

one-third of Americans are worried about paying their bills. They are pulling back on their spending and putting more on their credit cards. Some people are even taking on extra work just to get by, but sometimes it is still not enough.

As one new mom in Missouri put it:

It's just hard. I work full time. My husband works full time. I feel like at this point, we're moving more towards survival mode, rather than thriving.

Another mom in Virginia says of her sons and their wives:

[E]verybody is working as absolutely hard as they can. They are not farther ahead than my husband and I were 30 years ago.

Another woman, in Pennsylvania, who is working two jobs, says:

Prior to inflation, I didn't have any debt, I didn't have any credit cards, never applied for like a payday loan or any of those things. But since inflation I needed to do all those things. . . . I've had to downgrade my life completely.

They are not alone. For many Americans, life in the Biden-Harris economy feels like a downgrade. It now costs a typical family \$13,000 more per year just to maintain the same standard of living it enjoyed when President Biden took office—\$13,000 more per year just to tread water.

That is an incredible strain on families' budgets. And it is not just higher prices. Measures to tame inflation have also added to Americans' financial pain.

To fight inflation, the Federal Reserve has been forced to keep interest rates high, which affects Americans' finances in a variety of ways.

As I said, many Americans have turned to credit cards to cope with inflation. And higher interest rates, in part, the result of the Fed's actions, are making credit card bills harder to pay down. The same is true for car payments.

And Americans looking to own their own home are facing what one housing expert called "the most challenging home buying market we have ever seen."

The average monthly mortgage payment is a staggering \$2,600—the result of a combination of higher mortgage rates and higher home prices.

The White House has spent a lot of time trying to spin the economy as strong, but the American people aren't buying it. An economy where people are working harder and still struggling to get by isn't what most Americans consider a strong economy. And it can't be America's future.

I said inflation began accelerating as a result of Democrats' reckless spending. That is not a Republican talking point. It is a fact with which Democrat economists agree.

Yet the Biden-Harris administration and congressional Democrats show no signs of backing off their reckless tax-and-spending agenda. In fact, it is clear they envision a lot more of the same.

The administration's latest budget request is filled with burdensome new

taxes and trillions in new spending. They want to see the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act expire, which would mean more tax increases. And Democrats still have plenty of tax-and-spending ideas they would like to implement.

The American people have suffered enough. I don't want to think about what kind of economic pain we could see from another 4 years of Democrats' reckless spending. And I hope—I sincerely hope—that the American people will not have to experience it.

#### RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which are at the desk: S. Res. 785, S. Res. 786, S. Res. 787, and S. Res. 788.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 20 minutes prior to the scheduled votes and that Senator CARDIN be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled votes.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO RON FORMAN

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I want to speak for a few minutes about a favorite son in Louisiana, but to do that, I have to give my remarks a little context.

I think, like most Americans and, I know, like the Presiding Officer, I love animals. I grew up in a rural area in Louisiana. And let's see. We had dogs—not all at the same time, but we had dogs. We had cats. We had hamsters. We had chipmunks. We had squirrels. We had alligators, baby alligators.

Now, the danger of a baby alligator is that they become a big alligator, and we used to keep our little, baby alligators—their names were Tim and Tubo—in a big washbasin in our backyard, and we put wire on the top. The alligators—they were about this long—were in the tub. Why would we keep wire on the top? Because the neighbor-

hood cats would try to get in there and eat them.

Well, Tim and Tubo grew, and they grew, and they grew, and, one day, we forgot to put the screen wire on the top of the washbasin with the water in which Tim and Tubo were residing. By this time, they were about this long. And one of our neighbor's favorite cats, all of a sudden, just had three legs. And we had to release Tim and Tubo at that point.

Dad said: No, Tim and Tubo are too big. We have got to release them back to the swamp.

Well, I remember we had a baby possum, and I am probably leaving some varmints out. But I love animals. I especially love dogs. I have two at home. I wouldn't ask Becky to choose between me and our pups. And I love when people bring their dogs to work.

I am not going to wade into this fierce debate about what kind of pet and what kind of animal is best, but I think we can all agree that there is a special bond between our species and our animal friends. Animals can teach us a lot. Animals teach us love. Animals teach us patience. Animals teach us compassion. Animals, especially dogs, teach us responsibility. Animals teach us to appreciate God's creation. Through our connection with animals, including but not limited to dogs, we all gain a deeper respect for the world around us.

Now, in Louisiana, we are blessed to have many animal havens. Some of our animals, of course, are wild. I can remember in my State when alligators were almost extinct. Now we have more alligators than people. By the way, the alligators are surprisingly well organized. So be careful.

But we also have a lot of zoos. We have aquariums, none better than those in New Orleans, and those of you who have been to New Orleans may know this. New Orleans is home to what we call the Audubon Nature Institute. That is a nonprofit that we set up in Louisiana. It operates the Audubon Zoo in Uptown New Orleans; the Audubon Aquarium on the riverfront, down near the French Quarter—the Audubon Aquarium and Insectarium we call it; the Audubon Louisiana Nature Center; the Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species; and the Audubon Coastal Wildlife Network. It is sort of our group of institutions all under the umbrella of the Audubon Nature Institute, and they also do world-class research and work in conservation.

Every year, the Audubon Nature Institute and all of its institutions that make it up bring thousands of Louisianians and hundreds of thousands of visitors in our State closer to nature. It fuels our love for wildlife, and it fuels our love for the outdoors.

Audubon Park, where our zoo is located—our first institution before we added the aquarium and the other animal havens—wasn't always a prized institution. It wasn't. One man—one person—had a lot of help, but one person

led the effort to turn what most of us once referred to as an animal ghetto—our zoo in Audubon Park. It was. It was an animal ghetto but what today we call both an animal haven and an animal heaven. That man's name is Ron Forman—Ron Forman.

Ron joined the Audubon Park and Zoo in 1972. That seems like yesterday to me, but to our pages here in the front row, it is a long time ago. Ron started when he was young. He started as a liaison to city hall in New Orleans.

At the time, the zoo in Audubon Park was a disaster. It was just a disaster. The enclosures for the animals were small. They were dirty. They were really filthy. They were prison-like. Ron was asked to describe them one time.

He said:

They are prison-like.

This is unacceptable. The condition in which we placed our animals was an embarrassment to the city. It was an embarrassment to the people of Louisiana, and the people knew it. Ron Forman sensed that. He had the vision to be able to say: You know, I can lead an effort. I am not just going to go to government and ask for a bunch of money. I can lead an effort, Ron said, in the community to build support for the zoo, and he did.

He not only improved the zoo—we have an aquarium. We have an insectarium. We have an R&D—a research and development—park. We have a conservation park. Ron Forman delivered. He delivered for the human species, and he delivered for our animal friends.

By 1977, Ron had climbed the ranks, and he became director of the Audubon Zoo. Then he took off and so did our zoo and our animal havens. He led the effort to transform Audubon Park, which you know is right across from Tulane University, into the Audubon Nature Institute, which, as I said, is the nonprofit conservation and zoological system we know today.

Ron helped—and he had a lot of help. I mean, there are thousands of people who contributed, but Ron led the charge. He helped transform a cramped and dirty zoo into a state-of-the-art conservation network, including a zoo, an aquarium, an insectarium, gardens, research institutions, and conservation efforts. And the Audubon Nature Institute has thrived. It hasn't been easy, but it has thrived in large part, in substantial part because of Ron Forman.

Now, we got hit by Hurricane Katrina, and it was bad. When we did, the Audubon Zoo and the insectarium and the aquarium and Audubon Park were terribly damaged. Ron didn't get discouraged. He saw the zoo, for example, as a beacon of hope—not as an object of depression but as a beacon of hope.

First of all, because of the precautions that he and his team took, we only lost three animals in the storm at the zoo. And if you have been to the zoo, there are trees everywhere. It is just a small miracle. God smiled on us

in that respect. The aquarium, unfortunately, down on the river, suffered substantial, substantial losses.

It wasn't easy to rebuild all of those facilities. It was very, very hard, but Ron Forman understood. He understood instinctively that we needed to get these institutions back up on their feet because families needed a place to go to forget their hardships.

Hurricane Katrina hit in late August. Ron Forman stood up. I thought he had lost his mind. He stood up, and he said: I am going to have Audubon Zoo reopened by Thanksgiving weekend.

We were hitting August. Forman stands up in front of God, country, and Louisiana and says: I am going to have the zoo open by November.

I thought Ron had been day drinking. I said: It can't be done.

I didn't say that publicly. I thought, if anybody can do it, Ron Forman can. He did.

This is what he said. He said: We are a city without kids and families, and a city without kids and families right now—because so many of our families and kids have left—is a city without soul. It is a city without heart. So we just thought it was critical to get the thing open for Thanksgiving weekend.

And he did. The zoo opened on Thanksgiving weekend. We were able to give thousands of parents and children a sense of normalcy and optimism during the holiday season at a very difficult time for my State and for my city.

Now, Ron also led us through the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many businesses and many institutions, the Audubon Zoo and Aquarium and Gardens had to close or restrict attendance to try to help stop the spread of the virus. Attendance at the zoo dropped 50 percent—50 percent. We had almost no cashflow. Under different leadership, we wouldn't have made it. We wouldn't have made it, but we had a secret weapon. We had Ron Forman, because Ron had the passion, and he had the business sense, and he had the support of the community and the support of government to guide the nonprofit through the pandemic.

Now, for the first time in 50 years, Louisiana is looking for a new leader for the Audubon Nature Institute because Ron is stepping down.

I am sad to see him go. I am happy for him. He is still going to stay on as president emeritus, and we are still going to be able to access his big heart and tap his big brain, but we are going to have a new leader. But thank God Ron is going to stick around for a while to continue his advocacy while we look for a new CEO.

Ron Forman made the Audubon Zoo—he made New Orleans home to one of the country's—one of the world's best zoos. He made New Orleans home to one of the world's best aquariums and best insectariums and best research and development centers and best conservation efforts. He didn't do it alone, but he led us, and that is why

I wanted to rise today. I just wanted to thank Ron. I wanted to thank Ron Forman for his vision. I wanted to thank Ron Forman for his guts. Some of the things Ron did were not always popular. They were right. But it took courage. I want to thank Ron Forman for his dedication. I want to thank Ron Forman for his love of animals, and I want to thank Ron Forman for his love of people. He brought us all together in New Orleans. I just will never forget him for what he did for us.

So, Ron, if you are listening, thank you, my friend, for giving so much to our animal friends. Thank you, Ron Forman, for giving so much to the people of Louisiana and the people of America. Thank you, Ron Forman, for your leadership.

I yield to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

COMMENDING THE PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S HOCKEY LEAGUE MINNESOTA FOR WINNING THE INAUGURAL PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S HOCKEY LEAGUE TITLE ON MAY 29, 2024

#### RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Technology be discharged of S. Res. 750 and the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions: S. Res. 750, S. Res. 789, and S. Res. 790.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged of the relevant resolution, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 750) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of June 20, 2024, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The resolutions (S. Res. 789 and S. Res. 790) were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION—Continued

##### NOMINATION OF DOROTHY CAMILLE SHEA

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, shortly we are going to be voting on the cloture motion for the confirmation of Dorothy Shea, the nominee for Deputy U.S. Representative to the United Nations.