act. What is unique by these sanctions is that they are individual. They are not against the country. They are personal to the individual who violates the basic rights.

And what does it do? It prevents them from getting a visa to come to

America because they like to visit their wealth that is here in our country. And it prevents them from using our banking system. It works.

It was reportedly the first issue between Mr. Putin and President Trump in their first bilateral summit meeting. Mr. Putin was upset about these sanctions. Good. I am glad that he is.

This legislation that Senator YOUNG and I have introduced allows us to look at whether we should be using these individual sanctions—these Magnitsky Sanctions—against the perpetrators of corruption who have not been held accountable in their own country.

There is lot to be said about why this legislation is so important. So I would like to just conclude by pointing out the bill that we introduced today is nearly identical to the bill that we introduced in the last Congress. It was reported out on a bipartisan basis by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

I want to thank Senator MENENDEZ for his help and Senator RISCH for his help. This is not a partisan bill. This is a bipartisan bill to promote an American value and a national security concern and that is making sure that America leads in fighting corruption so we do not have the resources going into a country like Russia, where Mr. Putin uses it to try to bring down our system of government.

I urge my colleagues to join me and Senator YOUNG in this effort. I hope that we are able to pass this bill quickly in the U.S. Senate.

We came close to doing it in the last Congress. We can get it passed in the House and signed by the President. I think we will look back at this day when that report comes out and say that we were able to accomplish concrete improvements in making this world a better place, in promoting American values, that this report will make a difference.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I have two 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 THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at 10:00 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 Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, January 25; 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 the Senate 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.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. WARNOCK. 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 6:02 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, January 25, 2023, at 10 a.m.