

expenditure of taxpayer dollars by preventing bureaucratic turf wars, which can slow down innovation.

Third, this legislation will protect intellectual property and research from foreign governments—most notably, China. The Endless Frontier Act will establish a research security office at the NSF and create a clearinghouse to share information about security risks. It also puts forward policies to protect controlled information, including a plan for background checks on researchers.

In addition, it will take critical steps to guard against Chinese intellectual property theft by prohibiting NSF funds from going to researchers who are part of a Chinese talent program or an institution with formal ties to a Confucius Institute. This is a new and important step.

Fourth, this bill will reduce the geographic concentration of R&D in a handful of States and universities. Put simply, this bill will be a game changer for the R&D geographic diversity that many of us have sought for years, if not decades. America can maintain our leadership over China only with a sustained effort that is national in scope. We should tap into the wide-ranging talents, expertise, and capabilities of Americans across this land, including Nevada and Mississippi.

The Endless Frontier Act will help address these long-standing disparities by increasing funding for the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, which we have all come to know as EPSCoR. Participation in EPSCoR helps institutions in many States and Territories improve their research capacities and, therefore, compete more effectively for Federal R&D funding. The legislation also invests in minority serving institutions and builds up research capacity in emerging institutions, which have traditionally received a relatively small share of Federal research dollars.

No. 5, this bill will boost regional economic development through the Regional Technology Hub Program.

No. 6, it will support manufacturing programs, in part, by quadrupling the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program, which already exists.

No. 7, it will help America win the “New Space Race” against China by including the NASA Authorization Act, which the Senate passed unanimously last year. The NASA bill allows Congress to set priorities and guardrails for the space Agency’s exploration and research programs.

No. 8, this bill will authorize a number of telecommunication programs to improve our telecom workforce and help get all Americans connected to high-speed and reliable broadband.

This bill also includes several bills that I have championed, including the Rural STEM Education Act, the Advanced Technological Manufacturing Act, the Improving Minority Participation and Careers in Telecommunications Act, and the Telecommuni-

cations Supply Chain Diversity Promotion Act—significant legislation and a mouthful, too.

Overall, this is a strong bill, but it can be made better. As I mentioned at the Commerce Committee’s markup last week, although the bill reported out of the committee makes important changes to the underlying bill, I regret the rushed process that was followed.

The underlying bill was introduced on April 20, just under a month ago. Only yesterday, Senate Majority Leader SCHUMER laid down a 1,400-page substitute that not only includes the Endless Frontier Act, but major legislation from the Foreign Relations, Homeland Security, Banking, HELLIP, and Judiciary Committees. Now known as the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act—USICA, I suppose—this legislation will make significant changes to our innovation ecosystem and the missions of our Federal Agencies.

A bill of this magnitude would normally take a year to write and involve soliciting input from Members and stakeholders across our country to craft a consensus package. Clearly, the Senate should consider this bill with an open amendment process.

Prematurely shutting down debate on amendments without this open process would send a false signal to China and the American people that we are divided in an area where, actually, we are united and together.

And then, when all is said and done, the effort will have to be paid for and will be subject to appropriations.

I hope the majority’s determination to rush this legislation through the Senate is not designed to use a partisan reconciliation bill to appropriate funding for these important initiatives. Science has always been debated in a bipartisan way in this body. Leaving one party on the sidelines in the appropriation process, which I hope will not happen, would have a detrimental consequences for the long-term stability of this legislation.

So on the whole, I am positive and optimistic about this bill and about the process that will get us to the end of both parties’ desire.

I thank my colleague, Senator CANTWELL, for her work as chair of the Commerce Committee to get this bill on the floor today, and I look forward to working with her to improve the bill in the next step in the process—an open amendment process

ALASKA TOURISM RECOVERY ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon receipt from the House, if the text is identical to the text of S. 593 that passed the Senate, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1318, the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

WORKER SHORTAGE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to give short remarks on three different subjects. Probably, for people wanting to speak, it will take me about 10 or 12 minutes.

Thanks to Operation Warp Speed, effective vaccines are available on demand to anyone who wants to take the shot. That means individuals and businesses are beginning to return to a degree of normalcy we have all been waiting for.

However, as I have made my annual tour through Iowa’s 99 counties, I have heard from business after business that they are desperate for workers, but job applicants are scarce. Those that do apply often don’t show up for interviews.

Nationally, the economy added over 700,000 fewer jobs than were expected last month. This is very concerning, as a vibrant labor market is vital—vital—to a strong economy.

I get that some individuals, even after being vaccinated, may be leery of returning to the market after a year of staying home to be safe, but the vaccines have been shown to virtually eliminate the chance of serious illness. Hopefully, the recent CDC guidelines that reinforce this by easing mask guidelines will reassure individuals that it is safe to return to work.

However, Iowa employers repeatedly informed me that the biggest impediment to finding workers is the over-the-top unemployment benefits extended as part of President Biden’s so-called COVID relief bill.

I had 13 county meetings throughout Iowa during our last Senate recess, and in all but one of them, this came up as a very important issue.

The simple fact is this: Under that partisan COVID package, many individuals can earn more if they don’t work than if they do work. That is wrong in principle and has proven disastrous in practice, and, as a matter of fact, in American society, a job is very essential and center to the quality of life.

As my Republican colleagues and I have warned for months, incentives matter. If you can earn more not working than working, it makes perfect sense not to work. I don’t blame workers for taking that deal. I blame government policy that puts the individual workers in this predicament.

Even prominent liberal economists have acknowledged a problem with

continuing to provide increased unemployment benefits. For instance, President Obama's former chief economic adviser, Jason Furman, admitted that if he were in a low unemployment State, he would be—these are his quotes—“thinking seriously about whether paying people more to not work than to work was a good thing to continue doing.”

This is the case in Iowa, which has an unemployment rate of 3.7 percent. That is low even in normal times, but it should be even lower as Iowa has more job openings than unemployed people.

I stand firmly behind Governor Reynolds, who recently announced Iowa would end its participation in the counterproductive enhanced benefit program, and that ending will be effective June 12.

President Biden talks about the government creating jobs by spending trillions of borrowed dollars, all while spending more borrowed money to pay people not to work. Now, that fails the commonsense test.

In Iowa, the private sector is already creating more jobs than we can fill. The economy is poised to take off if the government just gets out of the way. Politicians should live by the same principle as doctors: “First, do no harm.”

We shouldn't continue pandemic-era policies longer than they are necessary. That will only slow our economic recovery. Just as the CDC updated its guidance based upon the new reality about masks and about the vaccine, it is time for Congress to conform its policies to the conditions on the ground.

PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. President, on another subject, yesterday I participated on a call with Canadian counterparts that serve in Canada's Parliament.

Just for a little background on these meetings, until the pandemic or until people got so busy they couldn't travel back and forth between the two countries, over a period of more than a half a century, there have been meetings of Canadian Parliamentarians and Members of the American Congress on an annual basis.

One time, the U.S. Congressmen would go to some place in Canada; the next year, the Canadian Parliamentarians would come down here.

In the recent 5 to 10 years, this has been done more like yesterday by Zoom or by a few people from Canada coming down here more often than we went up there.

But over the period of my years in the U.S. Senate, I presume I have participated in at least 15 of those meetings where we travel back and forth, and I found them very helpful in talking about problems between the two countries. The problem is, it is almost laughable that we have very many problems between Canada and the United States. So we would end up talking about two or three issues, but they were problems that had to be worked out.

So we had this meeting yesterday by Zoom, as I just said. We discussed issues of concern that impact both legislative bodies in our respective countries.

Canada and the United States share the same values and are closely tied to each other culturally and economically. Canada is our closest ally. We need to effectively work with Canada and Canadians on issues that impact both countries.

On his first day in office, President Biden made a hasty decision to shut down the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline—a decision that cost the United States and Canada over 10,000 jobs.

This decision by President Biden sent a clear signal to other democratic countries across the globe. That message is, it doesn't matter if it will cost your State jobs and raise gas prices or irritate an ally; you would be better to listen to ideologues in your party who say something like this: Pipelines that transport oil are bad.

But while the Keystone XL Pipeline is better known, the Canadians who were meeting yesterday were worried about the current pipeline in use that goes by the name of Enbridge Line 5. The pipeline, which has been in use since 1953, delivers the bulk of Canadian crude exports to the United States and also supplies fuel to Ontario and Quebec.

In June of 2019, the State of Michigan filed a lawsuit to compel the decommissioning of the segment of Line 5 that runs under Lake Michigan. The basis of the suit is that the pipeline is a public nuisance that could become a source of pollution if it leaks. This month, the Canadian Government filed a request to stop the State of Michigan from shutting down the pipeline.

Shutting down the pipeline would have an immediate effect on crude oil supplies for refineries and, as a result, increase the price of gas for Americans. We saw it over the past 7 or 8 days, how the Colonial Pipeline's shutdown has increased the price of gas—if you could buy gas. So we ought to be thinking about these problems.

For the sake of North American energy independence and for American jobs and to mend relations with our closest allies, I am asking the Governor of Michigan to reconsider this lawsuit. For that matter, President Biden ought to step in and the entire Democratic Party ought to reconsider their stance on the use of pipelines. Take a cue from the former Governor of Michigan, now Energy Secretary Granholm, who said pipelines are “the best way to move oil.”

INSPECTOR GENERAL'S ACT OF 1978

Mr. President, my last comment, which will be very short, deals with the subject of the Inspector General's Act of 1978.

When we passed that act, we required a President who wants to remove an IG to provide Congress specific reasons why that IG was removed. When Con-

gress revised the IG act 30 years later, we amended that notification requirement and made it even stronger. We require Presidents to tell us their reasons and do it in no less than 30 days in advance of the removal. Neither of these provisions did anything to prevent the President from performing his constitutional responsibility to hire and fire people within the executive branch of government.

Unfortunately, Presidents from both political parties—let me emphasize “from both political parties”—seem to have a hard time following this simple notice requirement.

When President Obama fired IG Walpin of the Corporation for National and Community Service early in his term, he sent a vaguely worded letter saying only that he had “lost confidence” in Mr. Walpin. When President Trump fired IGs Linick and Atkinson last year, he sent letters to Congress saying exactly the same thing.

As I explained to both Presidents when they sent those letters, merely telling Congress that you have “lost confidence” in an IG isn't enough explanation. The loss of confidence occurs only after something happens. When announcing their decision to remove an IG from office, Presidents need to tell us what that “something” is. They need to explain why they have lost confidence. Failing to do so misses the point of the notice requirement entirely. The notice requirement isn't about a President's confidence in the IG; it is about the public's confidence in the inspector general system across the board.

IGs are put in office to serve as government watchdogs. If IGs are carrying out their duties as intended, they are likely going to make more enemies than friends. They may uncover things that make the sitting President and his political appointees very uncomfortable. So what? No President is going to like every investigation that an IG undertakes or every report that an IG prepares. But IGs should not be fired just for doing their jobs or to prevent them from releasing findings that may be embarrassing to an administration, Republican or Democratic.

Requiring the President to explain in advance why he or she is removing an IG gives Congress time to evaluate those reasons. It helps assure Congress and the public that the termination isn't based on politics but on real problems with the IG's ability to carry out their job.

Of course, there has been no shortage of bad IGs who are deserving of removal. In fact, I probably had something to do with removing five or six of them in the years I have been in the U.S. Senate. Maybe some of those who ought to be removed are still in office.

Recently, I called on the President, President Biden, to remove the Federal Housing Finance Agency IG due to an independent report by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity

and Efficiency that verified long-standing claims to my office that she abused her authority.

Whistleblowers originally came to my office in 2015 with concerning reports that the IG was personally and publicly demeaning her employees. She referred to them with demeaning names such as “weasel.” The IG also allowed her deputy to threaten employees who blew the whistle to my office. That was over 5 years ago, and—can you believe it?—the abuse is still happening today.

Based on my investigations and the CIGIE’s findings, I firmly believe the IG needs to go, but I don’t get to make that decision. Only the President can make that decision. He gets to decide when to exercise his constitutional authority. He has a right to do so and will ultimately be accountable to the people for a decision that he makes. All he has to do, all that is required for him to do under this law, is to give Congress proper notice. That is how things should work. That is how things were designed to work, but unfortunately, that is not what has been happening.

It is clear to me that we have to be even clearer that when we say we want reasons, we actually mean it. When making the decision to remove an IG, Presidents must send substantive, specific reasons to Congress in advance explaining the actions they are taking and why they are taking those actions.

That is why I introduced S. 587, the Securing Inspector General Independence Act. In addition to making the notice requirement even more clear, my bill would limit who can be an IG in an acting capacity and require CIGIE to provide guidance for annual whistleblower training for all IG employees.

My cosponsors and I have an interest in keeping our IG system strong and neutral, and that is what this bill does. I encourage all of my colleagues to support it and ask that the Homeland Security Committee give it full consideration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first, before my friend from Iowa leaves the floor, and he is my friend, I didn’t come to debate the Line 5 Pipeline that goes under the Great Lakes of Michigan, but I will say that this is an aging pipeline under a precious resource called the Great Lakes, 20 percent of the world’s freshwater. The Governor is really balancing right now what are issues that relate to safety and trying to make sure that we don’t have a spill in the Great Lakes that would just devastate not only our economy and way of life but the country’s as well.

S. 1260

Mr. President, I always say that the people in Michigan can outwork, outbuild, and outimagine anybody. Whether we are building the new Ford all-electric F-150 truck that President Biden rode yesterday when he was in Michigan or whether it is armored ve-

hicles that keep members of the military safe in war zones; whether it is solar panels and wind turbines and appliances and furniture or dollies strong enough to move helicopters, Michigan’s manufacturing workers are the best in the world, period. Their hard work makes our Nation stronger.

Unfortunately, there are times when our Nation hasn’t returned the favor. Each year, Federal Agencies spend billions of dollars in taxpayer money on products from the private sector, everything from vehicles, to office furniture, to electronics.

The Buy American Act, which was signed back in 1933, says the Federal Government should give preference to high-quality products here in America. Common sense, right? American taxpayer dollars should go to American manufacturers, American businesses, and American workers. Unfortunately, loopholes and waivers and outright noncompliance by Federal Agencies mean that, too many times, American taxpayer dollars instead go to foreign companies that compete against American manufacturers and American workers.

Back in 2018, I released a report that showed that between 2008 and 2016, exceptions and waivers to the Buy American Act allowed Federal Agencies to spend about \$92 billion on foreign-made products. That is \$92 billion in missed opportunities for American businesses and American workers.

That is why Senator BRAUN and I introduced the Make It in America Act, along with Senator PETERS, Senator PORTMAN, and Senator BALDWIN. I am grateful that Chairman PETERS and Ranking Member PORTMAN got this commonsense bill into the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee as part of the bill in front of us today, the Endless Frontier Act.

I also want to thank President Biden. His administration reached out to me and asked to be briefed on the report that we had done, and initial executive orders that they put in place were very much in line with our recommendations, and I know they are very supportive of this bill.

My legislation ensures that we are holding Federal Agencies accountable when enforcing Buy American Act activities. It adds new guardrails to the waivers. Right now, we have waivers, but there has been no transparency, no accountability, and over the years, no training really for how to administer it. Sometimes it is just easier to do a waiver than it is to do an extensive search about whether there are businesses in America that could do this work or provide a product.

It also calls on products purchased by Federal Agencies to incorporate more domestic content. The supply chain is so important. So much of our job creation is in the parts that go into the product. And it helps ensure that American companies aren’t undercut by cheap foreign products.

Of course, rules don’t matter if nobody enforces them, so, again, it is im-

portant that this legislation makes the Made in America Office a permanent part of the Office of Management and Budget. It will ensure that American workers and businesses receive preference regardless of who is in the Oval Office.

It is important to emphasize that the legislation doesn’t just benefit big businesses, and this is important. It calls for Agencies to use a wonderfully successful entity called the Manufacturing Extension Partnership so that small businesses and medium-sized manufacturers have more opportunities to sell their products to the Federal Government or provide materials for federally funded infrastructure projects. And, by the way, there is oftentimes a situation where a company could retool pretty quickly to provide a product if they knew that we were interested, if we were going to purchase, and we should give them the opportunity if there is an American company that can step up and be able to create that for us.

Everyone says we need to make more things in America, and here is an opportunity to put those words into action. I urge colleagues to pass the Endless Frontier Act, to get the Make It in America Act signed into law, and use our American tax dollars to purchase great American products that support great-paying American jobs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

CHINA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I like calling the Presiding Officer “Mr. President.”

Let me appreciate the Presiding Officer’s support about what I am going to speak today to address one of the most significant foreign policy challenges of our time, which is the U.S.-China relationship; a challenge that the Senate, I believe, is ready to meet with bold, bipartisan action.

Just weeks ago, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee made history when we passed the Strategic Competition Act of 2021 by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 21 to 1. This historic, bipartisan legislation is clear-eyed about the challenges we face, and it is designed to meet this consequential moment in U.S.-China relations.

Over the past few years, China has accelerated its rise to power and sharpened its efforts to undermine the liberal international order that brought the American people and our allies so much prosperity and stability in the 20th century.

We invited China to be engaged in the international order. We invited them into the World Trade Organization. We invited them into an international forum. We opened markets with them, all with the expectation that China, by being ultimately invited into the international order, would be part of the international order.

Unfortunately, instead of playing by the rules, China, under Xi Jinping, has

sought to undermine them. Today, China is challenging the United States across every dimension of power—political, diplomatic, economic, innovation, military, even cultural—and advancing an alternative and deeply disturbing model for global governance based on old-fashioned military antagonism, predatory economic practices, and digital authoritarianism.

The breathtaking scope, scale, and urgency of these challenges demands a policy and strategy that is genuinely competitive. Because of China's actions, the national security and economic future of the United States depends on framing our relationship with China today through the lens of strategic competition.

This is not about a zero-sum relationship or resurrecting a cold war mentality. This is about recognizing that in the 21st century, our strategic competition will revolve around the geo-economics of the future and America's ability to successfully compete in new and emerging technologies and other hotly contested domains. This is about securing a regional and international order for the 21st century built on progressive values, one that encourages healthy and fair economic competition, promotes global security and stability, and strengthens human rights around the world.

So how do we achieve this vision? Ranking Member RISCH and I incorporated input from almost every member of the committee to build the Strategic Competition Act. I believe the Presiding Officer had amendments as well, which mobilizes all of our strategic, economic, and diplomatic tools to clearly confront the challenges China possesses to our national and economic security.

So I am eager to see the Strategic Competition Act move on the floor, alongside the other pieces of this package, recognizing, as I have for years, that America's ability to compete with China begins at home, replenishing the sources of our national strength. That is why the investments in the Endless Frontier Act provisions and the other domestic measures drafted by various committees are equally important.

But even if we did all of those things alone, it would not meet our challenge with China because, first and foremost, China is a foreign policy challenge. That is why the Strategic Competition Act reaffirms our alliances and partnerships. It prioritizes building functional, problem-solving regional architecture in our Indo-Pacific strategy. Every witness we had before the committee, as we prepared for this legislation, said, You have to get your Indo-Pacific strategy right in order to be able to meet the challenge of China under Xi Jinping.

It promotes U.S. leadership within international organizations. It counters malign efforts by the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party to influence those institutions, and it grounds our foreign

policy in American values by authorizing a broad range of human rights and civil society measures to address abuses in Xinjiang with ethnic Uighurs and to demonstrate our commitment to the people of Hong Kong, Tibet, and China's civil society.

It counters China's predatory economic practices by addressing their rampant intellectual property theft and unfair state subsidies. It helps other countries work together to counter China's corrupt practices. China goes throughout the world holding itself out as being generous to nations in Africa and Latin America and elsewhere, but what it ends up being is a debt trap of diplomacy where these countries become hostage to China—not only economically, but then, in a transactional basis, China says, Well, you can't recognize Taiwan anymore; or China says, You have to vote with us at the U.N. Human Rights Commission and a whole host of other international forums.

And it bolsters U.S. economic statecraft, those economics tools we can deploy to advance our foreign policy goals like investing in supply chain security, infrastructure development, digital connectivity, and cyber security.

Now, I do want to take a couple of minutes today to directly address an emerging line of criticism I have heard that this bill is somehow seeking to ignite a new cold war with China. Nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is that for more than 40 years, the United States has sought to draw China into the international community as a responsible stakeholder. But any clear and accurate assessment of China's behavior and, particularly, its behavior in recent years under the hypernationalist leadership of Xi Jinping suggests that simply continuing down that path would only result in disaster for the United States, for China, and for the entire world.

Let's just review some of China's actions. China is committing genocide in Xinjiang against the Uighur people through forced labor. China has dismissed, out of hand, the ruling of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea with regards to its excessive maritime claims in the South China Sea, which it is militarily building up on and trying to intercede in the rightful passage of nations in the South China Sea.

China has walked away from the commitments it made to respect intellectual property rights. China has chosen to betray its legally binding obligations and its own commitments to the people of Hong Kong, crushing "one country, two systems" and the vibrant democracy, economic activity, and autonomy of the people of Hong Kong.

China refuses to respect the religious, cultural, and linguistic autonomy of the Tibetan people and is seeking to subvert the religious succession of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. China is using its Belt and Road Initiative to

exploit lesser developed economies to its own advantage. China threatens the efforts of the international community to deal with climate change by building more coal-fired power plants at a rate that outpaces the rest of the world.

So we must empower Americans, our partners, and our allies to protect against these egregious efforts to undermine human rights, security, and our environment. We simply cannot turn a blind eye to China's actions or wish it into becoming a better international actor.

Now, I realize that in discussing the Strategic Competition Act, I laid out a laundry list of big, structural policy issues with China that we will need to confront as a nation, but it is essential that the United States meets this moment if we hope to build a more perfect world, one that reflects our cherished commitment to free societies, free markets, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and the dignity of all humankind. At the end of the day, that is what this Strategic Competition Act is all about.

So I look forward to a robust debate and discussion with my colleagues over the next week or two about how to restructure and rework U.S. policy towards China so that we can be, after far too long, genuinely competitive. Together, we have to ensure the United States reclaims our place as a leader of nations and a force for good in a chaotic and increasingly complex world.

MIDDLE EAST

Mr. President, now, on another note, I know we have great challenges in the world. We are having a great challenge in the Middle East. I would just simply say that I am not a fan of having resolutions brought to the floor of the Senate without the appropriate consideration of the committee of jurisdiction—in this case, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—so that informed, deliberate debate and consensus agreements come together in the best pursuit of foreign policy.

It is easy to get caught up in the passions of the moment. It is much more difficult to think about what is the right policy and procedure and action the United States should take in any given part of the world.

So I know there is a bunch of resolutions that are being flown around—none of which have gone to the committee—some that have merit in each and every dimension but also have challenges. They fall short of what I think would need to be done, and I would urge colleagues to, particularly at this moment, have restraint, and I would urge the ability for the committee to be able to consider what is the appropriate course of action, whether it be at this time or any other time, as our Nation faces global challenges.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, during my recent travels across Iowa on my 99-county tour, I couldn't help but notice the number of "Help Wanted" or "Now Hiring" signs on storefronts along nearly every highway and Main Street.

In an era where we seem to live through one unprecedented occurrence after another, the dire job situation has become the latest extraordinary event as millions of Americans remain unemployed, despite an abundance of jobs that need to be filled.

In fact, the number of available jobs has reached an alltime record high, 8.1 million positions that need to be filled. And 44 percent of all small business owners have openings they cannot fill, another record. What makes this all the more stunning is that the Nation's unemployment rate increased last month to 6.1 percent. There are now more than 9 million jobless Americans, and nearly a third of those have been unemployed for a year or more.

In Iowa, the number of unemployed slowly inched upwards in February and March, and we continue to have more job openings than we do job seekers. There are more than 62,000 job listings posted on the Iowa Workforce Development website, which exceeds the total number of Iowans filing for unemployment benefits.

The jobs span a variety of occupations and locations in the State, and employers are desperate to fill them. The police department of Iowa City is urgently trying to hire 10 officers and is offering a \$5,000 signing bonus to new recruits. And I should note that another factor here could be the ongoing efforts to defund the police being pushed by folks on the left.

The owner of the Blind Pig restaurant in Cedar Rapids is paying higher wages plus a \$500 sign-on bonus, but even that isn't enough to attract workers. He says in the past he would get up to 50 applicants when he placed a "Help Wanted" notice, but now he might get 2. Yep, that is it. Two, he said, if he is lucky.

So what gives? Part of the problem is that the government pays folks more to stay home than to go to work.

I have heard from restaurant owners in Bellevue who need about 36 employees between their two locations and can only find 20. They have been forced to suspend plans to expand, costing additional jobs and stifling economic development.

Similarly, the owner of a small business in Cedar Rapids that offers good-paying jobs that don't require a college degree was turned down by three separate people because they chose to stay on unemployment instead.

I have also heard from folks who run in-home care services in West Des Moines and Cedar Rapids about their difficulties hiring providers for their professional care teams. Again, this is all due, in large part, to the Federal Government's excessive unemployment perks.

This may have made some sense a year ago, when there was plenty of uncertainty. But due to the success of Operation Warp Speed, we now have vaccines; and COVID cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are trending down.

Despite thousands being out of work in Siouxland, local businesses can't find the workers they need. The store manager of Sam's Mini Mart says: "People come in here and say, why work when I don't have to, when unemployment's going to pay me?" He goes on to say: "We've even upped our wages, our starting wages, and nothing seems to work."

Paying people not to work is not helpful. It is delaying us from returning to normal, prepandemic life. For our businesses in Iowa, "normal" means operating at full capacity.

If we are going to begin erasing the damages caused by the last year of the pandemic and get our economy moving again, we cannot continue to let Democrats disincentivize work.

Thankfully, in Iowa, our great Governor, Kim Reynolds, has already taken steps to curb the excessive Federal unemployment that has kept Iowans on the sidelines and created these challenges for our employers.

Now, we need to do more nationwide. As a senior member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am hoping to lead a bicameral effort to end the enhanced perks at the Federal level. The Get Americans Back to Work Act, which I helped put forward, decreases the extra Federal unemployment benefits to \$150 per week at the end of this month and then fully repeals them at the end of June.

It is time for Congress, the Biden administration, and State leaders across the country to do their jobs and help Americans get back to work.

With that, I yield the floor.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I was watching Senator ERNST give this speech. And as to that "Help Wanted" sign, I thought I was back in Springfield, MO, my hometown, where I was this weekend. There were occasions when I was driving down a block, and I started looking to see if there was a place that didn't have a "Help Wanted" sign up. They were everywhere—"Help Wanted" signs, hiring bonuses, rates well above the minimum wage. Our minimum wage is \$10.30 in our State. There were rates well above that being advertised on the "Help Wanted" signs.

You know, we all were disappointed by the job numbers that were issued at the end of April. But, obviously, the job numbers didn't reflect the fact that there weren't jobs to be had. It was just that there weren't people taking the jobs to be had.

We need to think about everything we can to create an environment where people want to go back to work, where people are encouraged to go back to work, and where people who can't go

back to work have that basic unemployment benefit. Nobody is begrudging that, but I think it is clear that we have made some mistakes here.

Now, many of us were concerned about this when it initially came up, and we were not able to turn back the additional bonus at the time, though the predictions were just too true about what might happen.

What small businesses in Missouri are saying is pretty consistent all over the State. In St. Louis, the manager of Mary Ann's Tea Room said: "It is heartbreaking that the business is there, but I can't hire anyone." And that restaurant was forced to just close down because they didn't have enough workers.

In Kansas City, the president of the Big Biscuit restaurant said: "We've never had a hiring drought like this before." And according to him, he said, there is "no doubt we are up against unemployment that has been artificially increased and stimulus payments that give people the opportunity not to show up for work."

In Branson, just as the busy summer season is getting underway, the general manager at Mel's Hard Luck Diner says he is so short-staffed that they have to close Sunday evenings now—a time when they would normally be open, just to compensate for the fact that they don't have enough people to do the 7 evenings and 7 days of business that they were used to doing. He says he can't even get people to show up for a job interview, let alone show up to work.

Just down the street in Branson, at one of the great theme parks in America, the Silver Dollar City Theme Park, they told me a couple of weeks ago that they could hire 150 people the next day—that would still be their view, by the way—if they could find 150 people. They have 150 jobs, and they have more customers than they have people, so not everybody could get in the park that would normally be able to come to the park.

In Columbia, right in the middle of our State, the owner of Just Jeff's said: "There's not a person that I come into contact with . . . as a businessowner or manager or something like that, that isn't in a terrible pinch right now for help."

That is just a snapshot of all we are seeing. I talked to one person who runs a family hotel chain. It is a big family hotel chain based in St. Louis. He said: We have the customers now who are coming back, but we don't have the help. We could fill more rooms than we are filling if we had people who could clean the rooms and get them ready the next day.

Businesses are ready to be back and be fully open, but they don't have the workers they need.

We had an amendment in the CARES Act, one of the five bipartisan bills we passed last year, that would have prevented people from making more when they are unemployed than when they

are working. I said at the time, when I voted for that amendment, that I was concerned that these enhanced unemployment benefits would really create a time when people didn't want to go back to work, and, unfortunately, that is exactly what happened in Missouri and around the country.

It has been a tough year, we all know that, for small business owners. We stepped up and tried to think of early ways to keep people on their payrolls rather than on the unemployment rolls. By the way, even at that time, many of those businesses were saying, well, that is a great idea. We would like to keep them on our payroll, but they can make more money on the unemployment rolls. Is that fair to them, to not let them go to this unemployment that the government and its policies made so appealing?

They were trying to fight the worst public health crisis ever and trying to keep businesses afloat. Now they are trying to figure out: As we come out of the public health crisis, what do we do to keep that business going?

You know, that misguided government policy—that comment Ronald Reagan used to make—is one of the scariest things you could hear: “I am from the government, and I am here to help.” This seems to be a case where that truly has been a scary thing: The government, trying to help, trying to reach out and do what at least a majority of our colleagues thought was the right thing, has created a situation that is different than it needs to be.

Twenty-one States have now either decided to stop participating already or have announced that they are going to stop participating. Governor Parson in Missouri made that decision. As Senator ERNST mentioned, the Governor of Iowa has made and 19 other Governors have made that decision.

The average unemployment benefit in the States in America right now is \$618 a week. That is the average. That includes the \$300 that the Federal Government has put into every one of those checks that are still going out at that level. That is \$15.46 an hour. Certainly, one way to mandate a \$15 hourly pay rate is just to decide that is what you are going to make if you are unemployed. Well, it hasn't worked. It won't work. Our State of Missouri and other States are moving away from this.

In Washington, we make policies, and one of our responsibilities is to be sure that we are keeping an eye on unintended consequences. The law of unintended consequences is one of the great certainties of making law, and we need to watch out for that. We have a huge unintended consequence here. We saw what happened when now the Biden administration is trying to explain why it is not their policies that appear to be slowing the recovery down, but we all know that this is part of that problem.

We have done something to cause this problem. We need to figure out how to solve this problem. This should

not be something that States, one at a time, reject. We need to get our economy back on track as quickly as possible.

There is virtue in work, and I hope we make work more appealing again than not working.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, in February of this year, there was bipartisan conversation about what is the next step dealing with COVID. We knew we were coming out of it. Vaccines were going in arms. States were opening up. My State in Oklahoma was rapidly opening in February, and there was this dialogue about what would happen in the economy.

Unfortunately, in the middle of that dialogue, my Democratic colleagues determined: We were going to go this on our own.

We still stay engaged. One of the big issues, though, was unemployment. Would there be additional unemployment benefits that would be done?

Now, myself and multiple others raised the issue on both sides of the aisle: How would this be handled?

If it was a year before—literally, in March of 2020, there was an extension of unemployment because unemployment was at 15 percent at that point, and there were no jobs to be had. But in March of this year, when the agreement was finally made and a straight partisan bill was passed, we weren't at 15 percent unemployment. It was at 6 percent and driving down to the floor. Now we are below 4 percent.

The challenge that we have is, there is additional unemployment benefits that have extended all the way until September.

Now, that bill passed—a straight partisan bill—in March. By the Sunday after Palm Sunday, when I was back in my State, I was already having businessowners catching me and saying: What in the world? I can't hire now because I am competing for wages with someone in the Federal Government.

What has that meant for right now? Now and May, what does that mean for us in Oklahoma?

In Oklahoma, there are 37 percent more jobs available now than there were a year and a half ago before the pandemic began, when we were at the best economy in 50 years. Literally, there are more job openings in Oklahoma now than there have ever been in the history of our records.

Let me run that past everybody again. There are more openings in Oklahoma right now for jobs than ever in the history of our recordkeeping for our State, but we can't fill jobs because people are making so much money on unemployment and they get the first \$10,000 of that written off on their taxes. Those two pieces together incentivize people, literally, to be able to stay home.

Our State has had to take a pretty radical step, quite frankly. We have

stepped in with 20 other States and have ended the unemployment assistance, but we have had to take it the next step because we have so many job openings in our State. We are literally giving a \$1,200 bonus to anyone who will go back to work. For the first 20,000 people who will actually get off of unemployment benefits and go back to work, we are paying a \$1,200 bonus to those individuals to return to work. What in the world? Why would we have to do this as a State? Our State is taking leadership, and I am grateful to Governor Stitt and his continued leadership to be able to help navigate our economy and our families. But why would we want to have a situation where we have literally disincentivized work and encouraged people to not return to work? What Governor Stitt has set up is an encouragement to actually get back to work. That is better for families. That is better for children. That is better for our economy.

Right now in Oklahoma, if you are going to build anything—and I mean build anything—good luck finding building supplies. And it is not because we don't have lumber. It is not because we don't have bricks. It is not because we don't have windows and shingles and all those things. Good luck getting it because they can't get enough labor to actually do the manufacturing. So everyone is running behind simply because there is a shortage of labor because we are incentivizing people to stay home rather than to be able to come back.

Shots are in arms. Our rates of COVID have decreased dramatically. It is time for us to return to work. But now we are going to have a situation where we have right now—where half the country is incentivized to stay home. Now you have 21 States—slightly less than half the country—that are trying to incentivize people to get back to work.

We need, as a nation, to incentivize work and to encourage families to be able to be engaged in productive activities. It is right for families. It is right for our economy. It is certainly right for us as a nation. And I thank Governor Stitt for his leadership in this area and for what we continue to do, but we have to get back to basic policies that don't disincentivize work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, let me say that I agree with my colleague from Oklahoma who just talked about the impact of the Federal supplement on unemployment that was passed here in this Chamber and signed into law by the President. It is time to end it because the situation has changed dramatically, hasn't it?

Back when the unemployment additional benefit from the Federal Government was put in place, we had people who couldn't go to work. Thanks to COVID, businesses actually were shut down, many by government edict.

There were people who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Therefore, this Chamber stood up and said: OK, for those people, we ought to provide a Federal supplement on top of the State unemployment insurance in order to make them whole, essentially. Initially it was \$600. Now it is \$300. That is on top of the State unemployment.

Now you have an exact opposite situation. You have all these jobs that are open. I just learned that in Oklahoma, it is a record number. Guess what. It is a record number nationally as well: 8.1 million jobs are being offered right now. That is more jobs than we have ever had open in the United States of America, and it is happening right now.

At the same time, you have people on unemployment insurance who are getting the additional \$300 on top of the State benefit. In Ohio, the average is \$360 plus \$300, so 660 bucks a week. Plus, the first \$10,000 is not taxed. So if you are a truckdriver making 40,000 bucks a year, you are being taxed, but if you are on unemployment insurance, your first \$10,000 of UI is not being taxed. How is that fair?

Well, it creates an additional disincentive to go to work. I am not saying it is the only reason people aren't going back to work, but if you talk to the small business folks in your State, you will find it is one of the big reasons. I think it is the biggest one.

Another one is that people are having a tough time finding childcare. I get that. Childcare is expensive. Part of the solution to that, of course, is to get the kids back to school. Fifty-four percent of K-8 schools are back in business, but the rest aren't. Schools being closed makes it really tough for parents to go back to work because one parent has to be there to take care of the kids. That is true.

Then, finally, there is an issue of the skills gap. I get that. The jobs that are available, some of them are skilled jobs. There are 720,000 manufacturing jobs in America open right now—right now. Yet a lot of them do require a skill level that, unfortunately, our system of education and training has not prepared people for. This is why our young people need to be given more opportunities to get those industry-recognized certificates to become a welder or become a technician or become a coder in the IT world or become a truckdriver, because we need those skills badly.

But the biggest reason, again, that I am hearing all over my State of Ohio is the fact that people are saying: You know what, I am making what I can make on UI, and that is more than I can make at work. For 42 percent of Americans, on average, that is true. Forty-two percent are making more on UI. That is not even including the fact that the first \$10,000 is tax-free. In Ohio, it is more than double the minimum wage. That is what people are making.

So this is a problem right now, and we should face it. By the way, it is in the interest of everybody to resolve this issue. It is in the interest of the small businesses that can't find people. Some of these businesses are literally shutting down. Geordie's, a restaurant in Columbus, OH, is closed. They literally closed because they can't find workers. Other restaurants all over the State of Ohio are going 5 days a week instead of 6 or 7 days a week or cutting a shift because they can't find workers. So it is definitely helpful for those small businesses and for all businesses, but, second, it is great for the taxpayer to not have to pay that extra 300 bucks a week. It is billions of dollars, tens of billions of dollars, even hundreds of billions of dollars when it is all added together, compared to what it would be under current law, where the \$300 supplement goes until Labor Day—Labor Day—with 8.1 million jobs open right now.

Finally, I would argue it is particularly good for workers to get back to work, to get back to their careers, to get back to the training they need to keep up with what is going on at work.

It is not in anybody's interest to have folks not back in the workforce. We should all want people to be back at work getting the fulfillment you get from work and the dignity and self-respect that come from work, but getting a paycheck and getting healthcare insurance again and getting back into their 401(k) plans and, again, closing that resume gap so they are up to speed on the training.

I will tell you what is happening, and this is what concerns me and I think should concern every Member of this Chamber. Businesses are adjusting. Do you know what they are doing? They are not just shutting down. They are not just cutting out a shift. Some of them are changing the way they operate in order to be more efficient. What does that mean? That means, when you can't find workers, you turn to technology, you turn to automation. And it is happening.

I know there are Members of this Chamber who think that by giving more money to people, this is a very smart thing to do and it is helping everybody. It is not helping because those jobs are not going to be there in the future.

There was a story in the Washington Post today about Huntington Bancshares. It is a bank in Columbus, OH. They are fielding literally dozens of calls from business owners who are trying to get financing to buy more equipment that will offset their loss in workers; in other words, more automation, more technology that they would not have otherwise gone to, but because they can't find any workers, they are using their money they would have paid workers to go to more technology. Those jobs are gone.

I know, again, some people, maybe on my side of the aisle, think that might

be a good thing, a more efficient economy. I want people at work. I want companies to be hiring more people.

A good friend of mine is a manufacturer. She has about 200 people. She makes a great product—windows—in Ohio, southwest Ohio, Hamilton, OH. She is looking for 60 people right now. Sixty people. She is offering a signing bonus of a thousand bucks and offering other benefits. People aren't showing up. But when the \$300 ends and when the additional \$10,000 of unemployment insurance not being taxed ends, people will go back to work.

The first State to decide “You know what, we are going to unilaterally just say we are not going to take the \$300” was the State of Montana. My colleague from Montana told me recently that he has a friend who is a hotel owner, and he was having a job fair every week trying to get people to come in to apply for jobs. He was getting about one applicant per week. The week after the Governor said no more \$600 or no more \$300 benefit on unemployment insurance in addition to the State benefit, 60 people showed up. That may be an extreme example, but I have to tell you, it is going to make a big difference.

Let's help get this economy going again. We are turning the corner on COVID. We have a situation now where we can actually get started again, get the businesses reopened.

I talked about the business owner in Columbus, OH, who was closed down. Do you know what his comment was? He said: I used the PPP program.

That is the Paycheck Protection Program, which we all passed here.

I got through COVID. We struggled, but we made it through COVID. We could make it through COVID, but now we can't make it because of our own government paying people more not to work on unemployment insurance than we can pay them to work.

He feels like his own government has turned on him.

That is not helping anybody. It is not helping the small businesses, it is certainly not helping the taxpayer, and it is not helping those individuals who are not getting back to work, back to their routines, back to the training, back to the 401(k) plan, back to their healthcare plan, and having the opportunity to achieve their American dream.

I hope that we change our minds here and don't continue this until September 6 and decide, instead, let's get people back to work.

I would also be for a \$100-a-week signing bonus if people were to go back to work. I think that would be a good use of funding. Let's, say, do that for 6 weeks and at the same time stop the \$300 Federal supplement. By doing that, those 8-million-plus jobs that are available right now would start to get filled, and we could really get our economy back on track.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, my friend from Ohio is correct. In many respects, it ought to feel like morning again in America. After all, COVID-19 is finally on the retreat. The vaccines have been a roaring success because of Operation Warp Speed. One hundred and twenty-four million Americans are now fully immunized, and another 30 million are halfway there. With the exception of a few holdout States, the mask mandates are gone, thank goodness. By all measures, our economy should be firing on all cylinders, but America now has a workforce problem. People are not heading back to work.

In February, the Congressional Budget Office predicted our economy would return to its prepandemic size by the middle of the year without receiving any new stimulus from Congress. Regrettably, Democrats in this Chamber brushed off that optimism from the CBO. They decided to pass more stimulus, to the tune of \$1.9 trillion.

This time, the money was excessive. It was poorly targeted and passed without bipartisan consensus. Three months later, the results are unflattering for my Democratic friends. Last month, our economy produced a paltry 266,000 jobs when experts had predicted over 1 million jobs—this at a time when our economy has a record 8 million jobs available, jobs that need to be filled.

Small businesses are desperate to hire. Restaurants, for instance, are having trouble finding people to become waiters and chefs. The National Restaurant Association reports that, in January, 8 percent of restaurant operators said finding and keeping workers was their No. 1 concern. That number doubled in February. It doubled again in March and then again in April. According to the latest survey, 57 percent of restaurant operators now say that finding and keeping employees is their biggest problem. The same problem exists across multiple sectors—hotels, construction, lawn care, welding, tech. The list goes on.

Americans would be streaming back into the workforce if not for the counterproductive policies passed by the majority. Government is now paying millions of able-bodied Americans to stay home, to stay home when they could be back on the job. Expanded unemployment benefits have become a hindrance to our recovery rather than a help, just as many of us had warned.

March 2020 was a unique moment of emergency that called for urgent financial relief for the American people. This body passed it on a sweeping bipartisan basis. But it is now May of 2021. The hour of emergency has passed. Americans need policies to help them reenter the workforce.

Fortunately, millions of Americans have Governors who are pushing back against Washington's pay-to-stay-at-home policies. Governor Tate Reeves, in my State of Mississippi, is one example. I commend Governor Reeves for opting out of the expanded Federal un-

employment funds in order to help our State embark on a full recovery. Nearly half of all Governors now share the same mind and are saying no to those unnecessary funds.

Madam President, the American people elected a 50-50 Senate and a narrowly divided House. They do not want drastic changes or dramatic growth of government. They simply want to put this pandemic behind them and get back to providing for their families.

Americans need government to get out of the way, and Republicans stand with the American people and on the side of a full recovery.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, first, I would like to associate myself with the fine remarks of the Senator from Mississippi, who sees every day, when he is home traveling in his State, the same things I am seeing in Wyoming—"Help Wanted" signs all around our home States, as businesses are looking for people to hire, and the government's incentives are making it that much harder to find workers.

Job openings right now are at a record high in America. There were 8 million jobs available going into April. Yet in that month, only about one-quarter of a million people actually were hired. The unemployment rate actually went up.

We lost manufacturing. We lost retail. We lost healthcare jobs last month. Construction jobs were flat. Ten million people are unemployed right now, even though there are 8 million job openings.

Every Senator I talk to says that there are "Help Wanted" signs all around their home State. Nearly every American who wants a job should be able to find one. Yet it is really not happening.

The question has been asked and answered on this floor by various Members of the Republican Party: Why can't small businesses find workers? Why are so many of these jobs unfilled? Because something like this doesn't just happen on its own. Oh, no. This happens as a direct result of the President's policies.

President Biden and Democrats are paying people to stay home. That is why so many people are staying home. They are being paid more to not work than to work. According to one analysis, nearly half of all people on unemployment benefits with the unemployment benefit bonus payment—the extra check—are making more money by staying at home than they would make if they go to work.

These people aren't lazy. Oh, no. When the President and Democrats offer people free money to stay home, it is perfectly logical—people take them up on the offer.

I believe the American people want to work. That is what I see at home in Wyoming. That is who we are. That is the fiber of the American people. We

are the hardest working people in the world. American businesses want to hire. Yet Joe Biden and Big Government are getting in the way.

President Biden has actually extended bonus payments until September. We are now in May. May, June, July, August, September—month after month, after month, after month of more of this. This is a grave danger to small businesses across America. If they can't find workers, they might have to close again. Then those job openings will no longer be there, and they will be gone forever.

President Biden appears to be, in my opinion, in denial on this. He held a press conference recently, and this is what he said: It is all "loose talk."

This is not loose talk. This is basic arithmetic. Job openings are going up; hiring is slowing down; and nearly half of workers make more money by staying at home.

"Loose talk" is when the President of the United States tells us everything is just fine when it is not. April was the most disappointing jobs report in more than 20 years—two decades. Yet President Biden says the jobs report "shows we're on the right track."

No, it doesn't. Hiring has slowed down. Some say people aren't returning to work because of coronavirus.

Madam President, let me tell you, it is very unlikely. We are vaccinating 2 million people a day. One in three Americans is now—these are adults—fully vaccinated already. We are getting the virus behind us. We have been very successful with Operation Warp Speed.

We should be filling the 8 million jobs available right now. Yet what are President Biden and the Democrats doing to fix the problem? Nothing, nothing at all. I believe they are making it worse by extending these bonus payments. It is time the President and Democrats worked for a solution.

You know, I am proud that the people of Wyoming and the Governor of Wyoming have done just that. Wyoming has taken a leadership role, along with approximately 20 other States, in ending these bonus payments. It is going to give our economy a boost. It is going to lead to more hiring.

It is time for President Biden and the Democrats to follow the successful lead of the people of Wyoming. Stop paying people a bonus to stay home. Reward the hard work that is a part of America and Americans' DNA.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, earlier this month, the Department of Labor's jobs report showed an uptick of the unemployment rate to 6.1 percent and employers only adding 266,000 jobs, despite widespread projections of approximately 1 million jobs to be gained in April.

To call this a dismal jobs report would be an understatement. It was the worst jobs miss since 1998. Yet it is not

surprising considering the many conversations I have had with Kansans throughout my travels. I have heard constantly how employers are struggling to find people for open jobs, largely because folks are staying at home due to the increased unemployment dollars and the stimulus checks that Democrats continue to push.

Earlier this year, Democrats forced through legislation—without any Republican support—that provided \$300 more per week in Federal unemployment benefits. This additional benefit, when coupled with the extended unemployment benefits offered by States, already means that the average recipient is making \$15 to \$20 per hour to stay home.

Democrats have made it more profitable for many Americans to stay unemployed. That is because these policies are not intended to help our economic recovery. They are intended to reform our American system and create more dependency on the government.

This leap toward socialism comes at a time when our Nation is on its way to reaching herd immunity and businesses are emerging from government-imposed lockdowns. Now President Biden has delivered them a government-funded labor shortage.

I recently heard from a wonderful small business in my hometown of Great Bend, KS, that are short-staffed by some 70 employees—that is 70 employees they are short-staffed. They are unable to match the strong incentive to stay home provided by the Federal unemployment benefits in order to rehire their workforce. The company's mission is to provide educational and work opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, giving nearly 200 individuals in the area the independence, inclusion, and training that they need to achieve success. This labor shortage directly affects their ability to meet the needs of the people they serve.

I have heard stories from manufacturers across Kansas struggling to recall their workers, despite offering generous benefits and high-wage jobs or restaurants remaining closed because they don't have enough employees for their basic operations.

Homes aren't being built because of a lack of labor, and hotels are turning away business because they don't have employees. One company even shared a story of offering a high-skilled and high-wage position only to be turned down because the prospective employee claimed they were comfortable on unemployment, and the hours clashed with the local bowling league.

We have seen the broader supply chain begin to feel the impacts, as a lack of truckdrivers means that building materials, computer chips, and common household goods like toothpaste and toilet paper can't reach their destination, or food processing plants are short-staffed and turning out less product than usual, driving up the cost for consumers.

Coupled with the trillions of Federal dollars that have gone out the door so far, we are beginning to see inflation. In fact, the Department of Labor's recently released consumer price index for April showed the largest spike in inflation since 2008.

There are a record 8 million jobs—that is 8 million opportunities waiting to be filled across this country. In my home State of Kansas, we have 57,000 job openings, and the March labor report shows over 58,000 Kansans received unemployment insurance.

While there are certainly people who need access to increased unemployment benefits during the heart of this pandemic, unemployment insurance was never meant to be a permanent salary replacement.

Rather, the benefit is meant to provide temporary assistance while folks get back on their feet. The government should not be in the business of creating lucrative government dependency that makes it more beneficial to stay unemployed rather than return to work. That is called socialism.

Nearly half of the States have halted the additional benefits, and I have called for the Democratic Governor from my home State to do the same. Unfortunately, no State in the Union with a Democratic executive has stepped up and dropped the benefits, despite many of these States having the highest unemployment rates in the country. Instead, Democrats in Congress are moving to make the enhanced benefits permanent.

For all these reasons, last week, 15 of my colleagues joined me in introducing the Get Americans Back to Work Act, which decreases Federal unemployment benefits to \$150 per week at the end of May and then fully repeals them altogether at the end of June. Not only will this help get people back to work but the savings generated can be used to pay for roads and bridges.

Let me close by saying "work" is not a four-letter, dirty word. A job brings dignity and purpose to all who have one. Over the past year, we have made great strides to develop safe and effective vaccines. Because more Americans are getting their shots, we have seen COVID cases decline to nearly a quarter of where they were in January. Now is the time for folks to get back to work, to get our kids back in school, and get our economy back to prepandemic levels.

I yield the floor.

S. 1260

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, if I could just say something, for a second, while the Senator from Mississippi is here. It has been one of the great joys to collaborate with Senator WICKER on so many important policies last year, working on everything from aviation to maritime and foreign issues, and now working on this legislation and infrastructure and on many things that we want to do for the fu-

ture. I thank him for his collaborative work on this process.

No one probably relished the speed at which we moved through on this bill from our committee perspective, but, nonetheless, I think the committee actually had a lot of joy in the fact that we were at regular order and could process so many amendments and have that diverse of a conversation. The subject matter, in and of itself, is so important—it really is—to get this right.

When I think about our attempts at America COMPETES in 2007 and 2010, we were enthusiastic, but we didn't convince the rest of everybody to put the money behind it. It makes me think that I am glad we are creating more of a robust debate about why this competitive issue is so important.

AMENDMENT NOS. 1517 AND 1547

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up and reported by number: the Tillis-Hirono amendment No. 1517 and the Scott-Johnson amendment No. 1547; further, that at 4 p.m. today the Senate vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed, with no amendments in order prior to those votes in relation to the amendments, with 60 affirmative votes required for adoption, and 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, between the two votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WICKER. Reserving the right to object—and I shall certainly not object—I simply want to say that this is the beginning of what I hope is an open amendment process, and I want to thank the chair of the Commerce Committee for working with us to get these first two amendment votes scheduled this afternoon. And I certainly withdraw my reservation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Carolina [Mr. TILLIS], for himself and others, proposes an amendment numbered 1517.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To amend chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, to require the voluntary collection of demographic information for patent inventors, and for other purposes)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. **COLLECTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR PATENT INVENTORS.**

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 124. Collection of demographic information for patent inventors

“(a) VOLUNTARY COLLECTION.—The Director shall provide for the collection of demographic information, including gender, race, military or veteran status, and any other demographic category that the Director determines appropriate, related to each inventor

listed with an application for patent, that may be submitted voluntarily by that inventor.

“(b) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—The Director shall—

“(1) keep any information submitted under subsection (a) confidential and separate from the application for patent; and

“(2) establish appropriate procedures to ensure—

“(A) the confidentiality of any information submitted under subsection (a); and

“(B) that demographic information is not made available to examiners or considered in the examination of any application for patent.

“(c) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—

“(1) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.—Any demographic information submitted under subsection (a) shall be exempt from disclosure under section 552(b)(3) of title 5.

“(2) FEDERAL INFORMATION POLICY LAW.—Subchapter I of chapter 35 of title 44 shall not apply to the collection of demographic information under subsection (a).

“(d) PUBLICATION OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.—

“(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, and not later than January 31 of each year thereafter, the Director shall make publicly available a report that, except as provided in paragraph (3)—

“(A) includes the total number of patent applications filed during the previous year disaggregated—

“(i) by demographic information described in subsection (a); and

“(ii) by technology class number, technology class title, country of residence of the inventor, and State of residence of the inventor in the United States;

“(B) includes the total number of patents issued during the previous year disaggregated—

“(i) by demographic information described in subsection (a); and

“(ii) by technology class number, technology class title, country of residence of the inventor, and State of residence of the inventor in the United States; and

“(C) includes a discussion of the data collection methodology and summaries of the aggregate responses.

“(2) DATA AVAILABILITY.—In conjunction with issuance of the report under paragraph (1), the Director shall make publicly available data based on the demographic information collected under subsection (a) that, except as provided in paragraph (3), allows the information to be cross-tabulated to review subgroups.

“(3) PRIVACY.—The Director—

“(A) may not include personally identifying information in—

“(i) the report made publicly available under paragraph (1); or

“(ii) the data made publicly available under paragraph (2); and

“(B) in making publicly available the report under paragraph (1) and the data under paragraph (2), shall anonymize any personally identifying information related to the demographic information collected under subsection (a).

“(e) BIENNIAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, and every 2 years thereafter, the Director shall submit to Congress a biennial report that evaluates the data collection process under this section, ease of access to the information by the public, and recommendations on how to improve data collection.”.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“124. Collection of demographic information for patent inventors.”.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Florida [Mr. SCOTT of Florida], for himself and others, proposes an amendment numbered 1547.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To direct unobligated amounts made available under coronavirus relief legislation for purposes of carrying out this Act)

At the appropriate place in title III of division F, add the following:

SEC. 6. USE OF PREVIOUSLY APPROPRIATED FUNDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any amounts appropriated under subtitle M of title IX of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117–2) for purposes of providing assistance to State and local governmental entities that are unobligated on the date of enactment of this Act shall be made available for purposes of carrying out this Act, including the amendments made by this Act.

(b) ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the amounts made available under subsection (a) for purposes of carrying out this Act, including the amendments made by this Act, are insufficient for such purposes, any amounts appropriated under any other provision of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117–2), other than the provisions exempted under paragraph (2), that are unobligated on the date of enactment of this Act shall be made available for purposes of carrying out this Act, including the amendments made by this Act.

(2) EXEMPTIONS.—No amounts made available under subtitle D, E, F, G, or H of title II, subtitle C of title III, or title V of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117–2) may be used for purposes of carrying out this Act (or amendments made by this Act) pursuant to paragraph (1).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1012

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, in a moment I will propound a unanimous consent request. Before I do, I want to make some brief remarks.

Right now, gas stations all over the eastern seaboard are suffering from a week-long gas shortage that has left thousands of stations completely out of gas. What we have seen is reminiscent of the 1970s, when Americans had to sit in long lines to fill their cars with gas.

Why are we experiencing this crisis? Because Russian hackers attacked the Colonial Pipeline, which had to shut down operations on May 7.

What is the reward Russia gets for attacking our infrastructure? Well, on the topic of Russia, just yesterday, President Biden doubled down on what is becoming a consistent “soft on Russia” position from the Biden administration, making the decision to disregard bipartisan legislation that passed through this body seeking to shut down the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that Putin is desperately trying to complete between Russia and Germany.

That pipeline had been shut down. We had succeeded in a bipartisan vic-

tory, stopping that pipeline, but, sadly, Putin resumed building the pipeline shortly after Joe Biden was elected. Yesterday, President Biden made the decision to refuse to enforce the bipartisan sanctions on the company building the pipeline for Putin.

If that wasn't enough, it is clear the Biden administration does know how to shut down pipelines—the Keystone Pipeline. His first day in office, Joe Biden signed an Executive order shutting down the Keystone Pipeline, destroying 11,000 jobs, including 8,000 union jobs—all destroyed by the Biden-Harris administration. For whatever reason, the Biden-Harris administration seems to have a philosophy that American pipelines and American jobs are bad, but Russian pipelines and Russian jobs are apparently good. And Russian hackers should get rewarded with Putin getting billions of dollars because Joe Biden refuses to stand up to Putin.

On the impact here at home of the Russian hacking, Colonial Pipeline transports 100 million gallons of fuel all over the east coast every day. It is responsible for transporting 45 percent of the fuel on the east coast, running from Texas to New Jersey.

The Colonial Pipeline is a critical piece of infrastructure, and when it shut down, it gravely disrupted the daily lives of millions of Americans—fuel for cars, for aviation fuel, for heating homes, all completely shut down. I am standing here today because one thing this crisis has shown us is that we need to diversify how we transport energy in this country so that if our critical infrastructure is attacked again—and we know it is going to be attacked again—that we have other reliable ways to transport energy.

One way to strengthen redundancy and to strengthen our ability to make it through another attack is to allow liquefied natural gas, or LNG, to be transported by rail.

Last year, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration finalized a rule allowing the safe transportation of LNG by rail. What this rule does is enable natural gas that is used for transportation, that is used for generating electricity, for heating homes, for manufacturing, to be transported by railroad, which helps Americans in hard-to-reach areas access the fuel that they need. It also takes pressure off of other critical infrastructure to meet our energy needs.

Yet, now that Joe Biden is President and he has empowered officials in his administration who have a repeated and demonstrated hostility to American pipelines and American jobs and American energy independence, this rule is in jeopardy. When the Secretary of Transportation was before the Senate for confirmation, I repeatedly asked the Secretary to commit to maintaining the existing rule of allowing the safe transport of LNG by rail, and, repeatedly, the Secretary refused to make that commitment. The foolishness of that position is now evident

to everyone as we have gas lines and skyrocketing gas prices on the east coast and throughout the country.

Therefore, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. 1012 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Mr. MARKEY. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I appreciate the points that my colleague from Texas is making, but the bill he is proposing to pass by unanimous consent has not been considered by the Commerce Committee, and it would drastically and unilaterally tie the hands of the Department of Transportation from protecting communities from having massive amounts of dangerous, explosive liquefied natural gas shipped right through their towns and cities. I understand that the Republicans and natural gas companies want to railroad through the Senate a bill that would undermine the safety of the railroads in our communities, but we just can't allow this to happen.

In 2020, the Trump administration moved to allow trains of 100 or more cars to begin transporting liquefied natural gas with no additional safety regulations. It did this over the objections of the attorneys general of 15 States and the District of Columbia. Firefighters opposed it. Railroad unions that represented the railroad employees objected to it. The environmental community objected to it as did the National Transportation Safety Board.

Listen to this: A train of 110 tank cars, filled with liquefied natural gas, would have more than five times the equivalent energy of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

We cannot put our firefighters, our railway workers, and our homes and families at risk from loose regulations on what could be catastrophically dangerous trains. Too many lives are at stake, and the Department of Transportation should have the ability to review this rule. This bill that is being propounded right now would blind our safety watchdog when we should be putting these threats under a microscope.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, as the Senator from Massachusetts knows, there is an existing rule that went through the ordinary process in finalizing the rule—the ordinary notice and comment process—that has been pro-

mulgated by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

The Senator from Massachusetts also knows the reality that accidents by rail are very rare. While we surely don't want to see any accidents occur or have disruptions in transporting LNG by rail, what we have seen by the cyber attack on the Colonial Pipeline is that nothing is certain. There are risks to everything, but by taking precautions and diversifying our transportation methods for fuel, we make our energy industry more resilient to attacks and accidents when they, predictably, do happen in the future.

Furthermore, LNG is already transported by vessels and tanker trucks and has been for decades. Obviously, accidents can happen at sea or with tanker trucks, but that doesn't stop us from transporting LNG in those ways. Accidents on railroads are rare, and if we can transport LNG by sea and in tanker trucks on the road, we should also be able to transport it by rail, where it is safer and more efficient and more effective.

Lastly, to cope with the shutdown, the Department of Transportation granted waivers for hours-of-service requirements to truckdrivers and Jones Act waivers for vessels to continue to transport fuel to try to alleviate the shortage. That just underscores the need for LNG by rail as well.

Unfortunately, as Americans are standing in gas lines, the answer they are being given by Washington Democrats is, the challenges you are facing don't matter to the Democrats. What we have seen from this objection is that Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS support higher gas prices—much higher gas prices that you will have to pay at the pumps. They understand that much higher gas prices fall disproportionately on low-income Americans and that they fall disproportionately on African Americans and Hispanics. The Biden-Harris Democrats are willing to jack up your gas prices, to make you wait in line, and to say, essentially, "tough luck." They have no answers, but they are going to block getting energy for your home, for your vehicle, for your life, for your family.

As we stand here today with a crisis at our southern border, as we stand here today with a gas crisis and gas lines, as we stand here today with an inflation crisis on the verge of erupting, and as we stand here today with war in the Middle East, sadly, we are seeing a reprise of the 1970s—the same failed policies producing the same disastrous results—except, in the rerun, Joe Biden is Jimmy Carter 2.0 and KAMALA HARRIS is Walter Mondale. The country, sadly, is paying the price for the extreme and failed policies, and we are just 4 months into it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

TRIBUTE TO ROGER BEVERAGE

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, there is a lot going on right now. I

have already spent time on the floor today to talk about some of the economic issues—inflation, unemployment—that are happening. There are a number of jobs that are open in my State. In fact, there is a record number of job openings in my State. There is unrest in the Middle East right now, and there are all kinds of things that are happening in the world.

Yet I can't help, just for a moment, pausing to be able to reflect on a friend of mine who, in a few days, will be sitting and hanging out with his 12 grandchildren and enjoying a moment of retirement.

His name is Roger Beverage. Roger Beverage just retired as the CEO of the Oklahoma Bankers Association. He is not the big banker guy. He is the community banker guy. For 30 years, he led our State in banking and engaged in issues from the smallest of the small banks in rural Oklahoma to family-owned community banks that are scattered around our State. He worked tirelessly to help individuals get access to banking who were blocked out, and he made sure that everyone had a shot. He has been a remarkable leader, and he is just a great grandpa.

In the days ahead, I celebrate his getting time with his 12 grandchildren because he has given so much to so many others. As he spends time with his five kids—just the five kids who carry around the 12 grandchildren at this point—and as he spends time with his bride of 43 years, Paula, I want to say thank you to him.

Roger wasn't born in Oklahoma; he was born in Nebraska. If you know Nebraska and Oklahoma's long heritage of football, you will know there has been quite a rivalry for a long time. Roger graduated from college and went to law school. When he finished up law school in 1971, he enlisted in the U.S. Army right in the middle of the Vietnam era. He served 2 years in the Army, working as a lawyer. He then served 6 more years in the Reserves after that. He retired as Captain Beverage. He is also a person who has never been shy or would walk away from a challenge and is one who has constantly been focused on service.

In the middle of times that people up here in Washington, DC, wanted to equate big banks and community banks the same and to say: Let's put the pressure on the big banks but "leave the little banks alone," often the little banks got caught up in that fight, and he was one of the folks who was constantly stepping out and saying: Allow community banks to serve communities.

In rural communities, like many of mine in Oklahoma, that bank was essential to the economic development of what is happening in farming, in ranching; what is happening in every single person getting access to a car loan or a home loan or just being that friend when they need a chance to talk about financial advice.

Now, Roger is a leader, and you can imagine, with bankers, who all have

lots of opinions and lots of great leaders, he didn't agree with everybody all the time, but I would tell you something I know about Roger: He always listened. Always.

People would ask me about Roger and what I think of him, and I would say: He is a servant leader. He is a hard worker. He is a person who listens. He has strong opinions, but his strong opinions are based on his own experience in the facts of the day, but he is also a humble worker who is actually working for the best of everyone.

He will be missed in my State—21 years of serving in the State chamber and leadership in so many areas in our State—but I am grateful today and in the days ahead that he is going to finally get a chance to just be grandpa and hang out with those 12 grandchildren.

Enjoy those days, Roger. Thank you for what you have done to be able to help lead our State in this area and to be able to serve so many community bankers all across the Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

NORD STREAM 2 PIPELINE

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, as the disasters pile up left and right from these early months of the Biden Presidency, one might be called the Tail of Three Pipelines—three separate pipelines, three separate challenges, united by one consistent theme. In each case, the foolishness and weakness of the Biden administration has led to the disaster.

First, President Biden began his administration by killing the Keystone XL Pipeline on day one. This decision was a gift to the radical environmentalist nonprofit industry in Washington, DC, and destroyed thousands of good, high-paying, blue-collar, American jobs, including many jobs in my home State of Arkansas.

Second, last week Russian-affiliated hackers attacked the Colonial Pipeline—an artery that supplies nearly half the fuel for the east coast—causing widespread gas shortages across the Southeast.

Instead of making the hackers feel the full wrath of the U.S. Government, the Biden administration called the attack a private sector concern. Colonial then paid the hackers over \$4 million in ransom, presumably with Biden administration foreknowledge and acquiescence, if not explicit support. This payment, of course, will only encourage further such attacks on American companies.

Third and finally, yesterday the Biden administration announced it will waive major, legally mandated sanctions against the Russian Nord Stream 2 Pipeline into Germany. This refusal to implement sanctions approved by Congress directly benefits by design the Russian company building Nord Stream 2 and its CEO, who—you won't believe it—is a former Communist, East German Stasi officer and longtime crony of Vladimir Putin.

President Biden's decision to cave on Nord Stream 2 is just the latest show of weakness towards Russia by this administration, which is strange, coming from a party that spent the last 4 years all chesty and boastful, pretending they were Jack Ryan in a Tom Clancy novel.

Nord Stream 2 will serve as a noose around the neck of Europe's energy supply. It will allow Russia to squeeze the sovereign nations of Eastern and Central Europe into submission.

You may think I am exaggerating, but Russia has used energy as a weapon of foreign policy many times in the past. In 2009, for instance, Russia shut off the flow of natural gas to Europe during a dispute with Ukraine, causing energy shortages in the dead of winter. Russia has reduced or shut off gas to Austria, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, and Slovakia whenever those countries have refused its demands or otherwise displeased the Kremlin.

Nord Stream 2 will deepen Europe's addiction to Russian gas and make it ever more dependent on the dealer. All of Europe could suffer, but Ukraine would be hurt the most of all. If the Nord Stream 2 pipeline comes online, Russia could bypass Ukraine entirely. This would not only cost Ukraine's economy billions of dollars in transit fees, it would also give Russia the ability to isolate and starve this proud nation. It is hard to imagine a worse time for this to happen, with Russian troops massed on the Ukrainian border, while Russia's dictator salivates over conquering or further partitioning this country.

It is no wonder that the vast majority of Europe sees the dire danger posed by this pipeline. The European Parliament voted overwhelmingly against it on three separate occasions, including just last month. The United Kingdom, France, and Eastern Europe firmly oppose its construction as well. It is only a small but influential group of German elites who support this misguided plan.

It is ironic that these men and women of power and privilege would doubtlessly claim to support the so-called liberal international order, as is the fashion in such circles, but their actions are directly empowering a dictator who poses the greatest threat to their dreams; a man who rose to power and has maintained it through extortion, murder, and brutality.

Putin's most recent political rival, Alexei Navalny, was poisoned with a nerve agent and today is rotting in a Russian penal colony. Navalny's only crime was exposing the corruption and depravity of the Russian state. Yet President Biden wants to enrich and reward this very regime.

Ultimately, the pipeline is emblematic of the Biden administration's "America last" foreign policy, but there is still time to stop it. I am urging the President to reverse course immediately. There is little room for error left at this late, perilous stage.

Nord Stream 2 is 95 percent completed. Like an outstretched arm, Russia's pipeline extends ominously within reach of Germany's shore. We have to move quickly and in concert with our allies to make sure it extends no further.

This Russian pipeline is bad for America and bad for Europe. If the President wishes to take the reins of international leadership, this is his opportunity. Kill Nord Stream 2 now, and let it rust beneath the waves of the Baltic.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1714 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

ONLINE PRIVACY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, one of the benefits of vaccine rates going up is that school districts will no longer have an excuse to keep kids and teachers at home for virtual learning. But if I know kids—and as a mom and a grandmom, I can assure you, I understand the kiddos—getting them back in the classroom won't get them away from the screens.

These big tech companies in China and the Silicon Valley have done their jobs well. For many American kids, devices are integrated into their everyday lives. There is no escaping that 4-inch plate of glass in their pockets. It has become a part of their culture.

Now, this addiction to tech doesn't sit well with many parents and watchdogs. We have all heard arguments that in order to break this addiction, we need to somehow change the culture and persuade young people to break their own ties with Big Tech. I have a different argument: It is Big Tech that needs to change its culture.

As we all know, many of these companies are little more than glorified ad agencies. Facebook, Twitter, Google, and TikTok have all been successful because of their advertising strategies. Their job is to get eyeballs on content and keep fingers scrolling up and down the screen. This means that with every shiny new update, their advertising algorithms have also gotten an update.

The more complex and pervasive these tracking figures become, the harder it is for users to understand what data these companies are collecting and how that data is going to be used. Not even tech-savvy adults can keep up with the legalese in those updated privacy policies.

I think if I went around this Chamber and asked "When is the last time you read the terms of service on an app update?" I am willing to bet the answer for most of us would be "Well, it was a long time ago," or it could be maybe even never.

Big tech companies have taken advantage of that, and they have created

within their sphere a culture of pushing boundaries. It is do first, apologize later, and never ever respond to questions about their policies with a straight answer.

This Congress, I reintroduced the BROWSER Act as a way of pushing that culture toward a more consumer-friendly consent model. It would require tech companies to add opt-in and opt-out features to their data collection policies and inject some transparency into the relationship between the user and the service provider. It is a great place to start and a key element of my virtual new protection agenda.

Regulation hasn't kept up with innovation—that much is clear—but neither has demand for corporate responsibility and transparency. It is time to change that, and I encourage all of my colleagues on each side of the aisle to take a look at the BROWSER Act.

But what about those kids? Tech companies are increasingly catering to young demographics, which means the kids are exposed to more of the online world every day, which, depending on what corner you find yourself in, is a productive educational experience, or it could be a life-and-death situation.

Now, the science tells us that, physically, children do not have the cognitive ability to understand the advertisements and data collection scenarios that they are being thrown into. Their brains are simply not developed enough. But the security moms out there are keeping an eye on all of this, and they will tell you they do not need an anatomy lesson to know when their child is in over their head. They see their children following trails left for them by predators, and they are bothered. They see their daughters falling apart over body image and self-esteem issues made worse by photoshopped images. They see the violence and the sexual content in music and movies that is created for adults, but children are being exposed to this.

They have a really bad feeling about the expanding role of technology in their child's life. The stats and the scandals we are seeing every day back up their concerns.

According to Common Sense Research, 98 percent of children in this country—98 percent of children in this country—under the age of 8 have access to a mobile device at home. In 2011, just over half of the children had that kind of access. This means that 98 percent of children under age 8 are subjected to unprecedented levels of surveillance, data collection, and advertising attacks, even in supposedly kid-friendly apps.

Alphabet, Google's parent company, got caught tracking children on their school-provided devices outside of school hours. Amazon got caught collecting recordings from children's Echo Dot Kids devices. Parents and regulators have raked Google, TikTok, and Facebook over the coals for pushing products to children that would increase social media addiction.

In 2020, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received a recordbreaking 21.7 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation, and 21.4 million of those reports came from electronic service providers. If you are looking for the danger, there it is.

During yesterday's meeting of the Commerce Committee's Consumer Protection Subcommittee, Baroness Kidron had it right when she said that Facebook has not earned our trust, and I would encourage my colleagues working with me on this issue to apply this fact to Big Tech in general.

These companies are entangled in our daily lives and in the lives of our children, and they have no incentive to loosen their grip on our attention by making things easier to understand. Therefore, we have no incentive to assume they are acting with the interest of their customers in mind.

Remember that terms of service agreement we talked about earlier? Well, imagine standing by and asking a child to read, understand, and make an informed choice about whether to click the "accept" button. This is preposterous. We need to bring the parents back into the conversation and inject accountability and transparency into the process.

Last Congress, I introduced the SAFE DATA Act with my colleagues, Senators WICKER, THUNE, and FISHER. This bill contained a requirement that companies not transfer data collected from children between the ages of 13 and 16 without the explicit consent of their parent or guardian. This Congress, I hope my colleagues, Democratic and Republican, will be willing to work with me on similar legislation that truly targets this problem of child exploitation online.

We will never change the culture of Big Tech—the culture Big Tech has created for itself—if we don't take steps right now to de incentivize the monetization of children's attention and browsing habits. This is a bipartisan issue.

The Zuckerbergs and the Dorseys and the Pichais of the world who have come to testify before the Commerce Committee—they understand this. It wasn't a pleasant experience for them, but I do believe they have gotten the point. They need to understand that when it comes to privacy and safety mistakes, there is no safe harbor to be found here in the U.S. Senate, especially when it concerns the exploitation of our precious children.

What we have going on is going to be even more unpleasant when these security moms start upping the ante and start cutting off the flow of all that valuable underage data that is produced by their children online that is being data-mined by these big tech companies and then sold to advertisers, sold to the highest bidder. That is the breaking point we are rapidly approaching.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to complete my remarks before the scheduled vote.

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

CICADAS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I am fortunate enough to live in Baltimore, and I say that because I can commute every night to home, which is a real pleasure, to be able to be with my family in the evening. My wife Myrna and I normally take a morning walk before I start the day, and I can get the morning report from my neighbors as to what is on their minds.

So, this morning, you might be surprised to learn that the major topic of discussion was the Brood X, also known as the cicadas. These are the cicadas that appear every 17 years. Now, I must tell you, that became our subject because we were all trying to avoid stepping on them as we were walking.

Most of us would describe world events of the past calendar year as unprecedented, and this characterization is not wrong. For public health, for the economy, and for our democracy, the year 2021 has indeed brought us challenges previously unimaginable. However, 2021 also marks a predictably predictable natural phenomenon: the emergence of what is known as the 17-year cicadas. Reliably, every 17 years, these insects emerge in the Mid-Atlantic in droves. People greet their visits with equal amounts of scorn and excitement. Some of that is depending upon age.

I hope that we can use this 17-year marker to celebrate the scientific contributions of an unappreciated Marylander and reflect more broadly on the history of the relationship between humans and the natural environment in the Mid-Atlantic, especially the Chesapeake Bay.

Maryland sees the highest concentration of cicadas on the east coast. Scientists estimate that in some places, we have more than 25 or 30 cicadas per square foot or more than 1 million per acre. In addition to this astonishing quantity, male cicadas will perform a mating song that, in large groups, can reach the same decibel level as a lawnmower.

The cicadas' visits last only a matter of weeks for the purpose of mating, molting, and laying eggs that will eventually burrow into the ground and repeat the process in another 17 years.

In the words of prominent Maryland scientist Benjamin Banneker, "If their lives are short, they are merry," noting that "they still continue on singing till they die."

Benjamin Banneker's original handwritten document describing the cicadas in 1800 is at the Maryland Center for History and Culture in Baltimore. He accurately predicted the next 17-year cycles. Over the course of his life, he witnessed four 17-year cycles of cicadas. Benjamin Banneker may have

been the first scientist to observe and record the 17-year lifecycle of cicadas.

Banneker was born in 1731. His father, Robert Bannaky, was a formerly enslaved Black man. His mother Mary was a free woman of mixed racial heritage.

Banneker demonstrated a keen interest in the sciences after his maternal grandmother taught him to read and write, and he continued his education at a Quaker schoolhouse in Baltimore County. He quickly excelled in the area of mathematics and astronomy and is now considered one of the first African-American intellectuals to gain widespread fame.

He is probably best known for authorizing a series of commercially successful farmers' almanacs that predicted weather and tidal patterns for farmers and fishermen. Banneker also predicted lunar and solar eclipses, contributed to surveying the land for the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC, and reportedly built the first domestically produced wooden clock in the country.

In addition to his contributions to science and agriculture, Banneker advocated for abolition in a series of letters he exchanged with President Thomas Jefferson.

Mainstream historical narratives have largely excluded Banneker's accomplishments as a prominent Black intellect in the early days of our Nation. As we consider the enormous interest in the arrival of cicadas, it is appropriate that we acknowledge Banneker's early leading role in predicting the 17-year cycle.

There are few historical artifacts from Banneker's home in Maryland, which burned down shortly after his death. Fortunately, we have the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum in Catonsville, MD, which Baltimore County administers. The park tells the story of his remarkable life and the impact the natural environment of the Chesapeake Bay had in sparking his intellectual curiosity.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan issued a proclamation declaring May and June 2021 as Maryland Magicicada Months to recognize the return of the 17-year periodical cicadas and to generate public awareness about this phenomenon.

Fortunately, cicadas' buzz is worse than their bite. Cicadas do not chew, bite, or sting, so they are not a threat to humans, pets, animals, or most plants.

The unit of time marked by the arrival of the periodic cicadas in the region is a useful interval to observe how the local environment has changed over time.

Two years after the last emergence of cicadas in 2006 was the first year the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's report card was released. The habitat health values were generally poor overall in 2006, with a dramatic reduction in bay grasses. In 2019, the overall score for Chesapeake Bay was a C-minus. This

means the bay is in moderate health and is slightly improving over time. For its first ever score, the Chesapeake Bay scored B-minus. That means the larger watershed is in good health.

The path to success for Chesapeake Bay's restoration remains steep and is only becoming more challenging due to the harmful effects of climate change. Warmer and wetter weather conditions work against progress on removing pollutants and creating habitats conducive to population regrowth. The Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Blueprint set forth a timeline for the six watershed jurisdictions that end in 2025.

Now more than ever, we need State, local, and Federal partners working in tandem to meet these goals. The Chesapeake Bay Program will play a central role in that effort, bringing various Federal Agencies, State and local governments, and nonprofit organizations together to meet these goals.

A 17-year review of progress for the Chesapeake Bay should energize the community to work hard to meet our goals. In order to do so, we need the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to play its role as the referee for the Chesapeake Bay Program. The success of the effort depends on the stringent enforcement of statewide pollution reduction plans by the EPA.

As we consider the next arrival of cicadas in the area in 2038, it is impossible not to look ahead to the climate goals the Biden administration has enumerated. By 2030, President Biden has pledged that the United States should have reduced economy-wide net greenhouse gas pollution by 50 to 52 percent. This goal is also referred to as the nationally determined contribution, which is formally submitted to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. President Biden made this announcement during the Leaders Summit on Climate, which serves to demonstrate the return of the United States to leadership on climate issues.

The natural environment is probably one of the most obvious markers of the passage of time and provides an appropriate moment of reflection. Seasonal changes, growing trees and crops, and even the arrival of the cicadas can push us to acknowledge where we have met our objectives and where we have fallen short on our goals. In terms of our local and global environmental restoration goals, we have a lot of work to do before 2037.

TRIBUTE TO LOUISE FOSTER

Madam President, as we reflect on change, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate a member of my personal staff, Louise Foster, on her matriculation at Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs this fall.

"Weezie," as everyone who knows her calls her, has spent the last 3 years providing outstanding public service in my Washington, DC, office, first as a staff assistant on the frontline of constituent service and now as a legisla-

tive aide, applying science to environmental and infrastructure policy.

While my staff and I will miss her, we wish her the very best of luck and a little cicada magic in her academic pursuits.

With that, I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 1517

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be up to 2 minutes of debate, equally divided on amendment 1517.

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 2 minutes.

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

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I would like to thank Senator TILLIS for working with me on this amendment, amendment No. 1517, to the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, which comes from our work on the IDEA Act, a bill that passed the Judiciary Committee last month with bipartisan support.

Promoting innovation is key to ensuring the United States remains competitive in an increasingly competitive global economy. Unfortunately, the limited data that is available suggests large segments of American society are not engaging with a key component of the innovation economy, the U.S. patent system.

Women make up only 13 percent of inventors. Black and Hispanic college graduates patent at approximately half the rate of their White counterparts. Closing these patent gaps would turbocharge the U.S. economy.

One study found that including more women and Black Americans in the early stages of innovation could grow our economy by 3.3 percent. Hold that thought. Another found that eliminating the patent gap for women with science and engineering degrees alone would grow the economy by another 2.7 percent. We are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars of growth to our economy.

But if we have any hope of closing these patent gaps, we must first get a firm grasp on who is and who is not using the patent system. Unfortunately, the PTO—Patent and Trademark Office—does not collect demographic data on applicants. As a result, researchers are forced to guess an applicant's gender based on his or her name, determine an applicant's race by cross-referencing census data, or explore other options that are time-consuming, unreliable, or both.

Our amendment solves this problem. It would enable the PTO to collect demographic data from patent applicants on a volunteer basis. I want to repeat that. This is on a volunteer basis. Nobody is forcing anyone to provide this kind of information. This data could then be analyzed by the PTO and outside researchers to identify where patent gaps exist and how to address them.

Let me be clear. Simply providing researchers more data would not solve

the patent gaps facing women, racial minorities, and so many others, but it is a critical first step. We need to have data with which to make decisions.

I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, there are inventors in Colorado and Hawaii and across this Nation whom we don't even know about because the fact is, we have missed the opportunity to engage more people and have more diverse inventors.

We have to look at this from several different perspectives. Let's look at it from a national security perspective.

I have chaired the Intellectual Property Subcommittee for the last two Congresses. We heard endless reports of how China is churning out patents and more and more patents, breaking records every day. This commonsense amendment does nothing more than allow people to submit information that we can use to get a better beat on communities that we need to get into to create more intellectual property, to create more patents, and to get more people engaged in the patents and intellectual property system. With this bill, I believe we will make great strides.

I hope everybody will vote for this amendment.

Thank you.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1517

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

The result was announced—yeas 71, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 196 Leg.]

YEAS—71

Baldwin	Fischer	Murray
Bennet	Gillibrand	Ossoff
Blumenthal	Grassley	Padilla
Blunt	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Portman
Brown	Hickenlooper	Reed
Burr	Hirono	Risch
Cantwell	Hoeben	Rosen
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cardin	Kaine	Sanders
Carper	Kelly	Sasse
Casey	King	Schatz
Collins	Klobuchar	Schumer
Coons	Leahy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lujan	Shaheen
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Sinema
Cramer	Markey	Smith
Crapo	Menendez	Stabenow
Duckworth	Merkley	Sullivan
Durbin	Moran	Tester
Feinstein	Murphy	Tillis

Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock

Warren
Whitehouse
Wicker

Wyden
Young

NAYS—27

Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Braun
Cassidy
Cotton
Cruz
Daines
Ernst

Graham
Hagerty
Hawley
Inhofe
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis

Marshall
McConnell
Paul
Romney
Scott (FL)
Shelby
Thune
Toomey
Tuberville

NOT VOTING—2

Murkowski

Rubio

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this amendment, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1517) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1547

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be up to 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, on amendment No. 1547.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, the COVID-19 pandemic was devastating to our Nation and Congress came together in a bipartisan fashion to provide unprecedented relief for 2020.

Unfortunately, Democrats ditched that bipartisan approach in their so-called COVID bill, the American Rescue Plan, which was full of wasteful spending which has nothing to do with the crisis. It didn't receive a single Republican vote. Only 10 percent of the funds in the American Rescue Plan are related to COVID-19 and spending for vaccines is less than 1 percent.

With our Nation nearly \$30 trillion in debt and rising inflation, this spending is irresponsible and reckless.

One of the more ridiculous examples of waste was \$350 billion included for State and local bailouts, even though our States are doing just fine. In fact, California just announced it will have a \$75 billion surplus. Reckless spending has consequences, and we need to be fiscally responsible in every use of taxpayer dollars.

This amendment would simply pay for the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act and all provisions of this bill by using unobligated, unnecessary funding for the American Rescue Plan. I ask for your support.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I enjoy working with my colleague from Florida on many issues, but on this particular issue, I disagree.

This amendment harms both my State and our Nation. It literally is saying: Take the money that went to local governments in the rescue plan and repeal it to pay for the Endless Frontier Act.

It said by the date of the enactment of this, if that money is repealed, it can go and take other money that was part of the recovery plan that isn't spent and start taking money from it.

I think this is the wrong way to do that. This would take money imme-

diately away from Tribes. It would take money away from healthcare. It would take money away from broadband and, eventually, it could take money away from things like aerospace, manufacturing, and money that is there for the people who have been impacted by the downturn who no longer have jobs and need to be retrained and skilled.

I think we should pay for the Endless Frontier Act as our appropriator colleagues will get the chance. Please don't ruin this bill by basically trying to pay for it with repealing State dollars.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1547

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1547.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 197 Leg.]

YEAS—47

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

NAYS—50

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

NOT VOTING—3

Graham Murkowski Rubio

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). On this vote, the yeas are 47 and the nays are 50.

Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for adoption, the amendment is not agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1547) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 226

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I am proud to stand today in support of our great ally Israel. Israel is a vibrant democracy that supports capitalism, champions human rights, and holds free and open elections. Since its reestablishment in 1948, the United States has been Israel's most fervent supporter, and my home State of Florida has maintained a strong relationship with Israel throughout these years.

As Governor, I took a stand against discrimination and prohibited State agencies and local governments from contracting with companies boycotting Israel. I also signed legislation to ensure the State of Florida will not support those who participate in the BDS movement.

I traveled to Israel three times as the Governor of Florida to support our strong economic partnership and celebrate the opening of the new Embassy in Jerusalem. Israel's economic strength is key to its ability to defend itself and our common interests.

Last Congress, I was proud to cosponsor a bill recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and also supported the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act to promote security and energy partnerships in the Eastern Mediterranean.

While I visited Israel numerous times, my most recent trip as Senator gave me a clear perspective on Israel's proximity to its enemies Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS, and Iran. For decades, the people of Israel have endured unyielding attacks from terrorist groups, like Hamas, which with Iran's support and funding wish to destroy the Jewish State and its people.

Now, as thousands of rockets rain down, our resolve to stand with Israel must be stronger than ever. I want to be clear: Israel has every right to defend and protect its people from terrorist attacks and to do whatever is necessary to stop the murder of its citizens and foreign nationals residing in Israel.

No country—certainly not the United States—would allow the murder of its citizens. The terrorists blasting these rockets into Israel are the same terrorists that chant “Death to America.” They don't believe in democracy, and they want Israel wiped off the face of the Earth. As our great ally and the only shining example of democracy in the Middle East, Israel deserves our full support. Today and every day, the United States must align with those fighting for freedom and democracy, clearly denounce terrorism, and stand up against those who do not respect human rights.

The Trump administration made tremendous efforts to facilitate peace and prosperity between our great ally Israel and neighboring Arab nations, but we see the Biden administration

trying to unravel this progress and appease illegitimate Palestinian leaders, demonstrating once again the Democrats' reckless disregard for the security and prosperity of Israel.

The Palestinian leadership, which has been operating as a dictatorship for 15 years, had their last election for President in 2005. Biden has restored U.S. aid to the Palestinians, who openly support terrorism, wage war against Israel, and do not recognize its existence.

I am disgusted to see the anti-Israel agenda being pushed by the radical left. The Biden administration can't go down this path. They need to stop trying to rejoin the horrible Iran deal. Biden needs to stop his weak and misguided strategy and keep maximum pressure on the Ayatollah until Iran is no longer a threat to U.S. national security.

Israel deserves our full support; Israel deserves the right to peace and security; Israel deserves the right to protect its people from reprehensible terrorist attacks; and Israel deserves the right to take whatever means are necessary to stop the murder of its citizens and foreign nationals residing in Israel.

Because we have no greater ally in our efforts to preserve peace and secure our interests in the Middle East, I am proud to lead 29 of my colleagues today to condemn the escalating attacks by Hamas against Israel and thank them for joining me on this effort.

The resolution reaffirms the unwavering commitment of the United States to Israel and its right to take whatever means necessary to stop the murder of its citizens and foreign nationals residing in Israel. It is time for the U.S. Senate to say that enough is enough and unanimously adopt this resolution to make it clear that the United States stands with Israel. These terrorists need to know that acts of aggression toward Israel will never be tolerated.

President Biden should take immediate action to remind these terrorists and the world of the strong and unwavering support of the United States for the Israeli people, and we should stop cowering to the anti-Israel radical left.

I look forward to my colleagues joining me today to stand with Israel.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 226, submitted earlier today. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and I will object to the unanimous consent request by Senator SCOTT and offer my

own resolution. Unlike Senator SCOTT's resolution, mine is short and to the point, and I think it expresses the feelings of the overwhelming majority of people in our country and, in fact, throughout the world.

This is what our resolution says:

Whereas every Palestinian life matters; and

Whereas every Israeli life matters:

Now, therefore be it resolved that the Senate urges an immediate cease-fire to prevent any further loss of life; and further escalation of conflict in Israel and the Palestinian territories, and supports diplomatic efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to uphold international law and to protect the human rights of Israelis and Palestinians.

I would like to thank my colleagues Senator WARREN, Senator VAN HOLLEN, Senator KAINE, Senator CARPER, Senator HEINRICH, Senator MURPHY, Senator MERKLEY, Senator OSSOFF, Senator LEAHY, and Senator MARKEY for cosponsoring this resolution.

I would also like to point out that those of us who are supporting an immediate cease-fire are certainly not alone. We join with nearly unanimous calls from the European Union, with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, with Pope Francis, and with many others. In other words, all over the world people are seeing the terrible tragedy that is taking place in the region, and they want an end to it as quickly as possible through a cease-fire.

Now, I happened to have read Senator SCOTT's resolution, and I was particularly struck by one sentence in it on page 2. What it says:

The Senate mourns the loss of innocent life caused by Hamas' rocket attacks.

That is on page 2. Now, I certainly agree with that, and I think every Member of Congress agrees with that. The loss of 12 innocent Israeli lives is, in fact, a tragedy.

But what about the loss of 227 Palestinian lives, including 64 children and 38 women? Does Senator SCOTT not believe that the loss of those Palestinian lives, 64 children and 38 women, among others, is not a tragedy?

I believe that we should be mourning the loss of Israeli life, but we should also be mourning the loss of Palestinian lives or perhaps some people think that Palestinian lives don't matter. I would hope not.

And let us be very clear that when we talk about the tragedy that is now taking place in Gaza, what we are talking about is not only the terrible loss of life. As I hope most people know, Gaza, before this war, was an extremely poor and desperate community, and the latest Israeli bombardment has only made a bad situation much, much worse.

Let us remember, Gaza has been under a blockade since 2007, imposed by Israel and Egypt. Most people are unable to leave. Basic necessities are extremely hard to obtain.

Gaza is the home to about 2 million inhabitants. Its population density is among the highest in the world—just a

huge amount of people squeezed into a very small area. More than half of the population of Gaza, some 56 percent, live below the poverty line. Seventy percent of the population is receiving aid, according to estimates by the United Nations. Food rations constitute most of that aid. Unemployment in Gaza is around 45 percent; 48 percent of the population is under the age of 18; and 70 percent—let me repeat—70 percent of the young people in Gaza are unemployed, with no hope for the future.

And because of this war, the bombardment from Israeli planes, the situation has gotten even worse.

Today's New York Times reports that the Israeli bombardment has—this is from the New York Times—“damaged 17 hospitals and clinics in Gaza.” Got that? Seventeen hospitals and clinics have been damaged.

The bombardment has “wrecked its only coronavirus test laboratory, sent fetid wastewater into its streets and broken water pipes serving at least 800,000 people. Sewage systems inside Gaza have been destroyed. A desalination plant that helped provide fresh water to [a quarter of a million] people in the territory is offline. Dozens of schools have been damaged or closed, forcing some 600,000 students to miss classes. Some 72,000 Gazans have been forced to flee their homes.”

That is from the New York Times this morning. Perhaps the situation has gotten even worse. I don't know. I want everybody to think for a moment what it means to be living in a very small territory, with dozens and dozens of planes attacking and bombing. What does it mean, in particular, to the children of Gaza?

Jess Ghannam, a professor of psychiatry at the University of California San Francisco who specializes in the psychological effects of armed conflict on children, told USA Today:

[What] children in Gaza are exposed to on a regular basis exceeds anything, anything that any children anywhere else in the world experience. There's basically no place to go for these children. They are unable to escape.

When you put people under this sort of continued, intense pressure, with no hope for a better future, you cannot be surprised when violence erupts. Indeed, 3 years ago, in May of 2018, I wrote a letter, with 12 of my colleagues, urging the Trump administration to do more to alleviate the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. In that letter, we cited Israeli defense officials—Israeli defense officials—who were warning that if the crisis was not addressed, it could lead to yet another eruption of violence.

Why didn't we take notice then? And when this latest war ends, will the United States once again turn away? Will we consign those children, once again, to the horrible conditions they are forced to live under today? And I would hope that my colleagues appreciate that we must not do that.

Senator SCOTT's resolution says a lot about Hamas terrorists in Gaza. And

let us be clear, Hamas is a terrorist organization. It is a corrupt organization, and it is a repressive organization. But here is the irony: It is resolutions like Senator SCOTT's that help Hamas. Hamas would be overjoyed if Senator SCOTT's resolution were to pass.

Now, why is that? Let us understand that one of Hamas's goals is to show Palestinians that they represent the real resistance to the occupation. Senator SCOTT's resolution would help them do just that. By making this all about Hamas, Hamas, Hamas, Senator SCOTT is effectively echoing Hamas's own argument that Hamas is the true face of Palestinians' struggle, and I reject that, because, my friends, day after day, year after year, decade after decade, nonviolent Palestinian activists struggle against the daily violence and harassment of occupation—violence and harassment subsidized, by the way, with billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

Let us be very clear. No one is arguing that Israel or any government does not have the right to self-defense and the responsibility to protect its people. We should understand that, while Hamas's firing rockets into Israeli communities is absolutely unacceptable, today's conflict did not begin with those rockets. It goes much, much deeper.

For years we have seen a deepening Israeli occupation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and a perpetual blockade on Gaza, all of which makes life increasingly unbearable for the Palestinian people. The truth is that these policies, like this current war, will continue to strengthen—to strengthen—extremists on both sides, including Hamas. If you want to strengthen Hamas, support this war.

We, Congress, must understand that in more than a decade of his rightwing rule in Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu has cultivated an increasingly intolerant and authoritarian-type of racist nationalism. In his frantic effort to stay in power and avoid prosecution for corruption, Netanyahu has legitimized extremist forces, such as the Jewish Power party, by bringing them into the government.

Moreover, we should understand that these dangerous trends are not unique to Israel. What was going on and what is going on in Israel, in my view, is a political tragedy, but it is part of a trend that is going on around the world, including here in the United States, where we are seeing the rise of authoritarian nationalist movements.

These movements exploit ethnic and racial hatreds in order to build power for a corrupt few, rather than prosperity, justice, and peace for the many. For the last 4 years, these movements have had a friend in the Trump White House, and on January 6, those forces attacked this very Chamber.

It is no accident that the only European Union country that did not join the nearly unanimous statement yes-

terday calling for a cease-fire was Hungary. Hungary did not join the rest of the European Union, and Hungary, of course, is led by the ethno-nationalist authoritarian Viktor Orban, a strong ally of both Netanyahu and Donald Trump.

Now, some may choose to be on that side, but that is not the side I choose to be on. We must be on the side of those who want to build a society based on real security and political equality and based upon the principles of economic justice, racial justice, political justice, social justice, and environmental justice. I believe we must stand in solidarity with those Palestinians and Israelis working to build a future of equality and peaceful coexistence and not with the intolerant extremists on either side, who wish to destroy that future.

In this moment of crisis, the United States should be urging an immediate cease-fire. My colleagues, I strongly believe that the United States has a major role to play in helping the world build a more peaceful and prosperous future, one in which human rights are upheld and the life of every human being is valued.

We should be leading the world in combating the existential threat of climate change. We should be leading the world in making sure that every person on Earth, no matter what country he or she lives in, receives a vaccine to protect them from the COVID-19 virus, and, yes, we should lead the world in attempting to bring the Israeli people and the Palestinian people together.

If the United States is going to be a credible voice on human rights on the global stage, we must recognize that Palestinian rights matter. Palestinian lives matter.

Madam President, I object to the Scott resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, today is a sad day for the U.S. Senate, and one we will not forget. No one in this body supports the loss of innocent lives—no one. But let me be very clear about what we just witnessed. We just saw the Democratic Party completely abandon the sovereignty of Israel in support of a terrorist organization. The radical left is fully embracing the lie of false equivalence and refuses to plainly state: Israel has the right to defend itself, period.

The resolution I offered today simply reaffirms our support of Israel, one of our greatest allies and our most important ally in the Middle East. And it condemns the escalating terrorist attacks against Israel.

This isn't controversial. In fact, it is in line with everything America has stood for, for generations. It is actually in line with what my colleague just wrote in his op-ed for the New York Times. He said: “No one is arguing that Israel, or any government, does not

have the right to self-defense or to protect its people." So why is he objecting to this today? Does he agree with the radical left that the United States shouldn't follow through with a critical arms sale to Israel as it continues to face attacks?

It was not long ago that the Senate, including my colleague, stood with Israel on a bipartisan basis. In fact, in 2014, when Israel was again subject to a barrage of rockets targeting innocent Israelis, then-Majority Leader Reid offered a resolution supporting Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas.

The 2014 resolution even acknowledges the simple truth that "Hamas refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist." It also said: "Hamas refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist." It says: "Hamas uses rockets to indiscriminately target civilians in Israel." It says: "Hamas intentionally uses civilians as human shields." And it resolved to "condemn Hamas's terrorist actions."

The Senate, including my colleague, unanimously supported then-Majority Leader Reid's resolution supporting Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas and never said at that time that the resolution would embolden Hamas. Yet, today, something has changed for my colleague. You are seeing a growing and dangerous anti-Israel agenda permeate the Halls of Congress. Israel is a country surrounded by nations and terrorist groups that want it wiped off the face of the Earth. And as rockets rain down in Israel, my colleague refuses to stand with our ally.

I will say it again. Today is a sad day for the U.S. Senate and one we will not forget. I will never accept a weakened position on Israel—never. I will never stop fighting to support Israel and ensure the Biden administration upholds the longstanding and special partnership between the United States and Israel.

I yield the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 225

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 225, submitted earlier today; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, reserving the right to object, my colleague is wrong for trying to boil this down in an attempt to distract from the reality we are seeing here today.

The radical left is fully embracing the lie of false equivalence and refuses to plainly state: Israel has the right to defend itself, period.

My colleague's resolution offers nothing supporting Israel's rightful efforts to stop this repeated cycle of vio-

lence. No one in this body welcomes the loss of innocent life—no one. But we cannot and I will not accept the left's ignorance of the evil and devastating role Iran plays in funding and supporting Hamas, the terrorist organization responsible for taking innocent lives.

My colleague's resolution offers nothing to condemn Iran, the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism. My colleague's resolution offers nothing to condemn Hamas.

Here is the difference between Israel and Hamas. Hamas uses its rockets to kill innocent Israelis. Israel uses its rockets to defend its people. It should not be difficult for the Senate to simply reaffirm our support of Israel, one of our greatest allies and our most important ally in the Middle East, and condemn the escalating terrorist attacks against Israel and its right to end the murder of its citizens.

It wasn't difficult to get that done in 2014, when my colleague and every other Member of the Senate unanimously supported then-Majority Leader Reid's resolution supporting Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas. The same resolution also said: "Hamas refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist." It says: "Hamas uses rockets to indiscriminately target civilians in Israel." And it says: "Hamas intentionally uses civilians as human shields." And it resolved to "condemn Hamas's terrorists actions."

So what does my colleague believe has changed about the facts on the ground since then? Here is what has changed. The Democrats now have a powerful and growing anti-Israel caucus in their party who defend terrorism against Israel. The Democratic Party has abandoned American values, and now they are abandoning American allies.

And, as I said earlier, we can't allow this dangerous anti-Israel agenda to permeate the Halls of Congress. We can't allow a blatant blind eye to be turned to Israel.

Israel is a country surrounded by nations and terrorist groups that want it wiped off the face of Earth. I will never accept a weakened position on Israel—never. And I am not going to stop fighting to support Israel and ensure the Biden administration upholds a longstanding and special partnership between the United States and Israel.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the situation in the Middle East is a stark contrast from that of just 9 months ago.

Last summer, the United States helped broker the Abraham Accords—a historic step in the relationship between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. The UAE became the third Arab country—the first Gulf State—to recognize and normalize relations with Israel. Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan would follow suit shortly thereafter.

These agreements mark historic progress toward peace in decades and appear to open a new era of diplomacy in the Middle East.

Today, though, the optimism we felt just a little less than a year ago has been replaced with more violence—more violence—and more destruction than we have seen in years and civilian casualties that continue to climb every day.

Hamas has fired thousands of rockets into civilian populations in Israel. If not for the Iron Dome anti-rocket defense system and the U.S. support and funding that made it possible, the death toll would be significantly higher than it is.

Just as any sovereign state under attack by terrorist forces would do, Israel has defended its citizens. Given the way Hamas uses Palestinian civilians as human shields—a war crime, by the way, for which Hamas alone is responsible—the counterstrikes have carried a human cost.

As the conflict has intensified, some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have called into question Israel's right to defend itself. They have acted as though there is some moral equivalency between the terrorist acts of Hamas and Israel's right to defend itself. They have called on the President to speak out against the conduct of Israel but not Hamas. It is as though they think that Israel is somehow a terrorist group, not the other way around.

As I said, Hamas has launched thousands of rockets specifically headed toward civilian targets in Israel. The moral equivalency argument between Hamas's attack and Israel's response is clearly divorced from any reality.

Let's be clear, though. This conflict is not a welcome development for anyone. The Israeli and the Palestinian people are bearing the cost of a conflict that they had no hand in creating.

It is important to remember that two things can be true. First, Israel has a right to defend itself. If Hamas or any other terrorist group or state launches an attack on Israel, its government has both the right and the responsibility to respond and protect its citizens. Secondly, the number of civilian casualties on both sides, particularly the number of children, is heartbreaking. Both of those things are true.

The violence and destruction we are seeing is devastating, made even more upsetting by the progress we appeared to have made just last year. But this is not a conflict between two governments; this is a sovereign state defending itself against a terrorist attack.

I am afraid that message has been lost on President Biden. When asked about the conflict earlier this week, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the administration is using "quiet and intensive diplomacy"—"quiet and intensive diplomacy" while the rockets are raining down on civilian populations in Israel.

The only democracy in the Middle East is being attacked by a terrorist

organization, and the diplomatic strategy of the leader of the free world includes remaining quiet. I am reminded of President Obama's statement—bizarre now, in retrospect—talking about “leading from behind,” an oxymoronic doctrine which gave way to disastrous, albeit predictable, consequences in Libya. We continued to see the dire cost of poor American leadership in other foreign countries. In Yemen, in Iraq, Syria, and Ukraine, leading from behind has done nothing but harm the cause of peace.

I hope this serves as a wake-up call for President Biden of the dangers of a similar quest. “Quiet and intensive diplomacy” is not the appropriate course when one of our closest allies in the world is being attacked by an internationally recognized terrorist organization.

But we can't lose sight of the country behind the curtain, the silent financier of this conflict, which is Iran, the No. 1 state sponsor of international terrorism, because this is, in fact, a proxy war waged against the Jewish State.

Iran is a prolific state sponsor of terrorism and has felt growing pressure from the United States and its allies in recent years. The Trump administration withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and placed sanctions on hundreds of businesses and individuals who have helped finance Iran's illicit activities. And there is no question that Iran stood to lose the most from the peace agreements brokered last year. The threat of Iran was largely responsible for these countries to come together and to lay down their arms and to work together.

The Biden administration has made clear it intends to recklessly revive the Iran deal, while loosening the sanctions that would provide the United States leverage to negotiate better terms. These important sanctions target Iran's support for terrorist groups like Hamas, as well as its ballistic missile development and human rights violations.

Removing them now, essentially unilaterally, is a grave mistake. Simply by signaling this intent, President Biden has already emboldened and encouraged Iran's malign activities through its proxies—Hamas, Hezbollah, and others.

This current loss of life and destruction demonstrate that Iran is capable of wielding deadly force, even with lean resources. Fewer sanctions, though, have meant less cash flowing to their terrorist proxies.

This week, we are reminded of the saying that has been around for years: “If Hamas laid down its weapons today, there would be no more violence. If Israel laid down its weapons, there would be no more Israel.”

America must remain steadfast in our commitment to support Israel, as well as our responsibility to counter threats posed by terrorist organizations like Hamas and malign nation state actors like Iran.

I hope for a day in the future when the Middle East can be a place of peace, stability, and democracy, but we simply will not reach that point without a strong and secure Israel.

I stand in full support of Israel and will continue to fight for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. The United States does not bow down to terrorist organizations, and we will not allow our allies to be bullied and beaten by Hamas or any other terrorist group.

(Mr. OSSOFF assumed the Chair.)

S. 1260

Mr. President, on one final matter, we know the Endless Frontier legislation, which is on the floor today, is part of our response to the competition caused by an increasingly belligerent and aggressive China, and I am glad the Senate has taken up consideration of this legislation.

In coming days, I expect both sides to offer amendments to strengthen this legislation and to ensure that it addresses a broad range of strategic threats. As Leader MCCONNELL has said, a robust amendment process is critical to the success of this legislation.

One of the most pressing needs, though, is to bolster our domestic semiconductor manufacturing, which will be addressed and is addressed by the underlying bill. We rely on these microelectronic circuits, or semiconductors, for everything from our telephones that we have in our pockets to the cars in our driveways, to the missile defense systems that are right now knocking down Hamas rockets raining down over Israel.

Over the past couple of decades, as our need for semiconductors has increased, as we have become more technologically centric, so has our dependence on the countries that produce those semiconductors.

Here is a graphic reminder of our dependency on foreign supply chains in order to supply these critical semiconductors that are so important to our economy and to our national security. As you can see, 63 percent of the global market supply of semiconductors comes from Taiwan, 18 percent comes from South Korea, 6 percent from China, but nearly 90 percent of chips are sourced from Southeast Asia.

As we learned in the pandemic called COVID-19, vulnerable supply chains are something we need to be aware of and to fight against.

I am reminded of what President Jimmy Carter said in 1980 in the State of the Union Message when he spoke about the Persian Gulf and Soviet threats to the movement of essential energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz. President Carter at that time articulated the Carter doctrine, as it came to be known. He said:

An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America.

In other words, it would be an act of war because of the dramatic depend-

ence that the United States had at that time on oil flowing through the Strait of Hormuz.

But I think you could consider today that semiconductors are the new oil. Instead of the Strait of Hormuz, we are now dependent on a supply chain from parts of the world we can no longer depend upon.

Just as a blockade would have left the world with devastating consequences, a blockade of the semiconductor supply chain would have far-reaching, negative consequences to our national security and economy. In fact, we are getting a glimpse of what that might look like right now.

There is a global semiconductor shortage that is largely related to COVID-19 and has led to far-reaching consequences across virtually every industry. In Texas a couple of weeks ago, I met with executives from companies across the range of industries that have been impacted by the shortage of semiconductors, including automotive, consumer electronics, and defense.

So we need a strong response to restore domestic semiconductor manufacturing, which is why last year, Senator WARNER, the Senator from Virginia, and I introduced what we call the CHIPS for America Act. Thanks to the leadership of then-Chairman JIM INHOFE on the Senate Armed Services Committee, that became law, and it will help restore American semiconductor manufacturing by creating a Federal incentive to encourage chip manufacturing right here in the U.S.A.

But the thing we couldn't do then, even though the amendment we introduced passed 96 to 4, to authorize this Federal incentive program, the one thing that was missing was the money and the finances in order to make this happen.

My preference is always to fund things through the regular order whenever possible. We simply cannot get into the habit of cutting the Appropriations Committee out of the appropriations process. But there is clearly broad support for the CHIPS for America Act. As I said, 96 Senators voted to include it in the Defense Authorization Act.

I am committed to securing funding for the program created by the bill, and there have been many conversations about the alternatives available to us on how to do so.

Originally, we introduced a tax credit provision, but unfortunately that did not seem to gain the traction that we needed. When we tried to get the funding in December, we came up empty-handed.

But today I am glad to say there is a significant emergency appropriation included in the underlying bill. But unfortunately, politics being what it is and Washington being a political city, there are unnecessary and purely political provisions related to the payment of prevailing wages, which U.S. semiconductor manufacturing companies already pay their employees, and they

have created a problem for funding this noncontroversial measure to bring chip production back to American soil.

I have reached out to our friends across the aisle to try to work in good faith to reach a compromise that allows this funding to pass with a broad bipartisan majority. There is a clear and urgent need to bolster domestic semiconductor manufacturing and to secure one of our most, if not the most, critical supply chains.

Here is what a recent support of the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence said:

[The United States is almost entirely reliant on foreign sources for production of cutting-edge semiconductors critical for defense systems and industry more broadly, leaving the U.S. supply chain vulnerable to disruption by foreign government action or natural disaster.]

It is clear that other countries—notably China—are steadily investing in their own semiconductor manufacturing. Today, as I speak, China is building 17 fabs, or manufacturing facilities, in the People's Republic of China.

The United States needs to compete, and in order to do so, we need to pass this essential funding. We should not be bogged down by bipartisan or political points to be scored when, in fact, they really don't make any difference to the semiconductor industry because they already pay high wages. The only reason to do this is to try to advance the interests of organized labor and impose additional costs on the construction of these advanced fabrication facilities.

The fact is, this actually expands the role of prevailing wage requirements because this is essentially private construction, funded in part—in a modest part—by U.S. Federal tax dollars. So now is not the time to let politics get in the way of our progress. It is just simply too important to our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, before the Senator from Texas leaves the floor, I want to acknowledge that in Oklahoma, last Sunday, I was with a group of people, and, independent of each other, they asked the same question: Where is America, and what is happening over there right now? Our best friend and most loyal ally in that part of the world, Israel, is being hit by terrorists, and we are sitting back and not doing anything. It is just not thinkable that that could happen.

I think one of the most meaningful things that I had not heard before, stated this way, that the Senator from Texas stated was, if Hamas were to stop the attacks on Israel, Israel would do nothing, but if Israel were to stop responding, there would be no Israel left.

That is the situation we have there. It is something that is not understandable. It is something that we are going to do everything we can to reverse.

That is not why I am here on the floor, but I just wanted to mention that.

S. 1260

Mr. President, on this legislation that we are working on right now, we have an amendment. Senator SHELBY and I, jointly, have an amendment.

Now, we did this initially because I chaired the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee, and it is an agreement that we had 10 years ago. We agreed on parity, that anything that we do that is going to be defense-related is going to be equaled by nondefense.

Now, that has been our pattern, Democrats and Republicans, for 10 years, but now the situation has changed, the way it is structured now in this bill, so that there is nothing in there for defense.

Here we are in the most threatened position we have ever been in with China. Yet the China bill is doing all these things with China, but it is not doing anything in terms of the military that we are suffering under right now.

We have to remember—a lot of people have forgotten this—that two administrations ago, in the Obama administration, we had a situation where, during the last 5 years—that would have been from 2010 to 2015—the President at that time, President Obama, had reduced the budget for defense by 25 percent. During the same timeframe, China had increased theirs by 83 percent.

Now, just look at that. That is what was happening. That was back in 2015, and now the situation is really getting worse because, since that time, China has increased its capabilities in hypersonics and other areas, so that they are actually ahead of us in many areas.

So what we want to do is just to be sure that, whatever product we come out with, we end up having parity between defense spending and nondefense spending. It is something we have been doing for a long period of time.

So the threat has not improved over the last 3 years but has only gotten worse. I think that any bill that really seeks to address the threat from China—the whole threat from China—must also address China's very real military and its broader military-civil fusion that is taking place right now. That is why any response can't separate out military and economic competition. It must be whole of government. And this bill is only focused on economic competition, not military.

Our amendment, SHELBY's amendment and mine, will make sure that any increase in nondefense, discretionary spending will be matched by the same level of increase to the defense spending. Now, this is not something that is just Republican. This is something that was agreed upon some 10 years ago by Democrats and Republicans. Yet that is not what we are looking at with this. So this would merely be going back and agreeing

with what we all agreed to, Democrats and Republicans.

In fact, in this document right here—we often refer to this document. This is the NDAA document that was put together, to remind my fellow Members here, this was six Democrats and six Republicans, all recognized in their skills in military planning, coming up with this document. This was 2018. Yet, today, it is just as applicable as it was back then. And that is what they talk about—what is necessary this year to spend on military to try to keep some type of a parity with China.

Now, this has to be our top priority. Our security underwrites everything else we do as a nation. That is why America is viewed as the leader of the free world. It can't be either one or the other. It has got to be both.

The Chinese are competing against us in every area, and this bill currently does nothing to bolster our national defense to confront this threat or to leverage our military and intelligence community's significant research and development expertise in this area. It doesn't establish the sort of cooperation between our defense and commercial sectors on technology and technological development that we need.

China isn't just investing in technology, manufacturing, and research; they are also investing in military. They are putting more money into modernizing their military than ever before. China is on a modernization sprint. They have been channeling money into building weapons that we don't even have yet, like hypersonics.

I was embarrassed about a year ago when China came out and in China, in their parade, they were displaying hypersonics, things we don't even have yet. That didn't used to be that way. It used to be, following the Second World War, that we always kept ahead at that time. We recognized that there was a risk there and that the risk was something we had to meet.

So they are on track to dominate in new capabilities like artificial intelligence and hypersonics and other areas. So, meanwhile, we are crawling forward because we aren't giving our military the resources they need to stay competitive with China.

We know what that looks like. It is at least 3 to 5 percent in real growth. Now, that is actually what is in this document right now. They have updated this to show that right now we should, in order to stay even with China, be upgrading somewhere between 3 and 5 percent, this year, in this budget. And we are reducing the amount. It doesn't even meet the cost of living.

So in the military advantage—that is what we use to deter China from moving from economic aggression to military aggression—we have already lost our edge in some areas. So, to maintain our military advantage, it is going to take investment, but President Biden is not willing to make the investment

we need. He is proposing to cut our defense budget, and that doesn't even keep pace with inflation.

So, meanwhile, he is proposing to increase all other spending almost 20 percent, and in this bill here it spends as much on microchips for the auto industry as it does on microelectronics for our national defense. Can you believe that?

If we don't invest in our military deterrent, it is hard to see how any of our other efforts—diplomacy, innovation, economic growth—will succeed either.

So we will continue to work in a bipartisan fashion to address these needs. I really believe that this should be the first amendment to come up. I don't know. I am not in charge of that. But it should be. It is one that should be easy to pass because it was agreed to 10 years ago—that we didn't need to be in a position where we are not keeping up with China.

So our amendment does one simple thing. It is parity. It says any change that you make in the nondefense spending you have to have in defense spending at the same time. I believe that should happen. It should take place. I am hoping that we will have an opportunity to vote on that tomorrow.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). The Senator from Washington.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of S. 1260 tomorrow, the following amendments be called up and reported by number: Inhofe-Shelby 1523 and Johnson 1518; further, at 12 noon tomorrow, the Senate vote in relation to the Inhofe amendment and at 1:30 p.m. in relation to the Johnson amendment, with no amendments in order to these amendments prior to a vote in relation to the amendment, with 60 affirmative votes required for adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, just for the notice of our colleagues, I should say we are still trying to work out other amendments, including the Coons amendment and others, so we will be working on that this evening.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that 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.

HONORING FIREMAN SECOND CLASS MARTIN DAYMOND YOUNG

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, Navy Fireman 2nd Class Martin Daymond Young, born on May 11, 1920, was one of nine children who grew up in a busy house-

hold in the tiny Dukes community in Hancock County, KY. His family said their goodbyes when he enlisted in the Navy in the summer of 1940 and he headed to the South Pacific—to Pearl Harbor.

Sadly, Daymond Young was one of the 429 crew members who perished aboard the USS *Oklahoma* on December 7, 1941. He was 21 years old. The tragedy of his death was even more unbearable for his family because he was buried in a mass grave among scores of unidentified shipmates.

His siblings and particularly his twin sister, Daisy, did all they could to keep his memory alive for their children, who remember a photo of Daymond in his Navy uniform that was always proudly displayed in her home. All of his nieces and nephews looked up to him even though most had never met him.

Beginning in 2015, new dental, anthropologic and mitochondrial DNA analyses were employed to identify those who had fallen at Pearl Harbor, eventually certifying Daymond's remains in 2019. His family members wanted to bury him on what would have been his 100th birthday, May 11, 2020, but the coronavirus pandemic made travel and a public ceremony impossible. So, finally, on May 15, 2021, the remains of Daymond Young returned to beautiful Hancock County, KY, where he was buried alongside his ever-devoted sister Daisy. Among those welcoming him were his nephew, Layman Hawkins, of Lewisport, KY, and the many relatives and residents who knew him only by his legacy of sacrifice for his country.

The tragedy of war, the unanswered questions of forensic science, and even the restrictions of a pandemic were ultimately unable to separate the remains of this honorable sailor from his loving family and the community that refused to forget him. Likewise, we are honored to remember him, and to this returning sailor, we say, "Welcome home. Fair winds and following seas."

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF CASPER COLLEGE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I stand today to recognize the 75th anniversary of Casper College, a community, regional, and State pillar of education. Casper College is one of Wyoming's great educational institutions, with the mission of "Education for a Lifetime."

Casper College was the first community college in Wyoming. The idea for the college began following World War I. After 19 years of study and debate, a measure to establish the college was passed by the Wyoming Legislature. It was signed into law in February 1945 by then-Governor Lester C. Hunt. Casper Junior College opened in 1945 on the third floor of the Natrona County High School building. Timing was ripe for Casper College to meet the demands of the "greatest generation" of service

men and women who were eligible for the newly offered GI bill. Since that time, Casper College has continued that same spirited mission. The college is an incredible success story, growing into one of the largest and most comprehensive community colleges in the Rocky Mountain West.

In 1955, the rapidly expanding 2-year school moved to its present location on the hills below Casper Mountain. Today, the campus comprises 28 buildings on more than 200 acres. Casper College offers more than 140 academic transfer and technical and career programs. Eleven universities offer advanced degrees through university partnership programs. There are 40 University of Wyoming programs through the Casper College 2+2 Degree plan.

Casper College has received numerous awards and national recognition. In 2020, the College Consensus named Casper College one of the Fifty Best Community Colleges in the United States. The school was also named the ninth-best community college in the Nation in a recent study conducted by the personal finance outlet WalletHub. This study recognizes where students can receive the best education at the lowest price. In 2021, Great Value Colleges named Casper College as one of America's most beautiful community college campuses.

Casper College's core values are integrity, people, diversity, forward-thinking, and community. Alumni leaders include former Vice President of the United States Dick Cheney, the late country singer and rodeo cowboy Chris LeDoux, artist Chris Navarro, renowned entomologist Wayne Hunter, and Marlan Scully, American physicist best known for his work in theoretical quantum optics. The alumni list also includes former professional athletes Earle Higgins, Bob Lackey, and Flynn Robinson. With over 4,000 students each semester, Casper college will continue to produce outstanding artists, athletes, academics, and professionals.

Under the direction and guidance of President Darren Divine, staff, and faculty, Casper College continues a tradition of excellence started by the founders 75 years ago. They are educating, teaching, and training the next generation of leaders and professionals. The college board of trustees are Chair Steve Degenfelder, Vice Chair Tim Kugle, Secretary Sue Schilling, and Trustees Kathy Dolan, Liz Batton, Scott Bennion, and Susan D. Miller.

Student Senate leaders for this anniversary year are President Anastacia Slack, School of Business & Industry; Bre Long and Dylan Cornelius, School of Fine Arts & Humanities; Tierra Price and Jakob Duncan, School of Health Science; Madelyn Polys and Morgan Bundy, School of Science; Emma Mercer and Abby Hudman, School of Social & Behavioral Science; Logan MacKearney and Charissa Parker, Freshman Representatives; and members Paige Noble and Dani Warner.