

State and Federal court. He has tried more than 250 jury trials to verdict, including more than 120 State jury trials and more than 135 Federal jury trials. He enjoys the strong support of both of his home State senators—Mr. CORNYN and Mr. CRUZ—and the American Bar Association unanimously rated Mr. Gonzalez as “well qualified” to serve on the Western District of Texas.

During Mr. Gonzalez’s confirmation hearing, Senator CORNYN expressed his belief that Mr. Gonzalez’s “temperament, his knowledge of the law, and ability to handle a large docket will serve the Del Rio Division of the Western District well.” I agree with that assessment. I strongly support Mr. Gonzalez’s nomination, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we start the 12 noon vote now.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON GONZALEZ NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gonzalez nomination?

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The clerk will call the roll

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Tennessee Mr. (HAGERTY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 102 Ex.]

YEAS—88

Baldwin	Cotton	Kelly
Barrasso	Crapo	Kennedy
Bennet	Cruz	King
Blumenthal	Daines	Klobuchar
Booker	Duckworth	Lankford
Boozman	Durbin	Lee
Brown	Ernst	Lujan
Budd	Fetterman	Lummis
Butler	Fischer	Manchin
Cantwell	Gillibrand	Markey
Capito	Graham	McConnell
Cardin	Grassley	Menendez
Carper	Hassan	Merkley
Casey	Heinrich	Moran
Cassidy	Hickenlooper	Mullin
Collins	Hirono	Murkowski
Coons	Hyde-Smith	Murphy
Cornyn	Johnson	Murray
Cortez Masto	Kaine	Ossoff

Padilla	Schatz	Vance
Paul	Schumer	Warner
Peters	Scott (SC)	Warnock
Reed	Shaheen	Warren
Ricketts	Sinema	Welch
Risch	Smith	Whitehouse
Romney	Stabenow	Wicker
Rosen	Tester	Wyden
Rounds	Thune	Young
Rubio	Tillis	
Sanders	Van Hollen	

NAYS—7

Britt	Marshall	Tuberville
Hawley	Schmitt	
Hoeben	Sullivan	

NOT VOTING—5

Blackburn	Cramer	Scott (FL)
Braun	Hagerty	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will immediately be notified of the Senate’s action.

The Senator from Washington.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

UDALL FOUNDATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2023—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate a message from the House of Representatives on H.R. 2882.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 78, nays 18, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 103 Leg.]

YEAS—78

Baldwin	Duckworth	Markey
Barrasso	Durbin	McConnell
Bennet	Ernst	Menendez
Blumenthal	Fetterman	Merkley
Booker	Fischer	Moran
Boozman	Gillibrand	Mullin
Britt	Graham	Murkowski
Brown	Grassley	Murphy
Butler	Hassan	Murray
Cantwell	Heinrich	Ossoff
Capito	Hickenlooper	Padilla
Cardin	Hirono	Peters
Carper	Hoeben	Reed
Casey	Hyde-Smith	Ricketts
Cassidy	Kaine	Romney
Collins	Kelly	Rosen
Coons	King	Rounds
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Schumer
Cotton	Lummis	Shaheen
Cramer	Manchin	Sinema

Smith	Tillis	Welch
Stabenow	Van Hollen	Whitehouse
Sullivan	Warner	Wicker
Tester	Warnock	Wyden
Thune	Warren	Young

NAYS—18

Budd	Kennedy	Rubio
Crapo	Lankford	Sanders
Cruz	Lee	Schmitt
Daines	Marshall	Scott (SC)
Hawley	Paul	Tuberville
Johnson	Risch	Vance

NOT VOTING—4

Blackburn	Hagerty
Braun	Scott (FL)

The motion was agreed to.
(Mr. KELLY assumed the Chair.)

UDALL FOUNDATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2023

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Chair lays before the Senate the message from the House.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, that the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2882) entitled “An Act to reauthorize the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Trust Fund, and for other purposes.”, with a House amendment to the Senate amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move that the Senate concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment.

CLOTURE MOTION

Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 the Senate amendment to H.R. 2882, a bill to reauthorize the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Jack Reed, Peter Welch, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jeff Merkley, Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tim Kaine, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Brian Schatz, Tina Smith, Jeanne Shaheen, Chris Van Hollen.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 1790

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to concur in the House amendment with an amendment No. 1790, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2882, with an amendment numbered 1790.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 1 day after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to concur with the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1791 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1790

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have an amendment to amendment No. 1790, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 1791 to amendment No. 1790.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

On page 1, line 3, strike "1 day" and insert "2 days".

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 1792

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to refer the House message to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 1792.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER], moves to refer the House message to accompany H.R. 2882 to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report back forthwith an amendment numbered 1792.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask that further reading be waived.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 3 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1793

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have an amendment to the instructions, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 1793 to the instructions on the motion to refer.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading be waived.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

On page 1, line 3, strike "3 days" and insert "4 days".

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1794 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1793

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have an amendment to amendment No. 1793, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 1794 to amendment No. 1793.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be waived.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

On page 1, line 1, strike "4 days" and insert "5 days".

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, we are nearing the end of what has been a long, winding, and tough process. I just want to start by thanking everyone who has worked with me to get here, and that starts, of course, with my vice chair, Senator COLLINS, who has been a really great partner throughout this process, and I so appreciate it.

I also want to thank our counterparts in the House, Chair GRANGER and Ranking Member DELAUNO. And I want to thank all of my staff and the vice chairs who have worked tirelessly on these bills, all our incredible subcommittee chairs: Senators TESTER, VAN HOLLEN, MURPHY, BALDWIN, REED, and COONS; our ranking members: Senators HAGERTY, BRITT, CAPITO, FISCHER, and GRAHAM; Leaders Schumer and McConnell; and all of their staffs; and so many others.

As I have said before, this is not the package I would have written all on my own, but by working together, we were finally able to hammer out an agreement on funding bills that protect and even strengthen critical investments in our families, in our economy, and in our national security.

Make no mistake, we had to work under very difficult top-line numbers and fight off literally hundreds of extreme Republican poison pills from the

House, not to mention some unthinkable cuts, but at the end of the day, this is a bill that will keep our country and our families moving forward.

I want to talk about what is in this package before our final vote. I want to start with something that is a top priority for families and for me: childcare, which is far out of reach for so many people right now.

I will seize every opportunity I can to help families get affordable childcare. And in this funding bill, I am pleased to say that we increased Federal funding for childcare and pre-K by \$1 billion. That is not even counting steps I secured to protect the CCAMPIS Program that helps young parents who are in college who need childcare or double the capacity for the universal pre-K program we have for our servicemembers.

Ultimately, we need to pass, I believe, my Child Care for Working Families Act to fix this crisis and make affordable childcare a reality for every family. But until we get there, I will keep pushing for every inch of progress to alleviate the stress families are feeling when it comes to childcare.

Can we take steps to help our military families get childcare? What about moms who are looking to get a college degree? What bit of progress can we make to help folks? These are the questions that motivate my thinking on this issue and many others like people's health and well-being.

This package provides crucial health funding. It boosts research funding for cancer, for Alzheimer's, for maternal mortality, and more.

It funds community health centers, local efforts to fight the opioid and mental health crisis, and the new Federal office of pandemic preparedness that I created with former Senator Burr.

In the face of House Republicans' push to gut funding to end HIV and build our public health infrastructure, we protected those vital efforts in this bill.

We protected family planning, not just from the House Republican efforts to defund title X entirely but also from countless far-right proposals to restrict women's reproductive freedom.

The American people should know that Democrats stood firm to reject every single one of those.

We also stood together to make critical investments in education, protecting increases we made to the maximum Pell award in recent years, educator preparation initiatives, and workforce training programs.

We rejected House Republicans' unthinkable cuts in funding for K-12 schools, which would have reduced funding for nearly 90 percent of school districts and force teachers out of our kids' classrooms.

Of course, this package does fund our staffs and Capitol Police here in Congress, our election security, and other essential, basic functions of government.

Then there are the crucial investments for our national security. At a time when Putin is on the march in Ukraine, the Chinese Government is growing its influence in an aggressive posture, and the Israel-Hamas war is still raging, American leadership could not be more essential. That is why it remains imperative the Speaker finally put that national security supplementing bill that we passed overwhelmingly up for a vote, and it is why this bill also includes investments to promote global stability, to keep our country safe, to deter conflict, and to ensure our military remains the strongest in the world.

That means investments in diplomacy, maintaining strong ties with our allies, upholding our commitments, forging new partnerships, providing more humanitarian aid, and promoting stability and global health.

It means investments in defense, not just funds for new equipment—though that is important—but investments in the men and women in uniform who are our true frontlines of defense.

The bill provides our servicemembers a pay raise. It invests in childcare for their kids, like I mentioned earlier. It invests in food security and strengthens our efforts to prevent suicide and address sexual assault and harassment in the forces, and more.

This bill secured additional visas for brave Afghans who worked alongside our servicemembers during the war in Afghanistan.

Finally, this package provides critical operational funding for the Department of Homeland Security. It is certainly not a perfect outcome, but let's not forget that Democrats were at the table. We were ready to pass a bipartisan border policy deal until Donald Trump told Republicans to kill that deal.

But in spite of that, the funding in this bill shows we can at least agree to some extent that we must not short-change crucial work: stopping fentanyl from reaching our communities; stopping dangerous human trafficking; cracking down on drug cartels; and ensuring our borders are operating safely, efficiently, and humanely.

Now, I hope my colleagues will work with me to close the book on fiscal year 2024, to avoid a shutdown and get this bill passed ASAP, and then let's make sure we all learn from the hard lessons of the past few months about how we do get things done in a divided government, because what we have seen at every stage of this process is that when we do work together, when we put our heads down and focus on solutions and listen to our constituents, we can find common ground. We can craft bipartisan bills.

But when House Republicans stopped everything to renegotiate the deal they struck with the President; when they insisted on partisan poison pills; when they listened to the loudest voices on the far right, who—let's be real—were never going to vote for any bipartisan

funding bill, that gets us nowhere. It wasted months of precious time far better spent crafting bills that grow our economy and protect our country and make things better for folks back home. After all of that delay, how different, ultimately, was the outcome? Think about that. Yet now we are here, 6 months into the fiscal year, and Agencies will just have 6 months left to leverage these full-year spending bills.

I believe we negotiated strong, bipartisan bills that will help the American people. This outcome is so much better than a shutdown or a full-year CR, which would have had devastating cuts, but it should never have taken us this long to get here. We should not teeter on the verge of a shutdown and lurch from one CR to another. Agencies should not be dedicating so many resources to preparing again and again for a possible government shutdown. Don't we all agree that the Pentagon and the NIH have better ways to be spending their time and their tax dollars? The far-right elements who forced this dysfunction claim to care a lot about fiscal responsibility, but the constant chaos they create is the opposite of fiscal responsibility.

The truth is, these appropriations bills are written over the course of months, after dozens of hearings, with input from nearly every Member, and they reflect the priorities of every State in America.

Working together, focusing on solutions, solving problems for people back home—that is the responsible way to get things done, and it is for the most part how we conduct ourselves here in the Senate.

Vice Chair COLLINS and I held bipartisan hearings. We gave every Senator an opportunity to weigh in on these bills. We crafted 12 bills that passed out of our committee overwhelmingly, many unanimously. I think we need more of that as we begin our work now on fiscal year 2025 if we are going to keep this process on track.

So as we finally pass this bill, I urge all of my colleagues to really take the lessons of the past year to heart. Congress can still work but only when we come to the negotiating table in good faith and leave politics at the door.

Before I turn it over, I want to submit into the RECORD a list recognizing our incredibly dedicated staff, the people who truly keep the trains on track and who poured so many long days and nights of hard work into these bills.

I ask unanimous consent to have that printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF

With great appreciation I thank the following staff for their tireless dedication to the FY24 appropriations process:

Dianne Nellor, Rachel Erlebach, Blaise Sheridan, Jessica Berry, Lindsay Erickson, Michael Bednarczyk, Abigail Grace, Brigid Kolish, Gabriella Armonda, Kate Käufer, Katy Hagan, Kimberly Segura, Laura Forrest (Mancini), Mike Clementi, Robert Leon-

ard, Ryan Pettit, Aaron Goldner, Doug Clapp, Jennifer Becker, Laura Powell.

Maria Calderon, Diana G. Hamilton, Ellen Murray, Maddie Dunn, Carly Rush, Dylan M. Stafford, Evan Schatz, Janie Dulaney, John Righter, Josephine Eckert, Katelyn Hamilton, Elizabeth B. Lapham, Emily M. Trudeau, Jim Daumit, Kami White, Angela Caalim, Anthony Sedillo.

Melissa Zimmerman, Rishi Sahgal, Ryan Hunt, Richard Braddock, Amanda J. Beaumont, Claire Monteiro, Erin Dugan, Kathryn Toomajian, Mark Laisch, Meghan Mott, Michael Gentile, Dylan W. Byrd, Jason McMahon, Michelle Dominguez, Alex Carnes, Andrew Platt, Kali Farahmand, Sarita Vanka.

Dabney Hegg, Jessica Sun, Kelsey Daniels, Rajat Mathur, Ben Hammond, Clint Trocchio, George A. Castro, Hong Nguyen, Joshua Kravitz, Karin Thames, Leslie Logan, Lynn Favorite, Penny Myles, Valerie Hutton, Karina Gallardo, Ryan Myers, Amir Avin, Hart Clements.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I again want to thank my colleague, who has worked with me side by side, through ups and downs and challenges, for well over a year now to get us to where we are here today. We want to get this bill passed and move on because we believe that by working together, we make America better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today in support of the final six government funding bills before us. These bipartisan, bicameral bills are the result of many months of hard work by the Appropriations Committees in both the Senate and the House.

Let me start by thanking Chair MURRAY for her tremendous leadership and hard work throughout the entire appropriations process. She has really made a difference.

Since Chair MURRAY and I took the helm of the committee over a year ago, we have been committed to an appropriations process that provided Senators with a voice in funding decisions through robust committee proceedings. Toward that end, we held more than 50 public hearings and briefings. We televised our committee markups for the first time ever. The Senate Appropriations Committee marked up and advanced all 12 bills individually for the first time in 5 years, and we did so with overwhelming bipartisan support. Every single bill—each and every one of them—was subject to robust debate and amendments. Many of them passed unanimously, I am pleased to say, and others with only one dissenting vote.

This final package on the Senate floor today includes the fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills for the Department of Defense; State and Foreign Operations; Financial Services and General Government; Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education; Legislative Branch; and Homeland Security. We are not punting through yet another continuing resolution, nor is this an omnibus; rather, it is a package of six individual bills that fund critical programs, important Agencies, and essential Departments through the end of this fiscal year.

Now, Madam President, I would have preferred that more of these bills would have been brought across the Senate floor, but no one can say that they were not available for scrutiny since we reported the last of them from committee way back in July.

In addition to my thanks for Chair MURRAY, I want to thank the ranking Republican members on each of the subcommittees reflected in the package today—Senators GRAHAM, HAGERTY, CAPITO, FISCHER, and BRITT—for their outstanding efforts in assembling this package. I also want to acknowledge the contributions of their Democratic chairs.

This legislation is truly a national security bill. Seventy percent of the funding in this package is for our national defense, including investments that strengthen our military readiness and industrial base, provide pay and benefit increases for our brave servicemembers, and support our closest allies.

This legislation also supports America's working families while providing funding to better secure our borders and combat the transnational criminal organizations that are flooding our communities with fentanyl.

As part of the effort to address the crisis at the border—and it is a crisis—this package includes funding for additional detention beds and more Border Patrol agents and port-of-entry officers. Those are longstanding Republican priorities—priorities that are shared by many Democrats as well.

As the ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, I want to take a few moments to highlight the bill in this package on which Chair TESTER and I worked extremely closely.

The bill avoids a devastating year-long CR that every single service chief told us would be a disaster for the Department of Defense. It meets the complex threats that are facing our country.

Madam President, to say that things have changed since the fiscal year 2024 budget request was first presented last spring would be a drastic understatement. Putin refuses to end his war in Ukraine. Hamas conducted its heinous, brutal attack on Israel on October 7. Iran continues to fan the flame of violence and terrorism throughout the Middle East, including against American forces. China's military budget and armed forces continue to grow unabated.

But you don't have to take my word for it. In the past few weeks, the Commander of U.S. Central Command, GEN Eric Kurilla, has described this as the most dangerous security environment in 50 years.

On the other side of the world, the Commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command told Chairman TESTER and me earlier this week that this is the most dangerous time he has seen in his 40-year career, citing cooperation between Russia and China as a key and growing concern.

In addition, just last week, the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Chief of Naval Operations wrote to the majority and minority leaders describing the harm to the readiness of our Navy and Marine Corps unless we quickly pass a full-year Defense appropriations bill. This needs to be done before a large part—about two-thirds—of our government would otherwise shut down at midnight tonight. We must not let that occur.

To meet these challenges, our bill includes nearly \$824.5 billion for the U.S. military. It fully funds the 5.2-percent pay raise for servicemembers—the largest pay raise in more than 20 years. It includes a critical \$123 million increase for bonuses for our new recruits and junior enlisted soldiers. The bill also doubles the number of children who will have access to full-day pre-kindergarten in DOD schools—an important priority for Senator MURRAY and for me.

I also want to salute the work Representative KEN CALVERT did in this whole area of improving benefits and pay for our junior enlisted soldiers.

As the Chinese navy rapidly expands to more than 400 ships over the next 2 years, our legislation includes \$33.7 billion for Navy shipbuilding and downpayments for both an additional DDG-51 destroyer and an amphibious ship—the largest shipbuilding budget ever provided. Indeed, our legislation supports a Navy fleet that is six ships larger than the President's woefully inadequate request.

The Defense bill also includes more than \$2.2 billion for our uniformed military leaders' highest priorities that were not included in the administration's request. But, as the Presiding Officer knows, we get a list of unfunded priorities from our service chiefs.

Our bill includes \$273 million for long-range radars and sensors to close the awareness gaps identified by General VanHerck when he was Commander of Northern Command. It includes \$50 million for the INDOPACOM Commander to accelerate his top priority targeting capability and \$200 million to accelerate the development of the E-7 radar aircraft that was a top priority for the Air Force.

To strengthen deterrence against China, our legislation keeps the modernization of the nuclear triad on track. It funds the transition from "just-in-time" to a "just-in-case" stockpile of munitions by authorizing and funding, for the first time ever, six multiyear procurement contracts for missiles and munitions.

Surely, that has been one of the lessons that we have learned from Ukraine: how important it is that we have modernized an adequate stockpile.

And \$6.5 billion is also included to maximize this year's production of Patriot air defense missiles, long-range anti-ship missiles, and six other long-range precision strike missile programs.

Finally, in the area of defense, this bill also includes \$500 million for Iron Dome and David's Sling and Arrow—the cooperative missile defense programs that are consistent with the 10-year memorandum of understanding signed between the United States and our close ally Israel. This will provide much needed assistance to Israel in its fight against terrorism.

In addition to having a strong national defense, another priority of mine is biomedical research. And this bill will continue the progress that we are making in increasing funding for the National Institutes of Health. It increases funding for NIH by \$300 million, including \$120 million in an increase for the National Cancer Institute and \$100 million more for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia research.

I would note that it also increases funding for mental health, which is so important—an area that has been neglected somewhat in the past.

Another cause of mine, as the cochair with Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN of the Diabetes Caucus, has been to increase the funding for diabetes research. And we have done so in this bill.

We also pay attention to the problems with opioids and have included an increase in the funding for the Help to End Addiction Long-Term initiative, known as the HEAL initiative. Palliative care research also receives an increase. That is so important as our population ages. And that is an area—long-term care—that we still need to do an awful lot of work on in this country. I hope that this will start us on our path to that end.

Again, there has been so much work done on this package of bills. And I want to thank my Republican and Democratic colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, the leaders in the House, as well on the appropriations subcommittees and full committee. And I also want to thank our Senate leaders on both sides of the aisle and our House leaders for their extensive work on these bills.

Members throughout the Senate have contributed to prioritizing funding and identifying how funding should be prioritized. And I want to note for my Republican colleagues that the legacy riders that we have traditionally included, such as the Hyde amendment, are included in this bill.

Finally, I want to thank our extraordinary staff. They have worked non-stop throughout this past year but particularly this past month, without getting sleep, without seeing their families—just working night and day.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this final fiscal year 2024 appropriations package and complete our fundamental job of funding our government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, Congress is poised to do what no American family would ever do. Congress is poised to spend one-third more dollars

than they receive. This is essentially equivalent to a family at home making \$45,000 but spending \$60,000. No American family can do that. But that is what is happening here.

The spending that has been brought forward for our spending plans this year will lead to a \$1.5 trillion deficit. So we bring in about \$4.5 trillion, and we are going to spend \$6 trillion. It is reckless. It leads to inflation. It is a direct vote to steal your paycheck. Because what happens, as we borrow more money, the Federal Reserve just prints up more money, and they will pay for all the debt that is created today. But that devalues your dollar.

So when you go to the grocery store and your prices have risen 20 percent, you can thank the people today that are all for you, and they are going to give you everything you want. Every program under the sun that grandmother and mother and apple pie wants, they are going to give you. But they are going to borrow the money.

This is a bait-and-switch. It is like: What do you want, America? Here, we will give it to you. It is free. You don't have to do anything.

But it is borrowed. When they give you stuff that they buy with borrowed money, they create inflation. This has been going on for a while. But it has accelerated. It is at an alarming pace now.

With the COVID lockdowns, we were borrowing \$3 trillion. Then with the Biden years, we were borrowing over a trillion. We are still borrowing at \$1.5 trillion. Why? Because their spending proposals take most of the spending off-limits.

Two-thirds of our spending is entitlements—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps. That is two-thirds of the spending. That equals all of the money you pay in taxes.

They have taken that off the limit. They have stuck their head in the sand, and said, "We will not ever touch entitlements."

Well, if you don't, you are not a serious person. If you don't, you are part of the problem.

Entitlements is two-thirds of the spending. Do I take joy in knowing that we have to reform these? No. But if you don't reform them, they are an anchor around the neck of America, and they are destroying us by spending money we don't have.

So two-thirds of the spending they are not even going to address. Now, of the remaining third of spending, that is what we vote on—military spending and nonmilitary spending. They call this discretionary spending. Of that remaining third, they took half of that off the table.

So entitlements is two-thirds of the spending. That is going up at about 5 to 6 percent. The remaining third that we vote on is military and nonmilitary. They say: Well, we have to continue to expand the military. It is going to go up to 3 percent.

So what are we left with? We are left with one-half of one-third, one-sixth of

government, about 16.6 percent. And we are going to say: Oh, we are going to really try to rein in spending there. And there what they do is, they almost slow it down to 1 or 2 percent.

This bill spends a third more than comes in. And what it is going to lead to—and has been leading to—is the erosion of your paycheck, the explosion of your gas prices, and the explosion of your grocery bills. Nothing is changing.

And you ask yourself: Where are Republicans? We have a Republican majority in the House, and, ostensibly, Republicans are for reducing the debt.

We have a filibuster-proof minority in the Senate and, ostensibly, Senate Republicans are for taking control of the debt. And yet what happens? Nothing happens. The spending goes on apace. The deficit grows by day.

So when did we get this spending bill? They have months and months to do this. When did we get it? At 2:32 a.m. on Thursday. And now it is: rush, rush, rush; we have got to shovel that money out the door, most of which we don't have or a third of which we don't have. We have to borrow it quickly, shovel it out the door because the government is going to shut down Friday at midnight.

Why is the government shutting down, and why are we up against a deadline? Because they didn't give us the thousand-page bill until 2:30 in the morning on Thursday.

Do you think we ought to read it? Do you think we ought to know what is in it?

Republican and Democrat leadership gave this to us at 2:32 in the morning—1,012-page bill, spends over a trillion dollars. No one will be able to thoroughly read and know what is in this until after it has passed. But it is rush, rush, rush; borrow more money; spend the money; and then try to deceive you into thinking that we gave you—we brought you manna from Heaven. We gave you all these gifts, these baubles. You are going to get a lot of free stuff. Every cause you like under the sun, you are going to get something for it in there. But they won't tell you the truth—that it is borrowed, it leads to inflation, and it is the biggest threat to our country.

We are not threatened by other countries invading our country. We are a strong and mighty country to which I do not believe we have an external threat. But we have a threat internally, and most of it resides in this body. Most of it resides in this body and in the House with profligate spenders who are not adequately concerned with spending what comes in. They are just jolly well borrowing it. They are jolly well borrowing it and sending it abroad.

You know, look, my sympathies are with Ukraine, but my first obligation to my oath of office is to my country. We can't just borrow money to send it to Ukraine.

You know, once the war is finally over, which one day it will be over, the

whole country is destroyed with bombs on both sides, and someone is going to be asked to pay for it. That is going to be you. Uncle Sam, Uncle Sucker will be asked to pay for it.

This bill that we are looking at has 138 pages and over 1,400 earmarks, totaling \$2 billion. What is an "earmark"? It is pork. It is not acknowledged by the Constitution. The Constitution says we can tax and spend money for the general welfare. We are allowed to spend money up here, according to the Constitution, only if it is for everyone.

So a bike path in Rhode Island is for people who live in one city in Rhode Island. They should tax the people of Rhode Island. But you don't tax everybody for a bike path in Rhode Island. That is against the principle and the spirit of the Constitution.

Now, these 1,400 earmarks are on top of the 6,000 earmarks we had last week for \$12 billion. So total between the two bills in the last 3 weeks, we have over 7,000 earmarks for \$14 billion. That is a lot of pork.

Democratic and Republican leadership want this reckless spending bill to pass quickly to make sure that no one has time to read or scrutinize the bill. Likely, no one will ever have the time to review all of the \$2 billion worth of earmarks before this is passed.

Now, earmarks and pork barrel spending is not brand new; it has been going on a long time. There was a conservative Democrat by the name of William Proxmire. This was a long time ago, in the old days, when there used to be conservative Democrats who cared about the debt.

And one of the programs that he talked about was—and he gave out a Golden Fleece Award to point out waste—but he said it was one of his favorites. He said the government, in their infinite wisdom, decided to discover whether or not, if you gave gin to a sunfish versus tequila, which would make the sunfish more aggressive?

Think about it. These are oppressing problems: \$100,000 to give tequila to sunfish and gin and see which one made them more aggressive.

Now, you would think that is so crazy, certainly it was one off and that we discovered this kind of waste, and we made it better. He talked about this for 15 years. And throughout the 15 years that he talked about the research money going to crazy research like this that not a penny should be spent on increased.

In fact, fast forward to last year—we are now like 30-some-odd years after William Proxmire was talking about this—last year, the main organization that is probably the most wasteful scientific accumulation of grants up here is the National Science Foundation. What did this body do, Republicans and Democrats? They voted to double the budget for the National Science Foundation.

What else do they do at the National Science Foundation? Let's see. Nearly

\$1 million was spent studying whether or not Japanese quail, if you give them cocaine, whether or not they are more sexually promiscuous—your tax dollars.

Every time they are bragging about what they are doing—it is worth borrowing the money—you remind them of what they are spending it on: nearly a million dollars to study Japanese quail to see if they are sexually promiscuous when they take cocaine.

Another one was ostensibly for autism. But when they got to the autism and they subgranted it and sent it here and there, and you never know where it is going to wind up, \$750,000, and it went to some, let's just call them egg-heads—that is the nicest word I can think of—to study what did Neil Armstrong say when he landed on the Moon. Was it "One small step for man" or was it "One small step for a man"? So \$750,000 was spent studying what he actually said. They listened to the crackly old audio from the black-and-white tapes from the Moon landing. And in the end, \$750,000 later, they couldn't decide, was it "One step for man" or "One step for a man"?

This is the craziness that goes on. Yet it goes on and on and on.

Here is what I will tell you. Even when it is something justified—I have family members who have Alzheimer's. My mother-in-law died not too long ago with it. So I have a great deal of sympathy for the disease. I think we are a big, rich country and government; we could spend money on Alzheimer's disease. At the same time, we can't bankrupt our country.

Let's say we spent \$100 million last year on Alzheimer's disease. Am I a cruel person for saying we don't have enough money; we should spend \$95 million this year? That never happens. Nothing ever gets smaller around here. Everything gets bigger. Everybody who wants something gets it. Put it on Uncle Sam's tab. We have a \$34 going on \$35 trillion debt. The biggest payment now in our budget within about a year is going to be the interest on that.

Here are a couple of the new earmarks that are in this bill: \$2 million for the construction of a kelp and shellfish nursery in Maine. You might say: Well, kelp might taste really good. I like to eat kelp. Good. There is already a \$15 billion private market for kelp. There are companies, including in Maine, that are growing kelp for farms. I say wonderful. I am not so sure if giving it to the government or to government universities is going to help these businesses or compete with them. But I don't think it is the job of the Federal Government to be involved in these parochial concerns.

Another earmark that we discovered in this bill is \$1.5 million to encourage video gaming in New York. Now, you know, I have nothing against people who play video games, sure. But \$1.5 million to encourage people? I have seen kids. I don't think they need any encouragement. In fact, we might be

better off spending \$1.5 million to discourage kids from playing video games. I see no reason, when we are down and in the hole this year \$1.5 trillion, that we should do this. This is an add-on. These add-ons are earmarks. They are in the name of probably the Senators from New York. They decided they want this video gaming thing in there. Maybe they know somebody in that industry, I don't know—maybe a friend of theirs.

That is why you don't earmark things. That is why things are supposed to be for the general welfare. You don't say: Here is something I am going to give to a specific parochial interest in my neighborhood or my State.

The third item we have is \$388,000 for Columbia University. I am sure the people who put this earmark in would be saying: I just love education, and I am just for education. Well, so am I. I am a product of public school education, private school education, lots of education. I am all for it. But do you know what? Columbia University has a \$13.6 billion endowment. They make \$388,000 in 20 days of interest. You would think maybe they could spend their own money. If you want to take a summer program to get into Columbia—which I think this money may be related to—it costs \$12,500 for a 3-week course at Columbia. We are talking about extraordinarily wealthy people paying this and going to this school. But there is no reason for the taxpayers to be giving a rich university that has \$13 billion any money.

The next earmark we found was \$249,000 for the Baltimore Symphony. People say: Gosh, I love the symphony, and I love music. So do I. The thing is, the way government is supposed to work is if you think that there is a general need for symphony money, you would pass a general symphony bill and we give money to all the symphonies and make them part of government. We don't have the money to do that. Instead, we do something even worse. We shouldn't be in the symphony business. It is not part of the general welfare.

What happens here is the people on the Appropriations Committee who have seniority—that means you have been here between 50 and 100 years most of the time—that is an exaggeration. Let's just say 50 years. They have been here 50 years and rise to the top and, by golly, they get money for their symphony in their city. That is not the way government is supposed to work.

There might even be less complaints if we have a surplus. But this is in the midst of borrowing it. So the \$250,000 is going to be borrowed from China. Everybody is all up in arms about China. We are borrowing money from China. We are becoming weaker than China because we keep spending money we don't have.

The next earmark was \$1 million for Cambridge, MA, Community Center to install some solar panels. I like solar panels as well as anybody. I think it is kind of cool to get some of your energy

from solar panels. This is a rich community. This is where Harvard is. This is where some of the largest, most successful corporations and research are in Boston. You think they can't pay for solar panels? Solar panels aren't for general welfare.

Our Founding Fathers said all spending and taxation had to be for the general welfare. And they went one step further. In article I, section 8, they laid out all the powers of Congress, all the things we are allowed to do. And not listed in those was to buy solar panels for one town.

You would think all the wealth with MIT and Harvard and all that wealth that is attracted to Cambridge, they would be able to buy their own solar panels. It has no place in a budget that is \$1.5 trillion in the hole and only makes us weaker. The next earmark is \$1 million for Martha's Vineyard Hospital, one of the richest ZIP Codes in the United States. I have been to Martha's Vineyard. It is beautiful. But I could only afford to go one time.

The thing is, if you live there, that is wonderful. I am all for wealthy people. I love that they have all these beautiful homes. I think President Obama may have a place there. The thing is, pay for your own hospital. I have little, tiny hospitals with 40 beds in a really rural community that because of all the rules and resolutions, are barely breaking even in Kentucky, and I don't see sending millions of dollars to Martha's Vineyard.

Once again, why did it go to Martha's Vineyard? Because somebody has been here for 50 years. They are on the Appropriations Committee. They put an earmark and said: I want the pork to go to Martha's Vineyard. Nobody makes a debate about whether Martha's Vineyard needs a bed more than Harlan, KY. They stick an earmark in here and get it because they have been here a long time.

It is a terrible way to legislate, but it is a terrible way to legislate in the context of this enormous debt we are amassing.

This bill is teeming with about \$2 billion worth of earmarks at a time when we can't afford the additional debt. Just days into the new year, the Treasury Department announced the U.S. debt had surpassed \$34 trillion. That is hard to fathom. The Chairman of the Federal Reserve came out and said it is an urgent problem. Jamie Dimon with JPMorgan Chase came out and said it was an urgent problem. On the heels of people saying it is an urgent problem, what happens? Congress rises to the occasion and borrows more money. Talk about tone-deaf—completely tone-deaf.

We are just going to borrow another \$1.5 trillion on the heels of \$34 trillion. We are spending at such a rate that right now, we are averaging a trillion dollars to the debt every 90 days. If that pace continues, instead of \$1.5 trillion, it could be up to \$4 trillion in the next year. Since this year, the United States is borrowing money at \$7 billion

a day. Think about that. We are borrowing money at over \$300 million per hour, and \$3 million per minute is being borrowed. We are borrowing money at \$85,000 a second. This is just spinning, literally, out of control. If you look at the debt clock online you can see the numbers just spinning like crazy.

If we are to judge the backroom negotiations between the “uniparty” leadership in Congress and the White House by its results, we can only conclude that they do not take our spending problems seriously. Even Republicans who talk such a good game about government spending and respect for taxpayer dollars when they are at home cannot be depended upon to fight for fiscal sanity when push comes to shove.

Our Nation’s greatest threat comes not from abroad but from within the Halls of Congress, which at every opportunity looks for ways to ignore our spending problem and expedite our economic decline. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office predicts we will add an average of \$2 trillion to our debt every year for the next decade.

But there is a breaking point. There is a point at which they print so much money that you can have a catastrophic loss of the value. This is what has happened in South America for decades. It is what has happened in Central America. And we don’t want it—at least I don’t want it—happening in our country.

The CBO also estimates net interest payments will outgrow defense spending this year and will become the largest item—over \$800 billion just in interest.

This reckless level of borrowing and spending is unsustainable. The ever-increasing heights of our debt in a weak economy, high inflation, and confiscatory tax rates—in other words, today’s spending threatens tomorrow’s prosperity.

We are approaching a predictable economic crisis in the United States. In my time in the Senate, I have proposed spending freezes, balanced budgets, spending cuts designed to get our Nation back on path. Today, though, instead of a balanced budget, I merely ask that this bill be sent back to the Appropriations Committee and that they report to the full Senate about how to responsibly cut 5 percent from this bloated monstrosity.

We wouldn’t eliminate everything, but everything you are going to spend money on—grandma, motherhood, apple pie—is going to get 5 percent less. That is what it would take to start balancing our budget.

We wouldn’t do it just on this bill because we would actually have to do that to everything in all our spending. Doing it here today shows somebody is serious about the spending.

My instructions even leave the Appropriations Committee open to determine where to reduce the spending. This isn’t asking that much. It is a lop-

sided compromise in which the select handful of Members who wrote this bill get 95 percent of everything they want. That is what it would mean if we were to pass this cut.

Realize that when we vote on this cut though, not one Democrat will vote to cut one penny. Seriously. If we offered an amendment to cut one penny, every Democrat would vote no on it. They are resisting voting no now because they are worried people at home will discover what they are voting for.

It is more than just the Democrats. No Democrat cares about the deficit. Many Republicans profess to care, but half of them will vote with the Democrats as well. This is really a bipartisan problem. Don’t let anybody tell you this is just about Joe Biden; it is about the previous administration as well. They borrowed \$7 trillion. They shut the economy down. COVID lockdowns led to extravagant borrowing, more than we have ever seen, and we are continuing it now.

But this is a bipartisan problem. It means that rather than spending \$1.2 trillion in this package, my proposal would spend \$1.14 trillion. Some would look at that and say: Gosh, that is not very dramatic at all. How did you become so moderate? And you know that is true; I am quite the moderate. It would cut \$60 billion—\$60 billion.

But they will unanimously, on the Democrat side, vote against this because they are against cutting one penny. And our side, half of our people on our side will vote against any cuts also. This is a modest cut and only the beginning of what you would have to do to bring fiscal sanity. I am willing to accept a reasonable compromise, even one that does not balance the budget significantly or even cut the necessary spending. I am willing to vote for something to cut some spending.

By agreeing to this motion, which will be an amendment later today, we can show to our constituents that we respect them as taxpayers and are open to the most reasonable attempts to shave down the unsustainable level of spending.

I ask that all consider a “yes” vote on my amendment when the time comes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

(The remarks of Mr. SCHATZ pertaining to the submission of S. 4063 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

Mr. SCHATZ. I yield the floor.

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

TAX RELIEF FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES AND WORKERS ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, clearly it is an election year, because we are hearing more and more political speeches from the floor of the Senate and precious little work doing the hard things that we actually are elected to do, which is to legislate.

Here we find ourselves dealing with appropriations bills that should have been completed last September. I don’t know if people really understand that. What we are doing today, lurching from one shutdown to the next, is dealing with last year’s work. But you would think that, under the leadership of Majority Leader SCHUMER, we would have enough things to do rather than squander the opportunity to deal with those because we are dealing with last year’s work.

I think we can do better next year. Hopefully, with a different majority, we can actually pass a budget. We can take up and pass appropriation bills on a timely basis, and we can get our work done on time—something that has not happened under the current leadership.

I want to mention one hopeful sign, where, at least, one branch of the legislature is actually moving things through committee and across the floor and allowing votes, amendments, and debate. That would be the House of Representatives, not the U.S. Senate, sometimes called the world’s greatest deliberative body.

To their credit, earlier this year, the House passed a bill that made significant changes in our tax system, and that is what I want to talk about for the next few minutes.

This legislation was negotiated by the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, on which I am privileged to serve, Senator RON WYDEN, and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman JASON SMITH. They released a framework of this agreement in mid-January, and our colleagues in the House immediately began work on the bill.

The Ways and Means Committee, for example, held hearings—actual hearings, legislative hearings—and then a markup to debate the legislation. Members offered and voted on amendments, and, ultimately, this package passed the committee and the full House with strong bipartisan support.

Given the polarization and partisanship that often grips Congress, advancing a bipartisan bill is no small feat, especially during an election year. But that doesn’t mean the work on the bill is finished. As every high school student knows who takes civics or American history—they know that Congress is a bicameral body. The House and the Senate have to work together. There are two Chambers, two sets of Members with diverse views, Senators representing whole States—in my case, 30 million Texans. The House Members represent a much smaller Congressional District. But the process means that both Chambers need to work through these bills to improve them and make sure they are as good as we can make them before they are signed into law.

So my point is that the Senate is not a rubberstamp for the House, and the House would say that they are not a rubberstamp for us. And that is the

way it is. So be it. Members of both Chambers have a responsibility to evaluate and shape legislation before it is sent to the President's desk.

Congratulations to the Members of the House for doing their job. They sent a bipartisan bill to the Senate at the end of January, and now it is the Senate's turn to take a closer look at this legislation and see how it might be improved.

I had hoped that Chairman WYDEN would schedule a markup in the Finance Committee and allow members to ask questions and offer amendments to the bill. I am sure he thinks his negotiated bill with Chairman SMITH is perfect and doesn't need any improvement, but others may have a different point of view.

After all, members of the House Ways and Means Committee had that opportunity. That is called the legislative process. That is what we are supposed to do.

So you would think that Chairman WYDEN would want members of his own committee to have the same opportunity that the members of the House Ways and Means Committee had, but apparently that is not the case.

Nearly 2 months have passed since that bill passed the House, and Chairman WYDEN has shown zero interest in moving this bill through the Finance Committee and across the floor of the U.S. Senate, giving all Senators a chance to participate in the process and hopefully improve the final outcome. In fact, the chairman has refused to schedule a hearing or even a markup, as I mentioned, and has rejected commonsense proposals by Ranking Member MIKE CRAPO and Senate Republicans.

Earlier this week, the majority leader virtually guaranteed that the bill will not go through the regular order in the Senate. He took a procedural step to put this bill on the fast track for a vote here on the Senate floor, without any opportunity for the Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over tax matters, to engage—no hearing, no markup, just “take it or leave it.”

Well, I have reviewed this bill, and while I will concede that there are some portions that are very promising, there are problematic areas that need more work. For example, this bill aims to incentivize research and development here at home by easing the tax burden on America's innovators.

Cutting-edge research and development is absolutely critical to our competitiveness, and Congress needs to promote new investments in the capabilities that will propel our economy and our national security into the future. This legislation, to its credit, restores full and immediate expensing for equipment and machinery purchases, which will enable small businesses to make new investments in their business and boost domestic manufacturing.

I have spoken to a number of my small business constituents in Texas

about the need for these types of reforms, and the House-passed bill is a great starting point for a full debate here in the Senate.

I believe there is a lot of potential here, but I share Ranking Member CRAPO's concerns about some of the remaining provisions in the bill. One example is the watered-down work requirement for the child tax credit. Under the proposed change, parents with zero earnings would still be eligible for a government check.

In other words, historically, tax credits have been tied to work and have been a credit against taxes that you would otherwise owe. But a refundable tax credit is merely a check from the Federal Government, regardless of whether you worked or created any income whatsoever.

Under the proposal by Chairman WYDEN and Chairman SMITH, as long as a person worked during one of the last 2 years—one of the last 2 years—they would be eligible for the child tax credit. As I said, historically, the child tax credit has been tied to work. I would think we would want able-bodied people to be working, if work is available. But this change would completely undermine that basic principle.

When the Joint Committee on Taxation analyzed this bill, they found that the expanded child tax credit would cost more than \$33 billion over the next 3 years.

You heard my colleague—our colleague—Senator RAND PAUL talk about the fact that our national debt is approaching \$35 trillion. This would add another \$33 billion to that. And despite what the authors of this proposal have said, the vast majority of that cost is not due to tax relief.

According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, 91 percent of the cost of this legislation is spending. It is writing a check. It may be called a tax credit, but really it is a welfare payment. It is a transfer payment. Mr. President, 91 percent of the money will be sent as a check to people with zero tax liability because they have insufficient income to cause them to have any kind of tax liability. So it is not a credit against earnings or work; it is essentially a welfare check.

Only 9 percent of that \$33 billion cost is true relief for hard-working taxpayers with children. The rest is a new welfare program by another name. And it is not limited to the 3 years of the R&D tax credit and the expensing of interest; it is permanent. And I have every confidence that our colleagues across the aisle will come back for another bite at the apple.

We would be doing a great disservice to taxpayers by allowing the child tax credit to morph into another welfare program. We should not set the stage for it to become a permanent fixture of entitlement spending.

Again, you heard our colleague from Kentucky talk the fact that the money that we are appropriating here today and that we did a couple of weeks ago—

this is only about a third of what the Federal Government spends. The rest of it is on autopilot. It is mandatory spending. We don't even vote to appropriate that money; it is automatic. Proponents of this tax bill want us to add another \$33 billion over 3 years to that number.

The truth is, when it comes to the discretionary spending, the money we appropriate, we have done a much better job controlling the rate of increase of that spending, but right now, entitlement programs grow at 6, 7, 8 percent a year. That is one reason why our national debt is approaching \$35 trillion.

Well, supporters of this proposal have tried to downplay concerns about the cost of the bill because they say: It is only a temporary change. Well, that reminds me of Ronald Reagan's observation that the closest thing to eternal life on Earth is a temporary government program. There is no such thing as temporary around here. People come back either to reauthorize it or to extend it or to grow it. Once created, it doesn't go away.

As soon as the temporary change expires, supporters will argue it has to be extended. They will frame anyone who opposes another extension as trying to increase taxes on hard-working families. Well, as I said and as the Senator from Kentucky said, our national debt is currently \$34.5 trillion. A lot of that was money we spent during the COVID pandemic trying to deal with the public health crisis and the economic crisis caused by that virus. We did whatever we had to do to make our way through that, but in doing so, we added a lot of money to the national debt. We should not continue that.

The national debt is increasing by almost \$1 trillion every 100 days, and the permanent tax credit expansion would only fuel the debt crisis we are facing. Someday—someday—there will be a terrible crisis as a result of the trending national debt. Already you are hearing we are spending more money this year on interest on the national debt than we are on our own defense.

Well, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, this child tax credit expansion would cost \$180 billion over the next 10 years. We need to pump the brakes on this expansion, this runaway debt train, not stomp on the accelerator, which is what this proposal would do.

Mandatory spending already represents nearly two-thirds of Federal spending, and a permanent child tax credit expansion would drive that number even higher. That is just one of the concerns that I and many of my Republican colleagues have with this legislation.

Over the last several weeks, as we have been able to analyze the text of the bill, even other concerns, more concerns, have come to light.

This legislation would have major impact on families and job creators

across the country. We need to be careful, we need to be deliberate, and we need to make sure we understand what the impact of this legislation would be before a vote on the Senate floor, which is the reason why committees like the Finance Committee exist. Getting it right is far more important than doing it fast.

If Chairman WYDEN's goal is to build consensus, which is the way we do things around here, he can't shut everybody else out of the process. I understand building consensus in a diverse body like this is not easy—it is hard—and I think some people are positively allergic to the difficulty of that job. But that is the way we govern. That is the way the Senate operates. We need an open forum to debate this bill and make changes at the committee level, and I am disappointed that the chairman of the Finance Committee himself has refused to do so.

Just as our counterparts in the House had their chance to evaluate this legislation and make improvements at the committee level, Senate tax writers need to have the same opportunity.

As each of our colleagues knows, Congress has developed a very bad habit of abandoning the procedures that were designed to give every single Senator a voice in the legislative process. For too long now, we have had bills cooked up behind closed doors and plopped here on the Senate floor, facing another deadline, another cliff, and being told: You have no choice. You can't change it. All you can do is vote up or down or else there will be dire consequences, like a shutdown.

Committees have been sidelined, and we have moved toward a process in which a small number of Members make decisions and try to bully or threaten everyone into voting yes.

Well, I can tell you that I, for one—and I know I am not the only one—am tired of being cut out of the process and being treated like a potted plant.

That cannot happen with this bill, so I will not vote to move this bill on the Senate floor until we have a process that allows all Senators to participate but starting with members of the Senate Finance Committee. I hope my Republican colleagues will join me in requesting that the Finance Committee be given an opportunity to do its job. Until that time, I hope there are 41 Senators who will deny the majority leader's request that we proceed to consider this legislation after bypassing the Finance Committee process. But once we do that, the majority leader must allow a robust floor debate and amendment process. That is what we do. That is our job.

All Senators deserve a chance to participate, as I said, first in the committee and then on the floor.

Many supporters of this bill are pushing for a truncated process in the Senate because the tax season is already well underway. They suggested that the Senate should just abdicate its job and rush to get the bill done. But, as

our colleagues know, the tax season began before this bill even passed the House, and the chairman of the Finance Committee completely undermined the urgency argument by sitting on this bill for the last 2 months.

The majority leader and the chairman of the Finance Committee want to ram this bill through the Senate without proper debate or amendment, and Republicans must not allow that to happen. The way we gain leverage and force a negotiation rather than being run over and treated as a mere speed bump is for 41 Senators to stick together to deny cloture on a motion to proceed.

Members deserve the chance to shape a bill before a final up-or-down vote on the floor, and I urge Chairman WYDEN and Leader SCHUMER to give us that opportunity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GLOBAL HAPPINESS SURVEY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, we have had a lot of good news in the last several months, over the last year. Unemployment remains at its lowest level ever. For the last 2 years, the unemployment rate has been under 4 percent. That is the longest stretch that we have had less than 4 percent of Americans without a job in 50 years. Inflation has cooled to the lowest level since the start of the pandemic. The U.S. economy is booming. We have seen it grow faster than any other large, advanced economy in the world. Crime is down. We saw a 12-percent reduction in urban gun violence in 2023. That is the biggest reduction in the history of the country in 1 year. That is a lot of good news if you look at the metrics that we normally look to when we assess the quality of our public policy.

But here is some other striking data: In a report released this week, we come to find that despite unemployment going down, despite inflation going down, despite GDP going up, Americans are more unhappy than anytime before. This year in the global happiness rating survey, the United States, for the first time since they started doing this survey, fell out of the top 20. We are now No. 23 in the world.

Even more worrying, amongst young people, the United States ranks 62nd in the world. This is reflected by other surveys that show over the last 10 years the rate of happiness and contentment and fulfillment self-reported by Americans dropped despite the fact that the economy is growing, more people have jobs, and crime is plummeting.

So I am on the floor for just a few minutes to ask this simple question: Should we care about this disconnect between the quality-of-life indicators that we normally look to to assess the measure of our public policy and self-reported rates of happiness? My answer is pretty simple: We should care because we are in the business of happiness.

I know that doesn't sound right, because your happiness comes from your personal decisions, the priorities that guide your day. America isn't—our government isn't in the business of delivering the last mile of happiness, but we absolutely are in the business of delivering the first mile of happiness. Why do we know that? Because that charge, that mission, is in our founding document. The Declaration of Independence says that amongst the inalienable rights enjoyed by all human beings is the right to pursue happiness. So that means that our job, charged to us by our Founders, is to set up rules of the economy, rules of society, rules of culture, that give people the best shot at achieving happiness.

So it is time that we take a big step back as policymakers and ask, if a job or rising GDP or a safe neighborhood isn't bringing people happiness, what does? And all I am suggesting today is that we engage in a conversation together—an apolitical, nonpartisan conversation—to try to discover the roots of American unhappiness, because it doesn't appear that just dialing the knobs of public policy to the right, as happened under Trump's Presidency, or to the left, under Biden's Presidency, is changing this long-term dynamic of more Americans reporting being unsatisfied with their lives.

Let me just tease this conversation with two routes to happiness that we don't talk enough about. The first is connection. In fact, if you look at longitudinal surveys of Americans' happiness, there is a seminal study done by Harvard where they study, over the course of 75 years, Americans of every income bracket, of every race and ask them questions every year: Are you happy, and, if so, why are you happy?

What they found and what many other surveys found is that it is not a job or career or how much money you make but your relationships—your connections to other human beings—that actually is most indicative, most predictive of whether you will report being happy and fulfilled in your life. And so it shouldn't be surprising or shocking to us that during a moment where more Americans are reporting feeling deeply lonely, we are also seeing more people reporting being unhappy.

There has been a sea change in this country, over the last 20 years, when it comes to the amount of time that we spend with other human beings, and the data is particularly acute for young people, but it is true of adults as well. We spend nearly half as much time today with other human beings in personal connection than we did just 30 years ago. That is a catastrophic decline in socialization.

There are lots of reasons for that, but many of them are connected to public policy choices that we have made. We decided not to regulate this transformative new technology called smartphones, nor the apps that dominate those smartphones, social media.

That technology has facilitated this withdrawal from socialization, from connection, from conversation.

We haven't meaningfully adjusted wages in this country. So people are being forced to work 70 hours now to enjoy the same quality of life that 40 hours of work would have 40 years ago. What does that mean? People are robbed of leisure time. So they can't connect with friends and neighbors through socialization in the evenings or on the weekends.

We have undermined the places where people often find connection, like downtowns, which are less healthy, less vibrant than ever before, as we created an economy where everybody just buys stuff from a set of big monopolistic, internationalized companies.

And so what we know is that feeling connected to other human beings, having strong relationships, is maybe most predictive of whether or not you are going to be happy, but we make public policy choices consistently to make connections harder, not easier. But we don't measure it. We don't measure it. Instead, we just measure things like unemployment and GDP, which are important, but not most predictive of whether people are going to be happy.

Let me give you a second way that people find a route to happiness, and that is living a life of purpose—knowing what your role is in the world and living a life that fulfills that role.

Well, let's be honest. Many of the ways in which people found purpose 50 years ago are not available to them today. One purpose, for instance, was passing along a better life to your kids, making sacrifices as an adult—tough, difficult sacrifices—but knowing that those sacrifices were going to allow for your child to be better off than you. Well, that purpose feels further away than ever before today because we have made it so hard for parents to be able to pass on that better life.

College is 400 percent less affordable today than it was in 1980. Economic mobility is more difficult than before, in part because we favor legacy admissions in colleges, in part because we allow for so much massive transfer of inherited wealth. Economic mobility is further away.

So we have robbed from individuals that sense of meaning and purpose, passing along a better life to your children. Other people found purpose in serving God, living a life in accordance with religious tradition, securing a place in the afterlife. But in a very short period of time, we went from 70 percent of people belonging to church to 50 percent of people belonging to church.

Now, I don't think there is a government solution to reverse that trend, but we need to admit that it is another example of how very quickly people have become unmoored from a place where they previously found all sorts of purpose and meaning. And if we are not talking about trying to create al-

ternative places where people can find that purpose or, perhaps, working together to find a way to make those institutions, like churches, healthier places, then we are not connecting in to the roadways, to the pathways to happiness, connection, meaning, purpose.

I get it. These are hard topics for policymakers to talk about. They feel more natural for philosophers or academics or theologians. But our Founders told us in the Declaration of Independence that we need to be in the happiness business, and we have made some likely wrong assumptions about what leads people to happiness. We have become such a materialistic world, and we have become such a materially focused institution that we make an incorrect assumption that, by changing the rules of the economy, we are automatically providing people a route to happiness. But it is not always economic change. It is not always economic policy that provides people meaning, provides people purpose, makes people feel happy.

So these are the questions that I think we should be answering. I think it is a really lovely way for us to set aside some of the policy fights that have worn this place out.

What brings meaning? What brings purpose? What makes you feel happy? Ask those questions, and then let's let those answers guide the policies that we can work on together. I frankly think that we would be surprised to find out that inquiry and the policies that inquiry commends us to pursue might not divide us as much as policy arguments that currently dominate this business.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, as we near the end of the fiscal year 2024 appropriations process, I would like to thank Vice Chair COLLINS and Chair MURRAY, as well as my fellow committee members. The Labor-HHS appropriations bill, the largest non-Defense appropriations bill, is one of the most difficult appropriations bills to negotiate.

I see my chair over there. So it is good to be together again.

It is not a stretch to say that every year, when we go into appropriations season, it is assumed that Labor-H will be one of the hardest bills to pass. And many times it is. This is the first year that Senator BALDWIN and I have been at the helm of the Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittee, and I am pleased to say we were able to work together to present a bipartisan Senate bill last summer that laid the groundwork for this final compromise bill.

First, I want to thank all of my colleagues, and I want all of my colleagues to know that in this bill we continue all longstanding legacy riders, such as Hyde and Hyde-Weldon conscience protections. And I want to

make it clear that we worked together to avoid any new poison pill funding for controversial programs, such as title X family planning.

While we each approached this bill differently, it was important to present a bipartisan result, including Member priorities, such as greater investments in biomedical research, pandemic preparedness, mental health, childcare and education, efforts to combat the opioid epidemic, and rural health.

Our final bill includes \$194.4 billion in base discretionary funding, which is \$12.9 billion below the 2023 enacted level. Even with additional resources added, the Labor-H bill represents a 1-percent reduction from 2023 levels.

The final bill also allocates limited resources to certain programs by reducing funding by approximately \$630 million across 35 different programs.

The Labor-HHS bill provides an increase of \$300 million for the National Institutes of Health. This funding provides targeted increases for research in specific areas that are so important, such as Alzheimer's, mental health, and cancer, including funding—one that I am particularly interested in—the Childhood Cancer STAR Act.

We also continue efforts to fight the growing prevalence of substance use disorder. This bill provides \$4.95 billion in funding across the bill for addiction prevention, research, and recovery programs. Investments to address this epidemic include \$1.57 billion for State opioid response grants to address the opioid epidemic in ways that suit individual States' needs; \$2 billion for the substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery services block grant—again, giving our States the ability to address the issues—and \$640.5 million for the NIH, for their program Helping to End Addiction Long-term, also known as the NIH HEAL Initiative.

Additionally, we direct more resources to telehealth and rural healthcare programs that help States like my State of West Virginia.

Rural healthcare will receive an additional \$4 million to improve rural maternity and obstetrics services, and an additional \$4 million for a new rural hospital stabilization program.

This Labor-HHS bill prioritizes our children, starting with early childhood education to ensure children are ready to learn when they enter school, and continues investments for students in high school and college to make sure they are prepared for the jobs today and for those jobs in the future.

Specifically, we provide a \$725 million increase for the child care and development block grant and a \$275 million increase for Head Start, both to support early childhood education; a \$20 million increase for title I grants to local educational agencies to support K through 12 students in low-income schools; and a \$20 million increase for IDEA grants to States, which provides special ed services for our students with disabilities; additionally, \$7,395 for the maximum Pell grant award for

the 2024–2025 school year to support low-income students pursuing postsecondary education.

The Labor-HHS section of this mini-bus isn't what any of us would have written individually. However, it reflects a four corners negotiation with bipartisan priorities, it protects all legacy riders, and it did not provide any new funding for any poison pill programs.

I stand here today to tell you that this bill can help our fellow citizens, but I am also happy to report that this bill will have a tremendous impact on the people of the State of West Virginia. One of the reasons I am proud to be on this Appropriations subcommittee is because of the impact that we can each have on our home States, and this bill demonstrates that. The priorities that I have advocated for since I started in the Senate and the experiences I have seen and learned from advocates, community leaders, patients and doctors, students, teachers, and parents throughout West Virginia are why I wanted to help write this bill.

So this bill includes ways to grow nursing programs where we have shortages and to look into addiction treatment and recovery programs. It helps with hospital expansions and improvements and workforce initiatives for medical specialties, along with aviation workforce, and water and wastewater technicians.

I cannot list them all, but my partnerships and support for Marshall University, West Virginia University, Bridge Valley Community and Technical College, Shepherd University, the Martinsburg Initiative, Lily's Place, Charleston Area Medical Center, Roane General, Minnie Hamilton Health Center, and numerous other city and county programs are evident by the millions of dollars that we dedicate to the mission and work being done right back home in West Virginia.

Far too often, the Federal Government overlooks what local entities can do to meet the needs and the challenges in their local towns and communities. But do you know what? That is where the solutions are, and they know best. That is why I have been listening to them, and that is why I am bringing those resources home.

I would like to again thank Vice Chair COLLINS and Chair MURRAY—I see her on the floor—and all of the members of this committee here and in the House for reaching this deal.

Now I would like to briefly thank all of the staff who worked to put this product together. Many of them are in the Chamber right now. On my staff: Lindsey Seidman, Ashley Palmer, Emily Slack, Tom Pfeiffer, JT Jezierski, Dana Richter, and Addie Bassali.

On Senator BALDWIN's staff, I would like to thank Mike Gentile, Mark Laisch, Meghan Mott, Kathryn Toomajian, Amanda Beaumont, Erin Dugan, and Janie Dulaney.

With that, I would encourage my colleagues to vote positively on this bill. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I am going to start where my vice chair left off by thanking and appreciating our incredible staff for the hard work and the long hours that they contributed to this product.

Then I want to join my vice chair in appreciating the heroic work of PATTY MURRAY, our committee chair, and SUSAN COLLINS, our committee vice chair, for their leadership in ushering all 12 appropriations bills to the finish line.

I also want to thank Senator CAPITO for her approach and cooperation on the Labor-HHS-Education bill this year.

We started the fiscal year 2024 appropriations process nearly a year ago, including marking up 12 appropriations bills in an overwhelmingly bipartisan process last summer. The Labor-HHS-Education bill was reported out of committee 26 to 2, and I am very proud of that. The goal then was to produce bills free of extreme and partisan policies that could pass the House, pass the Senate, and be signed by the President, and that is what we are here to finish today.

The Labor-HHS-Education bill that is included in this package addresses some of our country's most pressing issues. It invests in our workers, our families, and our economy—from substance use and mental health programs to childcare, to biomedical research, to education programs and workforce training. This bill delivers for the American people. This year, we received 9,185 programmatic appropriations requests from Senators for important programs throughout this bill.

To Senators who might claim they didn't have a say in what is included in this bill, our doors have been open since the process began last year. We have tried to reflect the priorities of every Senator who has engaged in the appropriations process. Balancing the many competing priorities throughout the Labor-HHS-Education bill is difficult in any year, but this year was especially challenging because it includes less overall funding than it did last year. Consequently, this isn't the bill I would have written alone, but it honors the terms of the debt limit deal that was agreed upon last spring.

The Labor-HHS-Education bill included in this package is very much of a compromise, but despite the challenges we faced over many months in writing this bill, I am really proud of our finished product. It rejects proposals included in the House Labor-HHS-Education bill to completely eliminate critical programs. We saved programs such as those that are working to end HIV, ensured initiatives that increase access to contraceptives stay alive and well, and we kept programs in place that deliver support for moms and babies.

It rejected devastating cuts found in the House bill that would have gutted funding for educators and schools, gutted funding for biomedical research, gutted funding for Head Start, and gutted funding for Federal financial aid for college students and public health programs. So we rejected those devastating cuts. It also rejects dozens of extreme policy riders that would have restricted reproductive healthcare and women's freedom to control their own bodies as well as attacks on the LGBTQ community and workers' rights.

In doing so, this Labor-HHS-Education bill protects the vast majority of investments made in the last 2 years and, in some cases, builds upon them.

This bill addresses some of the most pressing needs that I hear about when I am traveling in my home State of Wisconsin. In Wisconsin right now, families are paying 20 percent of their income on childcare, on average, and that is for those who can afford and access it. Over half of Wisconsin is in what we call a childcare desert, meaning that, for every open childcare slot available in their communities, there are three or more children who need it.

I hear from families and businesses and educators about our dire need to invest in childcare, and I am proud to have done just that in this bill. This bill includes an increase of \$1 billion for childcare and Head Start, building on our major gains in the past 2 years. And I want to recognize our full committee chair, PATTY MURRAY, for making this such a high priority.

Look, I know that more needs to be done to fix our childcare system so that it works for families, providers, and our economy, but this is progress. This will help kids get the strong start that they deserve, get parents back into the workforce, and help our businesses get the talent that they need.

I am also proud that we are investing in our future generations' health. To cure the diseases that plague our families and communities, we successfully boosted lifesaving and life-changing biomedical research by \$300 million. We are doubling down on Alzheimer's disease research because we need to find new treatments, preventions, and, ultimately, a cure. As cancer continues to devastate families of all stripes, I am proud to report that we have increased cancer research funding by \$120 million. As we work to address the mental health crisis in our communities, we also increased funding for mental health research.

One issue near and dear to my heart is the issue of opioid use disorder. My mother struggled with addiction to prescription painkillers throughout her life. Sadly, my mother's story is all too common, and the opioid epidemic knows no bounds—geographic or ideological. But in recent years, this crisis has taken to new heights with the increased prevalence of synthetic drugs like fentanyl. While our country grapples with deadly poisonings and

overdoses from fentanyl, this bill protects investments in substance use programs. As an increasing number of individuals, especially youth, are seeking crisis care, it includes an \$18 million increase for the 9-8-8 suicide prevention hotline that I was so proud to help create.

With more than 100,000 individuals on the organ transplant waiting list, this bill invests in modernizing the Organ Network and Transplantation Network to better serve those families and give those families more hope.

Accessing healthcare in our rural communities is often a challenge. I know we are acutely experiencing this in the western part of Wisconsin right now, and our bill includes targeted increases to rural health to help turn the tides.

Last but certainly not least, our legislation invests in our future. It protects funding for foundational K through 12 and postsecondary education programs that support students and educators. It increases funding for career and technical education while maintaining investments in workforce development programs to help prepare workers for good-paying jobs in in-demand careers. This will help people find careers that provide a stable, middle-class life and help grow our economy.

I wish we could have done more. I am disappointed that this bill isn't able to increase funding for family planning or include larger increases to any number of programs that truly meet the needs of families and communities, but given the hand that we were dealt, I am proud of the investments that we were able to make and protect in this bill.

Nearly 6 months into the fiscal year and nearly a year after we started this appropriations process by soliciting input from every Member of the Senate, it is past time for us to get serious. This bill does that, and I look forward to supporting its passage today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, before I start my remarks in regard to Sudan, I want to thank Senator MURRAY for her incredible leadership in regard to the appropriations issue and Senator COLLINS.

It took a lot of work to get us to where we are now. I urge my colleagues to cooperate so we can get this vote before the government shutdown at midnight. It is a bill that I think we all can support and be proud of. It is not everything that we wanted, but I think the priorities have been protected, and I thank the chairwoman for what she has done in that regard.

SUDAN

Mr. President, in 2018, as the Sudanese people took to the streets to demand change after decades of war, a young woman climbed on the roof of a car. Protesters captured the "Lady Liberty" moment. As she pointed her finger in the air, she read a poem that would become one of the slogans of the Sudanese revolution:

The bullet does not kill. It is the silence of the people that kills.

It is the silence that kills.

I come to the floor today because we cannot be silent about Sudan. We must hold those committing war crimes accountable. I urge the Biden administration to take the critical diplomatic steps to end the conflict in Sudan.

In 2018, when protesters brought down the brutal and genocidal regime, two-thirds were women. They dreamed of a Sudan that was free of oppression, harassment, and sexual violence, a Sudan that would transition to democracy after nearly 30 years of authoritarian rule. But, today, Sudanese women face the brute force of a vicious war between two armed factions: the SAF, the Sudanese Armed Forces, and the RSF, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Both committed abuses during the civil war in Darfur. In the last year, their actions have been absolutely brutal. They have killed detainees and indiscriminately bombed civilians. They have conscripted children as soldiers. They have looted supplies and attacked aid workers.

One woman told NPR:

If they couldn't steal it, they burned it.

They are targeting non-Arab ethnic groups in Darfur just as they did 20 years ago. Last month, videos emerged of troops chanting ethnic slurs as they paraded the streets, holding decapitated heads.

According to the United Nations, 15,000 people were killed in just one attack; more than 8 million people have fled their homes; 25 million, including 14 million children, need humanitarian assistance.

In addition, Sudanese women face the widespread use of rape as a weapon of war. A 21-year-old survivor said:

I cannot even count how many times I have been raped.

Diplomatic efforts to end the conflict have failed. Cease-fire after cease-fire has been violated. In fact, the violence has intensified. Last December, I called for a special envoy for Sudan in S. Con. Res. 24. I am pleased to see that the Biden administration has named former Congressman Tom Perriello as our Special Representative. I strongly urge the administration to fully staff his office as quickly as possible so that Mr. Perriello can hit the ground running. We have lost too much time as it is.

Mr. Perriello has four Herculean tasks ahead of him. First, he must establish a single diplomatic forum to negotiate a cease-fire. We need one effort that involves Africa, Middle Eastern, and European partners, along with partners from multilateral organizations. Second, he must bring warring parties to the table.

The United States has imposed sanctions on the SAF and RSF. We need others to join us as we pursue additional targets. We must make it clear to the parties—and their foreign back-

ers—that the cost of continued conflict is higher than the cost of coming to the negotiating table.

In the past, Middle Eastern nations, Türkiye, and even Russia have picked sides in Sudan. A recent United Nations report found evidence that the UAE was giving arms to the RSF. According to Sudanese and regional diplomatic sources, Egypt is helping the SAF.

We must be clear: No nation should be providing arms or support to these groups.

Third, the Special Envoy must galvanize the humanitarian response. The SAF is blocking cross-border humanitarian assistance from Chad. There are reports that they are obstructing assistance to areas controlled by the other side. That must end.

At the same time, it is a moral stain on the international community that the U.N. appeal for Sudan is funded at just 4 percent. The United States is by far the biggest donor. We put our money where our mouth is. Partners with interests in Sudan, including neighboring countries and especially those in the Gulf, need to do the same.

Finally, the Special Envoy must start the conversation about addressing impunity once and for all.

Last year the International Criminal Court announced an investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity. The United Nations Human Rights Council established an independent factfinding mission to investigate abuses. On December 6, Secretary Blinken announced he had determined that members of the SAF and the RSF had committed war crimes and that the RSF and allied militias have committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

The sad truth is, what is happening in Sudan is in, large part, as a result of the lack of accountability for our previous abuses. Many of those involved in today's conflict committed war crimes in the past and were never held accountable.

Maybe things would be different if former dictator al-Bashir had been tried at the Hague. Maybe the SAF would have reformed if high-ranking officials had been held accountable for their atrocities. Maybe the RSF would not exist if the Janjaweed had been accountable for their crimes in Darfur. Maybe if General Hemedti had not been getting flown on the Emirati jet and welcomed by Africa heads of state, things might be different.

One thing is for sure, such crimes must not go unpunished. As chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I will continue to fight for justice and a resolution of this conflict.

To those who continue to commit war crimes in Sudan, know that we will keep fighting to bring you to justice, no matter how long it takes.

To the women and the young people across Sudan who dream of an inclusive political process with civilians in the driver's seat, do not give up hope.

And to the international community and those in the United States who value human life and dignity, now is the time to step up. Now is the time to put an end to this cycle of violence that has plagued this region for generations. Now is the time to end the silence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF ADEEL ABDULLAH MANGI

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, for the first time in American history, a gentleman of Muslim faith has been nominated to serve on a Federal Circuit Court of Appeals.

What could and should have been a moment of pride has been stained by the nominee, Adeel Mangi, having been subjected to a series—a campaign—of baseless and gross attacks.

Senator BOOKER of New Jersey came to the floor yesterday and gave an eloquent and thorough rebuttal of those attacks, so I won't rehash that. But it is important that my colleagues understand where these attacks came from. It is not just that they were untrue; it is that the whole campaign is a fake.

These attacks are part of a coordinated campaign by the same dark money interests that helped Donald Trump pack our Federal courts and who now want to stop President Biden from confirming qualified nominees who weren't handpicked by those billionaire special interests.

You don't have to search long to see their fingerprints all over this smear campaign. We can start with the main culprit, the Judicial Crisis Network. Let me give you just an overview of what the Judicial Crisis Network is.

The billionaire operation to pack the courts had an operative who was the staff person, essentially, who directed it. His name was Leonard Leo.

Leonard Leo runs a whole array of front groups to obscure what is really going on, sort of like a pea and shell game, only with lots of shells.

This is a diagram that I use about one component of his front group armada. What this reflects is his own companies up here: CRC Advisors, CRC Strategies, and CRC Public Relations. They are the entities through which he extracts money for services, so-called, from this array of corporate entities.

To understand what it is, the real ones here—the real ones here—are called 85 Fund and Concord Fund. Those are twin entities. They share office space and funders and staff. They have around them this array of other entities, none of which are real, all of which are registered fictitious names—fictitious names under Virginia law—under which their real entities are allowed to operate.

In this case, there are six of them, and one of them is this Judicial Crisis Network. This thing is being run through a fake entity that bears the fictitious name of a completely different organization. Behind that are more anonymous funders and screeners

of funding and, ultimately, behind all of that, a bunch of creepy billionaires.

The story of the Judicial Crisis Network is that it was the main group that the operative, Leonard Leo, used to help the billionaires pack the Supreme Court with their handpicked Justices. It spent, for instance, almost \$40 million opposing Merrick Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court and, thereafter, supporting the Trump Justices' confirmations. It took in millions in dark money dollars and individual contributions as big as \$15 million and \$17 million. This is not a grassroots organization; this is a billionaire-funded, multimillion-dollar contribution outfit. And it continues to work today in the service of packing the courts.

It is an organization for the billionaires to work through from behind the scenes through their operative, Leonard Leo.

It launched against Mr. Mangi a \$50,000 ad campaign called "Stop Antisemitism Adeel," in which a video plays saying the Senate should reject "anti-Semite Adeel Mangi," and—just to make the point even more grotesque—showing a plane flying into the World Trade Center. Classy stuff.

It has tweeted and promoted the false attacks that Senator BOOKER described at length over the past 2 months. In recent days, as the attacks on Mr. Mangi ramped up, the organization tweeted out "It looks like our ad campaign worked." This ad campaign had nothing to do with truth. It was all about using secret billionaire money to derail a circuit court nominee who had not been blessed by this outfit and the billionaires behind them.

Leonard Leo, as the billionaires' operative, had his fingerprints all over—smears by another dark-money group attacking Mangi. This one is run by a former Neil Gorsuch clerk who also oversaw the Kavanaugh nomination on the Republican side.

Because this is a dark-money group, we don't know all of its donors, but we do know at least two. And the first is—guess who?—the Judicial Crisis Network. It is the hand in the glove in the glove.

JCN—Judicial Crisis Network—helped get the second organization off the ground with more than a quarter of a million dollars in 2018 and 2019. When the new organization launched, its leader tweeted:

Excited to work hand-in-glove with [a person named Carrie Severino, who is a Judicial Crisis Network lead operative] my other long-time friends at JCN, and many others on the outside who understand the critical importance of the judicial fight.

And, specifically, he means the critical importance to billionaires to be able to control the judiciary and get things done that Congress would never pass through courts that will do their bidding.

The dark money ties don't stop just there with the Judicial Crisis Network front group and the front group for the

Judicial Crisis Network. The front group organization's vice president comes straight out of the Koch brothers—K-o-c-h, not C-o-k-e—the Koch political dark money network. That guy helped run multiple Koch political organizations, including the dark money flagship of the Koch political machine called Americans for Prosperity.

While there, guess what. He helped oversee Americans for Prosperity's multimillion-dollar campaign to pressure Senators to confirm Justices Gorsuch and Kavanaugh.

Who is the other big donor? Donald Trump. Earlier this week, it was reported that Trump's PAC gave the organization \$150,000 to keep up the dirty work. The leader of this group wrote an op-ed calling Mr. Mangi "Hammas's favorite judicial nominee" and included a picture of Mangi with the Hamas flag edited to appear over his face—classy stuff, again—and tweeted that Mangi should "Go serve as a judge in Gaza, you antisemite"—just beautiful stuff.

Leonard Leo and Trump World are also propping up yet another dark-money group attacking Mangi and other Biden nominees, the Conservative Partnership Institute.

The New York Times recently called the Conservative Partnership Institute "a breeding ground for the next generation of Trump loyalists." It has received millions of dollars from Donors Trust, which is widely known as the "dark money ATM of the right." It builds no product; it offers no service. What it does is launders the identity of donors so that if you are a big donor and you want to send money into politics, you send it to Donors Trust first, and then the report sent to the 501(c)(4) says the source is Donors Trust and not whoever really gave it. That is what it lives to do, and hundreds of millions of dollars flow through it. It also received \$1 million from Trump's PAC in 2021.

CPI is quite a cast of characters, folks like Mark Meadows, Steve Miller, Cleta Mitchell, and Jeffrey Clark. One of its projects has been to find bad-faith ways to sink qualified Biden nominees, and Mangi is just the latest of its targets. This same group was behind the false attacks on Ketanji Brown Jackson that smeared her as lenient on sex offenders.

These groups are spending millions in dark money from Leonard Leo, from Donald Trump, and from billionaires like the Kochs to keep the Federal courts stacked in their favor. They want to stop President Biden's nominees who weren't handpicked by them in some Federalist Society back room by billionaires and their fixers.

It is not just Mangi who is their target. They have tried to smear many other Biden nominees, and there is an unusual concentration in their targets of people of color. They seem to have a particular fixation with people of color.

They ran the despicable ads accusing Ketanji Brown Jackson of being "more concerned about the well-being of

pedophiles than the safety" of children. Judicial Crisis Network spent \$1.5 million on ads attacking Justice Jackson during her confirmation. Again, that is the fake group with a fictitious name that actually is Concord Fund but purports to be something different.

Judicial Crisis Network also spent more than \$1 million on a smear campaign against Vanita Gupta and \$300,000 on a campaign attacking Dale Ho, both extremely qualified candidates of color.

JCN's president has written numerous op-eds calling nominees of color, like Judge Nancy Abudu on the Eleventh Circuit, the first Black woman ever on the Eleventh Circuit, "ideologues" and "extremists."

These groups have waged similar smear campaigns in other committees than Judiciary, with qualified nominees of color like Saule Omarova for the Department of the Treasury and Lisa Cook at the Federal Reserve getting the smear treatment.

Adeel Mangi is an eminently qualified nominee. He comes across with all the dignity and decorum of an Oxford don. He is as well-trained and intelligent as any candidate who has ever come before the Judicial Committee. He has been the subject of vicious, bad-faith attacks, and the attacks come from this billionaire-funded, rightwing apparatus.

It is a scheme. It is not just a smear; it is an op. It is a covert operation designed to prevent the Biden administration from confirming well-qualified, fairminded judges to our courts so that they can create a vacancy so that if they can get Donald Trump elected in November, they can then put another rightwing extremist who will do what the billionaires want onto the court.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with the senior Senator from Maine.

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

UNRWA

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, UNRWA is a completely irredeemable organization. Since October 7, we have seen how much Hamas has infiltrated UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinians. In fact, some have called UNRWA a front organization for Hamas.

UNRWA staff participated in the October 7 attacks. Some participated in the attacks directly. Some helped with logistics. One hostage alleges that her captor was an UNRWA teacher. Another UNRWA staffer was actually a commander who participated in an attack on a kibbutz that left 97 people dead and took 26 hostages.

Regrettably, this does not come as a surprise. Because of previous U.N. investigations into UNRWA, we knew this was true before the October 7 attacks. We knew that UNRWA was using

schools to store weapons and launch attacks on Israel. We knew that their textbooks preached hate toward Jews and Israel and glorified martyrdom.

I introduced this amendment because funding an organization like UNRWA that is so deeply embedded in Hamas is wrong. Our U.S. taxpayer dollars should not be going to fund an organization that is essentially a front for Hamas. This Chamber's ultimate goal should be to permanently defund UNRWA—defund it the way the Trump administration did.

I spoke with the Senator from Maine, and she and I have agreed that we will continue to fight to ensure that future appropriations to deny UNRWA access—she assured me that she will continue to fight against future appropriations, to deny UNRWA access to U.S. taxpayer dollars. This underlying bill does that for 1 year, and that is a start.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I very much appreciate the comments of the Senator from Nebraska. I agree with him that UNRWA cannot be the conduit for humanitarian aid. It is clear that it has been infiltrated by Hamas, and indeed Israeli intelligence indicates that specific employees—employees of UNRWA were involved in the brutal atrocities of October 7 when Hamas attacked Israel. In addition, it is estimated that many other employees of UNRWA are sympathetic to Hamas or affiliated with Hamas.

So American tax dollars should not be going through an organization that has been involved—some of its employees—in a terrorist attack, one of the worst terrorist attacks we have seen, a terrorist attack that resulted in the worst loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust. How could we possibly allow American tax dollars to be used by this organization?

Now, this is not to say there should not be aid. There are differing views on that issue. But we know there are other organizations within the U.N.—there is the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees organization. There is UNICEF. There is the World Food organization. There are many other organizations.

For me, Mr. President, what was most compelling is when I learned that Hamas had a major communications and command control center underneath UNRWA's headquarters, and there were additional Hamas organizations that had locations in the tunnels underneath UNRWA's schools. Now, tell me, how could UNRWA possibly not have known this was occurring? How could they not have seen the tunnels being built, the air-conditioners being brought in, the computers being installed, their electric rate going way up? It is just not conceivable that UNRWA was unaware of all of this.

As my friend from Nebraska has mentioned, we know that far too many of the schools UNRWA is running in Gaza teach hatred in their textbooks—

teach hatred not only of Israel but of Jews in general.

It is totally unacceptable that American tax dollars would go to this organization. There are alternatives. That is why, in the supplemental appropriations bill, which I know the Presiding Officer feels so deeply about, as do I—in that bill, we defunded UNRWA and we said that dollars from previous appropriations could not be used by UNRWA. In the bill that is incorporated and before us today—the State, Foreign Ops bill, which is part of the six-bill package—we also defund UNRWA, and we extended it beyond the end of this fiscal year. We extended it to March of 2025 to ensure there wasn't a gap and give us time.

I do pledge to my colleague from Nebraska to continue to work on this issue about which I feel so strongly. I will continue to work with him, and I very much appreciate the opportunity to engage in this colloquy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I am grateful for the senior Senator from Maine's commitment to defunding UNRWA and grateful as well for her pointing out that there are other ways to provide aid to Gaza.

I would also like to point out that when the Trump administration denied UNRWA funding a few years ago, the world did not come to an end. So I do believe, as the senior Senator from Maine pointed out, there are alternatives.

With her commitment, which I appreciate, for that reason, I will no longer seek a vote on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, first let me express my appreciation to the Senator from Nebraska.

I will ask unanimous consent that a story from the Wall Street Journal on this very issue be printed in the RECORD. I would note that this story estimates that approximately 10 percent of UNRWA's staff in Gaza has links to the Hamas militants.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

INTELLIGENCE REVEALS DETAILS OF U.N.

AGENCY STAFF'S LINKS TO OCT. 7 ATTACK

(By Carrie Keller-Lynn and David Luhnow)

TEL AVIV.—At least 12 employees of the U.N.'s Palestinian refugee agency had connections to Hamas's Oct. 7 attack on Israel and around 10% of all of its Gaza staff have ties to Islamist militant groups, according to intelligence reports reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Six United Nations Relief and Works Agency workers were part of the wave of Palestinian militants who killed 1,200 people in the deadliest assault on Jews since the Holocaust, according to the intelligence dossier. Two helped kidnap Israelis. Two others were tracked to sites where scores of Israeli civilians were shot and killed. Others coordinated logistics for the assault, including procuring weapons.

Of the 12 Unrwa employees with links to the attacks, seven were primary or secondary school teachers, including two math

teachers, two Arabic language teachers and one primary school teacher.

The information in the intelligence reports—based on what an official described as very sensitive signals intelligence as well as cellphone tracking data, interrogations of captured Hamas fighters and documents recovered from dead militants, among other things—were part of a briefing given by Israel to U.S. officials that led Washington and others to suspend aid to Unrwa.

Intelligence estimates shared with the U.S. conclude that around 1,200 of Unrwa's roughly 12,000 employees in Gaza have links to Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and about half have close relatives who belong to the Islamist militant groups. Both groups have been designated as terrorist organizations by the U.S. and others. Hamas has run Gaza since a 2007 coup.

"Unrwa's problem is not just 'a few bad apples' involved in the October 7 massacre," said a senior Israeli government official. "The institution as a whole is a haven for Hamas' radical ideology."

An Unrwa spokesperson on Monday declined to comment, saying an internal U.N. investigation into the agency was under way.

Two officials familiar with the intelligence said the Unrwa employees considered to have ties with militant groups were deemed to be "operatives," indicating they took active part in the organization's military or political framework. The report said 23% of Unrwa's male employees had ties to Hamas, a higher percentage than the average of 15% for adult males in Gaza, indicating a higher politicization of the agency than the population at large.

Nearly half of all Unrwa employees—an estimated 49%—also had close relatives who also had official ties to the militant groups, especially Hamas, the intelligence reports said.

In the aftermath of Oct. 7, as Israel has waged war against Hamas in Gaza, Unrwa has emerged as one of the loudest voices decrying the impact of the fierce fighting on Palestinians in the enclave, where authorities say more than 26,000 people have been killed. Unrwa says at least 152 of its own staff have been killed in the conflict.

The agency is also the main pillar of operations to move food, aid, medicine and other humanitarian supplies into Gaza.

The vast majority of Unrwa's 30,000 staff across the Middle East are Palestinian, and Israel and some in the U.S. have long accused it of nurturing anti-Israeli sentiment in crowded refugee camps that have been important recruiting grounds for militant groups, including Hamas.

The Trump administration suspended funding for Unrwa in 2018, saying the agency's mission was fundamentally misguided. The Biden administration renewed funding in 2021.

The Oct. 7 intelligence reports seen by the Journal identified an Unrwa Arabic teacher who the reports said was also a Hamas militant commander and took part in a terrorist attack on Kibbutz Be'eri, where 97 people were killed and about 26 people were kidnapped and taken as hostages to Gaza.

Another Unrwa employee, described in the dossier as an Unrwa social worker, played a role in absconding with the body of a dead Israeli soldier, which was taken to Gaza, the reports said. He also coordinated trucks and munitions distributions for Hamas before being killed.

A person familiar with the dossier said that after U.S. officials were briefed on the intelligence material, they alerted Unrwa, which put out a statement announcing the allegation that some of its employees were linked to the attacks and saying it had fired

the employees involved. It provided no details, and didn't say how many employees were involved.

On Sunday, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said he was personally horrified by the allegations.

Unrwa commissioner-general Philippe Lazzarini criticized Western nations for pausing aid at a time when Gaza is facing a humanitarian crisis as the war between Hamas and Israel rages. Guterres also implored nations to not suspend humanitarian aid.

It is "immensely irresponsible to sanction an agency and an entire community it serves because of allegations of criminal acts against some individuals," Lazzarini said.

Unrwa looks after more than 5 million Palestinians in densely-packed refugee neighborhoods across the Middle East, including the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. But its biggest operations are in Gaza, where it looks after an estimated 80% of the local population and runs hundreds of schools and scores of clinics.

Israel says it has documented deepening ties between Unrwa and Hamas since the militant group cemented its hold on Gaza in 2007. Unrwa has admitted to finding Hamas weapons stored in schools and Israel has repeatedly said Hamas tunnels run under and through Unrwa buildings as well as other civilian facilities. The former head of Unrwa's union in Gaza was fired in 2017 after Israel found out he had been elected to Hamas' top political leadership.

The dossier is the most detailed look yet at the widespread links between the Unrwa employees and militants. It offers telling details regarding the events of Oct. 7.

A math teacher belonging to Hamas was close enough to a female hostage in Gaza that he took a picture of her. Another teacher was carrying an antitank missile the night before the invasion.

One Unrwa employee set up an operations room for Palestinian Islamic Jihad on Oct. 8, the day after the attack. Three other employees, including another Arabic teacher at an Unrwa school, received a text from Hamas to arm themselves at a staging area close to the border the night before the attack. It was unclear whether they went.

A different elementary school teacher did cross into Israel and went to Reim, a district where a kibbutz, an army base and a music festival were attacked.

One of the intelligence reports seen by the Journal said a 13th Unrwa employee, who didn't have a discernible affiliation with a terror group, also entered Israel. Hundreds of Gazan civilians flooded across the border as part of the Hamas-led attack, Israel says.

Teachers make up nearly three-quarters of Unrwa's Gaza-based local staff. Unrwa schools, which use textbooks approved by the Palestinian Authority, have come under fire for using materials that allegedly glorify terrorists and promote hatred of Israel. Unrwa says it has taken steps to address problematic content, but a 2019 U.S. Government Accountability Office report said that measures haven't always been implemented.

Since Oct. 7, Hamas has stolen more than \$1 million worth of Unrwa supplies, including fuel and trucks, according to the intelligence report. The intelligence assessment alleges that Hamas operatives are so deeply enmeshed within the Unrwa aid-delivery enterprise as to coordinate transfers for the organization.

CORRECTIONS & AMPLIFICATIONS

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency, known as Unrwa, was incorrectly referred to as Unrwa in one instance in an earlier version of this article. (Corrected on Jan. 29).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

H.R. 2882

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, before I suggest the absence of a quorum, I do want to just briefly respond to some of the comments that were made by my distinguished colleague from Kentucky, Senator RAND PAUL, earlier.

The first is that he is correct that a lot of the increase in spending is on the mandatory entitlement side of the budget, but that is not what the Appropriations Committee handles. That is not under our jurisdiction.

The second point that I want to make is that in this six-bill package, the amount of spending in the non-defense discretionary area is actually below last year. It is 1.7 percent below last year. When you factor in inflation, that means there are real cuts that these Agencies and programs are going to be experiencing. There is a 3.3-percent increase for defense, but that, too, is below the inflation rate. When you look at the global threats our combatant Commanders have identified, we should be spending more for defense than that.

The final point I will make is that we have adhered to the Fiscal Responsibility Act caps on spending in this bill, the final six-bill package, and the overall bills we have brought forth.

So we have also accommodated and followed the agreement that was negotiated between the Speaker of the House and the Democratic leader of the Senate. So these bills are not big spending bills that are wildly out of scope. They are carefully drafted, they are conservative, and they meet the requirements of the FRA and the top line established by the leaders.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Colorado.

H.R. 2882

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I know my time might be short tonight because we finally have come, I guess, to an agreement about a vote, but I wanted to come tonight to the floor to talk about why I am voting against this bill.

I am going to vote against this bill because the House has sent it over here without funding in it to support Ukraine, and I think that is shameful. I think that is a complete abdication of the House's responsibility to our own national security and to democracy around the world.

It is common to come out here and criticize the U.S. Senate. I have done it many times. But I was grateful to be part of the Senate when we had about a 6-month negotiation about whether

or not to pass what was called the supplemental, which was a budget bill to, among other things, fund Ukraine. There was money in that for Ukraine. There was money in that for Taiwan. There was money in that for Israel. There was humanitarian aid in there as part of that deal as well.

There was a lot of disagreement about a lot of things, but over a 6-month period, we actually finally came to a bipartisan agreement and got 70 votes. You almost never get 70 votes for anything in this place unless it is easy.

You almost never get 70 votes for anything in this place that is hard. Yet we were able to get 70 votes. We were able to put together a coalition of Democrats and Republicans to send a message to the House that funding Ukraine was very important and that the U.S. Senate, despite our disagreements over many, many things, we are united in the idea that we have an obligation to fulfill here on behalf of our national security, on behalf of democracy, on behalf of the fight that Ukraine has led.

We had to overcome, to be sure, isolationist voices—mostly in the Republican Party—during that debate. There are people making arguments from that isolationist wing of the Republican Party that we heard before World War I, that we heard before World War II. It is not an unknown tradition in American history that people would come out and make those arguments. It is such a known tradition that the people who are advancing those arguments are calling themselves by the same name of some of the folks who were the most ardent isolationists before World War II. America Firsters is what they called themselves back then, and that is what they are calling themselves again.

You would have thought they would have learned history's lesson based on the way history shone on the last version of the American Firsters. They were trying to keep us out of World War II. When my mom was being born in 1938 in Warsaw, Poland—a Polish Jew—the country was completely run over or was about to be run over by the Nazis. But all these years later, you hear the same people, the same wing of the same party making the same arguments once again, and the arguments just don't make any sense.

One of the ones that I think is hardest to understand is this argument that we can't simultaneously support Ukraine—we, the United States of America, cannot simultaneously support Ukraine and prepare for a possible conflict with China, which I am sure nobody here would wish. I certainly don't wish for that conflict. But it is more than hypothetical; it is possible that someday we might be in conflict. But the idea that we would stop supporting Ukraine in an actual conflict against tyranny, in an actual conflict against fascism, in the hope that we would somehow be better prepared for later makes absolutely no sense.

Then when you look at the contents of the bills themselves, the bills that we passed as part of the supplemental, and you see the money that is being spent all across America, in 40 States, in 70 cities—our industrial production for our military is up 20 percent since Russia invaded Ukraine because we were not investing in our production before that happened. That was a threat to our national security. And we are doing it now all over this country, all over the United States. In big cities and little cities, in rural communities and urban communities, that is what we are doing. We are retooling our defense complex.

If I accept, if I grant the isolationist wing's view of this, what I would say is that even based on your own arguments, you should be for these bills because these bills are making the United States stronger; they are refreshing our industrial base, our military base; and they are making us more prepared not just for what is going on in Russia today but for what could go on in China.

I mean, it is utterly self-explanatory, and that is why I think it is actually an excuse for not engaging. I think it is an isolationist impulsive tendency that we have seen before. We saw it when the United States shamefully didn't get into World War II until years after we should have, and we are seeing it again here. But this is a different case than that because we are not talking about American troops; we are just talking about American support.

So we are talking about retooling our industrial base. We are talking about creating jobs here in the United States. We are talking about spending the vast majority of money that we authorized in that bill in the United States of America—not in Ukraine but here.

I suppose it would be one thing if Ukraine hadn't earned our support, but on top of everything else, they have. In the last 2 years since they were invaded—an invasion they did not ask for—they have done everything the world could have asked of them—more than the world could have asked of them.

You know, it is another point here, too, that we are not sending them our fanciest equipment either. We are sending them older equipment that is a lot better than the Soviet-age equipment they had. But it is allowing us to have the newest versions of this. We are sending older versions of that equipment to Ukraine, but they have used it magnificently. I am on the Intelligence Committee, and the intelligence community is telling us that the Ukrainian people have fought magnificently.

I have heard some of the isolationists on the other side of the aisle say: Well, we don't know where the money is being spent, and therefore we shouldn't spend any more money. I think it is safe to say that there is no enterprise in the world—I choose my words carefully—there is no enterprise in the world that has a better set of receipts

than the men and women who have been fighting on the Ukrainian front-line. I challenge any of those people to show me where they said that Ukraine was going to throw Putin off half the territory he took from them, but they have; that they would be able to attack his so-called, you know, impregnable supersonic missiles, but they have. The Ukrainian people don't even have a navy, really. I don't mean any offense, but it is true. They don't really have a navy, and yet they have been able to keep Putin out of the Black Sea. That has meant that wheat has been able to be transported from Ukraine all over the world so people can eat. These fighters have the receipts. It is in the success they have had.

It is important to understand that this isn't just a fight for Ukraine, which they have fought magnificently. It is a fight for the West. It is a fight for NATO. It is a fight for democracy itself.

They didn't ask for this fight. President Zelenskyy never asked for this fight. Three years ago, he was on a television program, and then he ran for President, and he got elected because there was such concern about corruption in the country. They said: You know what, we are going to put a television guy in charge, and maybe he will do better.

Then Putin invaded his country, thinking that he was going to be able to decapitate the regime in 72 hours, thinking that Zelenskyy was going to run, thinking that they wouldn't stand up to his invasion—the first invasion since we settled all this stuff at the end of World War II with global order and commitment to the rule of law.

My mom is still alive, my mom whom I mentioned earlier. Born in 1938, she is still alive. She can't believe she has lived long enough to see another land war break out in Europe. I suppose, seen from a different way, it is an incredible testament to the institutions that have been built and the alliances that have been built that it has been so long since we have had somebody with the audacity to do what Putin has done. But thank God he ran into the Ukrainians—for all of us—because we don't have to send our people there, and NATO does not have to send their people there.

They are willing to fight and die for democracy, and they are asking us to support them—not with our people but with our military support and with a little bit of money.

As I mentioned earlier, we passed a bill with 72 votes over here to fund the effort in Ukraine, and the House of Representatives has completely ignored it. That same isolationist wing that is over here—that is now over there in the House of Representatives is declining to fulfill our responsibilities to the rest of the world, and they have left town today without having supported Ukraine.

I want to say, by the way, as I stand here that there has been an incident in

Moscow today or outside of Moscow, and I am very sorry for the theatergoers who are there who lost their lives—further illustration of how complicated this world is.

But let me tell you something: There is nobody more cheerful about the House of Representatives' failure to pass the Senate bill than Vladimir Putin. He reads our newspapers. He reads our social media. He manipulates our social media. He knows what is at stake, and the Ukrainians know what is at stake.

This is not fanciful, the questions that are at risk here. Look what happened just in the last few weeks in Russia. Vladimir Putin got reelected by something over 95 percent of the vote in Moscow, and of course it was completely manipulated, and he went out and said: This is an endorsement for my war. This fraudulent election is an endorsement of my war.

Look what happened in Hong Kong last weekend, where the Chinese Communist Party from Beijing has completely thrown out the rule book in Hong Kong, which has a long tradition of commitment to the rule of law, free enterprise, a place where you can predictably run a business or have a newspaper, have opposition. This weekend, they sucked out the last embers that were glowing there of the right to be able to do that stuff. So now you can get a life in prison—maybe even worse than a life in prison—in Hong Kong if you defy what Beijing says, just like Alexei Navalny, the leading opposition figure in Russia, who was put in prison by Putin and now, you know, died of natural causes in his early forties because Putin killed him while—while—Members of this Congress were at Munich during the Security Conference. He knew exactly what the message was he was sending: I care so little about your opinion of this that I am going to kill Alexei Navalny while you are all there.

So I am going to come to an end because I can tell people need to move on to the next thing, but let me just say that, contrary to what I have heard in the debate around here, the Ukrainians have succeeded beyond anybody's wildest dreams.

The evidence is so clear that that is true. Even the most recent town that was defeated, which was a smoldering ruin by the time the Russians got there—Avdiivka—it took the Russians 6 months and 30,000 troops to get that village. And the alliances held otherwise, notwithstanding the fact that they are out of bullets, notwithstanding the fact that they are out of artillery. At this point, in some ways they are kind of fighting with their bare hands, which is how they started in this war.

We have a responsibility here that is not a service to Ukraine. This is a service to our national security. This is a service to our kids and to our grandkids. This is a service that is the same as the one that was provided by

the people who, before World War II, were able to overcome the "America First" crowd back then so that America could play its unique role in the world. And this is a service to anybody on planet Earth who cares about freedom, who cares about the ability to have a real debate and a real discussion, who cares about whether there is actually a rule of law in place so might doesn't make right; so that you can open a small business in your village on a corner and know that a gang isn't going to come and steal your money; so that you know that your parents and grandparents aren't going to be locked up with the key thrown away just because they had a different point of view than the ruler of the country.

In human history, it is much more common to see a situation where might makes right than it is for people to exercise those freedoms, and the Ukrainians know that from the guys who are on the frontlines to President Zelenskyy and back. That is why they are fighting so hard for this freedom.

That is why we need to pay attention when Putin takes out his leading opposition. That is why we need to understand the implications for us when China sweeps into Hong Kong and rips away people's freedoms and people's rights in front of the entire world. That is what happens when they shut down opposition newspapers. This is something we should be able to agree on without respect to our political party.

I worry a lot about what is going to happen over the next 2 weeks, because there are people out there who are not telling the truth about what the battle has been in Ukraine. There are people out there—amazingly, to me—who think the United States can't support Ukraine effectively and prepare for what might be coming down the pike. There are people who don't believe that our military needs to be retooled. I am really worried in this moment that crossing our fingers and hoping for the best is not a recipe for a good outcome here. That is why I believe that it was critical for us to try to force, in this debate, on this bill, the inclusion of Ukraine funding, and I have said that all the way along.

The first funding bill that came over here 6 months ago, I threatened to shut the government down over that bill because it didn't include Ukraine funding. A deal had been cut behind closed doors, between the then-Speaker of the House and others in the House, to allow a bill to come forward without Ukraine funding, and I said to my colleagues here: We have no plan to fund Ukraine.

We had no plan to fund Ukraine, and as a result of that threat, we were able to get commitments from the leaders of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party here that we keep working on it, and we keep working on it.

Several months later, we had this same kind of moment, and we were able to get the same kind of commit-

ment, and because we all worked together on this, notwithstanding the political divisions that exists in our country, we were able to get to that 72-person vote. We were able to show Putin that we were going to stand up against him here—against him here. And, unlike some people here, he knows exactly how things are going on the Ukrainian battlefield. He knows he has got real problems on the Ukrainian battlefield because it took 30,000 people to succeed at the last village that he was able to secure. He knows how this nation of "MacGyvers" has shown up time and time and time again to figure out how to take him on with their fists or with drones or with our help.

But I am sorry to say this, Mr. President. I think it is true that the battlefield that he is trying to succeed on is the battlefield of the U.S. Congress. He thinks he is going to win on this battlefield. He is trying to count on our dysfunction, our division, our petty disagreements, and the lack of understanding about what is at stake here from the historical point of view or from democracy's point of view. With the message that we want to send to our allies and to our foes around the world tonight, he is going to be able to sleep a little better because the House failed to do it.

So I am not here to say that I am going to shut the government down. There is nothing I can do at this point to bring the House of Representatives back to Washington, DC. That is not possible. There wouldn't be any benefit to doing it.

I am going to vote against this bill because it doesn't include the Ukraine funding. And I would say to my colleagues who are here, every single one of whom supported the Ukraine funding when it came through the Senate, that we have got our work cut out for us over the next 2 weeks to make sure that we persuade the people in the House of Representatives that there is no more time left; that the Ukrainians, as I said, are out of bullets, out of ammo, and out of time. And we are out of time too. The whole world is watching.

I don't know the Speaker, but I would be very surprised if he wants to go down in history as the person or the politician who lost Ukraine—who lost Ukraine—because he had to hold on to his job, or who lost Ukraine because there were people in his party who couldn't resist the celebrity benefit of going out and raising money on crazy politics that doesn't recognize the stakes for what they are.

We were able to close over that here in the Senate, and I believe that the House is going to have to do that as well. And we have got to do everything we can to make sure we reach that conclusion, because the consequence for our Nation's reputation will be as severe as anything that we have ever certainly faced in the last decades around here.

Usually, I would end by saying I am confident. What I am confident in is

that there are people of goodwill in this body who have worked together to get this done and who will continue to work together to make sure the United States of America stands up for democracy, stands up for NATO, stands up for our responsibilities to our children and grandchildren and our responsibilities to this world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, I want to thank my colleague from Colorado. He has been steadfast in his support of the Ukrainian effort, and it makes a difference. I think we all have to speak out with what we are facing. We should have appropriated the money long ago to stand behind the people of Ukraine. And the fact that they are now in a moment of history where their fate may be decided really underlines the importance of the statements of this Senator.

So while this bill we are going to be voting on this evening covers so many areas, it still leaves a terrible gap, not only in our support for Ukraine but also for the humanitarian assistance which was part of our efforts.

When we read of the terrible humanitarian tragedy in Gaza and other places, we realize the United States has to help provide water, food, medicine, and basic supplies for them to survive, just as we need to help the people of Ukraine fight this effort.

Let me just add, parenthetically, a point of personal pride: "60 Minutes," in a show last week, highlighted Lithuania in the Baltics and how this small country of 3 million people has become a haven for political dissidents from Russia and other places. It is with some risk that they would assume this responsibility, but they are part of a commitment—this small nation—to democracy.

The United States needs to make that same commitment and put our money where our values are. Your speech this evening highlighted that, and I thank you for your leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that, at 6:15 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Schydlower nomination and vote on the confirmation of the nomination without further intervening action or debate and with all the previous provisions remaining in effect.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, over the last several days and weeks, I have heard a lot of discussion from some of my colleagues here in the Senate and in the House of Representatives about what they consider to be inappropriate congressionally directed spending projects. The majority of those projects appear to be objectionable simply because the organization involved provides services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans.

First, let me say that all of the CDS projects identified in the Labor-HHS-Education bill were in the Senate bill that was reported out of the Appropriations Committee last summer by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 26 to 2.

Second, and more importantly, I am deeply concerned about why these projects are being singled out. They are being singled out and discriminated against because they serve a particular group of Americans, a group of Americans whom every single one of us in this Chamber represents. We all have gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender constituents, and just like any other group of constituents, they are deserving of getting healthcare, mental health care, affordable housing, and a little help to lead a successful life.

However, the bullying campaign against organizations that help people who are just living their true, authentic lives is just wrong. For example, one project singled out provides services for LGBTQ seniors as part of a housing project. The project is to help low-income seniors age in place. The Labor-HHS-Education bill includes multiple CDS projects that help our seniors get the care and housing they need as they age, but this is the only one that has been on a list as being somehow objectionable.

Another is a federally qualified community health center—basically, one of our community health centers that provides services for individuals struggling with substance use disorder. That organization has noticed an increased need among members of the LGBTQ community and noted in their CDS request that that is a population that they serve and who needs service. For this, the CDS project was again, by some of my colleagues, identified as somehow controversial.

In fact, several of the projects that have been identified as problematic are to provide mental health services to people in the LGBTQ community, including LGBTQ youth. LGBTQ kids are just like any other kids. They have stressors in life. They face depression, anxiety, and other challenges, and they need help navigating it. Some of this criticism has been blatant misinformation, including one in my own home State. An organization in Wisconsin has, for a long period of time, helped kids who experience homelessness get help to get back on their feet with employment help, mental health and counseling, with finding housing, and

more. I was proud to secure funding for a very specific and narrow program of theirs that provides mental health support and counseling for kids experiencing homelessness. This would be for all kids. In fact, the organization does such great work that it has received Federal funding for years, including under the Trump administration, but since the organization has a program—which will get exactly zero dollars of this Federal funding—to help LGBTQ kids, it was ruthlessly attacked and smeared.

These attacks do not live in a vacuum, and they have real-world consequences. When this body says to LGBTQ community members that they are not worthy of our help, what kind of message do you think that sends?

Also, considering that we agree that the country is facing a mental health crisis, why would we be barring resources from helping a certain group of people, particularly a group that is acutely feeling the mental health crisis?

A recent survey of LGBTQ youth revealed that nearly half—nearly half—of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in this past year. Nearly one in four LGBTQ youth attempted suicide, and nearly three in four reported persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness, but almost 60 percent of LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care in the past year were not able to access it. These statistics are all young people—someone's child, sibling, neighbor, student, or classmate—and maybe one or more will occupy these seats, working collaboratively with colleagues to serve their States and their country.

I hope we can pause to consider that when we single out a group of Americans, it has a real impact. Our work and our words here matter, and I hope we can rise above the bullying and can, as we have for months, work across the aisle to deliver for all of our constituents.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of amendment No. 1725, which will be called up later. My amendment is with Senator CRAPO of Idaho, my dear friend. I want to speak a little bit about the EVs—electric vehicles—and the tailpipe emissions rule that has been handed down.

The administration's electric vehicle policy has been held completely captive by the activist environmental groups and the radical advisers in the White House. I can't put it any other way than that.

First, they tried to bribe Americans to buy EVs by giving them \$7,500, and now they are trying to mandate that we all must buy them after 2032—because they won't be produced anymore. So they have changed the rules. They basically tried to bribe them and still couldn't move them as quickly as they wanted to. Then, on top of that, they

are saying that now we are going to pass a law to where you can't have an option of buying another type of vehicle for transportation.

That is just not the American way. It is not the way we were raised. It is not the way this country grew. Transportation is the foundation of our economy. If you think about it, never in the history of our country have we had to depend on other foreign supply chains—and especially unreliable foreign supply chains—for our transportation: our cars, our trains, our planes, and everything in between. We have been able to do it right here, and now we have thrown everything onto the backs of foreign supply chains because we don't have the critical minerals. We don't basically manufacture, and we don't produce them. We don't do anything with them, and we are trying to get up to speed.

The Inflation Reduction Act was and always will be an American energy security and a manufacturing bill. When I negotiated and started negotiating after the BBB was killed and then the war started in Ukraine, there was one moving factor that urged me to do that internally more than anything else. We couldn't help our allies—those who fought and died with us who needed our help now—and Putin weaponized energy. He weaponized his gas and his oil reserves that went into Europe, and here we were not able to help them at all. I said we had better do something. That is when we started negotiating and working on some way that we could be energy independent.

I will tell the Presiding Officer that, for the first time in 40 years, the United States of America is producing more energy today than ever in the history of this country. We are producing more energy than any other country in the world, and we should be proud of that, but my friends in the White House won't speak about it. All they want to tell you about is the environmental bill. It is the greatest environmental bill. We are producing more energy from wind and solar than ever before. We are doing everything, and they can't accept an all-energy policy, and it is unbelievable. We are replacing some of the dirtiest fuels in the world because of what we are producing—cleaner than anywhere else in the world. Venezuela—we let them back into the market. They wanted more oil in the market. OK. They let Venezuela back in. They produce oil with 80 percent more pollutants—more emissions—than what we ever have.

So, anyway, the Inflation Reduction Act, like I have said before, was an American energy security and domestic energy bill. That is it. Can we have energy security, and can we basically have manufacturing coming back that should have never left, but we allowed it to leave? Let's bring it back so that we don't have to rely on unreliable foreign partners, if you will, foreign entities.

The White House wanted money for EVs. I wanted domestic manufacturing

and a secure supply chain. We were at a standstill, and we couldn't move any further. So we had to compromise, and the compromise was pretty simple. The administration would only get money to incentivize people to buy an EV if we were making and sourcing these ingredients that we needed—the critical minerals—from America or a reliable supply chain, and that supply chain was countries that we already had free-trade agreements with.

Let me make sure you understand. Our main objective for this bill, the IRA, was this: We will not be doing business with foreign countries of concern, and those foreign countries were four, mainly: China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. There is no way we should be depending on anything coming from them—that don't have our values—because they will use it as a wedge.

But the administration has completely liberalized and, in fact, broken the law that we agreed to and actually passed, and we have been having this continuous back-and-forth. I cannot believe, dealing in good faith, that we ended up with what we ended up with. We put strict but achievable standards in the IRA to ensure that China and other nations that don't share our values don't benefit off the backs of the American taxpayers and that we don't willingly give Xi Jinping, the President of China, a geopolitical weapon to use against us. I can guarantee, when he watched Putin weaponize energy, he surely was going to basically use the weaponization of all the critical minerals that we are using and all the things that we depend on from China—that he would have done the same thing with.

I remember waiting in long gas lines in 1974 to buy gasoline to go to work. I can remember those days vividly. I couldn't believe that the United States of America had gotten itself into that mess, but we did, but we got ourselves out of it too. Do you think China is not going to be using that to their advantage to bring us to our knees? Well, I am not going to be waiting in line for a battery to come from China, sir. Sorry.

But last year, the administration proposed cutting in half the IRA's requirements. This is how desperate they are to, basically, disregard the bill that we all agreed on in good faith and signed with the purpose of bringing manufacturing back. But with their ambition to get more EVs out the door quicker than ever before, they cut everything in half.

This is exactly what is written in the bill. This is it. The language is plain. By 2023, you should have 40 percent of the minerals that must be extracted or processed in the United States or free trade agreement countries or recycled in North America—40 percent.

Every year it went up so we would be more and more dependent on America, building up and building, basically, our ability to manufacture. This is exactly what they did.

Do you think it is a coincidence they cut everything in half from 40 percent? Now, this is what they admitted. This is what they are working with. This is their—they call them their new rules they have coming out, according to the Treasurer's proposed rules. I will get into why they call them proposed rules too.

This is what we intended to be self-sufficient. This is exactly what they intended to meet their political agenda to get these out the door quicker, cut everything in half.

The IRA set deadlines. Like I said before, the deadlines were 2023, 2024, to completely remove the countries from the critical minerals and battery manufacturing. We wrote language in the bill. If you read the IRA bill, it is written in there that we cannot do business with China, Russia, Iran, or North Korea. That was the whole purpose. If you are going to go down this path, let's make sure we get something back for the American taxpayers but also for American manufacturing.

But now the IRS is proposing “temporary” exemptions through at least the end of 2026. When have you heard of temporary rules that would go through—they are supposed to be, basically, done by December 31, 2024. They put in their rules 2026 or later—or later.

That is another 3 years of China and other foreign nations reaching deeper into and controlling more of our electric vehicle battery supply chains. The longer we allow this to happen, the longer we allow this to happen by, basically, pushing our American energy and technologies quicker, then basically all we are doing is supporting China and the grip they have on us.

Worse yet, the IRS under this administration seems to have adopted a new legal strategy to avoid any accountability from the courts or Congress. Now, this is the real innovative, creative way they are thinking.

By you issuing “proposed rules” like this and never finalizing them, the IRS can break the law—legally break the law—implement it in any way they wish it was passed. I have said this from day one: You are implementing a piece of legislation you never passed. I tell the White House that every day: You didn't pass this. The law we passed tells you exactly what to do. You are trying to implement something that you would like to do, but you never did.

And they do it with proposed rules because they think that basically protects them from any litigation.

That is a breach of everything that we agreed, a breach of everything that we agreed to in good faith and not the way the government in this great country of ours should ever, ever operate.

Let me be clear, there is no question that the IRA will be one of the most transformative bills in the way it was written. It is an all-of-the-above. It was an all-purpose bill. It was a balance between the energy that we need today,

the fossil fuels, that we are going to do them cleaner, and the technology of the energy we want in the future. That is exactly what the bill was supposed to do. It was supposed to bring back manufacturing that we let go, basically, with the NAFTA agreement—North American Free Trade Agreement—way back when, in the 1980s and 1990s, and then now with what we are dealing with, with bringing China and the WTO in the late 1990s, early 2000s. We have allowed things to leave our country. We should have never allowed the manufacturing base to ever leave.

Let's be clear, there is no question that the IRA will go down as one of the most transformational bills that we have ever passed. It is bringing opportunity. It surely is. It is bringing opportunity in areas that got left behind.

Electric vehicle and battery makers announced \$52 billion in investments in North American supply chains before the IRS even started loosening the rules. They want to come back to America. They want to build. But as long as you basically allow the foreign entities of concern—the Chinas of the world—to continue to flood the market with cheaper prices, our people will never be able to have a foothold as far as manufacturing in the United States. That is the problem.

We knew it would take a couple of years for us to get up to speed, but we will never get up to speed as long as they can still buy cheaper products somewhere else.

Numbers like this show that breaking the law doesn't get us more investment; it just makes the costs go up for every American taxpayer and sends our tax dollars overseas. We are trying to bring that manufacturing back and keep those dollars here, not in China or Russia.

But even bribing Americans with a liberalized, unlawful \$7,500 wasn't good enough for the administration because it doesn't meet their political timetable to eliminate gas-powered vehicles. If they had a good enough product—a product in America—the market usually will react. The market will reject or accept. They won't do it on your timetable. But when you have the government behind you, pushing you in a way to force the options you may have, that is not how we built the country that we have. It is not how we built this capitalist mentality or this entrepreneurship. It is just not who we are.

The EPA piled on by proposing these new tailpipe rules that force automakers to limit consumer choice and force Americans to buy EVs full of Chinese parts. That is exactly what is happening now.

The EPA wants more than two-thirds of the new cars to be electric by 2032, when there is only 8 percent of them that are electric today. They can't meet that goal unless it is buying overseas, which is what we tried to stop. Their intention is to continue to flood the market any way they possibly can

for their own political agenda by their extreme environmental climates at the destruction, basically, of our own jobs, our own economy.

The only way it would be possible to get anywhere close, like I said before, is to do business with other foreign countries, because China has a lock on most of all the markets—anodes, cathodes, 80 percent of that; basically, rare-earth minerals, about 60 to 80 percent of that. They have been doing this for quite a while. We want to get back up to speed, but we can't do it by continuing to support them.

Xi Jinping is already showing that he will use critical minerals as leverage to put Americans and the free world at risk by directing the Chinese Government to implement new restrictions on exports of several critical minerals. Now he really starts putting the choke on us. He sees that we have legislation that is going to force us to buy a product that he has control over.

Can you imagine us getting ourselves into a jam where we are going to be dependent upon China for their critical minerals and the battery components that we need to run the vehicles that we decide to change our transportation mode to before we are ready to do it ourselves? I would expect that from Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party, but I can't believe that we would be dumb enough to play into their hands. It is unbelievable. There is nobody who you can talk to in the industry who doesn't understand exactly what I am saying.

I never could have expected our own government to give up so easily and continue to let foreign—foreign—nations control our Nation's transportation. You know, I even said this to—they told me about all the charging stations that we have to spend billions and billions of dollars on, the Federal Government, the Federal taxpayers. I do not remember when Henry Ford, basically, was able to have the production of the Model T and bring it into mass production where the average person could buy it, that we said: Oh, oh, we have to go out and start building filling stations. I don't think the Federal Government built filling stations to meet the demands of the market. The market did it, and the market will do it again.

They say: Oh, no, we can't do that. We can't take a chance on the market, so let's go ahead and just commit billions and billions of dollars of taxpayers' money to do what the market has always done for America.

I will do everything in my power to hold this administration accountable to the deal we made—and intended to deal; everybody knew about it—to protect America's taxpayers and to secure our energy supply chains.

If we are going to do it, let's do it and benefit from it. Let's build America back. Let's do what we do best. Let's innovate and create. Let's believe in the market and allow the market, basically, to force us to work as it has always worked for America.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment that is coming up because I can tell you one thing: We have got to send a signal that this country is able to take care of itself; we are able to compete for ourself; and we should not depend on unreliable foreign supply chains for the most critical building blocks of our country.

Transportation basically keeps the lights on. It keeps food on your table. It does everything necessary for us to live a quality of life in this country. To allow and give it up because we are not in control of our transportation mode is absolutely criminal.

With that, I would say I hope all of my colleagues will look at this amendment very seriously and see how important it is for us to maintain this tremendous independence this country has always had.

With that, I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Schydlower nomination.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination of Leon Schydlower, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas.

NOMINATION OF LEON SCHYDLOWER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Judge Leon Schydlower to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas.

Born in Long Beach, CA, Judge Schydlower received his B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin and his J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law. After completing law school, Judge Schydlower began his legal career in the U.S. Navy, first as an assistant staff judge advocate, then as a military prosecutor. Thereafter, he joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Hawaii as a special assistant U.S. attorney, where he handled Federal law enforcement cases at the trial and appellate levels.

After leaving government service, Judge Schydlower practiced commercial litigation and medical malpractice defense at Kemp Smith, P.C. He later operated his own firm, where he handled Federal criminal defense cases and various business litigation matters. In 2015, Judge Schydlower was appointed to serve as a U.S. magistrate judge for the same district to which he is nominated. On the bench, he has issued more than 34,000 orders, reports and recommendations, opinions, and orders on motions.

The American Bar Association has unanimously rated Judge Schydlower "well qualified" to serve on the district court, and he has the strong support of his home State Senators, Mr. CORNYN and Mr. CRUZ.