

the administration's latest attempt to appease Democrats' radical base is a ban on new coal leasing in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and Montana.

This region is responsible for producing nearly half of the Nation's coal. Last year alone, the basin created more than 250 million tons of coal and employs more than 4,000 people. Shutting off development will result in lost jobs and millions of dollars of lost revenue for Montana and Wyoming.

The sting of the administration's War on Coal is one Kentuckians know all too well. And working families across the country are already struggling with persistent inflation. Energy prices alone have risen more than 40 percent since President Biden took office.

But Washington Democrats' radicalism may have finally stretched their own party to a breaking point. In fact, the Biden administration's war on affordable, reliable American energy has proven so radically harmful to consumers, workers, and our global competitiveness that it is facing bipartisan opposition right here in the Senate.

Just yesterday, a bipartisan majority passed Senator CRUZ's resolution disapproving of the Department of Energy's new rule to effectively ban affordable natural gas home furnaces.

This rule would significantly increase the existing efficiency standard and effectively ban the sale of more affordable home heating furnaces that don't meet it. By one estimate, this rule will heap as much as \$4 billion in new costs onto consumers who already can't afford the high cost of the Biden economy.

The American people have suffered enough, from Bidenomics to the Green New Deal. I am glad a majority of the Senate agrees it is time to slam the brakes on the administration's assault on gas appliances. And I am thankful to my colleague Senator CRUZ for bringing attention to this madness.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Angela M. Martinez, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 8369

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, the State of Israel is facing the deadliest threat to its existence in a generation.

To its south, Israel is waging a war of survival against Hamas terrorists, who slaughtered 1,200 Israelis and abducted more than 250 men, women, and children. To its north, Hezbollah—the most armed terrorist organization in the world—is menacing Israeli towns and forcing tens of thousands to flee their homes. Just last month, Iran launched more than 300 ballistic missiles and attack drones at Israel—for the first time attacking the Jewish State from Iranian territory. Outlaw rebels and brigands in Yemen are also firing missiles and drones at Israeli and allied shipping, to include U.S. naval vessels.

As Israel is under siege at home, it is also under diplomatic assault abroad from Hamas's proxies at the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and even American college campuses.

Joe Biden's allies on Capitol Hill have grown increasingly hostile as well. The majority leader and the former Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI, called for the removal of Binyamin Netanyahu from power. The majority leader said that Israel needs new elections. I think New York may need new elections.

Senator BERNIE SANDERS said we should not send "another nickel for Netanyahu," while Congresswoman ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ supports a bill that would strip the tax-exempt status of pro-Israel charities.

That is bad enough, but, unfortunately, instead of backing our Israeli friends to the hilt in this moment of maximum danger, the Biden administration has sanctioned Israelis, condemned its military, and second-guessed it, while trying to undermine its democratically elected leader.

Two weeks ago, Joe Biden went a step further, halting the shipment of bombs and precision-guided bomb kits that Israel needs to limit civilian casualties and destroy Hamas strongholds inside of Rafah and, for that matter, to free hostages, including American citizens.

The President also announced that he will withhold additional offensive weapons to Israel if Israel targets Hamas in Rafah, as if there were much difference between offensive and defensive weapons when Israel is surrounded on all sides by mortal enemies.

Joe Biden is instituting a de facto arms embargo on Israel that will save Hamas. The reason appears to be simple: He wants to appease a small minority of pro-Hamas voters in his own party in critical swing States he believes are necessary for his reelection.

That is why I have partnered with Congressman KEN CALVERT to pass the Israel Security Assistance Support Act, which would reverse Joe Biden's arms embargo on our ally. This legislation simply requires the prompt delivery of all weapons shipments approved by Congress. It also withholds pay from any Department of State or Defense bureaucrat who withholds vital military aid from Israel.

Earlier last week, the House did its part and passed the Israel Security Assistance Support Act with a bipartisan majority that included over a dozen Democrats. Now it is the Senate's turn.

Therefore, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 398, H.R. 8369. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. In my capacity as Senator from Vermont, I object.

Mr. COTTON. I regret that the Democrats will not allow this bill to come up for a vote, which, again, would simply ensure that aid that Congress has approved is delivered promptly to Israel in the middle of a shooting war of survival—a bill that, I would remind everyone, passed the House of Representatives with a bipartisan majority.

The time is now to reverse Joe Biden's de facto arms embargo on Israel.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

#### STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last month, President Biden announced yet another student loan giveaway. Among other things, this latest scheme would waive accrued and capitalized interest for certain borrowers and, staggeringly, provide significant loan forgiveness for three-quarters of a million borrowers with an average household income—get this—of \$312,976.

That is right. President Biden's latest reckless expenditure of taxpayer dollars would go, in part, to providing loan forgiveness to three-quarters of a million borrowers with an average household income above \$300,000.

All told, the President's latest student loan giveaway will cost nearly \$150 billion. That is on top of the \$475 billion in loan forgiveness the President announced last summer.

That scheme, which the administration dubbed the Saving on a Valuable Education Plan, will implement de facto loan forgiveness on a massive scale by creating a system in which the majority of future Federal borrowers will never fully repay their student loans.

The Department of Education estimated that borrowers with only undergraduate debt enrolled in the SAVE Program can, on average, expect to pay back just \$6,121 for each \$10,000 that they borrow. That amounts to the Federal Government taking on, on average, almost 40 percent of the cost of these borrowers' student loans.

There are so many problems with the President's plan it is difficult to even know where to begin.

First, there is the staggering cost of these and other Biden administration student loan programs. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget,

where the President's own Treasury Secretary used to sit on the board, had this to say:

Including the Biden administration's new student debt cancellation plan, we estimate all recent student debt cancellation policies will cost a combined \$870 billion to \$1.4 trillion. That's more than all federal spending on higher education over the nation's entire history.

That, again, is a quote from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Let me just repeat that last line:

That's more than all federal spending on higher education over the nation's entire history.

And "the vast majority of this debt cancellation," the committee goes on, "was put in place through executive actions under President Biden."

So the staggering cost of President Biden's giveaways is one major problem, especially when you consider another major problem, which is that the President's giveaways will do nothing to fix the actual problem, which is the cost of higher education. In fact, they could very well make things worse.

For one, there is reason to fear that his student loan giveaways could actually encourage colleges to raise their prices. And, of course, the President's giveaways will do nothing to encourage students to only borrow what they can afford. Indeed, there is a good chance students will increase their borrowing as a result of the President's plans.

President Biden's student loan schemes will cost a massive amount of money, while doing nothing to solve higher education costs.

But the problems don't end there. To start with, there is the question of whether or not what the President is doing is even lawful. Last summer, the Supreme Court struck down the President's original student loan forgiveness plan because the President lacked the statutory authority to forgive student loans, and there is reason to wonder whether his SAVE Plan or these latest measures could be struck down in the courts as well.

Of course, on top of all of these issues, there is also the fundamental issue, and that is the unfairness of asking taxpayers who never went to college or worked hard to pay off the full balance of their student loans or who worked their way through school to avoid a heavy loan burden or who covered the costs of their education by enlisting in the military and risking their lives for their country to shoulder the massive cost of all this loan forgiveness. Why should someone who never went to college be taking on the burden of loan forgiveness for borrowers making in excess of \$300,000 a year?

Then, of course, there is the troubling message sent to students when we teach them that they can expect to be bailed out for the debt they take on, even though they agreed to repay it.

I could go on.

The President announced his first student loan forgiveness scheme 2

months before the 2022 congressional elections. I don't think there is a coincidence about that, and I suspect it is no coincidence that he expects to implement his latest student loan giveaway this fall before the 2024 election.

Last week, I joined Senator CASSIDY and Congresswoman FOXX on a bicameral letter to the Secretary of Education, urging him to withdraw this latest plan. But, unfortunately, I suspect that the President and his administration won't be withdrawing anything that they think could win them a few votes in November. So the American people will, once again, have to endure yet another disastrous Biden administration spending plan.

I yield the floor.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 8369

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I was in the Chair and objected in my capacity as the Senator from Vermont to the unanimous consent request of the Senator from Arkansas. I would like now to have an opportunity to explain the basis of that.

First, the Senator from Arkansas essentially said that President Biden is appeasing pro-Hamas voters in imposing an arms embargo on Israel and, also in that assertion, suggesting that President Biden is not fully supportive, as he has been throughout his political life, to Israel.

Let me start by saying what I believe represents the unanimous points of view of this U.S. Senate, and that is that the attack by Hamas on Israel, the taking of hostages, the sexual assaults, the murder of so many innocent Israelis are condemned by each and every one of us. No one condemns it more than President Biden, who went to Israel on his own to show his solidarity and empathy for what happened to the Israeli people.

Second, I believe that every Member of the U.S. Senate supports the Jewish, democratic State of Israel.

Third, while the Senator from Arkansas suggested an "arms embargo," the U.S. Congress—without my support, by the way, for reasons I will explain—has sent billions of dollars in aid with the supplemental appropriations bill.

The fact that the President is raising questions about how best to secure the long-term status of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State in the context of this conflict in Gaza is in no way a suggestion of lack of support.

There is serious debate within Israel about the war plan that is being prosecuted by the Netanyahu government. In fact, a member of the war cabinet has indicated that he will leave the war cabinet if, in fact, the Prime Minister does not come up with a plan for what happens after the cessation of hostilities in Gaza.

Is there going to be an occupation by Israel? Is there going to be a joint Arab force that will be peacekeeping? Will there be an effort to constitute a Pales-

tinian Government that has the support of its people?

None of these plans envision Hamas having a role, and they can't have a role. But the President is asking responsible questions that are being asked by seriously engaged military, political, and security folks in Israel.

So to suggest that the President is raising questions because he is looking over the horizon and saying that adding to the 35,000 casualties in Gaza—half or more women and children—to suggest that the President, when he says Israel should not invade Rafah because of the catastrophic consequences of more humanitarian losses, to suggest that when the President says 2,000-pound bombs that would be dropped on the most densely populated couple of square miles in the world, without massive civilian casualties, is not showing support for Israel, I dispute that. I disagree with that.

This effort requires judgment, and the President has been given authority by this Congress to send arms to Israel. He has made a decision that 2,000-pound bombs should not be included in that. And he is not alone. There are many in Israel raising the question about the wisdom of how this war is being prosecuted.

We know that in order for there to be peace between Israel and the Palestinians, we must have a two-state solution. That is not just the policy of the Biden administration; it has been the policy of the Obama administration, the Bush administrations, and the Carter administration. Two states for two people where the respective rights of those people for self-governance and the renunciation of violence toward one another has got to be the long-term goal.

We have a situation right now where our ally Israel—and the current government Israel—disagrees with that two-state solution approach. And, in fact, the Netanyahu government position is that there should be one state.

And what we are seeing right now is the escalation of violence by extreme settlers in the West Bank that is causing more instability. So the President, as our Commander in Chief, must be given some latitude about how best to distribute whatever munitions have been authorized by the U.S. Congress. And in the President's judgment, 2,000-pound bombs to Rafah are the wrong munitions at the very wrong time.

All of us have enormous heartbreak for what has happened to those Israelis and their families, to those Palestinians in Gaza who are being used by the vicious Hamas as human shields. But the President is committed, as I am committed—as I believe all of us are committed—to peace and security in the Middle East, and we believe—most of us—that that requires a two-state solution where there is an independent, democratic Palestinian state—self-governing, respectful of Israel's security—and where there is an Israeli state that reciprocates toward the Palestinians in Gaza and in the West Bank.