

Dick and his deer stand, and I always ask, when I look at these proposals—from closing the boyfriend loophole to putting in better background checks, to doing something about better checking the records of 18- to 21 year olds—I think, does that hurt my Uncle Dick and his deer stand? Of course, the answer is, it does not.

This is our moment to act. It is not just one killing, and we all know that. It has happened in every single community. Every single Senator in this Chamber knows of a moment where they thought “How could this happen in my community?” when they meet with a family.

What I remember the most, actually, is a case involving a police officer out of Lake City, MN. He was a good cop doing his job. He was called to a domestic violence incident.

What people don’t often know is that for police officers, these domestic violence calls can be some of the most dangerous because you have someone who is very angry, and you don’t know what you are walking into. It is in the moment.

He gets there to the door. He has his bulletproof vest on, but the perpetrator—clearly mentally ill—who had been beating up his young, young, young girlfriend, meets him with a gun, shoots him in his head, and he dies.

I was there for that funeral. There was an outpouring of support from the community. The funeral was held in the very same church where the officer and his wife and their three little kids had gathered for the nativity play just a few weeks before for Christmas, those two little boys and a little girl. The father had sat in the front row to watch his boys in that nativity play only a few weeks before, and the next time the family is in that church, it is the widow, the two little boys, and this little tiny girl in a dress with blue stars on it walking down the aisle of that church at his funeral. That is a moment I won’t forget.

I just shows you how domestic abuse and those kinds of cases—yes, there is one immediate victim—most likely the woman—but it is a whole family who is the victim. Kids who witness domestic abuse through their lives are so much more likely to get into crime themselves. Statistics have shown it. But it is even more than the family, it is the whole community, as that family who lost their dad and lost their husband would tell you if they were standing in here right now.

So I am so pleased we are finally moving on this. I thank Senator MURPHY. I thank Senator CORNYN and all those involved. I am also so grateful that my 10 years of work leading this bill with Representative DEBBIE DINGELL in the House has not gone for naught. We kept it moving. It is probably a sign for anyone that perseverance matters in this place. I am very pleased that it is part of the final negotiations, and it will make such a difference for saving lives.

I yield the floor.

# RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:52 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

## HONORING OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS COMPREHENSIVE TOXICS ACT OF 2021—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

### TRIBUTE TO TED LEHMAN

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I come to the floor today to sadly announce the retirement—or not retirement—my chief of staff’s decision to move on to another great opportunity, and I wanted to take a few minutes to talk about Ted Lehman and not only the 5 years he has been my chief of staff but the nearly 20 years he has been working in the Senate.

Before I start, though, he attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he got his undergrad, and then he went to Georgetown to get his law degree. He clerked for Thomas Hogan, who was then the chief judge of the DC District Court.

He came to the Senate about 20 years ago, in 2002. To give you some perspective, I didn’t enter the legislature in North Carolina until 2007, so he has years of experience on me. He has knowledge of the Senate that I will never gain.

He started work with Senator Hatch. He worked for a couple of years with Senator Sessions, and then he worked for Senator GRASSLEY on the Judiciary Committee. He was the chief counsel of nominations and senior counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee, and that is where I met Ted.

I remember vividly, when my chief of staff at the time, Ray Starling, told me that he was going to be moving back to North Carolina, I told him: Great. Now find your replacement.

It was later that day that he came to me and said: What about Ted Lehman?

I said: I think that is a fantastic idea.

Ted wasn’t looking for a job, and I wondered whether or not he would be interested in working for a freshman Senator from the State of North Carolina. But he took that job, and he has done extraordinary work, not only in terms of the day-to-day institutional grind that a chief has to go through but his attention to staff—not only the DC staff but the North Carolina staff. I think he is well-regarded among the staff, and he is going to be sorely missed.

I also need to talk about Ted and his family. To say that it is in the Lehman blood is an understatement. His brother Dirksen served on the HELP Com-

mittee with Senator Jeffords. His brother Patrick is the legislative director to Senator SASSE. He knows a lot about this institution, and he knows a lot about its processes. The first, really, opportunity I got to see that in action was when he was responsible for moving Justice Gorsuch through the nominations process.

Ted has a great family—his wife Amy, his son Jackson, his oldest son, his oldest daughter, Emma Claire, Sallye, and a young son now. Now, Ted is not from North Carolina, and we have speculated as to why he named his son what he did. He may say it is related to some sort of family tradition, but I think it is no coincidence that he named his son “Raleigh” after our State’s capitol.

Ted is an avid hunter, fisher, outdoorsman, baseball dad, soccer dad—all those sorts of things—and he gets the right balance. He understands that family is as important as work, and he figures out how to strike that balance. But there is very seldom a morning where he is not one of the first people in, and there are so many nights where I am the last person he sees before he goes home.

I appreciate his service. I am going to miss him.

Thank you, Ted.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

H.R. 3967

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise today in support of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promises to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act, also known as the Honoring our PACT Act.

Our Nation asks a great deal of our servicemembers and their families. We ask them to be ready to fight and to win against a wide range of security challenges across the globe. Our Armed Forces know and understand the threats they may face on the battlefield. Unfortunately, servicemembers also face threats that aren’t as apparent—exposure to toxic materials. These exposures can result in rare and sometimes fatal medical conditions.

From exposure to Agent Orange to radiation from nuclear tests, veterans have carried an extra burden because of their service. It has too often been a struggle to recognize and address those impacts.

Now, a new generation is dealing with the long-term effects of toxic exposure. Indeed, during their service, up to 3½ million veterans have been exposed to toxic burn pits. As the name implies, burn pits are pits where all forms of waste, including toxic waste, are disposed of by burning. Our servicemembers lived and worked in close proximity to these burn pits, often without knowing the potential consequences to their long-term health or any way to avoid it.

Since 2009, the Department of Defense has recognized the harm burn

pits can cause. The health consequences are so serious that in the fiscal year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, within that legislation, we included a provision that says that the only way the Department of Defense can now use a burn pit overseas is if the Secretary of Defense personally issues a waiver. It is an authority that cannot be delegated to anyone else in the Department.

The bill we have before us today would really honor our obligation to care for other veterans by acknowledging the injuries and illnesses they sustain in serving our country and providing them with treatment.

The bill would expand eligibility for VA healthcare for the 3½ million veterans who were exposed to burn pits. It would also eliminate the burden of proof for veterans for 23 conditions presumed to be caused by toxic exposure. It will create a new framework for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to evaluate the science around burn pits and establish other presumptive conditions associated with toxic exposure. It will also provide significant resources for the VA to carry out the expansion of benefits in this bill, including provisions on staffing, retention, pay, and leasing of new VA facilities.

Every generation of Americans has had men and women who were willing to serve our country in uniform. As chairman of the Armed Services Committee, I have had the honor of traveling across the globe to meet with our deployed servicemembers, including numerous trips to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Our servicemembers and our veterans truly represent what is best in our country. We honor and venerate their heroism in combat, but too often in the past, we have overlooked and dismissed the long-term health effects of their service.

This is changing.

With this bill, we will do the right thing for our toxic-exposed and combat veterans and their families. We can ensure that they have access to the care and services they deserve and have earned.

I hope all of my colleagues will join me in supporting this important piece of legislation.

Before I yield the floor, I must recognize the extraordinary work of Senator JON TESTER and Senator JERRY MORAN, the chair and ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. This was an extraordinary effort. It was bipartisan. It was motivated by the recognition on both sides of the aisle of the service and sacrifice of thousands and thousands of men and women. But we would not be here today without the undaunted and unflagging dedication of JON TESTER and JERRY. I salute both of them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO C. CLYDE JONES

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, this afternoon, I want to recognize a longtime Manhattan, KS—known as the Little Apple—a Manhattan, KS, public servant, C. Clyde Jones, on his 100th birthday.

Before building his life in Manhattan, he grew up in West Virginia and then swore an oath to our Nation in 1943 to serve our country in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Following his service, he returned to focus on his education, earning a bachelor's, master's, and doctorate concentrated on social science and history. After serving several universities in the South and Midwest, he received a phone call to come interview at Kansas State University. And while his initial reaction to living in the Sunflower State was less than thrilled, Kansans easily won him over when he visited. The beauty of the Flint Hills, where K-State is located, also didn't hurt. That was 60 years ago, and in that time, Clyde has left a tremendous impact both on Kansas State and the larger Manhattan community.

He was hired to head the business department within the College of Arts and Sciences; but with his leadership, it resulted in the transformation of the department into an accredited college. In 1962, he opened the Kansas State University College of Business as its first dean.

His involvement in campus life was all-encompassing, also serving as chair of the athletic council as it spearheaded the construction of the current football stadium, now known as Bill Snyder Family Stadium. It continues to welcome thousands of Wildcats to each Saturday's home game throughout the fall season.

His reach extended beyond campus as he invested in the larger community, serving on various community boards, including the United Way. He also worked as president of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce. In 2001, the annual Chamber Volunteer of the Year award was renamed in his honor.

Clyde has also become a staunch advocate for Shepherd's Crossing, a local ministry focused on providing caring assistance to those in need of financial support. Over the 20 years since its founding, Clyde has held every position within the Shepherd's Crossing organization. Even today, he holds the title of chief development officer; and in this role, he has increased donations to support the work they are doing by hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Clyde's love and dedication to Manhattan has been demonstrated in everything he has done for over 60 years. Our community has been made better and stronger because of his countless hours of service.

Clyde, thank you for being an example of a solid, true, and faithful public

servant. You are what I have in mind when I say we need more civics and less politics in our community, State, and Nation. I wish you the happiest of birthdays and hope that you can ring in 100 years surrounded by the ones you love. Know that there are many of us who love you.

Happy birthday, Clyde.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3986

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, this past Saturday, I got to spend the whole morning with the East Central Kansas Model T Club back home. I even got to take a joy ride in a 1921 Model T. Among many stories, I learned Americans were paying only 21 cents a gallon when this car was made. And it wasn't until 1975, 54 years later, that gas had doubled from that price, jumping from 39 to 53 cents—54 years it took to double.

I don't have to remind anyone that, thanks to our President's energy policies and his reckless spending, he accomplished a doubling in less than 2 years. As we all know, gas is now over \$5 a gallon, if you can believe it or not. We are seeing record prices that have gone now 16 days in a row without a single downtick.

And this is why I am here today to ask for unanimous consent to pass the Gas Prices Relief Act, which would bar any Federal agency from finalizing any rule or regulation that would make it harder to produce American fuels.

My legislation would send the right signal to American producers and investors. It would show them that the Congress sees the problem and that we are ready to address it. It would set us on a course to bring down prices at the pump, not with more reckless spending and more regulations, but by getting out of the way of American production and allowing them to power the world without more needlessly restrictive rules.

With this more than doubling of price, many families back home are telling me they are paying \$50, up to \$100 a week more for gasoline. And that is \$2- to \$400 a month, in case you are adding it up. And on top of that, their monthly utility bills have doubled.

I am sure this administration will propose more reckless spending to fix that problem, too. Unfortunately, Biden-flation is impacting many Kansas families to the tune of \$6- to \$700 a month. That is over \$7,000 a year.

Now, why the increase, you might ask. Now, I am not an economist, but it looks to me like if you increase the regulations on a process, on a business, that is a surefire way to decrease the

supply. And as we all know, our President and his policies are ramping up regulations at every step of the American oil and gas business, all the while begging for help from other nations. Indeed, he is fulfilling his campaign promises to destroy American oil and gas.

Now, one more thought. As history teaches us, along with reckless spending, energy is always a leading indicator of inflation. If we don't get our arms around this energy crisis and reckless spending, we will never slow down inflation. But it appears our President and his party disagree with this, or else, simply stated, they don't care. Or maybe they want these high prices. It just seems like yesterday I was filling my truck up back home for less than \$2 a gallon, and now, again, it is over \$5 a gallon across most of the Nation.

Rising energy prices add inflationary pressure to everything. It is like a game of dominoes. When the diesel fuel powering our 18-wheelers are costing truckers 80 percent more than it did last year, they are going to have to pass on that rate to their consumers. When businesses are paying 30 percent more for their gas utilities, they are going to have to raise their prices to make up the difference. And Kansans, already paying more just to get to the store, are continually finding that what money they have left is getting them less and less every week.

You don't fix a supply-and-demand problem of this nature with price controls or artificial subsidies or more reckless spending. In reality, this is not very complicated. You could fix it by decreasing demand or increasing supply. Now, demand, unfortunately, is not decreasing, which is why we need this regulatory holiday in order to set American energy free.

On some level, the administration knows this and, hence, their knee-jerk decision to release a million barrels of oil from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve every day, reportedly without initially coordinating in a meaningful way with our partners overseas. Obviously, 1 million barrels a day won't cut it. In 2021, the United States consumed roughly nearly 20 million barrels a day. This release is truly a drop in the bucket.

The administration knows that the Strategic Petroleum Reserve releases are purely cosmetic, to try to convince the American people that they have solutions while they run off to beg foreign dictators and terrorists to produce more oil. Instead of looking within, instead of creating more Americans jobs, high-paying jobs, producing the cleanest fuel in the world, they continue their full frontal assault on American production and seek to enrich our enemies, like Venezuela and Iran.

But there has been a lot of talk on the left that they are not interfering with oil and gas production in the United States. These claims are simply untrue. On the campaign trail, Presi-

dent Biden promised to end the leasing of oil and gas production on Federal lands, and his climate czar recently said the administration "remains absolutely committed to not moving forward with additional drilling on public lands." Most Presidents brag when they fulfill a campaign promise but apparently not when the results are this bad.

It is hard to imagine that this is not all by design. This administration is getting exactly what they want. In the President's own words, the world is currently going through an "incredible transition," and he thinks we will "be stronger and the world will be stronger and less reliant on fossil fuels when this is over."

Well, the obvious question then is this: When—when will it be over? The Department of Energy has estimated that demand for oil and gas will increase through 2050. That is a simple fact. Yet we have a President who is perfectly willing to inflict pain on the people who elected him to force his climate policies—his costly climate policies—and ignore the economic reality that the American people are facing.

Now, why else would he propose a budget that gets rid of key tax provisions for the oil and gas industry? Why else would he promote policies that will make it more difficult and more expensive to drill? Does anyone think these policies are going to help the American people?

Let's talk about the stream of bad policies causing the crippling uncertainty that is making American producers hesitant to increase drilling.

Last November, the EPA started the process of updating methane regulations. While the proposed rule they put forward was criminally devoid of any details, their intent was clear: an increase in costly regulations that will harm the oil and national gas industry, run small businesses out of business, and further increase energy costs.

On February 18, by a completely partisan vote, FERC issued and made immediately effective two new policy statements that would have had disastrous implications for pipeline development in the U.S., pipelines critical to getting that oil to American consumers. Their off-the-deep-end proposal would have potentially put pipeline operators on the hook for mitigating the emissions of the end user of the product they transport. In other words, to get approval to build a pipeline, operators could have been forced to develop and pay for a way to mitigate the emissions caused by Americans driving to work every day or perhaps by Americans heating their homes or cooking their breakfast. Thankfully, in the face of fierce outcry from opponents on both sides of the aisle, they have temporarily pulled these changes back for further consideration. Though, that likely has more to do with the upcoming nomination process—the renomination process—for FERC Chairman Glick than it does with good energy policy.

On March 21, the SEC followed suit and proposed a rule that would require companies to disclose climate emission data, including greenhouse emissions, caused by their suppliers and their customers. This would require companies to calculate and disclose the emissions for how everyday Americans use their products, all in an effort to make doing business with American oil and gas producers seem even more risky and less deserving of financing.

And, finally, an issue that is at the top of mind of many producers in Kansas right now, the Fish and Wildlife Service is poised to list the lesser prairie-chicken as a threatened species. This is despite the incredible work being done by conservationists that have made the lesser prairie-chicken better protected now than ever. If the Fish and Wildlife Service goes through with this classification, it would have serious consequences for oil and gas producers in Kansas and severely limit their ability to increase production, not to mention the impact it will have on our utilities.

Once again, let me state, these reasons and more are why I am here today to ask unanimous consent to pass the Gas Prices Relief Act, which would bar any Federal agency from finalizing any rule regulation that would make it harder to produce American fuels. Our legislation would send the right signal to American producers and investors. It would show them that Congress sees the problem and that we are ready to address it. It would set us on course to bring down prices at the pump by getting out of the way and releasing American production and allowing them to power the world without more needlessly restrictive rules and regulations. Good energy policy will fix the current crisis, not more reckless spending.

Before I yield, I would like to turn the floor over to the Senator from Montana for his thoughts on the record gas prices we are facing and the need to pass our Gas Price Relief Act.

Mr. DAINES. I want to thank the Senator from Kansas for his work on this bill.

Madam President, the price at the pump has skyrocketed. Let's do a quick trip down memory lane. When President Biden was inaugurated, the weekly average price for gas was about \$2.30 a gallon. In fact, when we introduced the bill that we are trying to pass today, the Gas Price Relief Act, that was on March 31 of this year, the weekly average was \$4.02 a gallon. The weekly average today is \$4.84. In fact, other studies show it is now at \$5 and climbing. We think these numbers will keep going up. Most analysts agree. We may be facing \$6-a-gallon gas by this summer.

I filled up my pickup in Belgrade, MT, Friday night. My wife and I pulled into a gas station. And when the tank was full, the price tag was \$138.

The pain at the pump that Montana families are feeling today is because of

the Democrats' anti-American energy policies.

When President Biden killed the Keystone Pipeline 6 hours after being sworn in—by the way, that had tremendous benefits for the State of Montana. They help our impoverished Eastern Montana counties with tax revenues, not to mention providing nearly a million barrels of oil a day for the United States. By stopping and eliminating oil and gas leases, removing essential relief for small refiners, and then building an administration of, frankly, some far-left anti—anti—oil and natural gas ideologues, this administration has gone above and beyond to hinder traditional American energy development.

And what is the solution that we are hearing from President Biden? Turn to foreign dictators for more oil, tap into our oil reserves, beg OPEC to increase production, and perhaps the most out-of-touch solution I have heard, simply suggest families buy electric vehicles. I can tell you that won't work in a State like Montana.

The real solution is to unleash American energy and encourage American energy investment. This bill I have with Senator MARSHALL is simple. It prevents the Biden administration from imposing any new rules or regulations that would decrease oil, gas, or renewable fuel production, which would, therefore, increase gas prices of hard-working Montanans.

I am urging my colleagues across the aisle to think about hard-working families across this country, how are they trying to make ends meet, to think about their constituents who depend on affordable gas prices to get to work or drop kids off at school.

I am urging my colleagues across the aisle who say they support American energy development, and they want to lower gas costs, to support this bill.

We need to pass this bill for American families.

I yield back my time to the Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I would like to ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 3986 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I have been listening with interest to my two distinguished colleagues discuss this measure, referring to it repeatedly as "governing American energy." But, of course, what it really governs is fossil fuel energy. That is the intention here, and that is the result.

Let's start with a basic factual proposition, which is that the price of oil is set by oil companies.

In a market economy, the producer of a product chooses the price. And what has happened in this instance is that the oil industry has chosen to depart from market economics, to depart from the costs that were the same just a few years ago, and instead to follow upward the international cartel that our oil industry is a part of.

This international cartel has driven world oil prices extremely high. And American oil companies have chosen—have chosen—to follow that price, raise the prices at the pump, punish American drivers, in order to blow out their profits.

We know that this is true because the companies themselves are reporting unprecedented profits—massive profits. We know they are not tracking the cost of production at a reasonable profit because their profits have soared as they have chosen—chosen—to pursue this international cartel price and punish American drivers. It is their choice.

And then they have the colossal nerve to take their choice, what they have done to American drivers, and then start using that for leverage to try to get other fossil fuel industry prerogatives accomplished politically.

And let me say, don't be mad at the gas station owner. The gas station owner is not the one who is jacking up the prices. For a lot of gas station owners, they don't even make money on the gas. You have got to go in and buy a coffee or snacks to have them make money.

Your local gas station is not the problem with these prices. The problem is Chevron, Exxon, Marathon, all of the big oil companies that have chosen to drive gas prices through the roof so they can fill their pockets with profit, so they can prepare for the fact that their product has got an end point.

We can't keep polluting the Earth the way we are with the emissions of fossil fuel. I noticed that neither of my colleagues mentioned that this fossil fuel actually gets burned. We don't eat it; we burn it. And when we burn it, it emits CO<sub>2</sub> and other gases, and we are seeing the effect of that all over the planet.

Pollution increases. CO<sub>2</sub> levels continue to increase. We constantly set new records for CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere. Heat increases. We are heating the ocean so fast—there is a new term that we have, a new term of measurement, a "zettajoule." Do you know what a zettajoule is? A joule is a unit of heat energy measurement. A zettajoule is that unit with 21 zeros after it. It is an enormous number. All of the fossil fuel burned by all of the people across this entire planet amounts to less than half of a zettajoule of energy—all of it, less than half.

And for the price of that—because of the emissions, because of the pollution, because of the CO<sub>2</sub>, because of the methane—we are heating up the planet so fast that every year 14 zettajoules of

excess heat go into the ocean, where my fishermen in Rhode Island see their catches disappear, see their lives turned upside down, see fisheries that their fathers and their grandfathers fished completely upturned.

This comes home in Rhode Island. Our Coastal Resources Management Council predicts that all that ocean warming is going to raise sea levels so that in my lifetime we are going to start to see flooding. Things that are now part of our State are going to become islands. Warwick Neck becomes Warwick Neck Island. Bristol becomes Bristol Island. Poppasquash Point becomes Poppasquash Island. Newport divides into a mainland and an island.

We become the Rhode Island archipelago. We lose enormous amounts of our shoreline to sea level rise. Never mention—never mention that harm. So when you come here and say, we want to help more fossil fuel get burned, remember that on the other end of that are places like Rhode Island.

And if we want to have a conversation about how we solve price now and how we protect against emissions later, that is a conversation I am more than willing to have. But a one-sided conversation that is only about more burning, more pollution, more emissions, more of that for Rhode Island, I don't think so.

And it is not, of course, just Rhode Island. Other States are having unprecedented wildfires. They are having unprecedented droughts. We are seeing a planet whose basic operating systems are being changed by fossil fuel emissions. And until we grapple with that seriously, you can bet I will object—which I do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4217

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I would actually ask, in response, that we pass a different measure, and I would ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. 4217, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I think we should start calling electric cars coal-powered cars. We should start thinking about a cradle-to-grave environmental impact to some of the alternatives, but I want to reassure to my colleague, the folks on the other side of the aisle, that I want to leave this world cleaner, healthier, and safer than we found it.

But on the other hand, we can't create such high inflation with reckless

spending and energy policies that stifle American energy. I do believe that there is a balance. I do believe that there are opportunities, but we can't go from zero to 90 miles an hour overnight, nor can we throw the brakes on our current energy supply.

I grew up in the oil patch. I lived in the oil patch. The prices of oil are being driven up by the uncertainty created by this administration. Make no mistake about it, the price of oil is people who are thinking about investing, what will they get 2 years from now? It would take 2 years probably to see any type of return on investment from an oilfield exploration.

But this President and his policies, his regulations continue to create uncertainty and drive the price up for all Americans.

Just the thought of \$5-a-gallon gasoline makes my heart shiver. The people I talk to back home, there is no conversation I am going to have without someone bringing up the price of gasoline right now.

And I am so proud that we are taking traditional energies, and we are making them cleaner; that we are using biofuels to help decrease the tailpipe emissions through E15 year round and higher ethanol as well. I am proud of the biodiesel that we are using as well.

I think that there are incredible opportunities out there, but inflation, reckless spending inflation, driving up the price of gasoline very purposefully is what this President has accomplished, and it is hurting people back home.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. My colleague may care to object.

Mr. MARSHALL. So I object to Senator WHITEHOUSE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Or at least to the motion I propounded anyway.

Mr. MARSHALL. Yes, I specifically object to the motion. My apologies.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Senator WHITEHOUSE, of course, as well, but I think the intention was to object to the measure.

I see that my friend Senator BARRASSO has joined us. I had mentioned zettajoules. I want to add one other figure. This is from a report by the corporate accounting and consulting firm, Deloitte Consulting, which has said that if we don't get ahead of this climate problem that my colleague seems so scrupulously interested in ignoring, the cost to society in the next five decades will be, if I remember correctly—the number is \$178 trillion in economic harm across those years.

You want to talk about big numbers? And if we do get it right, if we grow up, treat this as a factual scientific problem and put in serious, real economic solutions, then the win side is \$43 trillion.

So the swing is \$220 trillion. You want to talk about big numbers? That is a big number. And it is going to de-

pend on decisions we make now, and I hope we start making good decisions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor as I see my colleagues debating issues related to energy, and I come to the floor to also debate and discuss the issue of energy and, specifically, the need of the American people for more energy.

Because right now, America, in terms of energy, is running on empty. Gas prices have broken records day after day after day over the last several months. Inflation increased again last month to a new record 40-year high. Just this morning, we found out that inflation from producers is even higher than inflation for consumers. Wholesale prices are up by nearly 11 percent in the last year.

That means higher prices for people who grow our food, who build our buildings, and who work so hard to keep the lights on.

Inflation for producers means inflation for consumers tomorrow. After 13 months of this inflation crisis, there is still no light at the end of the tunnel. The average price of gasoline across the United States today is over \$5 a gallon.

That is a big number. We just heard colleagues discussing big numbers. Five dollars a gallon is a big number for anyone who is driving a gas-powered car or a diesel-powered car or truck in America.

Gas prices are at an alltime high in all 50 States, and there is no end in sight. Experts tell us that the price of gas is going to continue to go higher. We may actually see \$6 a gallon this summer across the country, and today, gas is already \$6 a gallon in a number of locations.

Now, for most Americans, this is unthinkable. So what are families doing? Well, they are kind of buckling up for what may be a summer of financial suffering for the American people. For many, it means a summer of staying home. People are having to change the way they drive, the way they eat, the way they live. Family vacations are being canceled left and right. People are cutting back on shopping to the point that retail jobs disappeared last month, thousands and thousands of retail jobs.

Coronavirus caused one lockdown. Now we are headed into a new lockdown because people don't have the money to get out—get out to go to dinner, get out to go to a movie, get out to go on vacation. People are staying home because they can't afford to do anything else.

Many working families are being pushed to the breaking point. Savings have melted away. Household debt is now at a record high. More and more people are having to borrow money just to get through the end of the month. The purchasing power of the American

people keeps going lower and lower and lower. That is providing very little relief—even for people who are getting raises, they are having a hard time keeping up and feel they are falling further behind.

Home energy costs are up and will continue to go up this summer. We hear that our energy grid is vulnerable for blackouts this summer. Democrats have been in power for over 17 months. They continue to do nothing to help the American people with this Biden-caused energy crisis.

Now, Joe Biden's Cabinet has been on tour, talking and trying to mislead the American people about the energy crisis. We saw Pete Buttigieg and Gina Raimondo. They said that Joe Biden is just an innocent bystander, just standing there, watching the world go by. Nothing he could do about it.

The Commerce Secretary last week said—and this was on a national news show—she said there isn't much that can be done to produce more energy. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Joe Biden has “done everything he can to bring down energy prices.” Everything he can? This is a blatant, bold-faced lie to the American people.

Joe Biden and the Democrats have caused this American energy crisis. Joe Biden seemed to brag about it at first when, on his first day in office, he killed the Keystone XL Pipeline, killing 800,000 barrels of oil a day to the United States—more than we would have ever gotten from Putin. Joe Biden bragged about it, proud of himself. Stopped those oil and gas leases as well. What the President has done with the oil and gas leases was blatantly illegal and brutally punished working families in my home State of Wyoming.

You know, after 16 months in office, President Obama had held 44 oil and gas lease sales. Joe Biden? Not a single one.

If the Senator from Alaska were here, she would say that Joe Biden shut down oil and gas production in the Arctic. For leases that were out there, drilling applications, thousands and thousands are in limbo because the administration just wants them to sit there.

Now Joe Biden is furthering his attack on American energy. He is not just blocking new leases, he is even going after thousands of existing leases that were sold during previous administrations, the Obama and the Trump administrations.

After just 16 months in office—and the American people know this; I am not making any news here—Joe Biden is already the most anti-American energy President in American history. He has kept our energy production on lockdown, he has kept workers on the sideline, and he has kept energy buried in the ground. As a result, today, we are still producing 1 million fewer barrels of oil today and every single day than we were producing in America before the pandemic.

So, despite what the administration claims, Joe Biden could do things right now to actually produce more energy. First, instead of blocking all Federal land, he needs to hold Federal oil and gas lease sales. He should approve the 4,300 drilling applications that he is holding in limbo. Finally, instead of shutting down pipelines, he should approve more pipelines so we can transmit energy. He should speed up the pipeline approval process. Right now, it takes a lot longer to get approval to build a pipeline than it does to actually build a pipeline. But Joe Biden refuses to change his policies. That is why I say that Joe Biden actually wants high gas prices.

Democrats keep bragging about the so-called incredible transition. It is a transition that is strangling the American people. Joe Biden went on a late-night comedy show last week. He was asked about climate change. He said right now "there's an opportunity to move more rapidly . . . to alternative energy." He seems to think everything is going according to plan.

The climate elitists want prices so high that people can't afford to buy gas. The economists call this demand destruction. Democrats are working to achieve demand destruction through supply destruction, and the result is economic destruction—a destruction of the standard of living for the American people—all because they want their climate ideology.

So Democrats have kept supply slow and low. They have driven up prices. Now the American people are forced to stay home.

Well, the Transportation Secretary continues to say: Just get an electric vehicle. Gas prices are no big deal.

The average electric vehicle costs over \$55,000. The American people can barely afford groceries right now, let alone an electric vehicle. CNN ran a story recently about single mothers skipping meals so their kids can eat. I would say to the Secretary of Transportation: How are they going to afford the electric vehicle, let alone find a place to charge it?

Astonishing stories have been written in the press recently. People trying to drive electric vehicles from point A to point B said: Never again. Oh, no.

I have heard stories of someone renting an electric vehicle in Wyoming, driving it from one place to another, using a regular plug-in, coming back an hour later, and it had charged the battery enough extra in that full hour that they could go an additional 4 miles. That is what Joe Biden wants for America. That is his view of America—"stay at home" Joe.

The Transportation Secretary refuses to admit that gas prices drive up the cost of other things like food, the cost of retail, the cost of almost everything.

Democrats tell us that we just need a little more wind energy, a little more solar power, and things would be great. So what is Joe Biden doing? He listens to them, and he uses wartime Execu-

tive powers to demand that we make more solar panels.

This is another dangerous Democrat delusion. We don't have high gas prices and high food prices because of a lack of solar panels; we have high gas prices and high food prices because of a lack of American gasoline, oil, energy.

Democrats keep repeating the talking points about renewable energy. Yet they never do the math. The most affordable and most reliable energy known to man is traditional energy—oil, natural gas, coal. Electric vehicles still use energy. This energy comes mostly, in this country, from natural gas and coal.

The only way to bring the price of gas down is to bring the supply of gas up. It is the one thing the Democrats refuse to do.

It is interesting to listen to some of Joe Biden's allies in the Senate who are threatening to make the Biden energy crisis even worse. They want to talk about bringing back their reckless tax-and-spending bill. This bill is more reckless today than it was last year. You put that kind of additional spending on the economy, that kind of additional debt—inflation today is a lot higher than it was the last time they forced this kind of money onto the economy. This will be adding fuel to the fire.

Then the Democrats are talking about raising taxes and specifically raising taxes on American energy. More taxes on American energy means higher prices at the pump. It is as simple as that. Higher prices at the pump means higher prices at the grocery store. Now isn't the time to raise taxes on the American people.

Janet Yellen was surprised. She said it last week. She talked to the New York Times. She said she was surprised at how negative people's opinion was of the economy. She said she was amazed at how pessimistic people were about the economy. How out of touch can one be for the Secretary of Treasury to say that at a time when there are the highest gas prices in the history of the country, food prices at an alltime high, and inflation at a 40-year high?

Over three out of four Americans think the country is heading in the wrong direction under Joe Biden and the Democrats. The American people have seen what 16 months of Democrat rule has done to them, and Janet Yellen is surprised at the pessimism and the negativity.

Record inflation, record gas prices, record debt, disappearing savings, empty shelves, labor shortages, a looming recession—it is long past time to change course. It is time to stop this reckless spending, unleash American energy. The American public cannot afford to pay the price, but they will make the Democrats pay the price come November.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Mr. MURPHY assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. DURBIN assumed the Chair.)

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

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

#### CELEBRATING THE 245TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, this is one of the more enjoyable things of being a Senator, especially when I have some friends in from Southern Indiana up in the Gallery to see what we do here.

I rise today to offer a resolution expressing support for the Pledge of Allegiance as an expression of patriotism and honoring the 245th anniversary of the introduction of our United States flag.

Today we celebrate Flag Day, which was first established over 100 years ago by President Woodrow Wilson. As we pause to recognize all that our flag represents, let us also honor those who have sacrificed everything to defend it.

In 2002, Senator Tom Daschle raised a similar resolution with unanimous support from the Senate. It passed on the floor uneventfully. Today, I ask this body to reaffirm our support for the Pledge of Allegiance.

I also rise to honor a fellow Hoosier who knew the innate value of the Pledge of Allegiance to civic education. In 1969, Red Skelton, the American entertainer who was well-known for the program "The Red Skelton Hour," wrote a speech on the importance of the pledge. Reflecting on his time in Vincennes, IN, he spoke about the values instilled by one of his high school teachers.

After the performance of the speech, CBS received 200,000 requests for copies. The speech would go on to be sold as a single by Columbia Records and performed at the White House for President Nixon. I think it would honor Mr. Skelton's memory and the importance of the Pledge of Allegiance if it were recited today on the Senate floor in the words of Mr. Red Skelton. I have done this 2 prior years too. This should never get old for anyone here or the American public in general.

When I was a small boy in Vincennes, [Indiana.] I heard, I think, one of the most outstanding speeches I ever heard in my life. I think it compares with the Sermon on the Mount, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and Socrates' Speech to the Students.

We had just finished reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and he [Mr. Lasswell, the Principal of Vincennes High School] called us all together, and he says, "Uh, boys and girls, I have been listening to you recite the Pledge of Allegiance all semester, and it seems that it has become monotonous to you. Or, could it be, you do not understand the meaning of