

am hopeful that before year's end, we will be able to do our work.

Sometimes I get complimented—not very often, but sometimes I get complimented, and when I do, it is often for my efforts. While I am willing to do all the efforts that are necessary, in this case, efforts are woefully inadequate, and results are critically important.

Mr. President, I look forward to my colleagues and I moving forward on farm bill legislation and disaster assistance short-term needs being met. I offer myself to work with Republicans and Democrats, rural and urban, to see that we get those goals accomplished.

In closing, the current farm bill is not adequate to provide the relief or safety net of our Nation's farmers, nor is it reflective of the current state of the farm economy. With financial pressures building across the agriculture industry due to increased production costs and weakened market prices, the overall financial situation of the farm economy is bleak. The status quo is unacceptable. We must pass a long-term farm bill this year, and we must also consider immediate relief for farmers with a supplement.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, of which I am a member and have been its chairman, as we continue the appropriations process and find a solution so that it can be included in our work before year's end.

Our farmers deserve and need better, and in the absence of successful farmers, the places that many of us call home—the future is bleak.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FETTERMAN). The Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Court nomination be considered expired at 2:30 p.m. today.

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

The Senator from Alabama.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 332

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, a truly amazing thing is happening in our Nation right now. The sitting Vice President is actually running for election by running from her record. After 35 months in office, she is promising change from her own administration.

Her day one was actually January 2021, but she is trying to convince the American people that things are going to be different this time around. And it is not just that she is promising change for our country, it is that she says she herself has seemingly changed overnight. Just about every unpopular policy position imaginable that she has taken and been on the record supporting for years—well, now that she is up for election, she no longer believes those things.

Let's just look at a sampling of policy positions that the Vice President has held. Let's start with energy and

economic security. She supported enforcing an EV mandate that would take gas-powered vehicles off the road, ending offshore drilling, banning fracking, eliminating private health insurance, and raising taxes by trillions.

But it doesn't stop there, and it just gets worse for public safety and border security. She supported decreasing funding for the police, abolishing ICE, decriminalizing illegal border crossings, ending the detention of illegal border crossers, giving taxpayer-funded benefits to illegal border crossers, defending sanctuary city policies, vowing to block all border wall funding, and even using taxpayer funds for gender transition surgeries for illegal aliens and Federal prisoners. These are some of the most radical positions it is possible to take, and that is why she was actually ranked as the most far-left Senator when she was a Member of this body.

Now that she is President of the Senate, she is her party's nominee for President, and she is her party's leader. Again, she claims she has changed some of her own policy positions. So today we are going to give her party and the Chamber she leads an opportunity to prove whether that is true. To paraphrase the majority leader from his remarks yesterday, we are going to give our Democratic colleagues another chance to show the American people where they stand.

We will start today with a few bills related to energy and border security, and we can continue this every day the Senate is in session moving forward. The American people will be watching, and I look forward to seeing what happens today.

We are going to go ahead and start with the WALL Act. Last year, I introduced the WALL Act. This legislation is common sense and with a clear aim. It would appropriate funding needed to finish actually building a barrier on our southern border.

And it would accomplish that without raising taxes and without adding to our national debt. For all of you in the Gallery, we are \$35 trillion in debt. That is not just fiscally irresponsible, that is morally irresponsible.

And for the first time ever, we paid more money on the interest on our national debt than we did for our national defense. You can look, over time, in the moment that any nation does that, it begins to become a nation in decline.

So I wanted to make sure that we had something that had a common-sense approach, and through the WALL Act, construction of a border wall would be funded by eliminating taxpayer-funded entitlements and tax benefits for illegal border crossers.

The bill would also close loopholes that allow illegal border crossers to receive taxpayer-funded benefits intended for citizens and lawful residents.

Finally, this legislation would impose fines on individuals who illegally

enter the United States or overstay their visas. In 2018, the Joint Committee on Taxation estimated that the tax components of this bill alone would save \$33 billion over 10 years. Let's use these funds to build a border wall and to help keep Americans safe.

So, today, we are giving Senate Democrats a very clear choice. Now, watch what happens next very closely. Let's see how they answer these questions. Do they support building a border wall or will they block building a border wall? Do they want to spend taxpayer funds on keeping American citizens and legal residents safe or do they want to keep those taxpayer funds funding illegal border crossers? Where does the Vice President's party stand on these very different policy positions?

Well, we are about to find out.

As if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of S. 332 and the Senate proceed to immediate consideration. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The President pro tempore.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, Border Patrol has very serious needs that actually need funding; namely, new technology, and we should focus on how we get those done in a bipartisan way.

We have limited resources. We know a border wall is ineffective and really has no impact in preventing the cartels from bringing fentanyl into our country.

I, for one, would prefer we direct those resources toward stopping fentanyl from getting to our communities through our ports of entry along the southwest border.

No one should forget there was a bipartisan proposal on border policy changes earlier this year, one that Senate Republicans strongly endorsed, one that was, frankly, probably more conservative than I would have preferred.

But instead of voting to so much as take it up for consideration, Republicans decided then that instead they wanted to campaign on the border, as they are attempting to do with this proposal, because one man, Donald Trump, told them: Kill the bill. Trump told Senate Republicans he wanted to let a fire burn so he can campaign on the ashes, and Senate Republicans said, yes, Mr. Trump.

I think that history tells us how serious the effort before us today is, but just like when I built the bipartisan border funding bill with my ranking member Senator COLLINS, I do look forward to working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle on comprehensive immigration reform and serious solutions to the challenges we are facing at the border.

The door is always open. Today, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, I see my colleague from Oklahoma here and would love to have the opportunity to hear about his bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1121

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. President, thank you and thank you to the Senator from Alabama for doing this.

I think it is very important that we understand what is happening in our economy right now with the energy issue and the energy crisis we find ourselves in.

And so the bill that I bring forward today is Protecting American Energy Production Act.

It is real simple. It allows us to be energy independent. The backbone of our economy is energy, and if you have high energy costs, which we have had a 37-percent increase in energy under this current administration, you obviously are going to have inflation increase because energy is the backbone of our economy. You cannot make a product, nor can you deliver the product, without factoring in the cost of energy.

With a 37-percent energy increase over the last 4 years, we have to bring back that resilience. We have to bring back that energy independence. And the way we do that is we understand real numbers.

For instance, in 2019, fracking, which our current Vice President has been on record saying that she wants to ban fracking, in 2019, fracking accounted for 63 percent of our total crude oil production and 75 percent of our natural gas supply.

Underneath the current administration, we have seen a significant decline in fracking wells. At the same time, we haven't seen demand decrease, we have actually seen demand increase, which by the amount that has actually been taken away from oil or from American producers, now we have seen an increase in imports.

Not all of them are friends of ours. As I said, the bill is very simple, Protecting American Energy Production Act.

So as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1121 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Reserving the right to object.

My colleague whom I am pleased to work with on a number of issues has

come to the floor with a unanimous consent request that would constrain the power of our President to protect our public lands. So while we may agree on a number of things—and I hope that doesn't hurt his reputation back home—on this particular proposal, I do bring a different perspective.

I think in my role working on the Interior Committee—and understanding that the authority we have granted the President is so essential to making sure that the lands that are publicly held remain a treasure for every single American.

It was not that long ago—well, it seems like quite a few years now, maybe a decade, I attended a hearing in which a number of folks came forward to explain different damages that had occurred to the water table in their community from fracking.

Now, in this case, my real concern here is about constraining the President's ability to protect our treasures, our public lands, from these types of effects.

I think Americans who have traveled to our national parks and our BLM land and our Forest Service land understand that this is a responsibility that we in the Senate take very seriously, but there is also a little bit more to my concern here as well.

One is that if we are going to tackle climate chaos, we have to have international cooperation. And if we continuously say we are going to reduce the ability of the United States to have policies and abilities to address our own production of fossils, then, of course, every other country is like, well, the United States and China are the biggest producers of climate gases—both methane, known publicly as natural gas, methane gas—and they have very large footprints, if they are not going to act, why should we act?

So if we want to address this challenge and sustain international cooperation, we can't be consistently restricting the potential flexibility of our President.

The third is that the climate impact in my home State is very substantial. We have seen a loss of snowpack in the Cascades that is devastating—the water in late spring and early summer—to our ranchers and farmers. Our rural foundation, our rural pillar is our farming and our ranching. And when you constrain the water in our rivers because of the dropping snowpack, that is a big impact.

And in addition, our water tables have been dropping that many farmers have depended on. In fact, we are investing heavily in piping our irrigation ditches at huge expense, knowing how precious every drop of water is.

So if we care about our rural areas, we have to take on climate chaos and not just our farmers and ranchers, our foresters, too, because we are seeing significant devastation to Oregon's famous forests over drought and insect infestation with climate chaos.

Of course, it is not just Oregon that is affected. Every single State is affected. I was very concerned earlier this year, earlier this summer, when I heard about the 115 to 120 degrees in a heat dome that passed over my colleague's State and the impact that that was having. I think every State has their effects that they are experiencing.

So this is a big issue that we need to wrestle with, and this brings me to the fourth item mentioned about energy security. In the last 4 years, under the Biden administration, we have become energy independent. There has been a vast increase in the production of oil and a vast increase in the production of gas. As a result, we are now the largest producer of oil and gas, and we are the largest exporter of gas.

Now, kind of the interesting little piece here is that the goal of the gas industry is to export gas and raise prices on Americans, so it is more expensive for Americans to heat their homes and heat their water. But we could do the opposite. We could, in fact, say we are going to repeal the 2015 law that put us into the world market and created these massive exports and lower the price here in America for our families.

That is a much better idea than raising the prices. Let's lower the prices. In fact, here is the thing. Let's start right now by ending our exports of oil and gas to China. Now, my colleagues just not so long ago advocated that we end any sale of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to China with good reason. Why should we lower their prices and increase our prices? But that is true for the exports that are going to oil and gas as well.

So let's stand together on both sides of the aisle. Let's lower the price for American consumers and ban these exports to China. And for that reason, I have prepared just such a solution and an opportunity to have it embraced by my colleagues.

And so I turn to the formality here that I ask the Senator to modify his request and that the Merkley substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, so that we will have the ability to end these exports to China and lower the prices for American consumers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection to the modification?

Mr. MULLIN. Reserve the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. While I understand my colleague from Oregon, where he stands on this issue, there are just some factual things that need to be checked on that.

One, he said that we are the No. 1 exporter of gas. That is just not true. Russia is the No. 1 exporter of gas.