

will protect America’s national security interests.

All too often, our government and our businesses are accused of being too short term, but this is one of the most significant long-term thinking bills we have passed in a very long time. I told our caucus yesterday that our grandchildren will hold good-paying jobs in industries we can’t even imagine because of what we are doing right now.

And we did it together, both sides cooperating in good faith on some truly difficult issues. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their superb work on this legislation: my colleague Senator YOUNG, with whom I originally authored the Endless Frontier Act, as well as Senator CANTWELL, our conference chair, and Senators WICKER and WARNER and CORNYN and KELLY. I also want to thank Senators WARNOCK, BROWN, and SINEMA for their help and Leader MCCONNELL for his support as well as all members of the conference committee and all the individual Senators—just about every one of us—who helped shape this legislation. These are moments when the Senate is at its very best.

This is going to go down as one of the major bipartisan achievements of this Congress, along with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the recent gun safety law. The American people deserve to see more examples like this, of both sides coming together to do very, very big things that will leave a lasting impact on our country.

And I am confident that future generations will look back on the passage of this bill as a turning point for American leadership in the 21st century. And we are paying attention to all of America. We are making sure tech hubs will be located not just in the big, big megalopolises like San Francisco or New York City or Boston but in places like Buffalo and Syracuse and Rochester and Indianapolis and Omaha—not just major cities.

For decades, it was America’s fierce commitment to scientific research, technological growth, and advanced manufacturing that made us the envy of the world. That funding that we put into science created the greatest laboratories, split the atom, spliced the gene, landed a man on the Moon, and unleashed the internet. We generated decades of American prosperity and fostered an innate sense of optimism in the American spirit. And we made the world a safer, more hospitable place for our democratic values.

Today, we face the great task of renewing and strengthening that spirit in this century, in a world of fierce competition and hungry authoritarians. It is no longer the case where we can just leave it up to corporate America. Now there are nation-states and authoritarian governments funding and aiding these corporations to come to their shores. Authoritarian nations are cheering for us to fail, hoping we sit on our hands and fail to adapt to the changes of the 21st century.

We dare not cede the mantle of global leadership on our watch. We dare not permit America to become a middling nation in the middle of this century.

No, we mean for America to lead this century. We mean for America to prosper and grow just as we have done throughout history. It won’t happen on its own, but today we are laying the foundation for a bold and thriving future. Today, by passing this CHIPS and Science bill, we are making clear that we believe America’s best days are yet to come.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question occurs on agreeing to the motion to concur with amendment No. 5135.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

The result was announced—yeas 64, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 271 Leg.]

YEAS—64

Baldwin	Graham	Reed
Bennet	Hagerty	Romney
Blumenthal	Hassan	Rosen
Blunt	Heinrich	Sasse
Booker	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Burr	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kelly	Sinema
Capito	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lujan	Tester
Casey	Markey	Tillis
Cassidy	McConnell	Van Hollen
Collins	Menendez	Warner
Cooms	Merkley	Warnock
Cornyn	Moran	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Whitehouse
Daines	Murray	Wicker
Duckworth	Ossoff	Wyden
Durbin	Padilla	Young
Feinstein	Peters	
Gillibrand	Portman	

NAYS—33

Barrasso	Hawley	Risch
Blackburn	Hoeven	Rounds
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Sanders
Cotton	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lankford	Shelby
Cruz	Lee	Sullivan
Ernst	Lummis	Thune
Fischer	Marshall	Toomey
Grassley	Paul	Tuberville

NOT VOTING—3

Leahy	Manchin	Murkowski
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The motion was agreed to.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS HEATH ROBINSON HONORING OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS COMPREHENSIVE TOXICS ACT OF 2022—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House mes-

sage to accompany S. 3373, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 3373, a bill to improve the Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant and the Children of Fallen Heroes Grant.

Pending:

Schumer motion to concur in the House amendment to the bill.

Schumer motion to concur in the House amendment to the bill, with Schumer amendment No. 5148 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 5149 (to Schumer amendment No. 5148), to modify the effective date.

Schumer motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, with instructions, Schumer amendment No. 5150, to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 5151 (to the instructions (Schumer amendment No. 5150) of the motion to refer), to modify the effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 5152 (to amendment No. 5151), to modify the effective date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

CHIPS ACT OF 2022

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, just a few minutes ago, after a year and a half of work, we have finally—finally—passed our plan to boost microchip manufacturing in the United States.

Microchips go in nearly everything we use. They are in the TV or the cell phone that folks are watching this on, and they are in lifesaving medical devices, and they are in our most advanced weapons systems.

The United States invented microchips, and, once, we produced 40 percent of the world’s supply. Today, we only produce about 12 percent, and we don’t produce any of the most advanced microchips.

Now, that leaves us vulnerable to disruptions in the supply chain, like the current microchip shortage that has halted production lines and driven up prices.

If you have recently tried to buy a car—a new car—and waited months or paid more than you were expecting, the microchip shortage is a big reason why.

So we have worked on a plan, Republicans and Democrats, with incentives to make sure the world’s leading microchip manufacturers grow their operations here in the United States instead of in China or Europe. It also boosts research so that the most advanced chips in the world are invented and produced right here in the United States. That will mean tens of thousands of new jobs in places like Arizona, which is already a microchip hub, poised to grow as Intel and the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company expand and build new manufacturing facilities.

That is all made possible by this legislation, and it creates jobs, not just with those companies but also with the companies that supply them the tools and packaging for their products. And these are great-paying jobs, and many

of them do not require a four-year degree.

I visited Estrella Mountain Community College just several weeks ago, where they are training Arizonans to enter the semiconductor technician career track with just a 10-day course followed by a guaranteed job interview.

Now, this is an enormous opportunity to reinvent our economy for the future, and this week, we are getting it done. This bill has now passed the Senate, and I am confident that it will pass the House and be signed into law.

While this process has been long, it has also shown what we can accomplish when we work together, Republicans and Democrats.

Senators YOUNG, CORNYN, WARNER, and I first began working on this at the beginning of last year, we found agreement, and we worked to build support from our colleagues. Since then, we have had to overcome more than a few roadblocks, but what matters most is that we got this done. As a result, our country is going to once again be a leader in microchip manufacturing, creating tens of thousands of great-paying jobs, strengthening our national security, and lowering costs for everyday products.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, shortly, I will ask unanimous consent on the nomination of Dimitri Kusnezov to be the Under Secretary for Science and Technology at the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department needs qualified and steady leadership to support its 240,000 employees and their critical missions to protect our homeland security and to keep Americans safe. The Directorate of Science and Technology plays a vital role in carrying out these responsibilities as the Department's research and development arm, conducting groundbreaking research to help our Nation identify vulnerabilities in our homeland security so that we can close existing gaps and increase our capacity to address both current and emerging threats.

Dr. Kusnezov is more than qualified to lead these efforts. He most recently served as the Deputy Under Secretary for Artificial Intelligence and Technology at the Department of Energy, where he led the efforts to drive artificial intelligence innovation by incorporating it into their missions and operations, including through the creation of a new Artificial Intelligence Office.

After more than a decade on the Yale faculty as a professor of theoretical physics, Dr. Kusnezov left academia to pursue public service at the Department of Energy and became a member of the Senior Executive Service. He served as a senior adviser to the U.S. Secretary of Energy and Chief Scientist for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

Throughout the confirmation process, Dr. Kusnezov has demonstrated he possesses the technical and specialized expertise to serve in this role, and I urge my colleagues to confirm Dr. Kusnezov.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 727, Dimitri Kusnezov to be Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Department of Homeland Security; that the nomination be confirmed without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this nominee has been failed by the bureaucracy that he attempts to join.

For months, I have been working with the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security—USCIS specifically—to rectify an egregious immigration case.

A North Dakota family, an American family, is being forced to live apart from each other after one of the parents, a Canadian, inadvertently overstayed their visa after receiving poor advice during the chaos of the COVID pandemic. This forced separation has been ongoing since last year. In fact, the Canadian citizen, the Canadian mother, is barred for 10 years from returning to her home.

The family has complied with every request our government has thrown at them and, as we speak, are working on fulfilling another dilatory and unnecessary request for more information.

The review of this case could have been done a long time ago, but instead bureaucrats are expediting nothing, stringing out request after request, actually forcing my constituent to prove the hardship of being separated and even show why moving to Canada would be a problem. Think of it. Their own government is asking them to justify why they can't just move to Canada. They are past the point of exasperation, and I don't know how we can blame them.

It is wrong and unjust, especially when my constituents witness the same Agency allowing thousands of people to pour across our southern border without a scintilla of review every single day.

The government is not without fault in this case, and I could share many more frustrating details of their saga, but I will refrain for the sake of their privacy as they work through this grueling process. However, my holds on DHS nominees will remain until this case is resolved. And I will add, if there is no meaningful change soon, these holds will expand to other Agencies that are involved in this case—specifically, the State Department.

It is not a decision I make lightly and one I would rather not make at all, but I would like to state the obvious: It shouldn't take a U.S. Senator personally calling Agencies and the administration while holding up nominees to get the so-called public servants to actually serve the public.

Get this done.

With that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I renew my above request except that I ask unanimous consent that the vote occur at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader; that there be 10 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form on the nomination; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would be happy to have a vote on this this afternoon. But the decision isn't mine; it is the bureaucrats at DHS.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, every day, I receive messages from Michigan families who are struggling to cope with rising costs for the things they depend on. We know that it has been challenging in a global pandemic with supply chains broken down and consolidation, but we also know that from food prices to household necessities to gas, corporate price gouging is also taking a big chunk out of Michigan wallets. And perhaps no industry has been price-gouging longer—actually for decades—more deeply than the pharmaceutical industry.

Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs—highest prices in the world—even though we are the ones who have invested so much partnering with the industry on new types of medications and innovations. We allow research and development tax credits to help pay for that cost. We support other efforts. The National Institutes of Health helps to pay for the basic research, hundreds of billions of dollars working with the industry. And yet we have the highest prices in the world—the highest prices in the world. And one in four Americans can't afford the medications they depend on. This is just not acceptable. It is just not acceptable.

A senior with complex medical needs pays an average of more than \$6,000 a year on prescription drugs. And the median price for a new prescription drug is \$188,000 a year. That is 90 times the median price for a new drug just

back in 2008. And that is more than most Americans earn in 3 years, not just 1 year, but in 3 years.

Christina of Center Line, MI, knows this. She was prescribed Humira for an autoimmune condition that affects her eyes. Unfortunately, even though she needs it, she can't afford it. The medication costs more than \$6,000 a month—a month. She wrote this:

Autoimmune patients . . . struggle with the cost of prescriptions being so high and some just give up and don't even bother. That should never be an option in my opinion.

James, who lives in Manistee, suffers from narcolepsy. It is a neurological condition in which patients can suddenly fall asleep during other activities, including eating or driving. I am sure we have all known someone or seen someone who has this disease.

James first started taking medication called Xyrem in 2015. Back then, it cost about \$9,000 a month. Today, that same medication costs more than \$18,000 a month—\$18,000 a month, or \$226,221.84 a year.

Who can do that? Who can do that?

Last year, James' doctor switched him to a slightly different drug with less sodium, produced by the same company, Jazz Pharmaceuticals. The new drug, XYWAV, costs even more—\$239,000—\$239,320, to be specific, per year.

James writes:

Who is profiting from these huge price hikes? Will these huge price hikes continue every year? Does Jazz Pharmaceuticals have enough oversight? Are they putting profits over people?

I think there is an answer to that. It sure seems like that to me, James.

There is no fundamental reason for these prices to be going up and up and up. Now, when I think about insulin, which has tripled in price in the last decade or so, this was a drug that was actually discovered 100 years ago by two Canadian doctors who developed this patent for lifesaving medicine, and because they felt it was unethical to actually be making a profit off of something that would help people, they gave it to the University of Toronto for the equivalent of \$1.

That was 100 years ago. It hasn't substantially changed as a product in 100 years. The company has more than recovered their research and development—their costs and so on. And yet in the last couple of years, the price has tripled—tripled. If that is not a sign of price gouging, I don't know what is.

From 2000 to 2018, big pharmaceutical companies raked in \$11.5 trillion in revenue. That is T—trillion dollars. Between 2016 and 2020, drug companies spent \$577 billion on stock buybacks—not lowering prices, but doing more for their CEOs and doing more for their stockholders. The \$577 billion on stock buybacks is about 10 times as much as they spent on research and development.

They also have significantly increased executive compensation while

Americans struggle to afford lifesaving medications. For the record, the CEO of Jazz Pharmaceuticals made more than \$16 million in total compensation last year; an awful lot of Michigan families could live a good life on that one salary.

The pharmaceutical and health products industry spent \$350 million on lobbying in 2021, nearly double the spending of the second-highest industry. In fact, at one point—I haven't done this recently, but at one point, I looked at the number of lobbyists per Senator, and it was 15 lobbyists in the drug industry for every one Senator. And so we wonder, what is going on here? And then we see what happens in elections and so on; and, unfortunately, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle who receive a lot of the benefits of the contributions from the pharmaceutical industry then come to the floor and try to block us from doing something on behalf of people to lower these prices. And that is going to be what is happening again next week.

So far in 2022, pharmaceutical companies have already raised the price of 1,186 drugs, and they raised the price on 100 drugs just this—right now in July, this month—100 drugs. Prices have gone up, just this year.

It is appalling. There is no other word for it. And while Republican colleagues are fighting to protect these absurd profits, Senate Democrats are fighting for people who need their medicines, in some cases just to survive, to live, or to be able to go to work, to be able to do things to support their children to get what they need.

Our commonsense plan, which we will be voting on next week, to lower drug prices will save \$288 billion over the next 10 years. First, it would empower Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices beginning with 10 of the highest costing drugs, starting next year. I can't believe it. We negotiate everything else, and we know the VA that negotiates on behalf of veterans' prescription drugs gets about 40 percent less. Common sense tells you that we should be negotiating these prices.

But, unfortunately, years ago, when the prescription drug bill, Part B, passed in Medicare, the drug companies were successful in getting specific language in that says you can't negotiate with them. Medicare cannot negotiate. Well, that needs to change, and we are going to change that.

So it would be 10 of the highest costing drugs next year that would expand to 20 drugs in each year after that by 2029. Just imagine how much money can be saved if Medicare was allowed to negotiate, and it would directly benefit people who are living with conditions including asthma, blood clots, COPD, as well as cancers as well as a whole range of things—everything you can imagine.

Secondly, our legislation caps Medicare beneficiaries' out-of-pocket costs for seniors, for people with disabilities

on Medicare. We will cap the out-of-pocket costs to \$2,000 a year and allow people to spread that out over the year so that it is easier to make that payment. So instead of \$6,000 a month or \$9,000 a month or \$10,000 a month or whatever, we are talking about a cap of \$2,000 you can spread out over the year in out-of-pocket costs for seniors and people with disabilities. Never again will a diagnosis like cancer mean \$10,000 or more for a single drug to treat it.

Medicare beneficiaries would also receive free vaccines, including vaccines for shingles. That currently costs seniors \$190 if they are not enrolled in Medicare Part B. It would increase help for low-income seniors, giving all qualifying Medicare beneficiaries the full low-income subsidy under Medicare Part B. So we would help low-income seniors even more. That would save the average senior about \$5,000. That is a lot of money. And it would keep Part B premiums in Medicare affordable for seniors and people with disabilities and ensuring that premiums won't increase because of bad actions by drug companies, and that means not faster than inflation. Speaking of bad actions by drug companies, it would penalize them for outrageous price increases. If they go above inflation, they are going to have to rebate those funds.

Today, drug companies are incentivized by keeping drug prices high by secretly negotiating with insurers and pharmacy benefit managers to increase profits at the expense of patients. Under our legislation, drug companies, not consumers, will be on the hook for drug price hikes that exceed the rate of inflation. This proposal alone is expected to save Medicare \$71 billion.

For far too long, the drug companies have been taking advantage of people like Christina and James. People should not have to go without the medicine they need in this country, in America, where we fund through our tax dollars so much of the innovation that creates these drugs. They should not be forced to skip doses or take less than what was prescribed to save money, and they should not have to choose between taking their medicine and keeping the lights on or putting food on the table.

Christina and James deserve better. Americans deserve better. And we are going to fight until that gets done. That is what next week is all about on prescription drugs. It is time. It is past time. People deserve to be able to afford the medicine they need. It is time to put people before profits, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO DR. THOMAS E. DOBBS, III

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I rise to express deep appreciation for Mississippi State Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs, a friend and leader to all of the frontline healthcare workers in my State.

Dr. Dobbs joined the Mississippi State Department of Health as the State health officer in December 2018. After 3½ years and a global pandemic that none of us saw coming, he will soon step down from his role and return to the clinical side of medicine.

Mississippi's State health officer is responsible for directing public health activities related to the State's many health challenges, which included my State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Dobbs' experience and his expertise made him the perfect professional to lead Mississippi through this pandemic. With a belief that each person in Mississippi was his patient, Dr. Dobbs worked tirelessly throughout his tenure to care for our nearly 3 million residents. From the start, Dr. Dobbs was steadfast in informing and advising citizens, policymakers, and healthcare providers on the best practices to combat the deadly coronavirus. He never wavered despite evolving challenges and so many tragic COVID-related deaths.

He is one of the country's most respected public health officers, having earned a stellar reputation for his clinical work in the field of infectious diseases. Dr. Thomas Dobbs proved himself to be the leader Mississippi needed during a very difficult time. I am saddened to see Dr. Dobbs leave the Mississippi State Department of Health, but I am confident he will continue to do great things.

There are not enough thanks in the world that could cover all that Dr. Dobbs has done for Mississippi, but I say from the bottom of my heart, thank you, Dr. Dobbs. Your service and sacrifice on behalf of Mississippi reflects well on you and your profession.

I am also grateful for his wife, Dr. Kim Dobbs, and their two sons, Wyn and Max, for sharing so much of their husband and father during this time.

As Dr. Dobbs departs the State department of health, I look forward to continuing to work with him and the new State health officer, Dr. Dan Edney, in making Mississippi healthier and happier.

Thank you again so much, Dr. Dobbs. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

INFLATION

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, the mountain Americans have to climb to make ends meet keeps getting steeper and steeper as a result of Bidenomics.

Since President Biden began his reckless tax-and-spending spree, prices are sky-high for gas, food, housing, and just about everything else. The admin-

istration's own statistics reveal inflation jumped nearly 10 percent in the last year, the biggest increase in over four decades.

Democrats keep telling us not to worry and that the problem is only "temporary." Yet, every month, prices keep climbing and climbing and climbing. The reason is simple: President Biden's fiscal policies are driving costs higher and higher.

You may recall I came to the Senate floor a year ago to warn my colleagues that Bidenomics was causing inflation to spin out of control. Yet Democrats have ignored the struggles being inflicted on hard-working Americans and continue to pass one trillion-dollar bill after another. As reckless spending increased, the value of the dollar declined, meaning paychecks aren't going nearly as far as they did just a year ago.

To make matters even worse, the Biden administration's ongoing effort to end domestic oil and gas production is fueling the elevated price at the pump, which reached an alltime high of more than \$5 per gallon this summer; and an internal analysis by the Biden administration's own Treasury Department forecasts that, this fall, gas prices could top \$6 a gallon.

I am already hearing from Iowans and Iowa businesses about how folks aren't even able to afford to drive to work. The problem is becoming even more difficult since Bidenomics is driving up the sticker prices on cars to record highs. The actual retail price for a new vehicle is \$48,000, and if that sounds like a lot, the cost of buying a home has also reached an alltime high of \$416,000. It is no surprise fewer people are buying homes. Then look at rent. It has also hit a record high of nearly \$1,900 a month. These unpredictable prices have everyone asking themselves if "The Price is Right."

Folks, Americans shouldn't have to play guessing games about whether or not their paychecks can be stretched far enough to avoid going over a financial cliff. Each bill the Democrats have passed as part of the Biden agenda has increased costs for working Americans while moving our Nation closer and closer to the edge of the fiscal cliff.

Consider that when Joe Biden was inaugurated as President in January 2021, the inflation rate was only 1 percent. After their so-called COVID relief bill—which cost \$1.9 trillion—was passed in March of last year, the inflation rate moved up to nearly 3 percent.

In July, President Biden claimed the quickly increasing prices were "temporary" and that his big spending plans would result in lower prices for Americans, but by the time the President signed his \$1 trillion, so-called infrastructure bill in November, inflation had climbed to almost 7 percent.

In December, President Biden said inflation had reached its "peak." He was wrong once again, and, today, inflation is more than 9 percent.

This isn't a cliffhanger, folks. We all know where this is headed. Step by

step, President Biden's reckless tax-and-spend policies are taking us closer and closer to going over the cliff, and yet the Democrats are still trying to outbid each other with another trillion-dollar, budget-busting, partisan package that would raise taxes on small businesses and increase prices for everyone.

That is right, folks. Bidenomics is driving up the costs of everything, and the Democrats' solution is to spend even more of your hard-earned money to pay for more of their pricey, partisan pet projects. Any more Bidenomics will push the economy over the fiscal cliff and into a recession.

It is time to take a step back and stop the wasteful Washington spending, which is the only way to make these prices come on down.

I yield the floor.

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

HEALTHCARE

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I just was able to watch the administration climb the inflation rate cliff, and I want to talk more about this problem of what happens when the administration ignores the warning signs that are going to produce the kind of results that they have produced.

You know, Democrats, all by themselves, after five bipartisan bills the year before to try to fight COVID and save the economy, decided that the recovering economy needed even more help to recover and passed a \$1.9 trillion spending bill in March of last year. And that money almost immediately went out.

You know, we talk about \$1.9 trillion. I don't even know quite how we compare that in a way that people can think about it. The normal annual spending for the whole discretionary budget is \$1.47 trillion. So in one bill, in addition to the money that the government would be spending that year in the budget that we vote on—the discretionary budget we vote on—Democrats decided: We are going to spend that much and more. We are not going to spend just twice the normal discretionary spending. We are going to spend twice the normal discretionary spending plus another 25 percent or so.

You know, we spend every year about 700, and last year we spent \$780 trillion to defend the country. That is a third of the money, roughly, in the \$2 trillion American Recovery Act. We spent less than \$700 billion to do everything else that we vote on. All of the debates we have here about spending are spending that results in a little less than \$1.5 trillion of spending that is part of the normal budget.

So when you double that and then you add to the doubling of that, and you put all of that into the economy at one time, you are clearly going to create a situation where you have inflation.

That is what Democrats in previous administrations, like Clinton's Secretary of the Treasury and people in

the Obama administration, all said—that this will create runaway inflation. But if that wasn't enough, we hear that they want to spend even more.

But over the next year, after they passed that bill, inflation kept skyrocketing. Cracks kept appearing in the economy. There were plenty of warning signs, but our colleagues on the other side kept pushing to write the biggest check they possibly could and to write another one.

Their latest plan is a massive amount of government spending. This one will be really focused on the Affordable Care Act, sometimes called ObamaCare. Apparently, the Affordable Care Act wasn't all that affordable or isn't all that affordable, because if you believe the reason for this bill, almost nobody can afford it. If you don't get insurance at work, it is almost unaffordable.

In the original healthcare law, there were government subsidies for people who didn't make much money so that they could afford to be in what turned out to be an overpriced system. But that law capped how much you could earn and still get a subsidy.

The \$2 trillion I talked about earlier, the reckless tax-and-spending spree from March of last year, got rid of those income limits. Apparently, the income limits—no matter how high they were—weren't high enough. So they eliminated the income limits. Now the amount you would get from the government would be based on how big a share of your income you were spending on insurance, no matter how big that income was.

One study found that a typical family of four making \$106,000 would almost immediately—and did almost immediately—get almost \$10,000 in subsidies. Before that, they got zero in subsidies. Four hundred percent of the poverty level appeared to be enough in the original bill. That is the system that should have provided insurance that people could afford, but, apparently, it hasn't done that.

The insurance on the government exchanges is so expensive in some areas that people making half a million dollars or more could qualify for thousands of dollars from the government under this new structure. This, by the way, is the structure that the next spending bill is supposed to be trying to make permanent or at least permanent enough that people will get so used to having it that they will never want to give it back.

The bill was called the American Rescue Plan. Its supporters kept telling us it had to be big because there were still people in real need and the economy was struggling. But we now know that while there are always people in need, it is not because the economy is struggling. Now people are in need because the economy is spiraling out of control, and whether it is at the gas pump or the grocery store, you are having to make decisions you wouldn't have thought you would have to make.

The health insurance subsidies in particular were meant to be temporary—at least if you believed the reason that was given when that bill was passed—and would only last until the end of this year. Now our friends across the aisle want to make these temporary subsidies permanent.

For purposes of the law itself, they don't want to admit that. So they say: Well, we just want to extend this year for another couple of years.

And, by the way, I think we are clear that when we get to the next deadline, once you have had these subsidies for 1 year, as it turns out—let alone 2 or 3 more—the whole idea is to get people so committed to getting this money that the government will never back up and take it away.

It is just a budget gimmick—everybody knows that—a gimmick to extend the program to further redistribute taxpayer money to people who are making big incomes but have decided it is better for the government to pay for their insurance than it is to pay for their insurance themselves.

This doesn't relate to everybody. In fact, the 400 percent of poverty, which many people thought at the time, and still think, sounds like an income where you ought to be able to pay your own insurance—and, if you can't, there must be something wrong with the healthcare system. In fact, last year, my colleague from West Virginia, Senator MANCHIN, said he had serious problems with another version of this bill because there wasn't a cap. He said: "What I see are shell games—budget gimmicks that make the real cost of the so-called \$1.75 trillion bill estimated to be almost twice that" much during the full time of the bill.

So the Congressional Budget Office looked into this health insurance study plan or subsidy plan. They found that when it actually gets extended, this extension over 10 years costs another \$250 billion. If we have people who are making more than 400 percent of poverty—in fact, if we have people who are unlimited in their income—who somehow need to have government help to buy insurance, we ought to figure out what happened with the insurance marketplace that ObamaCare created.

The CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, figured that \$36 million of that \$250 million would go to people who make more than 400 percent of poverty, which works out to be about \$140,000 for a family of 4. They also say that 48 percent of the new people entering the program would be making more income than that \$140,000 level.

Even if you think someone who makes \$140,000 is low income—as maybe our friends on the other side of the aisle do—and deserves a handout from taxpayers to buy their insurance, again, I would say there must be something wrong with the insurance plan. If we have an affordable healthcare plan that nobody can afford, that should be our focus instead of focusing on making other taxpayers pay for the

unaffordable healthcare plan rates that we have.

The Congressional Budget Office expects 2.3 million fewer people, by the way, to get their insurance on their job if the subsidies become permanent. Why should your employer pay for your insurance if the government will pay for it instead? Why would you pay some portion of the cost of your insurance if the government will pay 100 percent of the cost of your insurance? Another 200,000 people, because of this, would end up in Medicaid and the CHIP Program, or the Children's Health Insurance Program.

This is a plan to get people committed to something that just simply doesn't work. All it does is prove what President Reagan said, which he once said:

Nothing lasts longer than a temporary government program.

So we are going to be discussing, in the next few days, about how we want this 1-year program to become another 2- or 3-year program, which clearly would become a permanent program.

Temporary assistance in March of 2021 and the other things in that bill that were spent immediately—that \$1.9 trillion bill—fed the fuel to the fire of inflation that we see right now. Combine that with terrible energy policies, and American families feel it every single day.

We don't need to do more of the same. We need to figure out what we did that created this problem and stop doing it.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

OFFICER ELLA GRACE FRENCH TASK FORCE
SUPPORT ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, yesterday, during a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, I had a chance to share the story of this fallen hero from Chicago, IL. Her name is Ella French.

Officer French joined the Chicago Police Department in 2018. A true public servant, she was always eager to help. She loved people, loved her family, and loved animals, particularly stray dogs. She would often pick them up in her squad car and ferry them to safety at the end of the day.

Last year, tragically, Officer French was shot down during a traffic stop. She was 29 years old. Her partner, Carlos Yanez, Jr., was seriously wounded. The gun that was used to shoot both of them had been straw-purchased in Indiana, a State adjoining Illinois. A straw purchase takes place when someone without a criminal record, who can pass a background check, buys a gun for someone who cannot. In this case, the purchaser was turning the gun over to a convicted felon who used the gun to kill Ella and seriously wound her partner.

During yesterday's hearing, which focused on law enforcement officer safety, we were joined by Officer French's mother, Elizabeth. She is a wonderful

person. I want to take this opportunity to thank Elizabeth French for her bravery and her commitment to honoring her daughter's legacy.

I want to thank our witnesses, including Chief Angel Novalez of the Chicago Police Department, who himself was shot in the line of duty, for participating yesterday in the hearing.

Every time law enforcement officers put on their uniforms and badges, they put their lives on the line, especially in a country that is now awash in guns, America, the country of 350 million people and 400 million firearms. In fact, guns are not only the No. 1 cause of death for America's children, they are the leading cause of death for officers in the line of duty, second only to COVID.

We have made some progress in recent months in reducing the risk of gun violence for police officers and our families. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act included a provision I have long supported, cracking down on straw purchases, like the gun that was used to kill this amazing young woman.

We still have a lot of work to do. Yesterday, I introduced legislation—and I have named it in Officer French's honor—that would provide funding to multijurisdictional task forces to combat straw purchasing: the Officer Ella Grace French Task Force Support Act. I am glad her mother was there to hear that.

I hope every Senator who prides himself on supporting law enforcement will join me in this legislation. I can think of no better way to honor the service and sacrifice of our officers, to protect our families and our children, and to demonstrate to America that this Senate is serious about stemming the tide of gun violence in our country.

RIGHT TO CONTRACEPTION ACT

Madam President, in the United States of America, nearly all women—99 percent—use some form of contraception in their lifetime to prevent unplanned pregnancy. They use birth control pills, IUDs, condoms, and other devices. Many women who are not sexually active still use birth control to manage medical conditions.

Further, almost every woman who identifies as religious has used a contraceptive method in her lifetime—99 percent of mainline Protestants, evangelical Protestants, and Catholics—and 96 percent of people with other religious affiliations.

In short, women in all stages of life in America and of all religious backgrounds rely on birth control. It is their constitutional right. It is their decision. But this right, this decision, is now under attack.

Over a month ago, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, revoking for the first time ever an established constitutional right: the right to reproductive healthcare. And I fear that the Court's assault on our fundamental freedoms is just beginning.

In his concurrence in the *Dobbs* opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas urged the Supreme Court to "reconsider all of this Court's substantive due process precedents, including *Griswold*, *Lawrence*, and *Obergefell*." He made reference in that statement to three Supreme Court decisions which have been on the books for over 50 years. That is an explicit threat by Justice Thomas against the very right to same-sex marriage, the right to consensual relationships between LGBTQ people, and the right to contraception, which has been protected by the Court's decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* for 55 years.

In that case, *Griswold*, a supermajority of seven Supreme Court Justices ruled that married couples have a right to access contraception. They based it on a word which you will not find in the Constitution: "privacy." Now, more than half a century later, we are living in an America where women are no longer guaranteed this right to privacy, this right to reproductive healthcare, and where their very right to contraception is now in doubt and in jeopardy.

This is not some alarmist rant. At this very moment, women in America are being denied their constitutional right to contraception. How could that possibly be in this country? Well, look no further than your local pharmacy.

This past weekend, USA TODAY reported on the story of Abigail Martin, a young woman who has been taking birth control pills for the past 6 years. She went to a Walgreens pharmacy to refill her birth control prescription, which had been prescribed by her doctor. She was turned away by a pharmacist at Walgreens. It took 4 days before she was finally able to access her medication by going to a different pharmacist. That is a dangerous delay in healthcare. Apparently, Walgreens allows its pharmacists to refuse to fill a prescription for which they have "a moral or religious conviction . . . [and] to refer the customer to another employee or manager on duty who will complete the transaction."

Since Abigail's story went viral, other Walgreens customers have come forward to say that cashiers refused to ring up their condoms because they announced it violated their faith.

A pharmacist should not be able to unilaterally decide that their personal moral or religious beliefs can delay or interfere with the medical needs of a patient standing at the cash register, buying a legal medication, which is why this week I sent a letter to the CEO of Walgreens, an Illinois corporation, for an explanation of their policy.

If Walgreens is going to allow its individual employees to dictate what legal medical products customers can purchase, then the company should make this policy known to the public. They should be required to display signs at their cash registers alerting customers and the public that they may not be able to fill their prescriptions or buy healthcare products in a

timely manner. Given this information, customers may decide to take their business elsewhere—to a pharmacy that does not allow individual staff members to restrict or interfere with their customers' legal purchasing decisions.

A woman's right to essential healthcare should not differ based on which pharmacy she chooses, who fills her prescription, or who rings it up. Her right to this personal decision in her life is fundamental—fundamental. That is why Congress must pass the Right to Contraception Act introduced by Senators MARKEY and MURRAY. This is a commonsense proposal, and I have cosponsored it. It would codify the right to contraception in America nationwide—a right that has been undisputed for 55 years.

We need this legislation because now women in America are living with the consequences of six unelected Justices erasing the constitutional right to reproductive healthcare, and pharmacies, like Walgreens, are allowing their employees to dictate what healthcare products consumers are able to purchase. Walgreens says they want to be respectful of the moral judgment of their employees and staff. Should they not also be respectful of their customers?

Politicians and pharmacists have no business standing between a woman and healthcare. If protecting this right sounds like common sense to you, then join us in supporting the Right to Contraception Act.

If the Supreme Court will not respect this fundamental personal right, you have the right to demand that your Member of Congress will.

CHIPS ACT OF 2022

Madam President, across America, tens of thousands of cars are lined up bumper to bumper in a total standstill. This is not an ordinary traffic jam. You see, these cars are brand new. They were assembled by some of the finest names in American manufacturing. But they are missing something, a key, essential component: microchips.

If you are in the market for a new car or even a fridge or a smartphone, there is a good chance you have felt the semiconductor shortage. These tiny pieces of silicon power nearly everything around us. But with the coronavirus epidemic, supply chains have been snarled and foreign factories have been shut down, which has led to a global shortage of microchips.

This has had a devastating impact on American consumers, businesses, and workers. Over the past 2 years, the price of a new car has skyrocketed by 20 percent—40 percent for used cars. We have seen the repercussions of this firsthand in my home State of Illinois, which is one of the leaders in the auto industry. Companies like Stellantis, which runs an assembly plant in Belvidere, have been forced to shut down production several times this year because of these shortages.

Today, the Senate did something remarkable: We passed a bill, a bipartisan bill. How about that. And it is important. We came to the rescue of job creators like Stellantis and to the rescue of American consumers. We voted on this legislation to invest billions of dollars into making microchips right here in America.

This bill is critical for the future of our economy. It is even critical for our national security. And we need it desperately for more scientific breakthroughs. But in the near term, the CHIPS Act is imperative for shoring up our Nation's supply chain and strengthening our defense system. Why? Because microchips are essential not just for cars and refrigerators and smartphones but for guided missile systems and fighter jets.

Right now, America has to rely on foreign suppliers like China to supply the chips that power the next generation of defense in America. That wasn't always the case. In 1990, America produced almost 40 percent of the world's supply of microchips. Today, make that 12 percent. Somewhere along the way, we settled for outsourcing semiconductor production to Asia. That is just unacceptable, and it is unsustainable. Imagine our turning to the Chinese Communist Party to determine whether or not we can buy the microchips that fuel our economy and protect our Nation. That is a dangerous scenario.

I have heard a few colleagues voice concern about the subsidies in this bill, but—let's be clear—this is no reckless corporate giveaway. The CHIPS Act will bring American factories back to life, creating good jobs in our country.

The fact is, our competitors in Asia and even Europe are already investing billions of dollars in luring chipmakers away from America. We need to fight fire with fire. The CHIPS Act will. It will incentivize the biggest names in technology to manufacture right here in America, and if any company breaks their commitment to make it in America, we reclaim all of the funding that we give them under this bill.

But beyond this economic and national security imperative, the CHIPS Act is important for another reason, one that really strikes at the heart of America: pioneering innovation. The CHIPS Act includes historic funding authorization for groundbreaking scientific research at the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy's Office of Science.

This has been a particularly important issue to me personally as a Member of the Senate for many years. It was 7 or 8 years ago when I decided to try to push for increasing medical research funds at the Federal level. I concentrated on the National Institutes of Health, with Senator ROY BLUNT of Missouri, who was just on the floor before me, joining me in a bipartisan effort with PATTY MURRAY in an effort to make this bipartisan and effective. It worked. We dramatically increased the

investment in the NIH. But I knew that wasn't enough. We needed the Department of Energy's Office of Science, as well as the National Science Foundation, to have the same increase in funding. Today, with the passage of the CHIPS and Science bill, we are finally moving in that direction.

We know how important scientific research is. We have learned it over and over. For instance, finding that vaccine for COVID-19 in recordbreaking time was a result of investing in science and medical research years and years before.

We also know that we have launched some things which are going to change the world. The James Webb Space Telescope is one of those things. The deepest and sharpest photos of our universe are finally coming home to the United States and the rest of the world.

What is NASA doing with this trove of data being collected by this telescope now? Well, since NASA is funded by taxpayers, they are sharing it with researchers throughout the country. One professor at the University of Chicago, Jacob Bean, says that he is planning on using this data to learn more about exoplanets orbiting faraway stars, whatever the possibilities may be that they can host a life.

This one image of our universe has unleashed a flood of new ideas and just countless questions for researchers around the world. It shows how funding and scientific research can really change the place we live in.

When we support scientists and researchers, we are paving the way for new discoveries. NASA was critical for developing so many products. Imagine, if you will, that they had a lot to do with developing athletic shoes, CAT scans, and smartphone cameras. These staples of American life and more were unintended discoveries pioneered in NASA's labs.

With the CHIPS Act, we can kickstart a new generation of discovery. I am happy to say that, in Illinois, in the Chicagoland area, we have two of the best research operations in our country: the Argonne Lab and Fermilab.

With this funding, these facilities will break new ground in researching emerging technology, like AI and quantum computing. In fact, Argonne and Fermilab already partnered together with the University of Chicago to launch the most advanced quantum network in the world. They are planning to expand it to other parts of the country, bringing more research into this cutting-edge research technology.

And much like space exploration 50 years ago, quantum computing is the new frontier in science. We have only begun to explore techniques like teleporting qubits, which may sound like a line from Star Trek, but it has profound implications.

Quantum computing could revolutionize the way we design electric batteries for cars, even solar technology, to maximize energy efficiency. These are the possibilities that lie before us.

The passage of the CHIPS and Science Act today on the floor of the U.S. Senate is a vindication of our commitment to this Nation's future and an investment that generations will thank us for.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, in a moment, I am going to propound a unanimous consent request. Before I do, I want to make some brief remarks. Right now, we have an administration that is killing oil pipelines, slow-walking natural gas licensing, illegally halting lease sales, and writing rules that Congress never gave the executive branch the authority to write.

This is how President Biden regulates our energy industry. In the morning, he complains that gas prices are too high, and he chastises oil and gas companies to produce more. Then he takes a nap, wakes up, and says the very existence of oil and gas companies offends him, and it is our duty to put them out of business. It is absurd.

But today I want to focus on the Biden administration's reckless release of our emergency crude oil stockpile, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The President's energy policy has been a failure so much so that today the United States produces 1½ million fewer barrels a day of oil than it did in November 2019.

That is why oil and gas prices are high. It is no mystery, and it is not principally because of the war in Ukraine, as much as Joe Biden and the Democrats want to blame it on that.

At the same time that President Biden has tried to strangle U.S. energy production, he has simultaneously groveled to Saudi Arabia and to Venezuela, asking them to increase their production. And he has attacked small business gas stations around the country and told them: Just lower your prices. Then he has taken the unprecedented step of releasing an arbitrary amount of our emergency crude oil stockpile in order to try to lower gas prices before the midterm elections.

The Biden administration has even sold at least 2 million barrels of oil to the Chinese Communist Party's state-owned oil and gas company, Sinopec. One million barrels in April of this year, another million barrels in July sold to communist China. China, at this very moment, has created the world's largest stockpile of crude oil, which according to Bloomberg totals 926 million barrels.

In comparison, under Joe Biden, our own reserves have fallen to 492 million

barrels of oil. That is the lowest level since December of 1985, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Of course, no mention of China and the administration would be complete without noting that Hunter Biden's private equity firm, BHR, has a major stake in Sinopec.

But there is something we can do. I am calling on this body to pass the No Emergency Crude Oil For Foreign Adversaries Act, which is cosponsored by 11 of my colleagues.

This bill takes the commonsense step of prohibiting the Secretary of Energy from selling our emergency crude oil stockpile—there to protect the national security of the United States—to communist China and also to other foreign adversaries, including Iran, North Korea, and Russia.

It would also require a full accounting of where our crude oil has been sent for refining since the Biden administration began releasing the oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve last November.

It is important to note we have no issue with exports in general. In fact, we want to continue to help our European allies remove themselves from their reliance on Russian oil.

A recent study found that since 2015, U.S. oil exports increased oil and natural gas development in the United States, reduced global oil prices by \$1.93 per barrel over a 6-year period, added \$161 billion to our GDP, and added nearly 50,000 jobs here in America.

But under no circumstances should we be giving our emergency stockpile to our enemies, particularly at a time when they are benefiting from stockpiling cheap Russian oil and gas. This poses a direct threat to American national security, and the Biden administration shows zero interest in stopping it. That is why Congress needs to act.

This should be a simple and easy bipartisan measure to say we are not going to sell our Strategic Petroleum Reserve to communist China to use it against America.

Therefore, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 4515, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, 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?

The junior Senator from Connecticut.

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

I appreciate the Senator's interest in trying to make sure that American energy resources don't go to benefit communist China. And it is interesting because I don't think a lot of Americans know that prior to 2015, the United States didn't allow for the export of American oil. We saw it prior to 2015 as

a strategic asset, all of the oil produced in the United States.

Prior to 2015, we decided that the oil produced in the United States would stay in the United States; that it should benefit U.S. consumers.

And I have heard my Republican colleagues come down to the floor over and over again calling the Biden administration to do more drilling, to do more exploration, to authorize more permits under the belief that drilling in the United States will produce results for American consumers.

But the reality is we have done more drilling in the United States, but much of that drilling and exploration has benefited—you guessed it—China. Prior to 2015, the United States didn't export oil to China. In 2013, we exported .3 million barrels, the next year .4 million barrels, the next year .8 million barrels, the next year 80 million, then 84 million, dipped down to 50, then back up to 176. In 2021, 91 million barrels of oil shipped from the United States to China.

And so if we are sincere about trying to make sure that American-produced oil benefits American consumers, rather than the Chinese Communist Party, well, then let's make that our policy. Let's not limit the policy to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; let's just make the decision that American oil is going to benefit American consumers.

Now, that change was made in 2013 as part of a compromise. Republicans wanted the ban on oil exports lifted. Democrats wanted the extension of some tax incentives for renewables. It was a bipartisan compromise. But now that we seem to have greater consensus around stopping American exports of fuel benefiting China, then let's not just do this halfway; let's make it a clear policy.

And so I just learned of the Senator's unanimous consent request this morning, and I will commit to him to learn more about the more targeted approach that he is making, but I am going to plan to object to it today unless we can modify it to make this policy universal.

Senator MARKEY has a piece of legislation that would reimpose that ban on the export of oil. It seems like a pretty important time to do that. If we have oil in the United States, why don't we keep it here to benefit the people of the United States instead of shipping it to China? Senator MARKEY's bill has language in it that would allow for national interest exemptions so that if we needed to get oil to Ukraine, for instance, we could still do that. But 91 million barrels of oil, that is a lot of oil to be sending to China every year.

And so I am going to ask that the Senator modify his request to pass Senator MARKEY's legislation instead, which would, frankly, get at the concern that Senator CRUZ is articulating but do it in a much more comprehensive way. I expect he may object to that modification, and if he does, I will object to his original request but com-

mit to him to spend some time looking at his more targeted approach given a little bit more of a window.

So I am going to make this request right now, which is that the Senator modify his request and instead that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 1415 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, 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. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. CRUZ. I do not. Reserving the right to object.

Debates on the Senate floor sometimes can be clarifying. Over the course of the day, my office and I engaged in good-faith negotiations with a number of Democratic Senators. We engaged in extensive negotiation with Senator MANCHIN, the chair of the relevant committee. Senator MANCHIN proposed minor alterations to this bill and agreed to support it if we made those alterations. I agreed to accept Senator MANCHIN's alterations, and we then had what was going to be a bipartisan bill.

Senator CANTWELL, likewise, we negotiated with her office today and had reached what we thought was an agreement.

And then at the last moment, the Senator from Connecticut raised this objection. And I think what he is asking this body to pass really clarifies where the extreme left wing of the Democratic Party is, which is the Green New Deal Democrats want to destroy American energy jobs. They want to destroy the American oil and gas industry. They want to destroy our own production, and, bizarrely, they simultaneously want to benefit energy jobs of our enemies.

There is some irony that the Senator from Connecticut is leading this objection because it was earlier this year when the Senator from Connecticut led the effort in this body to block sanctions on Russia and Vladimir Putin on the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, sanctions that I had authored and passed into law, not once but twice; sanctions that had stopped that pipeline; sanctions that had prevented Putin from invading Ukraine; sanctions that hurt Russia and hurt Putin until Joe Biden became President and decided to waive the sanctions on Russia and Putin to capitulate to Russia and Putin.

When Biden did so, when Biden waived those sanctions, the Government of Ukraine, President Zelenskyy, said: If you waive these sanctions, Russia will invade Ukraine. The Government of Poland said: If you waive these sanctions, Russia will invade Ukraine.

And in January of this year, I forced a vote on imposing the sanctions. At the time, the Government of Ukraine begged us—there were tanks on the border of Ukraine, the invasion hadn't

happened—and the government of Ukraine begged us: Please pass these sanctions.

Now, every Democrat in this body had voted for my sanctions not once but twice. They had supported it when the President's name was Donald J. Trump.

But then they had a Democrat in the White House, and a Democrat, Joe Biden, who, on the day of the vote, came to Capitol Hill—it is the only time I know of that he has done this—to personally lobby Democrats to vote against sanctions on Russia, against sanctions on Putin, to vote to greenlight a natural gas pipeline for Putin and Russia.

And the Senator from Connecticut led the fight on the Senate floor, urging his Democratic colleagues: Flip your votes. Give an enormous present to Russia and Putin, and sacrifice Ukraine in the process.

I stood on this floor and said: If you do this—the 44 Democrats who cast the vote—we will see Russian tanks in the streets of Kyiv.

I wish that prediction had proven wrong, but it did not.

What the Senator from Connecticut just came back with is: We should prohibit all energy exports from America.

And, in fact, I will read from the bill he called up. It is:

The President . . . may restrict exports of . . . coal, petroleum products, natural gas, or petrochemical feedstocks.

Shut down all exports.

So I want you to understand the difference between my bill and the bill the Senator from Connecticut is asking us to pass.

My bill says: Don't sell our oil to our enemies. Communist China is our enemy. Russia is our enemy. Iran is our enemy. North Korea is our enemy. Let's not sell our oil to our enemies.

This is a reasonable, commonsense proposition. I am confident any one of us at home with our constituents, if you asked your constituents, "Should the President of the United States be selling oil that the American taxpayer has paid for, that is kept as a strategic reserve to keep America safe, should we be selling it to communist China," the overwhelming majority of your constituents and mine, whether Democrat or Republican, would say: Absolutely not. That is idiotic.

My bill says: Don't sell our oil to our enemies.

The Senator from Connecticut has responded with: Don't sell our oil to anybody. Don't sell our natural gas to anybody. Don't sell it to our friends.

Now, let's be clear. There have been a lot of Democrats in this Chamber who, once the war in Ukraine started, stood up and said the key to defeating Putin is exporting our liquid natural gas to Europe so they can get off of dependency on Russian oil and gas.

I can't count how many Democrat speeches I have heard saying what is absolutely true: We want our friends and allies purchasing energy produced

here in America and not purchasing energy from our enemy.

And what the Senator from Connecticut has just said is that we should abandon our friends in Europe. We should abandon our friends that want our energy. We should tell them: You know what. You are better off buying oil from Russia. You are better off buying oil from Iran. You are better off buying oil from Venezuela, which I guess makes sense because Joe Biden's State Department was asking Venezuela, led by an illegitimate Nicolas Maduro, an enemy of America—the Biden administration is asking our enemies to produce more oil.

So the effect of the Senator from Connecticut's proposition would be to hurt jobs in America, hurt energy prices in America. By the way, it would drive up gasoline prices. If the extremes in the Democratic Party have their way, we won't just see \$5-, \$6-, \$7-a-gallon gasoline, we are going to see \$10-a-gallon gasoline. That is where they want to go.

And, by the way, the Transportation Secretary, Pete Buttigieg, said publicly: This is the cost of transition. We have got to make gasoline expensive.

In politics, that is called saying the quiet part out loud—that for too many of the extreme Democrats, they want working men and women to pay 100 bucks, 150 bucks at the gas pump. Why? Because they don't like that some moms choose to drive minivans. They don't like that some Americans choose to drive a pickup truck or an SUV, and they want to force you to sell your Suburban and buy a Prius. And their strategy is: We are going to make it so expensive, so miserable that you can't afford your bills until you comply with what they want.

It is cynical, and it is misguided, but it does at least make transparent that the little stickers on the gas pump with Joe Biden pointing at the price saying "I did this"—that is what they intend.

We should not be selling oil to communist China. Everyone in this body knows this. But that doesn't mean it is a good idea to abandon our friends and send our friends and allies to become customers of Vladimir Putin. That is spectacularly ill conceived.

And, therefore, I decline to accept the modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection to the modification is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

The junior Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, here is what the Senator from Texas is saying: It is fine to sell to China so long as you are a big American oil company and profiting off of it.

That is the bottom line.

The Senator had the chance to endorse the policy that would have stopped all American exports to China. If the priority is to not enrich the Chi-

nese Government, then let's enact that policy.

What Senator CRUZ is essentially saying is that if the end result is massive profits for the oil company, then we are just going to look the other way. Then we are just going to look the other way.

The strategic petroleum reserve? No, we are going to keep that oil here. That can't go to China. That would be an immoral abomination if the Chinese got their hands on that oil.

But if the end result is that oil companies get to pad their profits by selling oil to the Chinese, well, then that is fine. Well, then, that is fine.

So let's be 100 percent clear in what is happening here. If your priority is not selling oil to China, then let's make that the policy. Let's make that the policy.

But that is not the priority. The priority is to make sure the oil companies can make as much money as possible.

ExxonMobil expects to make \$10 billion in profit—not revenue, in profit—in the second quarter of this year. So I don't apologize for a second for making my priority the people of this country, not the profits of the oil companies.

Yes, I want to keep American oil here because I want it to benefit American consumers, not the oil companies' bottom line.

And spare me the rewrite of history on Nord Stream 2. Those sanctions that we passed were ready to go for Donald Trump. What I objected to was the Senator being silent when Donald Trump sat on the sidelines and refused to implement those sanctions, and then taking a hard line when a Democrat was in the White House.

Senator CRUZ held up every State Department nominee that President Biden offered, as hostage in order to get a change on Nord Stream 2 policy. The Senator did not do that when Donald Trump was in office, during a period of time in which the pipeline was being built.

By the time that Donald Trump left office, that pipeline was 95 percent built, and had Senator CRUZ taken the same policy during the Trump administration, arguably, we could have been in a different place by the end of 2019.

So I don't apologize for saying: You know what. The oil companies are making too much money. Our prices, our constituents, our consumers should come first. And if we are serious about not exporting oil to China, then let's be serious about it and make the policy universal.

And so for that reason, I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The junior Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, you know, John Adams famously said: "Facts are stubborn things." So let's clarify a couple of facts.

No. 1, the bill that the Senator from Connecticut was pushing is a bill that is entitled the BAN Oil Exports Act. In

his remarks a moment ago, he suggested it was about China. This bill is not about China. This bill is about banning oil exports, natural gas exports, coal exports—energy exports across the board to anybody.

By the way, the bill is authored by Senator MARKEY. It is cosponsored by Senators WYDEN, MERKLEY, SANDERS, and WARREN. The Senator from Connecticut is not a cosponsor of the bill. This is an extreme bill.

As I pointed out in my remarks, what the Senator from Connecticut was asking is: Let's refuse to sell oil or natural gas to our friends, and let's make our friends buy them from Russia instead.

In response to that, he said precisely nothing, nada. He said: ExxonMobil is bad. He said: Don't sell to China.

My bill says: Don't sell to China.

His bill says: Don't sell to anybody.

And as for his revisionist history on Nord Stream 2, he is right that the pipeline was over 90 percent completed by the time the Senate and the House took up my sanctions legislation, and the Russian disinformation that was put out was: It is over 90 percent completed; so there is no way to stop it.

Putin stopped building Nord Stream 2 the day that President Trump signed my sanctions legislation into law. Literally, that day they halted construction. A 90-percent complete pipeline is zero percent complete. It is a hunk of metal on the bottom of the ocean. The pipeline lay dormant—it was dead—for over a year.

He complains that I didn't hold Donald Trump's nominations? I didn't need to. The sanctions worked. We had stopped the pipeline.

Then Joe Biden became President. He immediately began signaling weakness to Russia. He began foreshadowing what he actually did in May, which is to waive the sanctions.

Joe Biden was sworn into office on January 20, 2021. Putin recommenced building Nord Stream 2 on January 24, 2021, 4 days after Joe Biden put his hands on the Bible.

I find it very curious that Democrats, No. 1, ignored the pleas from our allies and stood with Russia and Putin to help Putin build a pipeline to generate billions for his war machine but at the same time are willing to stand up and say: We like Russian oil and gas jobs, but we don't like American oil and gas jobs.

We should not be selling oil or natural gas to our enemies. This is an obvious proposition. It ought to be bipartisan. It was bipartisan until this last-minute objection.

But the fact that we shouldn't sell to our enemies doesn't mean we shouldn't supply energy to our friends. Our friends are desperately asking for it, and sending them to buy from Russia is spectacularly foolish.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4612

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, a group of us will be speaking and

then asking for unanimous consent on a measure called the Right to Contraception Act. It is called the Right to Contraception Act because it guarantees the right to contraception.

If you had asked me a year ago, 6 months ago, would we need a Right to Contraception Act, I would have thought not in my lifetime. But the fact is we live now in the post-Roe era. It is a unique moment in our Nation's history, not just because the Supreme Court has overturned *Roe v. Wade* in the recent *Dobbs* decision but because, for the first time in our history, we are rolling back rights.

The history of our great country, the greatest in the history of the world, is that we advance and expand rights. From the time of our founding, the ethos and tradition of America is that we increase rights and liberties that are protected from governmental interference.

And now with *Dobbs*, one of the core freedoms—the right to decide when and whether to have children—has been stripped from women and given to government officials. But it isn't only reproductive rights under *Roe*, because the U.S. Supreme Court has very carefully, deliberately sent signals about where it is going in this rollback of rights and liberties. And it isn't just Clarence Thomas's concurring opinion, which now has become infamous for its signals. It is the opinion of the Court itself that clearly shows that this Court threatens not only abortion rights, but also contraception rights. And in addition to mentioning *Griswold v. Connecticut*, Clarence Thomas also—or I should say Justice Thomas, with all due respect—mentioned *Loving, Lawrence, Obergefell*—all of them on the chopping block, all those rights on this Supreme Court's hit list. And perhaps the most deeply rooted of them all in *Griswold v. Connecticut* is the right to contraception.

Now, let's be clear. The right to contraception wasn't stated in the Constitution, but the right to privacy is at its core. "Don't tread on me." The right to be left alone—that is the reason that we have the Bill of Rights. That is the reason why the Founders rebelled against England—undue, unjustified interference in their personal lives. And so the right to privacy is referred to often as a conundrum; but, actually, it is at the core of the Constitution. It is so fundamental to the mindset and the mantra of those constitutional guarantees from the very founding of our Republic, and the respect for the right of privacy should be bipartisan and, indeed, has been bipartisan throughout our history.

The simple fact is that the most important decision any of us make, at least in my view, is whether to become a parent. And it ought to be a decision—not something that just happens. It should be a decision that is made deliberately. Every American should have that right to decide when and whether to have children. And politi-

cians shouldn't be the ones to make it. They shouldn't be allowed to infringe or interfere on that decision.

And women can't be truly equal if they don't control their lives, their reproductive lives. If they don't control their bodies, if they lose that right, they simply cannot be equal. So it is not just privacy; it is equality that is at stake here.

My Republican colleagues are adamant in dragging this country back to a time when women had little or no autonomy over these choices. And I am shocked—and I think many of my colleagues are, the American people are as well—that American women today will have fewer rights than their mothers and even their grandmothers. We are living through a world where healthcare providers can't do their jobs and save lives without risking criminal penalties, and much of our Nation will be at risk of losing these fundamental liberties.

Let me be clear. This should not be controversial. This issue should not be one that provokes verbal jousts on the floor of the U.S. Senate. *Griswold v. Connecticut*—yes, it is *Griswold v. Connecticut*—has held for decades. It is enshrined in case law, reaffirmed by the Supreme Court that individuals have a right to use contraceptives. But we have seen after assurances by three of the members now sitting on the Supreme Court that respect for precedent really is no longer deeply felt—in fact, may not be felt at all.

What one nominee, Justice Kavanaugh, referred to as "precedent on precedent" and, therefore, it is well-established law, that was *Roe v. Wade*. Now it is gone. It was, in Justice Alito's words, "egregiously wrong." But none of those three nominees expressed any feelings whatsoever that it might be wrong, let alone egregiously wrong. So to all my colleagues who say that the right to contraceptives is unnecessary, I would simply say, Look at *Dobbs*.

When I introduced, along with the Presiding Officer, the Women's Health Protection Act in 2013, the idea that *Roe* might be overruled was unthinkable. Our goal was to prevent the growing restrictions on that right that imposed excessive burdens. What was unthinkable then is reality now. The Court overruling *Griswold* might have been thought unthinkable, but that danger is our present reality in the post-*Roe* world.

So I urge my colleagues to join in approving the Right to Contraception Act today to provide certainty and reassurance to women across the United States that they will have those rights. They can be sure of them; they can rely on them; they will know that having children will be a decision they make—not somebody else telling them when and whether to start a family.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, as we focus on contraception rights this

afternoon, listen to some of the comments made by my Republican male colleagues:

They are not going to change the law on contraception.

There is zero threat of contraception being taken away.

Pure hysteria.

I have no reason to believe these precedents are going to fall.

These are some of the statements made by my Republican colleagues—all of them male, by the way—have made regarding contraception. “Pure hysteria,” they say. This is not pure hysteria to the millions of women across the country who woke up one morning in June and no longer had a constitutional right.

When it comes to this far-right, agenda-driven Supreme Court, nothing is off the table and nothing is “pure hysteria.”

Last month, the far-right majority of the Supreme Court overturned nearly 50 years of precedent and took away the constitutional right to get an abortion. This decision was the result of a decades-long effort by far-right Republicans and rightwing groups to pack the courts with politicians in Roe.

And they are just getting started. For this MAGA majority, controlling women’s bodies doesn’t stop at forcing women to give birth. They actually want to ban contraception. We know this because, in this concurring opinion to overturn Roe, Justice Thomas wrote that the Supreme Court should reconsider—reconsider—the rulings that protect same-sex relationships, marriage equality, and, yes, contraception.

This kind of signaling by a Justice of a Supreme Court should be taken seriously.

So my Republican colleagues saying they have no reason to believe precedent will be overturned is resorting to magical thinking that no one should believe. After all, the Supreme Court just overturned a nearly 50-year precedent that women in this country relied on for nearly half a century—half a century. That is two generations. In fact, radical MAGA Republicans in State legislatures across the country are gearing up in Ohio.

House Republicans introduced a bill that would effectively ban all abortions from the moment of conception and, potentially, other forms of birth control, like IUDs.

Other Republicans have refused to rule out banning certain forms of contraception. We are living in a post-Roe world where our rights are on the chopping block. So, no, this is not “pure hysteria.” The American public knows this. Democrats know this.

So I say to my Republican colleagues, if any of you object to this bill, come down to the Senate floor and tell the American people the truth. Just be honest that you do not support guaranteeing the right to contraception because, in this post-Roe world, any suggestion that this Court won’t overturn precedent is no longer some-

thing to hide behind. But if my Republican colleagues do support the right to contraception, then they should have no problem with supporting our bill, which would create a statutory right for individuals to access contraception, protect the right to healthcare providers to provide contraception to their patients, and empower individuals by extending a private right of action against any State or government official that hinders these rights.

Today, my Republican colleagues have a choice. Do they support the right to contraception and an individual’s right to make decisions about our bodies and our healthcare? Or will they allow the government to tell millions and millions of women what to do?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, an illegitimate, stolen, and radicalized U.S. Supreme Court is putting the fundamental rights of Americans in jeopardy. Last month, the extremist Court took away the right to abortion, a right on which millions of Americans have relied for almost 50 years, undermining their health, their safety, their freedom.

The rightwing majority that overturned Roe v. Wade owns its control of the High Court to then-Leader MCCONNELL’s and Donald Trump’s and Senate Republicans’ theft of two seats on the Supreme Court. The Justices used their ill-gotten power to cast aside decades of precedent—precedent, which during their confirmation hearings they promised to honor, respect, and follow.

If anyone thinks this newly empowered Court’s decision to strip Americans of a longstanding constitutional right won’t be shamelessly repeated, they are wrong. What the Supreme Court just did with Roe is a preview of coming atrocities from this Supreme Court.

Justice Clarence Thomas wrote a concurring opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the decision overturning Roe v. Wade. And that concurrence is like a movie trailer for an upcoming horror film that Americans are forced to watch written, produced, and directed by a captured illegitimate Supreme Court. In his opinion, Justice Thomas made clear that he believes Americans have too many privacy rights under the U.S. Constitution, that the Supreme Court had erred in recognizing those rights, and that the Court should take them away as well—just as it did with the right to abortion.

This bears repeating.

A sitting Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States is arguing that Americans have too many rights.

What mistakes was Justice Thomas talking about?

Well, Justice Thomas urged the Court to correct the error the Court committed when it recognized this right to same-sex marriage in its 2015 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

He told the Court to fix the mistake it made when it recognized the right of Americans to engage in private, consensual sexual activity in its 2003 decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*.

Then he said the Court got it wrong when it recognized the right of Americans to use contraception in its 1965 decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut*.

But it is Justice Thomas who is in error, who is wrong, who has made a mistake. These are all fundamental, privacy-based rights which the Supreme Court correctly recognized. They should all remain the law of the land.

Today, I want to talk about the right to contraception that this extremist and out-of-touch Supreme Court and legislators in red States are taking aim at.

The Supreme Court has recognized the constitutional right to contraception for more than half a century, since its decision in the *Griswold* case in 1965. Over time, the Court has affirmed and expanded that right: in its 1972 decision, a Massachusetts case, *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, recognizing the right of all people to access contraceptives regardless of marital status; and in its 1977 decision in *Carey v. Population Services International*, which held that a State could not constitutionally prohibit the distribution of contraceptives to minors.

The right to contraception is therefore a fundamental right that the Court has repeatedly recognized and reaffirmed. It is a right that is central to a person’s health, to their well-being, to their life, liberty, equality, and economic and social freedom in our country. It is a right grounded in the need and ability to make decisions about one’s own body, one’s own family, and one’s own future. It is a right that is woven into the fabric of a free, pluralistic, and modern society. And it is a right that we must codify and make part of our law so that far-right, extremist judges and elected officials cannot take it away in order to advance their own blatantly political agendas.

That is why I have proudly introduced the Right to Contraception Act with my colleagues Senators MAZIE HIRONO and TAMMY DUCKWORTH, with Senator BLUMENTHAL and Chair PATTY MURRAY of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and have been joined by more than half of the Democratic Senate caucus.

The Right to Contraception Act would codify the Supreme Court’s decision in *Griswold*, recognizing the right to obtain and use contraception. The Right to Contraception Act would enshrine that right in Federal law, and it would guarantee a healthcare provider’s right to prescribe contraceptive products and services and information related to them.

The bill would also protect a range of contraceptives that are legally marketed under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. The Right to Contraception Act would authorize the

U.S. Attorney General, as well as individuals and healthcare providers harmed by unlawful restrictions, to go to court to enforce the rights the bill establishes.

In short, the Right to Contraception Act would safeguard the rights established by more than 50 years of Supreme Court precedent and would protect access to contraception even if *Griswold* were overturned.

The concerns that have led to the introduction of this bill are not merely hypothetical. Justice Thomas's concurring opinion was a call to action that some Republicans and red States are eagerly heeding by continuing to attack and restrict the right to contraception.

Several States have already gone after access to contraception by cutting off the public funding for it, by seeking to define abortion broadly enough to include contraception, and by allowing healthcare providers to refuse to provide services related to contraception based on their own personal beliefs.

And the harms that would flow from abolishing the right to contraception aren't merely theoretical. Attacks on healthcare, especially reproductive healthcare, fall hardest on historically marginalized communities, including Black, indigenous, and other people of color, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, those living in rural and underserved areas, and immigrants.

Last week, we all on our side proudly watched the House pass its version of the Right to Contraception Act by a vote of 220 to 195, though it is dismaying that only 8 House Republicans—only 8—voted to codify that right.

With the right to abortion stolen, the right to contraception threatened, and the need to protect and expand access to contraceptive methods and information on contraception, it makes it more imperative than ever that we pass this legislation. We can't wait for the next hammer to drop. We have an urgent obligation to take the first exit off this slippery slope that leads to the loss of our most personal freedoms—chief amongst them: the right of all Americans to make their own decisions about their bodies, their families, and their own futures.

We can't sit idly by and watch as decades of precedent, privacy rights, and progress are violated. We can't wait for the worst to come—because it is already at our doorstep.

To my anti-choice Republican colleagues, if you would deprive Americans of the choice to end a pregnancy, how can you also deprive them of the ability to prevent a pregnancy in the first place?

Unless your ultimate aim is, really, to exert control over the bodies of others, especially the bodies of women, then I expect to hear no objection to the unanimous consent request to pass the Right to Contraception Act. Other-

wise, the Republican position will be clear to everyone: no abortion but no birth control to prevent the need for one.

That is where the Republican Party is today. I urge my Republican colleagues not to object to our unanimous consent request.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 4612 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, reserving the right to object, here we are again—another day, another sympathetically titled bill offered by my Democratic colleagues wherein the talking points don't really give you the full story—case in point, the Right to Contraception Act.

The so-called Right to Contraception Act purposefully goes far beyond the scope of contraception. It includes provisions that could guarantee the funding of abortion providers and that defines "contraceptive" in such a broad way that it could include drugs to induce an abortion weeks or months into a pregnancy. This definition also could include non-FDA-approved drugs that would actually put a woman's health at risk.

The bill also flies in the face of decades of work in providing for conscience protections. It would require organizations to administer contraceptives despite their moral or religious beliefs.

There is something insidious with this bill, but don't take it from me. Look to the bill's text itself. The "findings" section of this bill notes the work of an organization that many of my colleagues will recognize: The United Nations Population Fund. This is the same organization that contributed over \$10 million to a mass sterilization campaign in Peru in the nineties.

That campaign was rife with coercive practices: Quotas were set; cash bonuses were paid to health workers for each client sterilized; and poor women were bribed with nutritional supplements and clothes for their children.

Then let's not forget the former Population Fund executive director's high praise of China's one-child policy.

But let's be clear here. Routine-use contraceptives should be more easily available, and the fact that they aren't has the biggest impact on women in rural areas, where a doctor could be dozens of miles away. A woman in a rural area doesn't need a platitude-filled messaging bill like the one we have here. She needs over-the-counter access to routine-use birth control. Luckily, Republicans have a solution.

My bill, the Allowing Greater Access to Safe and Effective Contraception

Act, incentivizes manufacturers of contraceptives to file an application for over-the-counter access. It also allows priority review for these applications and waives the FDA filing fee. That means cheaper, quicker, and more available access for women across this Nation.

With my bill, women 18 and over can walk into their local pharmacies, whether they be in Sidney, IA, or in the deepest parts of Manhattan, and get the routine-use birth control they need.

When your doctor is 30 miles away and gas is \$6 a gallon, you don't need a messaging bill; you need access.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4638

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4638, which is at the desk; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I thank the Senator from Iowa, but her bill would not ensure access to birth control, and it fails to codify the constitutional right to birth control across the United States.

In fact, her bill would actually restrict access to birth control for individuals under the age of 18—requiring a prescription even if the Food and Drug Administration has approved an over-the-counter option. And we cannot lose sight of the fact that this bill does nothing to address the reality that, for many women, true access means being able to afford birth control as well.

Last month, I cosponsored a bill that would guarantee that insurers fully cover over-the-counter birth control without any out-of-pocket costs. No one should have to jump through ridiculous hoops or pay extra just to get the birth control they need, not to mention that this bill would do nothing to prevent States from restricting or even banning access to birth control.

The reality that Republicans refuse to acknowledge is that an over-the-counter option doesn't help patients if their States are chipping away at their right to birth control.

So, with the Senator from Iowa's objection to my unanimous consent request and with her counter unanimous consent request, the Republicans have made their position crystal clear: no abortion but no birth control to prevent the need for one.

Republicans have just shown the American people where they stand on their right to contraception. While Republicans won't protect our fundamental rights as the Supreme Court and rightwing State legislatures take

them away, my Democratic colleagues and I will continue our efforts to keep in place the fundamental, privacy-based rights that Americans have had for decades and codify into Federal law the right to contraception.

As a result and for those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, it has been nearly 60 years since the Supreme Court decided *Griswold v. Connecticut* and affirmed Americans' right to privacy and, with it, their right to contraception. So you would think this would be a settled issue, and for the vast majority of Americans, it is. The right to birth control is overwhelmingly popular. It turns out that people want to be able to control their own bodies and make their own decisions about starting a family.

Yet, as we just saw, somehow, in the year 2022, this is not a settled issue for Republican politicians. We have seen some of my Republican colleagues not only block this but try to deny reality, try to say this isn't an issue or claim that Democrats are somehow wasting time.

Well, that is pretty rich because I can't help but remember how we all heard some Republicans saying the Supreme Court would not overturn *Roe* as well, how they tried to claim Democrats were "overreacting" even as they stacked our courts with anti-abortion judges and worked for decades to chip away at abortion rights.

Now we are seeing the nightmare we warned about become reality: women unable to control their own bodies and get the abortion care they need—a nightmare Republicans tried to deny and are still trying to deny even as it happens, even as 10-year-olds are having to travel across State lines for an abortion after being raped, even as women are now being left bleeding for days, waiting for treatment for their miscarriage.

So when Republicans say they support the right to birth control, my issue isn't simply that I am skeptical; it is that I know better. Let's be clear. When I say that I know better, I don't just mean in my gut; I mean I have heard Republicans' own words. I am watching their own actions.

Justice Thomas said explicitly in his concurring opinion in *Dobbs* that he wants the Court to reconsider *Griswold*, which affirmed the right to contraception. The senior Senator from Tennessee said the *Griswold* decision was unsound. That alone would be scary enough, but Republicans aren't just talking about undermining access to birth control, they are already taking action. Read the legislation from Republicans in Idaho, Missouri, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Michigan, which would, in fact, outlaw Plan B and IUDs. Talk to women who have already gone to the pharmacy, only to be denied

their birth control or Plan B. Yes, this is already happening to people. Just last week, 195 House Republicans voted against the Right to Contraception Act, and now today, they have blocked it in the Senate as well.

The evidence of where Republicans actually stand on birth control is overwhelming. They aren't standing for women. They aren't standing for families. They aren't standing for a right nearly all Americans support. They are simply standing in the way.

I want to thank the junior Senator from Massachusetts, the junior Senator from Illinois, and the junior Senator from Hawaii for their work with me on the Right to Contraception Act that Republicans just blocked. I know we are going to all keep working on this.

I do want to set the record straight because so many of the arguments we have seen from Republicans don't add up. They are trying to distract from their extreme position. We won't let them.

This bill is incredibly straightforward, so you simply cannot say you support the right to birth control and then block this bill. I hope everyone will listen closely because here is what this bill actually does. It simply codifies Americans' right to birth control into law. That is it. You don't have to take my word for it; read it yourself—it is all of 15 pages. It protects a right people depend on and makes sure no one can take that away. We are talking about a really basic and really fundamental right here.

Since that right was affirmed half a century ago, generations of Americans have used contraception to control their own future, to manage and treat their healthcare needs, and start a family when they are ready to. For them, it is not political, and it shouldn't be political here in Congress either, especially when protecting this right is supported by a majority of Democrats, a majority of Independents, and, yes, even a clear majority of Republicans.

The American people are watching closely. They were watching previously when Senate Republicans blocked us from protecting the right to travel across States to get abortion care. They were watching last week when Senate Republicans blocked expanding support for our Nation's longstanding Family Planning Program. They were watching when the vast majority of Republicans in the House voted against the right to birth control. And they are watching right now as Republicans block a bill that preserves the right to use condoms, take the pill, get IUDs, and buy Plan B, as Republicans refuse to let us protect that right and pass this bill and continue denying the threats that are already undermining that right. This is a basic, fundamental right.

Mark my words, the American people will not forget Republicans blocking us from getting this done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Colorado.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Madam President, in 1963, Americans could be arrested in some States simply for buying birth control pills. Sixty years later, if many States have their way, Americans may face that reality once again.

The Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* is so sweeping, so unprecedented that it now threatens the right to contraception. IUDs, emergency contraceptives, and other birth control could well all be banned, which seems hard to imagine. We are going backward in time to when women did not have control of their own bodies, nor the freedom to decide how and when they wanted to begin their families.

Who really believes that a woman shouldn't be able to use birth control; that a woman shouldn't be able to decide whether or not she wants to get pregnant; that a couple can't decide they aren't ready for a family? How many children should each woman have? Should it be as many as possible? Are they allowed to stop reproducing or is it a lifelong duty? Politicians should not be making these decisions.

This is a bill that guarantees a woman's right to access legal contraception. That is it. There is no trick, no sleight of hand. We can pass it into law today. The House has passed it already.

Starting a family is among the most private and personal decisions a person can make. It changes your life in ways that most of us can't even imagine. Yet there are people who want to force this restriction on women.

For women everywhere but especially in rural and low-income areas, birth control is essential healthcare. If you want to prevent unintended pregnancies, well, that is where you start.

When I was Governor, Colorado made long-acting, reversible contraception, like IUDs, available at little or no cost. That reduced unintended pregnancies by 54 percent—54 percent. Yet, now in Colorado, some Republicans are campaigning to put an initiative on the ballot this November that could make contraceptives illegal. Many other States are considering similar moves with bills or amendments waiting in the wings.

I think this is far, far beyond the mainstream of what most Americans believe. In fact, 92 percent of Americans, in a recent Gallup poll, said that contraception is morally acceptable.

My mother was born in 1921, a child of the Great Depression. She scrimped and saved every penny, but she always, always made it a point to make some donation to Planned Parenthood. Some years, it might only be \$10. But she believed there were few burdens harder for a woman to bear than being compelled to start a family before she was ready. As a mother of four, she knew how important it was for women to be able to make that decision for themselves.

Who are we, as politicians, to tell American women who has children, how many, and when?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise in support of the Right to Contraception Act.

Thirty-three days ago, the Supreme Court issued a rule shredding nearly five decades of precedent protecting a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. Now women, as we have seen over the last weeks, are at the mercy—are at the mercy—of a patchwork of State laws governing their ability to access reproductive care, leaving them with fewer rights than their moms and their grandmas. So now a woman in Minnesota has different rights when it comes to her reproductive care than a woman in Missouri, and a woman in North Dakota has different rights than a woman in Indiana. That is what we are dealing with right now.

Two weeks ago, I joined several of my Democratic colleagues on the floor to push for legislation to preserve a woman's right to travel to other States to access reproductive care, led by Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Unfortunately, Republicans on the other side of the aisle blocked us from that vote.

So we came back last week to push for legislation, led by my colleague Senator TINA SMITH, to protect and expand funding for a program created under a Republican administration, a Republican Presidential administration, to fund clinics that support maternal care, conduct cancer screenings, and provide contraception, but, again, that vote failed because we were not allowed to move forward with it.

So we came back to the floor today because if the Supreme Court won't protect people's fundamental rights—that is why we have three branches of government. That was the concept of our Founding Fathers. So if the Supreme Court isn't going to protect people's fundamental rights, then everyone in this Chamber has to decide whether or not they are going to do it, and that includes making sure everyone can access contraception.

I am concerned that the worse is yet to come. Right now, State and local legislators are literally racing, along with Governors, to be the first to say: Which State can limit rights the most first? Which rights can we take away? Sadly, it is not too hard to guess.

In his concurring opinion in *Dobbs*, Justice Thomas actually laid out a roadmap with clear directions for how the Court could overturn the right to contraception. He said that the Supreme Court "should reconsider"—"should reconsider," those two words—whether the Constitution protects the right to access contraception, as well as the right to marry whomever you love. Why? Because he talked about looking at other cases with regard to the right to privacy.

The Supreme Court has recognized the right to access contraception for more than 57 years, but the conservative Justices on the Supreme Court have shown they won't hesitate to overturn decades-old precedent no matter what they say at their Supreme Court hearings.

This threat is not hypothetical. Last year, the Missouri State Legislature tried to cut off public funding for widely used contraceptives, like IUDs and Plan B. Mississippi's Governor has refused to rule out banning contraception. A bill was introduced in Louisiana this spring that could be used to make IUDs illegal.

These radical proposals don't just hurt those in the States that implement the bans. Since the *Dobbs* decision, we have now seen how State bans create an uncertain legal environment for doctors and strain resources at clinics in States like Minnesota because the North Dakota clinic had to literally start a GoFundMe page to be able to get the costs paid for—the costs, of course, of moving the clinic from Fargo, ND, to Moorehead. That is what is happening right now in my State.

We cannot settle for a situation, as I noted, where people in my State have different rights than women in Mississippi or Missouri. And with so many extreme politicians out there racing to State capitals to be the first to take people's rights away, we need to explicitly protect the right to access contraception and information about contraception.

I will note that more than 80 percent of Americans support access to contraception. That is why I joined with Senators MARKEY, HIRONO, MURRAY, and DUCKWORTH in cosponsoring this bill to protect the right to access contraception and information about contraceptives. This bill safeguards a patient's ability to seek contraceptives and a healthcare provider's ability to provide those critical services.

The right to contraception can't just be an empty promise. That is why the bill gives the Department of Justice, as well as patients and doctors, the power to make sure that we don't infringe on the right to contraception.

I am proud to join my colleagues, and for the last 33 days I have been thinking about all the women in this country facing an unacceptably uncertain future. Today, each and every one of my colleagues had the opportunity to make clear where they stand, but, when given the opportunity, some seized the opportunity to protect the right to contraception, some did not.

I hope that some of our colleagues will change their minds and we can move forward with this and put in place these laws protecting the right to travel; protecting the right to contraception; and, of course, in the end, protecting a woman's fundamental right to make her own reproductive decisions about abortion.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled rollcall vote: myself for up to 15 minutes, Senator BLACKBURN for up to 10 minutes, and Senator TESTER for up to 5 minutes.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, coming to the floor and listening to some of my colleagues talk about their concern for lack of access to contraception—and some have said we need to pass a bill codifying same-sex marriage when that is currently the law of the land by virtue of a Supreme Court decision, the *Obergefell* case—reminds me of the old story about the little boy who cried wolf. He cried wolf when there wasn't any danger; and then, once there was danger, people didn't come to his aid because they thought it was another phony crying wolf.

I can understand our colleagues—given inflation, given crime, given the broken borders—wanting to change the subject to something else, but that is all this is. This is mere posturing pre-November, pre-midterm elections. This isn't about changing the law because the law already permits ready access to contraceptives. The law already permits same-sex marriage.

So this idea that we ought to spend scarce time here in the Congress, which we have in limited supply, reaffirming rights that already exist, is a clear political narrative designed to divert the American people's attention from things that really are at risk—that is, the paychecks of every American family because of inflation, because of failed energy policies.

We know that the price of gasoline and diesel and fuel to fill up your car so you can go to work or take your child to school or summer camp has increased. We know that our cities are on fire due to spiking crime waves connected to drugs that are coming across the southern border. And, of course, we know that the southern border is completely open with a big red carpet and a welcome mat out for anybody who wants to come to the United States illegally.

And the cartels that are rich and getting richer because of the flow of their human traffic are also getting rich because of the flow of illegal drugs that took the lives of 108,000 Americans last year alone.

We know where those drugs are coming from and that the Biden administration is doing absolutely nothing to stop them. I would want to change the topic too.

CHIPS ACT OF 2022

Mr. President, on a more positive note, the Senate approved funding earlier this morning to bolster domestic semiconductor manufacturing by a vote of 64 to 33. This funding will help kick-start the development of these

microprocessors, these chips that go into everything from your cell phone to the F-35, to Javelin and Stinger missiles that we send to Ukraine to defend their country from Russian aggression. This funding will help kick-start a domestic production of these semiconductors in a way that will prevent a vulnerability of our supply chain, since 90 percent of those advanced semiconductors currently come from Asia, with 60 percent coming from Taiwan alone.

One other benefit to this bill is that this bill could create roughly 185,000 jobs every year as these new facilities are constructed. Long term, it could bring another 280,000 jobs online. And once these foundries are operational, they will supply “Made in America” semiconductors that can be used on everything from smartphones to cars, to airplanes, to missile defense systems.

Semiconductors are the cornerstone of this legislation, but the bill also takes a range of other steps to help propel innovation in the competition we are currently in with the People’s Republic of China. This bill authorizes investments in research that will support everything from robotics to next-generation wireless technology.

It also authorizes NASA programs that will keep America at the forefront of space exploration. It extends the authorization for the International Space Station to 2030. This is very important, especially now that Russia has said it will end its commitment to the International Space Station after 2024.

This bill also lays the groundwork for America’s continued presence in space after 2030, including language I championed requiring NASA to develop a strategy to retire the International Space Station and transition to a successor platform. It also enhances existing programs that support future exploration missions. This includes the Moon to Mars Program, which is leading efforts to get an American astronaut on the surface of Mars.

Texas is the proud home to the Johnson Space Center, the home of human space flight, but also a range of other universities and companies leading the way in human space exploration. Enabling these partnerships saves money, drives innovation, and gives us a competitive edge over countries like Russia and China.

The broader bill included in the CHIPS Act will support both our economic and our national security and strengthen our efforts to lead the world in scientific innovation. The way we are going to compete with China and to beat them is to out-innovate them because no country in the world has better human capital, better brains, and a better system to encourage innovation, which will keep us ahead of the People’s Republic of China.

They don’t play by the rules. They certainly don’t observe the rule of law. They steal all the technology they can get. But it is important for the United States to be in the game and not be left behind.

I want to thank Mr. WARNER, the senior Senator from Virginia, for launching this effort with me 2 years ago. We introduced the CHIPS for America Act in June of 2020, which demonstrates how long it takes to get important legislation passed here in the U.S. Congress. Since the time we introduced it, I have worked with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to secure the necessary funding so we could deliver the benefits for our country.

Countless colleagues have been part of the process over these last few weeks, particularly Senator YOUNG, Senator PORTMAN, Senator WICKER, Senator SINEMA, and countless others; and Senator CANTWELL and certainly Senator SCHUMER as well and numerous others have led the charge on this legislation. Their hard work and their willingness to work cooperatively together and to find common ground is the reason for our success.

This has been a long, winding road with a lot of twists and turns along the way, but the end is finally in sight. Speaker PELOSI has promised to bring this legislation up for a vote in the House, and I hope our colleagues across the Capitol do not dally and get this bill voted out of the House and to the President’s desk.

Chip manufacturers are watching Congress and waiting to see if this bill passes before they decide where to build new fab manufacturing facilities. And we have been told that, unless this bill passes, these hoped-for manufacturing jobs and these semiconductor manufacturing fabs will not be built here in America but will be built in Europe and other places around the world. Secretary Raimondo, the Secretary of Commerce, has assured our colleagues that the United States will miss out on big benefits in terms of jobs, national security, and our economy if Congress doesn’t pass this bill by the start of the August recess.

Once this bipartisan legislation passes the Senate, our Democratic colleagues are reportedly planning a dramatic pivot from bipartisanship to an ultrabipartisan reconciliation process. Apparently, they are willing to work together when it is convenient, but they are also willing to abandon the notion of working together and are preparing to go on another reckless, partisan spending spree.

This isn’t the first time. At the start of last year, Democrats spent nearly \$2 trillion in unnecessary spending on a party-line basis. People wonder why we have 9 percent inflation. Part of it is our Democratic colleagues are willing to shovel money out the door and chase limited goods with supply chain problems, which means that prices get driven higher and higher—as well as, as I mentioned, flawed energy policies that look for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to increase production rather than to produce more American oil and gas here at home.

Well, our Democratic colleagues succeeded in that \$2 trillion bill, and they

tried to pass another partisan bill at the end of the year which would have cost the American people nearly \$5 trillion. But, thankfully, that entire effort failed.

Now, some of our colleagues are committed—this is their last chance before the August recess—to take advantage of the rules of the Senate and to go on a partisan spending bonanza, and certainly they don’t want to miss this opportunity.

We are hearing that our colleagues are frantically piecing together a bill that has not yet even been written and completed and passed the so-called Byrd bath test with the Senate Parliamentarian. So we are waiting to see whether they can meet the time deadline of the end of next week or not.

As I said, the bill is still reportedly being written, so we don’t even have a good picture of everything that is in it. But we do have an understanding of the general framework, and it is not looking good for the American people. For example, our colleagues have said their proposal will implement government price controls on lifesaving drugs, a move that will stifle innovation and end up with scarcity. That is what price controls always do.

Then we have heard that they plan to expand and extend the ObamaCare tax subsidies. This all started with a partisan spending bill that became law last year. It expanded the amount of taxpayer assistance people receive, which, in short, gave more money to more people, including lifting the cap on individuals who could receive those subsidies above \$400,000.

Of course, at the time, the camel’s nose under the tent was that it was designed as a temporary provision. But here we are a year and a half later, and they are already trying to extend it, indicating that there was nothing temporary intended by it.

They claim it is not a permanent extension and that it will only last 2 or 3 years, but I have no reason to believe that Democrats will give up on extending those provisions when they expire. In the words of Ronald Reagan, the closest thing to eternal life on Earth is a government program. Once created, they will not die, even if they are no longer necessary. And of course, a permanent extension will cost the American people a lot of money.

Last week, the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation released a report of the true cost of a permanent expansion, and it is pretty shocking for a number of reasons. First is the financial cost. By expanding the ObamaCare premium tax credits and making them permanent, Democrats will add \$248 billion to the Federal deficit over the next decade.

Mr. President, my age and your age—we are not going to be the ones who have to pay that money back. But these young people sitting down here are going to have to pay the price for the profligate spending today, and all Americans will pay the price by adding fuel to the fire of inflation.

For whatever reason—reasons I really can't fathom—the Federal debt and the national debt are of no concern to our Democratic colleagues. They simply don't seem to care. They act as though we are playing with Monopoly money, that we can print and borrow like there is no tomorrow because none of this really matters. But we know that is not true. Every dollar we spend is paid for by taxpayers, and every ounce of debt we accrue will be carried and repaid by our children and our grandchildren. But none of this seems to matter to our friends across the aisle. They are still plowing ahead with this legislation.

Unfortunately, the irresponsible spending isn't even the worst part. Our colleagues claim this extension will allow more Americans to afford healthcare, but the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation told us that under this plan, some 2.3 million Americans will lose their current coverage provided by their employer. Some 2.3 million Americans will lose their coverage provided currently by their employer. Hard-working Americans whose health insurance is currently covered by their employers would be told: You are on your own now. And no matter what you negotiated when you negotiated your salary with your employer, presumably if you are a union member and subject to a collective bargaining agreement where your union negotiated a generous healthcare plan, all of that will be in jeopardy by this reckless expansion of the ObamaCare subsidies.

Our Democrat friends want to continue subsidizing healthcare for six-figure earners. People earning 750 percent of the Federal poverty level would be eligible for taxpayer-funded subsidies—750 percent of the poverty level, you would get cash from Uncle Sam. Our country would be essentially paying wealthy people to lose their current employer-provided healthcare so they can end up on the government subsidy.

This is simply crazy policy: driving up the deficit, kicking people off of their employer-provided health plans, and forcing taxpayers to subsidize health insurance for the rich. This isn't about helping the uninsured; it is a backdoor way to implement Medicare for All. Yes, Joe Biden may be President, but it is the BERNIE SANDERS agenda at work here.

Of course, Democrats couldn't get enough support for this radical plan, so they are trying to jam it through on party-line votes. Instead of attempting to pass a massive, unpopular bill all at once, they are trying to serve it to the American people in spoonfuls. Bit by bit, they are trying to push America closer to a single-payer health system.

American people do not want Medicare for All. People who have their employer-provided coverage want to keep it. And the American people don't want the Federal Government subsidizing wealthy people who can afford to pay for their own healthcare.

This is a bad idea whose time I hope has not come, and I hope our friends on the other side of the aisle will simply give up on this massive, partisan tax-and-spending spree bill that will do no good and will do a lot of harm.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, my colleague from Texas was just talking about how taxes go up and spending seems to increase. This week, we have had before us a bill that was going to be about 30 billion and then 52 billion and then 72 billion. Now it comes out, and it is almost \$300 billion.

This is a piece of legislation that has had a variety of different names, and I have found it so interesting that it has had so many different names. Let's see. It has been called CHIPS, CHIPS+, CHIPS and Science, USICA, Endless Frontier, and "China COMPETES." You know, it seems as if there was a name that was given whenever there was an occasion that you thought you could rename something and make it fit, and I know DC is just famous for having these bills with the acronyms and the fancy-sounding names. But when I talk to Tennesseans, it is so apparent they are tired of that. What they want are the facts. They want someone who is going to tell them the truth. What they know is that China is an adversary; they are not a competitor. They know that we have to work diligently to stay competitive with China and not let them get the upper hand. But when we talk about these issues, sometimes we lose sight of that big picture. I do feel that as we talked about the CHIPS bill and semiconductor supply chains, this is something we lost sight of.

You know, there are some of us who have worked on the issues of dealing with China going back into the early years of this century, looking at IP theft, looking at reverse engineering, looking at the way the Chinese Communist Party would dip in and grab up great ideas from American innovators and then off to the races they would go. We have a lot of companies that learned a lot of tough lessons trying to manufacture in China. And then we come up near the pandemic.

When I was over in the House and before that period of time, we had an issue and realized that our active pharmaceutical manufacturing was where? In China. We couldn't get penicillin. Why was that? It was because there was one factory in China that made that, and the factory had an explosion. So we had a shortage on that. Then we had an issue with Heparin, and we had some deaths that were caused by a tainted product that was coming out of a factory there.

So Senator MENENDEZ and I had a piece of legislation that would have incentivized returning active pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturing to the United States. Then we got into the issues of the pandemic, and then everyone was saying: Critical supply

chains—we need to bring them back. Indeed, that is something that is important to do. Chips are an important part of that. Our laptops, our electronics, our automobiles all need chips, and there was a shortage. People began to realize that our military aircraft, our radar systems, our major defense systems all needed the chips. But, likewise, we needed active pharmaceutical ingredients. We needed our telecommunications supply chains. We needed polysilicon. We needed ag chemicals. All of these are critical supply chains.

Personally, I was optimistic about the possibility that we were finally going to begin to unravel this relationship we have had with the Chinese Communist Party. I see it as a dangerous relationship. But, like many pieces of well-intentioned legislation, it became a victim of some of the same compulsion to squeeze money from the American taxpayer and put it into a very narrow silo.

So after more than 2 years of working on these issues and multiple failed iterations, what we have is a bill that spends about \$300 billion and is a gateway to industrial planning. I know that many of my colleagues have read some of the postmortems on this, and people realize this wasn't about chips. It wasn't 72 billion. There was authorization language in there that was going to balloon this.

There was beefing up of the National Science Foundation, and we have National Labs that do a lot of that work. There were protections for U.S. manufacturing, some anti-China provisions, security provisions, that, guess what, poof in the night, a line drawn through them. They are out.

Wasn't that to be the purpose of this legislation? Of course it was. Let's bring the manufacturing back to the United States. And that is what we should have done. We should have looked at ways that we could bring manufacturing back across the range of critical supply chains.

We all know that China's control over our active pharmaceutical ingredients and other pharmaceutical products—that is a problem. Control over our telecom equipment—yes, that is a problem. Huawei equipment that we are having to rip out and replace in this country; telecom equipment that is part of our critical supply chain; control over our supplies of minerals and chemicals—for the Chinese Communist Party to control that, that is a problem.

So many who worked on this have spent 2 years looking at and working on supply chains and competition, and now what they have is legislation that invests billions of dollars in one industry, one industrial sector, and promises hundreds of billions of dollars more to the NSF that will duplicate many of those efforts that are already in progress at our National Labs and other DOE facilities.

So we are 2 years and \$280 billion into this, and about \$80 billion of that goes

into one industry. Honestly, it does not add up. We could have spent that time and a lot less money so much more wisely. We could have used tax credits to incentivize multiple industries to come home, to set up shop in business-friendly States like Tennessee and create thousands of jobs for American workers.

This is what you call a missed opportunity. And, unfortunately, the new axis of evil—they are watching, and I think they like what they see. I think they like it. I think they like it when we don't appear to be focused, when we don't appear to take the steps to challenge them across the board. We are running out of time to truly unravel ourselves from the influence of the Chinese Communist Party.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, it seems a bit like *deja vu* all over again. We have been here before. We were here before the Fourth of July talking about the PACT Act, the toxic exposure bill, the bill that has been in the works for 15 years and that the ranking member and I have worked on very hard over the last 18 months, year and a half.

We are going to vote on it again here in a moment. This is a bill that has been talked about a lot on this floor, and just about everything has been said about this bill. It is a bill that allows us, the American people, to live up to the promises we make our Active-Duty military when they come home with an injury—in this case, toxic exposure.

We have had toxic exposures—well, in World War I, it was mustard gas; radiation in World War II; and, of course, Agent Orange in the Vietnam war. We have had toxic exposures over and over and over again. In the Middle East, it is burn pits.

Over the last year and a half, we have had many hearings on this bill. In fact, we had a gentleman testify that he had a lung disorder. He was in tough shape. And, in fact, he passed away a few months ago.

The truth is, this is a bill that we need to pass. And we passed it already with 84 votes, and I think we had a couple of Senators gone or we would have had 86. It is a bill that is bipartisan in nature, and it is a bill that I think every Senator who votes for this bill can be proud that we are supporting the men and women who have felt the wounds of battle and are now trying to get their life back to normal.

But it is more than just the folks who served in our military; it is also their families. I would encourage all the Members of the body to support this bill.

It costs \$27 billion a year, but it is a cost of war. If we are not willing to take care of our men and women when they come back from battles that we send them off to, then maybe we ought to rethink whether we are going to send them in the first place. This bill is

a bill that was pushed by every veterans service organization out there. It was their No. 1 priority. We listened to the veterans, and we ended up with a piece of legislation that is very, very good.

If we are able to pass this out of the Senate again, this time it won't be going to the House. It will be going right to the President's desk, and we will have done right by our veterans in this country; we will have done right by the next generation of fighting men and women who will become veterans; and we will have had our veterans' backs along the way.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 3373, a bill to improve the Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant and the Children of Fallen Heroes Grant.

Charles E. Schumer, Jon Tester, Ben Ray Lujan, Richard Blumenthal, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tina Smith, John W. Hickenlooper, Mazie Hirono, Mark R. Warner, Debbie Stabenow, Jack Reed, Tammy Baldwin, Jacky Rosen, Raphael G. Warnock, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher Murphy, Mark Kelly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 3373, a bill to improve the Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant and the Children of Fallen Heroes Grant, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 272 Leg.]

YEAS—55

Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Kelly
Bennet	Duckworth	King
Blumenthal	Durbin	Klobuchar
Booker	Feinstein	Lujan
Boozman	Gillibrand	Markey
Brown	Graham	Menendez
Cantwell	Grassley	Merkley
Capito	Hassan	Moran
Cardin	Heinrich	Murphy
Carper	Hickenlooper	Murray
Casey	Hirono	Ossoff
Collins	Hoeven	Padilla
Coons	Kaine	Peters

Reed	Sinema	Warnock
Rosen	Smith	Warren
Rubio	Stabenow	Whitehouse
Sanders	Tester	Wyden
Schatz	Van Hollen	
Shaheen	Warner	

NAYS—42

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

NOT VOTING—3

Leahy	Manchin	Murkowski
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(Ms. SMITH assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 42.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider the failed cloture vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to discuss three civilian nominees: Mr. Robert Storch, Ms. Tia Johnson, and Mr. Russell Rumbaugh, who are each nominated to hold critical positions within the Department of Defense. They have been on the Executive Calendar for months. Yet I am unaware of any objections to these nominees related to their qualifications for the positions for which they have been nominated.

I need not remind my colleagues, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the increasingly aggressive actions of China, how critically important it is to ensure the Defense Department has the people power it needs to do its job well.

I would also like to note that in the past, my colleagues have been very cognizant of this need for the smooth workings of the Defense Department, and nominees for the Department—both civilian and military—have been voted out of committee and off the floor quickly, typically by unanimous consent. I find it ironic now, at a time when we see unparalleled threats to our national security, that nominees for the Department of Defense would be held for months on end, with no objections on qualifications, without any path to confirmation other than a cloture vote.

There are presently eight Defense Department nominees waiting on the Executive Calendar. At the end of next week, it will be 12. Today, I would like to discuss these three individuals.

Mr. Robert Storch is nominated to be the Department of Defense inspector

general and was favorably reported out of the Armed Services Committee on March 8, 2022.

The Defense Department has not had a Senate-confirmed inspector general since January 8, 2016. I will repeat that. The Defense Department has not had a Senate-confirmed inspector general since January 2016. The last nominee, put forward by then-President Obama, was withdrawn by President Trump on February 28, 2017.

Mr. Trump designated the Honorable Sean O'Donnell as the acting DOD IG on April 6, 2020, but the GAO recently issued a decision that Mr. O'Donnell's continuing service as the acting inspector general is in violation of the Vacancies Act. As such, there is really no effective inspector general in the Department of Defense—the largest Agency in the Federal Government.

For these reasons, in addition to the fundamental importance of the IG's work, the Senate needs to confirm Mr. Storch as soon as possible. The Department has been without a Senate-confirmed IG for more than 6 years, and we cannot wait any longer.

Ms. Tia Johnson was reported out of the committee on April 5, 2022, and would become one of five judges on the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, often referred to as the "Supreme Court of military law." The court's next hearing is scheduled for October 12, 2022, where it will consider important jurisdictional and substantive issues in military criminal law.

Importantly, the FY22 NDAA implemented extensive changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including a statute that would criminalize sexual harassment under some circumstances. Ms. Johnson will play a critical role on the Court of Appeals in reviewing challenges and issues with the recent sexual assault and sexual harassment statutes, including defendants' rights under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Without Miss Johnson, the court risks deadlock, which will further hamper the military's ability to provide good order and discipline, which is fundamental to any military force.

Mr. Russell Rumbaugh was nominated on March 21, 2022, to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Financial Management and Comptroller. This nomination was privileged, so it did not require a hearing and was intended to move expeditiously. The committee sent policy questions to Mr. Rumbaugh and received his answers on April 25, 2022. The committee reported out his nomination on May 12, and pursuant to S. Res. 116, his nomination was moved 10 days later to the appropriate section of the Executive Calendar and was ready for confirmation by the full Senate. So his confirmation has been waiting for 2 months.

The Navy has not had a confirmed Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Comptroller since July 2020. This role is critical to managing the budget and financial readiness of

the Navy and the Marine Corps, to include the Department's audit. Many will point out and criticize, with some reasonableness, the fact that the Department of Defense has not yet passed an audit. Well, it is very difficult to pass an audit if you have critical individuals who are not in place to help you prepare for and pass such an audit. That is another reason I think we need—the Navy needs a comptroller.

Each of these positions are critically important to the Department of Defense. The sooner they assume their offices, the better for the Department's ability to tackle these challenges on behalf of servicemembers and their families and the Nation. And, indeed, the sooner they are there, the more we will be able to support the men and women in uniform in the United States who are deployed across the globe. They need that kind of support here in Washington.

With that, Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: No. 843, No. 861, and No. 972; that the nominations be agreed to without intervening action or debate; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, the Senator from Missouri has objected, and I believe he is the only individual Member of the Senate who objects. In that case, I think I would be prepared to offer another unanimous consent that would allow debate upon these members. That, I think, should be satisfactory to the Senator, because it will give him an opportunity to express his objections to these individuals and why they are not qualified to be in office.

With that, I renew my above request, except that I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session; that there be 1 hour for debate, equally divided in the usual form on the nominations en bloc; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the nominations in the order listed; and that following disposition of the nominations, the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island has the floor.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I believe I retain the time, but if the Senator would like me to make a short statement and then object—

Mr. HAWLEY. Sure.

Mr. REED. I think the easy thing to do is let me yield such time as the Senator requires.

Mr. HAWLEY. I thank the chairman. It is always a privilege to be on the floor with the Senator from Rhode Island and to serve him on the committee, so thank you for that.

I would just say this: It has been nearly a year now since the events, the catastrophe, in Kabul that claimed the lives of 13 servicemembers, including from my home State of Missouri.

This was a catastrophe of this administration's making, and it has been now nearly 2 weeks, maybe 3, since I began to enter into the RECORD, page by painstaking page, this report undertaken by U.S. Central Command about that disaster at Abbey Gate in Kabul, about those deaths, not to mention the hundreds of American civilians who were left behind.

I am entering this report into the RECORD so the American people can see it because I cannot convince my friend from Rhode Island to hold a public hearing on this report, and I cannot convince the White House to stop their coverup of the events at Abbey Gate and the role they played in it.

This is not for lack of trying. For months on end, I have come to this floor and asked for a public hearing on this report. I have asked my colleagues. I have written to the chairman. I have spoken to members of the committee, who, by the way, say they have no objection.

And just last week, the White House reached out to me and said: What is it that you want?

I said, I want accountability for what happened in Afghanistan and Abbey Gate, and, specifically, I want a public hearing on this report, to which the White House said it is up to the chairman.

So I hope that we can make some progress on actually getting accountability for what happened, for the servicemembers whose lives were lost, and we can end this continual Vietnamesque, yearlong effort to push this crisis out into the shadows, to ignore it as if it never happened, and to deny the American people the accountability that servicemembers deserve.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I reclaim my time.

I respectfully disagree with the Senator from Missouri on this matter. The Senate Armed Services Committee conducts and has conducted extensive oversight on Afghanistan. Committee actions include seven public and closed hearings regarding the War in Afghanistan, lessons learned, and ongoing regional counterterrorism requirements

since the withdrawal last August. And Senator HAWLEY has participated in all of these.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 contained a provision, section 1092, that mandated the Department of Defense deliver quarterly briefings, in both unclassified and classified form, on the security situation in Afghanistan and ongoing counterterrorism efforts.

The classified briefings have taken place on January 20, April 14, and July 21. The unclassified briefings have taken place on February 14 and April 25. An additional unclassified briefing will be held tomorrow, coincidentally, and Senator HAWLEY has full access to all of these briefings.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 also contains a provision, section 1069, which requires a yearly assessment of our over-the-horizon counterterrorism capabilities in Afghanistan. While the first installment has not yet been delivered to the committee, Senator HAWLEY will have access to those assessments, as well as will all of my colleagues.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 further mandated the establishment of the Afghanistan War Commission, which will spend 3 years examining all aspects of the 20-year war in-depth. All the Commissioners have been appointed, and we expect the Commission to commence work in the near term. And Senator HAWLEY will have the same access to the Commission's findings as everyone else.

What I think the Senator does not understand is that the events that took place at Abbey Gate were not unique to that moment in time. They were the culmination of 20 years of actions by Presidents from both sides, by commanders on both sides. And in order to understand what truly happened at Abbey Gate, we have to look at all of those periods.

What was the effect of Donald Trump's agreement with the Taliban, excluding the legal government of Afghanistan, to essentially leave? And what other events created the situation that led directly to the situation at Abbey Gate? Without that context, this will simply be a way to vilify the administration, a way to point out shortcomings, and it won't get to what we really should be focused on: What profound lessons can we learn from 20 years in Afghanistan that will assist us in the future, that will protect our men and women in uniform?

Again, if the focus is on political retaliation and retribution, that is part of this organization. But if we want to focus on protecting today the lives of men and women who serve and their families who will grieve if they are lost, then we have to take a broader view, which we are doing in the Commission, which we are doing when we bring our experts in on a frequent basis to talk about Afghanistan—and which we must do by filling these positions in the Department of Defense.

Without the support of a functioning Department of Defense, we will be in a situation where we are putting at risk the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and guardians who protect this Nation. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

PACT ACT

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I want to make just a brief comment about the cloture vote that just occurred shortly before the Senator from Rhode Island sought the unanimous consent agreement.

And, as you know, cloture was denied on that bill, and, as you also know very well, that doesn't mean the bill is defeated. It simply means that the opportunity to amend it isn't eliminated. There haven't been any amendments. That is unfortunate.

But I want to just stress that my concern about this bill has nothing to do with the purpose of the bill. It is not about the approximately \$280 billion of new spending that is meant to be required under this bill for the VA to cover Medicare and other—healthcare, I should say, and other benefits for veterans who are exposed to toxic burn pits. What I want to change has absolutely nothing to do with any of that.

I see the chairman of the committee of jurisdiction. I think he understands that I have no interest in modifying the purpose of this bill, all the work that he and many others have done. And, by the way, I suspect there are 85 votes for this bill, for the underlying bill, if we fix this problem.

And here is the problem. Completely unrelated to the \$280 billion of new spending, there is a mechanism created in this bill—it is a budgetary gimmick—that has the intent of making it possible to have a huge explosion in unrelated spending: \$400 billion. This budgetary gimmick is so unrelated to the actual veterans' issue that has to do with burn pits that it is not even in the House version of this bill.

So, the fact is, we can fix this tonight. This is a relatively easy fix. There might be a few technical things we would iron out, and we could get this done tonight. And I know the chairman of the committee very much wants to get this bill done. This is the path to do it. And if we fix this—which, as I say, I would recommend we fix it tonight—we could do that by a unanimous consent request. We could do it any number of ways.

But once that is done, this bill sails through this Chamber and goes to the President and gets signed into law. So I just want to urge my Democratic colleagues to join me in working this out. This is not what this bill was about. We can fix it. We can do it immediately.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, the good Senator from Pennsylvania is correct. I want to see this bill passed. I want to

see this bill passed for all the reasons I have talked about many times in committee and on this floor.

This is about living up to the promises for our veterans. This is about making sure that when the veterans come back from exposures to burn pits or oil well fires or Agent Orange, that they don't have to go to the VA and fight for their healthcare and their benefits.

It impacts 3½ million veterans in this country. By the way, there will be a few more who die before we get this bill passed.

And I would also say that, as the Senator from Pennsylvania says, I am all for the \$278.4 billion over 10 years on this bill; I have got no problem with that—well, the fact is, he does have a problem with that. The fact is, by doing what happened today on this floor, the real issue here—and make no mistake about it—is the money that is being spent to take care of our veterans.

And I have said it before, and I will say it again. If you have the guts to send somebody to war, then you better have the guts to take care of them when they get back home—or don't send them in the first place.

Now, let's talk about the \$400 billion, OK, because, quite frankly, what this is about—this is about not even trusting the people in this body. We have an Appropriations Committee, and we vote on appropriations bills, and we set the levels in the accounts based off of appropriations. Let the process work. Let's not tie the hands of appropriators. Let's make sure we let the process work. That is what we have always done.

But the good Senator from Pennsylvania's amendment ties the hands of the appropriators. Make no mistake about this, the American people are sick and tired of the games that go on in this body. They are sick and tired of us working for Democrats or working for Republicans and not working for the American people. But this is bigger than that.

We have an All-Volunteer military in this country. If you don't think young people are watching what we are doing today who are thinking about signing up for the military, you are sadly mistaken. And when we don't take care of our veterans when they come home, they are going to say: Why should I ever sign on the dotted line because, of the promises that I made and the promises the country made, only half that deal is being respected—my half.

This is a sad day in the U.S. Senate. This is the biggest issue facing our veterans today. Make no mistake about it, if it wasn't, every veterans service organization wouldn't be out there talking to us and have been talking to me for the last 15 years.

So we can make up all sorts of excuses about how this is going to move money around, but—let me tell you something—we are the ones who decide that. If we want to move money around, we will; if we don't, we won't.

In the meantime, let's pass this bill. Let's give veterans the healthcare they have earned. If it isn't, it is political malpractice. What we are doing today with this policy, by putting this policy off, does nobody any good whatsoever. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I would briefly and simply reiterate my request that our Democratic colleagues, including the chairman, who obviously is passionate about this, just engage with us to fix this, this problem that has nothing to do with the bill that he wants to pass, this problem that wasn't in the House version of this bill.

The chairman's argument that, well, it is always ultimately subject to appropriations—well, that is really an argument that says let's not have a budget at all, let's not have any rules because—it is true—a future Congress can always do whatever it wants. So, by that logic, we should have no rules, no guidelines, no budgets, no procedures, no pay-go, no effort whatsoever to have any management of our Federal budget because—what the hell—any Congress can come along and just waive it.

I don't agree with that. I think, especially at a time when inflation is running rampant, when we have been spending money like no one has ever imagined—if we have got an important need, OK; we do that. But this gimmick—and the chairman said people are sick and tired of games. I totally agree. This is one of those games where you have got a bill that is going to pass and so let's sneak in this change in the budget rule so that it will be easy to spend money on other things in the future.

That is ridiculous. That is just not defensible. So, again, I would stress there is a very easy path to a very big vote in favor of this bill that probably could happen later tonight but could certainly happen tomorrow. And if the path is there, let's fix this problem.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I am going to reiterate what I said before. The concern that the Senator from Pennsylvania has is a concern that there is not a lot of trust in this body, and I agree—fair reason to be.

As far as having rules, I believe in having rules, but I don't believe we should have rules that tie the hands of our standing committees, that say: You can't do this. Appropriations, I don't care what you see, what you see, what issue comes down the road for veterans—in this case, MARTIN HEINRICH, the chair, and JOHN BOOZMAN, the ranking member—you guys can't address it.

That is what the Senator from Pennsylvania wants to do. That is not how this process should work. We should be dealing with issues as they arise. That is a fact.

And by the way, I have said for some time, programs that have outlived their lifespan, we should be cutting those programs, but we don't do that very well.

But we have been at war for 20 years. With that war—by the way, that was all put on a credit card—there was a fair amount that was funded by an OCO account. And now we are going to say: Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no; we are not going to spend the money to take care of our veterans. I am going to use this as an excuse. I am going to use as an excuse the fact that the Appropriations Committee might spend too much money.

Well, that is on us. And while that is on us, we have veterans dying of cancers and lung conditions because a bill that should have been passed before the Fourth of July is still on the floor today.

You can frame it any way you want. But in the end, this budgetary gimmick is called: How the Congress Works. Appropriators appropriate. If you don't believe me, ask Senator SHELBY. That is what we do. And if we appropriate too much, this body votes it down. Or if we don't appropriate enough, this body votes it down and amends it up. That is what appropriators do. That is how this process is supposed to work.

We should not be using that excuse to deny benefits to the men and women who have served this country in a God-awful place in the Middle East.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. WARNOCK). The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

SENATOR JOHNNY ISAKSON VA REGIONAL OFFICE ACT OF 2022

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a giant of the great State of Georgia—which the Presiding Officer and I both have the distinct honor of serving—to recognize a true legend of the U.S. Senate, an extraordinary father, husband, and representative of our State, the late Senator Johnny Isakson.

Senator Isakson served Georgia all his life. Born in Atlanta, Senator Isakson attended the University of Georgia, then enlisted in the Georgia Air National Guard. He was a successful private businessman, growing his real estate enterprise to one of the largest in the State.

He served in both the Georgia House of Representatives and the State Senate, and Governor Zell Miller, a Democrat, appointed him, a Republican, to chair the State Board of Education.

In 1999, Senator Isakson was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he worked to improve American K-12 education.

And in 2004, he was elected to this body, where he would serve for almost 15 years with courtesy, dignity, and kindness, supporting and championing bipartisan efforts to better serve our

Nation's veterans. And his service culminated in his chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and of the Senate Ethics Committee.

As we will hear from our distinguished colleagues who served alongside Senator Isakson—like Senator BLUNT—Senator Isakson, through his uncommon decency, his generosity of spirit, his commitment to integrity and service of others over service of self, won universal respect in this body; won respect in the State of Georgia that crossed party lines and earned the reputation not just nationally but around the world for statesmanship, effectiveness, and hard work.

Even more than his work as a statesman, Senator Isakson was a father and a husband. And I want to recognize Senator Isakson's extraordinary family, including his wife of more than 50 years, Dianne; his sons, John and Kevin; his daughter Julie—all of whom I have had the pleasure of speaking or corresponding with in recent months and all of whom, in their lives, carry on the Senator's legacy.

Senator Isakson had a saying that there are just two kinds of people in this world: friends and future friends. I hope we can all be inspired by that aspiration and that outlook, by his resilient desire to see the good in everyone; to see the opportunity to work with anyone; to try to find where our interests align, where we can meet eye to eye, where we can get things done together.

Senator Isakson's courtesy, collegiality, and integrity will forever serve as an example to all of us who serve in this body today and in the future. And that is why, in recognition of Senator Isakson's tremendous contributions to American veterans, to the State of Georgia, and to the United States, it has been my privilege to introduce—alongside my distinguished Republican colleague from Missouri, Senator BLUNT, and the Presiding Officer, Senator WARNOCK—the Senator Johnny Isakson VA Regional Office Act to rename the VA's Atlanta Regional Office after Senator Isakson as part of our Nation's ongoing recognition of his service and as an example to those who follow in his footsteps of the virtues that his representation embodied.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support of this legislation. We will hear from Senator BLUNT and Senator WARNOCK, to share their experiences working alongside and knowing Senator Isakson, in just a moment.

But now, let's get this done and take this action to demonstrate our enduring respect and admiration for this extraordinary American statesman, Johnny Isakson. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 4359 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.