

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

a good time to raise taxes on businesses. Yes, Democrats' so-called Inflation Reduction Act imposes new taxes on businesses to help pay for their Green New Deal spending.

I say "taxes on businesses," but, of course, taxes on businesses largely fall on workers and consumers in the form of fewer jobs and opportunities, lower wages, and higher prices—in other words, pretty much the exact opposite of what we need right now, with prices soaring and wages failing to keep pace with inflation.

The Inflation Reduction Act also imposes new taxes on energy that will drive up energy prices for both American families and American businesses, imposing further pain on family budgets and likely prolonging our inflation crisis even further.

The President may have wanted to build an economy "from the bottom up and the middle out," as he has described it; instead, he and his fellow Democrats have helped create an economy in which working families are struggling to make it from one paycheck to the next. And thanks to the additional tax-and-spend policies the Democrats have recently implemented, working families are likely to be struggling for some time to come.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4723

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, last week, Republicans made clear that despite the clear outcry from people across the country, overturning Roe was just their first step. Republicans want a national abortion ban. Republicans want to force my constituents to stay pregnant even when they do not want to be and to go after the doctors who provide abortion care.

I am here today to continue to say in no uncertain terms that Democrats are not going to stand for it. While Republicans are busy threatening the rights of women in every State across the country and threatening doctors with jail time, Democrats are here to defend abortion rights and defend the doctors who provide that care, because even before Republicans dropped their national abortion ban bill, I was hearing from providers in my home State of Washington who are facing a huge influx of patients due to Republicans' extreme bans.

Just yesterday, the Texas Tribune shared the heartbreaking story of a woman who learned that the pregnancy she had wanted so badly was incompatible with life, that her daughter was developing without a skull or brain. But because Republicans in Texas think they know better than this woman or her doctor, she had to travel for treatment from Dallas all the way to Seattle to get the care she needed.

Providers on the ground in my State tell me there are so many more patients being forced to make a trek like that. They are worried about caring for them, and not just because it is for so

many more patients, not just because Republicans are straining resources and causing a healthcare crisis that puts women's lives at risk; healthcare professionals are also deeply worried about how Republicans' extreme laws threaten their practices. They are terrified Republicans will take away their livelihoods and even their freedom just for doing their jobs, just for providing the care their patients need—care that is, once again, completely legal in my State.

They are right to be scared. When it comes to Republicans' extreme, no-holds-barred anti-abortion agenda, the writing is on the wall, and it has been for some time. Even before this latest bill, Republican State lawmakers were already drafting legislation that would make it a crime to provide abortion care to a resident even in another State where it is legal, and they were doing this while at the same time trying to claim they didn't want to throw doctors in prison.

On top of all of that, they were standing in the way of the bill I will offer today to protect healthcare providers. This is a really straightforward bill. It simply protects doctors providing legal abortion care.

The last time I tried to pass it, the junior Senator from Indiana said he was concerned about this bill "allowing abortions for anyone who crosses the State lines and is not a resident of that State." In other words, Republicans are worried about all the patients I mentioned earlier who are traveling to Washington State seeking abortion care that they urgently need. Republicans don't think they should be able to travel to Washington State to get healthcare, and they want to allow other States to target Washington State doctors, to threaten them for providing legal abortion care.

That is extreme. It is not what doctors want, and it is definitely not what the American people want. Women and men across the country do not want politicians making their healthcare decisions and throwing their doctors in prison. They want to be able to make their own decisions about their own bodies, their own families, their own future. They want doctors to be able to focus on doing their jobs, not fearing a jail sentence.

So I urge my Republican colleagues to step aside and allow us to pass the Let Doctors Provide Reproductive Health Care Act. This legislation is so straightforward. It protects doctors providing legal abortion care, and it ensures that they can practice medicine and save lives without fear of legal threats and intimidation. It makes clear that the attacks we have seen on doctors are unacceptable and that politicians should not be harassing or scaring or investigating, threatening, or punishing doctors for providing care that is perfectly legal, that patients want, and that in many cases is even necessary to save lives.

If Republicans have been doing what I have been doing, if they have been ac-

tually listening to doctors and patients, then they should reverse course and let us get this commonsense bill passed. But if they continue blocking these steps, if they continue ignoring the outcry from every corner of the country, if they continue to undermine the health of patients seeking care and the freedom of healthcare providers doing their jobs, they should know we are not going to stop pushing back. There is too much at stake.

So, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 4723; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, reserving the right object, I am glad the Supreme Court has returned the issue of life back to the people's elected representatives, where it should have stayed 49 years ago.

This legislation denies State representatives the right to make laws protecting life. This bill is an attempt to undermine State laws that protect life by allowing abortions for anyone who crosses State lines and is not a resident of the State.

Moreover, it gives the Department of Justice \$40 million in grant funding to help people sue States—to help people sue States—that enact policies to protect life. The Department of Health and Human Services is given another \$40 million in funding for any eligible center at Secretary Becerra's discretion. This funding is not protected by the Hyde amendment, and most likely, we are going to borrow every penny of it, like we do for most things in this place. We should not spend \$80 million to undermine State laws on life or impose a legislative backdoor for abortion-on-demand across our Nation.

For these reasons, I oppose this bill, and I do object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed. I am not surprised. We continue to see Republicans show their true, harsh colors, and the contrast with Democrats could not be more stark.

We simply want people to get the healthcare they need and let them make their own medical decisions. Republicans want to ban abortion nationwide. We want to protect doctors. Republicans want to threaten and penalize or even jail them just for doing their job, even when they are following their State's laws.

Mr. President, rest assured, I will continue speaking up for our healthcare providers, for families, for patients. And as we continue to see

this extremism, I want to assure everybody that I am not going to stop fighting.

Mr. President, someone should be allowed to travel out of their own State to get the healthcare they need. It is unbelievable that the Republicans block this bill.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 117-1

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to oppose the Kigali Amendment. That is the United Nations treaty that is under consideration in this body today.

Two years ago, this body, the U.S. Senate, passed a bipartisan bill. The goal of the bill was to reduce hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, and do it domestically. We passed it. It was signed into law.

Now, these HFCs are gases that are used in refrigerators, air-conditioners, fire extinguishers, and in insulation. They also contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.

So I worked in a bipartisan way to build a coalition of Senators to pass the bill. Two years later, here we are; the law is now in effect in the United States. Parts of the law are still being implemented. Yet, now, today, we are being asked to sign on to treaty obligations at the United Nations that I believe are wholly unnecessary.

We have already passed bipartisan legislation to reduce HFC consumption, and it has already become the law of the land. Many of the benefits and the jobs that are being touted are U.S. innovations, and it is the result of our domestic legislation, not ratification of some U.N. treaty. We did it here. We did it right.

I say we don't need to get entangled now in another United Nations treaty. Our own law can be amended if we would like. It can be repealed. It can be replaced. Depending on the impact and cost, the United States can make changes quickly. It is much harder, if not impossible, to do it with an international treaty. In fact, when you take a look at the Kigali treaty and amendment, there is actually no way to withdraw from it if we ratify and join in.

When I take a look at this, it is especially bad because it doubles down on the practice of treating China—yes, China—as a developing country. And the key word here is “developing.” China is not a developing country, but this treaty says they are a developing country, and it makes a big difference in terms of the treaty and the way that China is treated internationally because it gives China special treatment.

And I will tell you, Mr. President, they don't deserve the kind of treatment that they would get with this. Under this treaty, China would get an extra 10 years—an extra decade—to produce HFCs. Well, this places us, the United States, at a competitive disadvantage to China for 10 additional years.

Interestingly and, I think, surprisingly to people when they hear this, the United States would also be expected to give more American taxpayer dollars to a U.N.—United Nations—multilateral fund that is set aside to help developing nations. The key word here again is “developing.” And they want to treat China like a developing country. So it would send more U.S. dollars to China because they have access to this U.N. multilateral fund.

Well, the United States is already the largest contributor to this fund. We have given over 1 billion of American taxpayer dollars to this United Nations so-called—it is a slush fund.

But what about China? Do they contribute? Oh, no, China has actually taken \$1.4 billion out of the fund that we have contributed to because we are a developed nation and China is still, theoretically and legally, by this treaty, developing.

When you take a look at the debt that we have as a nation and you go and talk to any high school class or any junior high school class, as I have done in Wyoming—we did it in Wheatland, WY, with a bunch of really smart kids—they say: OK, when we have this debt, who are we borrowing the money from?

Do you know what they say? Oh, we are borrowing it from China.

So we borrow from China to give to the Multilateral Fund under this Montreal Protocol. And what happens then? The Fund gives it to China. The United States borrows from China. We give it to the United Nations. The United Nations gives it to China. So we are further in debt to China. This makes zero sense. Even to the high school kids it makes zero sense.

With ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the U.N. treaty, more and more American taxpayer dollars will be going to communist China.

Now, this is happening despite the fact that everyone knows that China is not a developing country and shouldn't be labeled as a developing country or be treated as a developing country. China is the second largest economy in the world. China is our greatest economic and geopolitical rival.

The United States should not let China play by a special set of rules that is designed to give a helping hand to truly developing nations. China doesn't fit. But this is exactly what is outlined in the Kigali Amendment. And that is why I have filed at the desk an amendment to what is being discussed on the floor of the Senate today. My amendment says the United States will not ratify this treaty until China is defined, rightly, as a developed country—

not a developing country but a developed country—because they truly are. No special treatment for China, period. Everyone should stand up for that in this body, each and every Member.

So Senators have some decisions to make: Are you going to vote to allow China to play by a whole different set of rules? Are we going to put America at a competitive disadvantage? Are we going to vote to continue to give American taxpayer dollars to China?

Now, Members and my colleagues and friends on the other side of the aisle say: Oh, it is not about China. This is about HFC, the chemicals involved. Again, we have already passed bipartisan legislation to reduce HFCs. The law is still going into effect. There is no excuse for any Senator to give China a handout at the expense of the American taxpayers and the American hard-working families—no excuse whatsoever.

We should not be outsourcing our environmental policy. I urge my colleagues to support my amendment and, once again, say no special treatment for China.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:30 p.m. today, Wednesday, September 21, all postcloture time in relation to Treaty Document No. 117-1 be considered expired; that the Schumer amendment No. 5503 be withdrawn; that the Sullivan-Lee amendment No. 5518 be the only amendment in order to the resolution of ratification and the Senate vote on adoption of the amendment; that upon disposition of the Sullivan-Lee amendment, the Senate vote on adoption of the resolution of ratification, as amended, if amended, all without intervening action or debate; further, that upon disposition of the treaty, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the Bennett nomination and that at 5:30 p.m. the Senate vote on the motions to invoke cloture on the Bennett and Prabhakar nominations in the order listed; that if cloture is invoked on either of the nominations, the confirmation votes be at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader; further, that the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 484, S. 4822, be at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, September 22.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Alaska.