

be celebrating that they weren't rising even faster.

Working Americans aren't buying that insulting spin. Middle-class families aren't rejoicing that their daily life costs 8.3 percent more than it did a year ago—and listen to this—13.2 percent more than when President Biden took office.

In Parma, OH, one local grocer is working hard to keep her prices competitive but admits that “[w]e have been getting hit with all of our suppliers with chicken, ground meat, everything.”

And in Fairfield County, the head of one organization that helps feed folks experiencing economic hardship put it this way:

I think things are going to get a whole lot darker and more bleak before they get a lot better. We're desperately worried about food.

Across the border in West Virginia, in Fayette County, persistent high prices have one retired grandmother worried about how the rest of her family is making ends meet.

She said:

I'm already stressed and stressed and trying to figure out how [my daughter is] going to pay to keep the lights on, get groceries, get school clothes on her kid's back.

In Perryopolis, PA, one shopper told a reporter that besides cutting back at the grocery store, she had taken on a second job of working nights at a warehouse to help feed her family of four.

This is what she had to say:

Clothing, gas, just about everything has gone up, and food is a large part of it.

Meanwhile, the head of a small manufacturer in Big Bend, WI, reports that amid price spikes and backed-up supply chains, “trying to source products has been very difficult.”

In each of these States' cases—West Virginia, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania—one Senator tried to spare working families from all of this preventable pain. Each of those States has one Republican Senator who warned about inflation, who voted against inflation, and who voted for amendments that would have reduced inflation.

But, unfortunately, each one of those States also has a Democratic Senator who decided to vote in partisan lockstep to plow ahead with the trillions of dollars in reckless, inflationary spending. One Senator each from West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin cast the tie-breaking votes to bring this pain down on their citizens' heads. Now, sadly, they are all paying the price.

Working families in West Virginia are paying Washington Democrats' inflation tax to the tune of an extra \$563 a month. Ohioans are paying \$661 more. In Pennsylvania, inflation is squeezing folks for an extra \$605; and in Wisconsin, it is \$673. Families in these States are paying a painful price for the deciding vote that their Democratic Senators chose to cast.

ENERGY

Now, Mr. President, on a related matter, Democrats' runaway inflation

includes skyrocketing costs to keep the lights on and to heat or cool homes.

We are also witnessing the dangerous vulnerabilities that Democrats in places like California have built into their electrical grids. California Democrats have spent years putting “green” lifestyle preferences ahead of the basic needs of working families. The result is a grid that is both more expensive and less reliable. We have seen the same California Democrats, who have spent years pushing their citizens to buy expensive electric cars, now begging the public not to plug them in.

Even as California teeters on the brink of an energy crisis of European proportions, Washington Democrats are pushing the rest of the country in that very same risky direction. They made their signature priority for this year spending even more of the people's money to take us even farther in the wrong direction even faster.

Last month, our Democratic colleagues rammed through a gigantic party-line bill that raises taxes on reliable domestic American energy in order to subsidize wealthy people buying electric cars or fancy, new appliances. Every Democratic Senator cast the deciding vote for that reckless spending spree.

That includes the senior Senator from West Virginia, who claims he only did so because the Democratic leader promised him that Democrats would line up behind permitting reform to make it easier to build things and complete projects in our country. But now, very predictably, this backroom deal is crumbling before our eyes. Almost 60 days after our colleague from West Virginia gave up his vote for this vague promise, it still appears the far left and House Democrats want no part of his backroom deal they didn't sign on to.

As for the Republican side, our colleague Senator CAPITO has put forward a real, actual, substantive permitting reform bill that would make the commonsense changes our country needs. Senator CAPITO's substantive bill stands in stark contrast to what every indication thus far suggests will be weak, reform-in-name-only legislation from her home State colleague.

As luck would have it, Senator CAPITO's real plan is also closer to passing the Senate than Senator MANCHIN's reform-in-name-only plan. Senator MANCHIN recently told reporters that his version may need 20 Republican votes to become law, but Senator CAPITO's plan only needs Senator MANCHIN and nine other Democrats to get on board. We are talking about real, substantive reform that is already closer to becoming law. But so far, our Democratic colleague from West Virginia has refused to back his colleague's commonsense proposal. He has shown little appetite to actually get something accomplished.

So talk is cheap. If our colleagues across the aisle want real permitting reform, Senator CAPITO's fantastic bill

only needs Senator MANCHIN plus nine more Democrats to clear this Chamber. Otherwise, it would appear the senior Senator from West Virginia traded his vote on a massive liberal boondoggle in exchange for nothing.

DISCLOSE ACT

Mr. President, on one final matter, finally, with all of these national crises hammering families, the Democratic majority is using the Senate schedule to demonstrate that they do not care.

The Democratic leader is not spending floor time on a bill to combat Democrats' inflation crisis or their immigration crisis or their violent crime crisis or their energy crisis, not on legislation to help American families' daily lives in any way. Instead, the Democratic leader is setting up a vote on a bill to erode the First Amendment and make political speech more difficult. Instead of trying to address the root causes of their unpopularity, Democrats are attacking the American people's ability to speak out against them.

The Democrats try to ram through political takeover bills like this zombie DISCLOSE Act once or twice every year. This legislation would give Democrats' friends in the unelected bureaucracy even more power to police the political speech and activism of private citizens.

Remember, donations to political action committees and electioneering nonprofits are already publicly disclosed. That is already the law. What Democrats want is a huge, new step that would reduce private citizens' privacy and chill Americans' constitutional rights. The same Democrats who wouldn't condemn angry mobs gathering outside the private family homes of Federal judges now believe that vastly more information about private citizens' political views should be made public.

It is no mystery as to how these things fit together. Even the liberal ACLU warned years ago that what the Democrats want to pull off “unconstitutionally infringes on freedom of speech and the right to associational privacy.”

I don't often say the ACLU has it right, but they do here.

Instead of addressing the reasons why Americans are upset with Democrats, the Democrats are trying to legislate our citizens into sitting down and shutting up.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

ABORTION

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, in the months since the conservative majority on the Supreme Court struck down Roe v. Wade, the assault on reproductive rights by anti-choice, MAGA Republicans has been relentless.

Anti-choice States across the country have already enacted strict and rigid abortion bans that strip our rights away, threaten to jail women and their doctors, and put women's

health at risk. And just as we have always known, this threat is not just at the State level.

Last week, legislation was introduced in this very Chamber that would enact a national abortion ban, one that would strip women of the fundamental right to control their own bodies. This abortion ban—and that is exactly what it is, a nationwide abortion ban—poses a real and serious threat to the rights of women across this country. This is a dangerous nationwide government mandate that would threaten women and their doctors—threaten them—with jail time, including those in my State of Nevada.

Pro-choice States like Nevada, where the people voted overwhelmingly to protect reproductive freedoms as part of State law, would be forced—forced—to abide by this Federal mandate. Because Federal law supersedes State law, this legislation would override the will of Nevadans and the freedom—the freedom—that they have had for decades.

If anti-choice Republicans in Congress have their way and their national abortion ban passes—listen to this—then Nevada's doctors could be prosecuted; Nevada's women could be jailed; and Nevada's women could die as a result of a lack of access to care.

So let's be clear. The only thing standing in the way of their national abortion ban is the pro-choice majority in the U.S. Senate, and I will do everything I can to fight this legislation threatening our reproductive rights not just in Nevada but across the country.

That is why I helped to introduce the Let Doctors Provide Reproductive Health Care Act, along with Senators MURRAY, PADILLA, and the Acting President pro tempore, Senator LUJÁN, to protect doctors in States like Nevada, where abortion remains legal and protects women from facing prosecution and potentially jail by anti-choice States. No doctor—let me repeat this. No doctor should ever be jailed for providing women with the reproductive and often lifesaving care they need wherever these women are from. No doctor should ever be jailed for providing care.

Anti-choice Republicans in the Senate have blocked these efforts in the past as they have continued to push for dangerous bans.

Today—today—we have another opportunity to protect doctors and their patients by passing this legislation—without obstruction or delay—because let's be clear: We will not—we will not—give up. We will not allow a national abortion ban to pass the Senate. We will not allow doctors to face prosecution for doing their jobs. We must—we must—protect a woman's right to choose and continue fighting against this ban every step of the way.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

INFLATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on Sunday, the President appeared on "60 minutes," where he was asked what he was going to do to help alleviate inflation in light of August's continued grim inflation news and the resulting stock market nosedive.

The President's response?

Well, first of all, let's put this in perspective. Inflation rate month to month was just—just an inch, hardly at all.

"Let's put this in perspective"? That might be something to say if the inflation rate had ticked up from, say, 2 percent—the target inflation rate—to 2.1 percent, but I am pretty sure that that is not the appropriate thing to say when you are talking about the sixth straight month of inflation above 8 percent and the ninth straight month of inflation at or above 7 percent and the 11th straight month of inflation above 6 percent.

Even more concerning than August's consumer price index rising 8.3 percent from the same month a year ago was the increase in core inflation—a measure of inflation minus the volatile categories of food and energy. This measure increased to 6.3 percent in August, up from 5.9 percent in both June and July, suggesting that inflation is sinking its roots even deeper into various sectors of our economy—or in the words of a CNBC headline from last week:

Inflation isn't just about fuel costs anymore, as price increases broaden across the economy.

But, of course, you don't have to take my word for it about the mess that we are in. Here is what one of President Obama's top economic advisers had to say last week after August's inflation numbers came out:

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

"Let's put this in perspective." That is what President Biden had to say? Here is the American people's perspective: Fifty-seven percent of Americans disapprove of President Biden's handling of the economy, and 37 percent of voters say that President Biden's policies have hurt them personally, versus just 15 percent of voters who say his policies have helped them.

These numbers are no surprise. The President may somehow still believe that he is creating an economy that will "work for working families," but the reality is that, in the Biden economy, working Americans are suffering. Americans' utility bills are soaring; their grocery bills have ballooned; and they are paying \$1.30 more per gallon every time they fill up their car than they were when President Biden was elected. Real wages have dropped every single month since Democrats passed their \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan spending spree—the bill, I would

add, that helped plunged our economy into our current crisis. And 40 percent of Americans report having difficulty paying for their normal household expenses. Americans are dipping into their savings or working side jobs to make ends meet. They are charging more day-to-day expenses on their credit cards. In too many cases, they are having to visit food banks, which are seeing huge lines thanks to continued high inflation. What are Democrats and the President doing about this? Nothing.

Of course, last month, Democrats did pass a bill they called the Inflation Reduction Act. The problem? The bill will do nothing to reduce inflation—nothing. Again, you don't have to take my word for it. The nonpartisan Penn Wharton Budget Model said this about the bill's impact on inflation:

The impact on inflation is statistically indistinguishable from zero.

"[S]tatistically indistinguishable from zero."

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

But it is not just that Democrats have done nothing to help solve our inflation crisis; they are also on track to make Americans' economic situation significantly worse.

In August, President Biden announced a massive student loan giveaway that could cost anywhere from an estimated \$500 billion to more than \$1 trillion and that the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget notes would "meaningfully boost inflation." This is a statement from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget talking about the President's massive student loan giveaway, and they say it will "meaningfully boost inflation" or, as the president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget recently put it, "Amid 40-year-high inflation and despite the administration constantly touting its 'fiscal responsibility,' these changes will recklessly add to the debt and make the Federal Reserve's job in fighting inflation even harder, which will amplify our risk of entering a recession."

Many of us would argue we are already in a recession—two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth.

Inflation has spent 8 straight months at 40-year highs, and the President has decided that now is a good time to implement a policy that will "meaningfully boost inflation."

The economy continues to show signs of weakening, driven in large part by the inflation crisis Democrats helped create. Major companies have recently announced job cuts. Sixty-three percent of small businesses are putting a hold on hiring, and 10 percent of those are cutting jobs. We have had negative economic growth, as I mentioned, for the past two quarters. So naturally—naturally—Democrats decided this was