

I know we have heard the argument that if you continue this, you are creating a disincentive to work. That is what we are told. According to the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, in a report this month—just a couple of days ago—they found: “Lack of opportunities to work, not a disincentive to work, are keeping unemployment elevated.” That is what they found. They documented more than that statement would entail, but that is what they found in their research. They also found 23 percent fewer job openings in July of 2020 versus July of 2019. So there were fewer job openings.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Department of Labor said that there are almost four unemployed in the United States for every job opening.

The third issue, State and local funding: The Republican proposal has nothing to help States and local governments. We know that State and local governments have to balance their budgets, so extra dollars can come only from one source—the Federal Government. State and local governments have had to spend more to protect their citizens with the onset of the virus, the COVID-19 disease, and the impact of the virus and the pandemic blew a hole in their budgets.

So what is going to happen? A State, whether it is a red State or blue State or whatever the political conditions—they are all the same when it comes to revenue loss. Here is what is going to happen, as sure as night follows day: They are going to have to cut education. So I would say to school districts: Get ready for cuts because if your State cannot balance its budget, there are going to be education cuts.

There will be cuts to healthcare, probably Medicaid in most instances, and there will be other cuts. Public transit—we were on a call last night with transit advocates from around Pennsylvania, and our side is asking for more help for transit. But you can go down a long list, whether it is education or healthcare or even public safety itself at the local level.

So we should do a lot more. We should be replicating or at least approximating what the House did when they allocated \$875 billion for State and local governments combined.

How about the Supplement Nutrition and Assistance Program? The majority has refused over and over again—categorically refused—to increase SNAP by the percentage that our side has argued for. I know it is a little easy in Washington to talk about hunger and food insecurity as some kind of distant issue because those of us who serve in this Chamber are not food insecure. We don't have to suffer the pain of hunger that many families are suffering. Many suffered food insecurity long before the pandemic, but many others—even middle-class families or people trying to get to the middle class—are suffering from food insecurity because of the virus and the economic downturn. Families, we know, are literally choos-

ing between the food they need for their families or paying the mortgage, choosing between the food they need—groceries—versus paying for their kids' medications.

The last issue in this part of my remarks is on Medicaid. We know that the Senate did the right thing in the Families First legislation way back in early March when it increased the matching dollars for Medicaid by 6.2 percent. Those matching dollars are vital for States to be able to pay for Medicaid and to be able to balance their budgets. The House bill, the Heroes Act, passed 10 weeks ago, I believe, set forth another increase of a higher amount—14 percent—for those matching dollars. I think that makes a lot of sense, especially when people are losing their jobs every day.

We just read a story in the New York Times last week, I think it was. More than 5 million people in the country have lost their health insurance because they lost their jobs or for other reasons. So a lot of those folks who are out of luck when it comes to healthcare itself are turning to Medicaid. We should increase the matching rate to 14 percent.

The Republican proposal has no additional dollars for Medicaid. I guess we should not be surprised because the White House budget proposals in the last several years—and I think supported in large measure by the Republican majority here in the Senate—have not only not wanted to increase dollars for Medicaid, but, in fact, the White House has proposed cuts of several hundred billion dollars to Medicaid over a 10-year timeframe several years in a row. Republicans in the Senate have said very little, if anything, against those kinds of proposals.

Let me just move to a separate set of remarks.

REMEMBERING JOHN LEWIS

Mr. President, I have some remarks about U.S. Representative John Lewis, whose casket just left in a hearse from the grounds of the Capitol this morning. It was moving to see the number of people who would stand in line for a long period of time in 97- or 99-degree heat to pass by his casket.

There is so much we could say about John Lewis. It is difficult to summarize or encapsulate or not repeat ourselves, but I think in so many ways John Lewis was courage personified. Very, very few Americans—other than those who served in combat itself or in other instances—could say that they have put themselves on the line as he did with his courage in the face of hatred and in the face of brutal beatings and otherwise.

John Lewis helped the United States in its ongoing work to form a more perfect union. There is so much more we could say about that. He was beaten on multiple occasions for standing up for civil rights and, of course, the right to vote itself. He did all of this—all of this—by practicing nonviolence. I don't know how he did that. I really don't. I

would like to be able to think that I could do that in the face of beatings, but I don't think I could. I really doubt that I could and that most people could. But he practiced nonviolence and thereby had a huge impact on the American people and American law.

He served 33 years here in the U.S. House of Representatives. He also served on the Atlanta City Council. When President Obama was bestowing the Medal of Freedom on John Lewis, he said that John Lewis was “the conscience of the U.S. Congress.” It was so well said.

I think, at a time like this, we are summoned by his enduring example. We are summoned by his heroic example to pass the voting rights bill, H.R. 4, which has been basically sitting here since December, when the House passed it. That is the best way to demonstrate our gratitude for John Lewis's contributions.

The fight against injustice must continue. We can't just say what a great man he was or what a great leader he was; we have to continue to be inspired by and act against injustice whether it is in housing or food insecurity or education or employment or healthcare or otherwise.

Martin Luther King said one time, “Until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” John Lewis's life was in furtherance of that goal—to bring about a world where justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I think John Lewis was a patriot in the broadest sense of the word. We know from the song “America the Beautiful,” that wonderful line, “O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years,” that the dream of a patriot, when they are fighting on a battlefield, is not just about the fight they are in; the dream of a patriot, of course, is about what happens after, that their sacrifice brings about a better world, a more secure country in the context of a war or a battle.

John Lewis also had the dream of a patriot, the dream of a better life for Americans, the dream of equal protection under the law, the dream of voting rights being protected. In the largest sense of the word, John Lewis was a patriot.

I am almost done. I know I might be overtime, and I know we have a colleague waiting. I will be brief. I apologize for going a little long.

We know that there has been a lot of debate about what happened when we had reports in the New York Times and other reports, in June, about the U.S. intelligence community learning that Russian intelligence had offered payments as high as \$100,000, transferred through a middleman, to kill U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan.

I know that we don't have time to get into all the details of that today, but we know that the President has, I think, on the record, not said anything about this until maybe yesterday in an

interview, and in my judgment, he did not address and did not respond appropriately to those reports.

I was hoping what the President would say in the interview that I saw on television this morning—I guess it was yesterday—and what he would have said long before that is that we are going to investigate this and we are going to make a determination about the conclusion that we reach—that he would reach as President and that he would directly confront Vladimir Putin and challenge him on this. But he had a recent phone call with him, and all the reporting indicates and even the President indicated in his interview that he did not challenge Vladimir Putin. That is beyond disturbing, and I think it is not in furtherance of our national security interests.

In the interest of time today, I will not say more because I know we are over time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks prior to the vote.

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

CHINA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, it is interesting to hear my colleagues talk about China and COVID and our response. I think many of us looked at 2019 and felt like that was really a significant year for U.S.-China relations. It marked the 40th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations between Washington and Beijing, and we also finalized a phase 1 trade deal.

This led many of us to being optimistic, but remember that 2019 also marked the 70th anniversary of Chairman Mao's ascension to the chairmanship of the Chinese Communist Party and the 30th anniversary of the massacre at Tiananmen Square.

When you start asking questions about that history and how it has informed the decisions of current Chinese leadership, the capitalist facade that has been so carefully constructed by the propagandists in Beijing starts to peel away, and it starts to crack.

After decades of espionage, military aggression, and horrific political violence inflicted on their own people, many here in Washington have grown numb to Chinese hostility. They kind of expect or accept that is the way they are going to act. That is the only explanation I could come up with for the shock that rippled through this town when we discovered that the Chinese Communist Party spent 51 days muzzling the doctors, lawyers, and journalists who desperately tried to warn the rest of the world about the growing threat from the novel coronavirus.

Our relationship with China has reached a tipping point. We will never be able to go back to what had been that cautious optimism that we had in 2019.

Fortunately, it looks like both my colleagues here in Washington and many of our allies are allowing themselves to process the threat posed by Beijing's standard operating procedures. The UK has banned the use of equipment from Chinese tech giant Huawei for their ongoing 5G rollout, and France has implemented policies that restrict the use of Huawei's products. These decisions are giving some hope to the people I am talking to back in Tennessee every single day. They are happy to see that allies are following in our footsteps. This is a good thing. It is an opportunity for us to role-model how you work to unravel a relationship with an aggressor.

They would also want me to tell you that they appreciate the Senate's growing bipartisan support for legislation like my SAMC Act, which will secure our pharmaceutical supply chains from Chinese interference, and Senator MCSALLY's Civil Justice for Victims of COVID Act, which will allow Americans harmed by this pandemic to sue the Chinese Communist Party officials in U.S. court.

But we all know that there is no single-shot bill we can use to decouple from China and put control back in the hands of American businesses, educators, institutions, and innovators. We have to begin to unravel these ties with China. Now, there are a lot of people in this town who think that this is impossible, and they will say: Oh, that is ill-advised. You do not want to try to unravel from China.

I think they are wrong, and I think that we can and we must do this. But lipservice is not going to cut it. Over the past few months we have talked at length about what needs to be done, but, with few exceptions, we are light on specifics. So last Wednesday I published a white paper laying out the current state of affairs between the United States and China and talked about what got us to this position. Then, I have 120 specific policy recommendations that Congress can use as a basis for future legislation, whether it is trade or agriculture or telecommunications or 5G or our military complex. I would like to use my remaining time to lay out a few of these recommendations as a place to start.

By now most Americans are at least familiar with the term "Belt and Road Initiative." This is an initiative program the Chinese have used to buy their way. They have bought their way into the good graces of governments in Asia, Africa, and Europe. The trillions of dollars in investment buys inroads and influence across countries of every economic background and in organizations like the United Nations.

While we cannot and should not compete dollar for dollar, we should partner with our allies to prevent struggling governments from falling into this debt diplomacy or these debt traps. We must also secure our supply chains across every sector of our economy and bring critical manufacturing

and technologies back to the United States.

I mentioned the SAMC Act. It would incentivize companies to bring their manufacturing operations back to the United States and also fund partnerships between pharmaceutical companies and universities so that they can train the workforce we need in order to pull this manufacturing out of China and bring it back to communities right here.

We should not hesitate in moving forward on this legislation. Once we invest in this new technology and infrastructure, we are going to have to invest in securing it by securing our emerging 5G networks. To that end, we need to make more spectrum available for the commercial wireless sector to ensure our continued leadership in 5G and other emerging technologies. If we fail to do so, we risk ceding ground to China in the standard-setting bodies that are going to define 5G internationally.

We will not be able to stop China alone. We must look toward those international organizations, as well as allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, to help us deter Chinese aggression and foster stable economic growth. This includes providing support for Hong Kong and Taiwan and promoting universal human rights standards, both in China and across the globe. We will also increase defense investment in the region through a newly created Pacific Deterrence Initiative.

Most importantly, we must accept the fact that, at its core, China is not a normal country. It does not behave like a normal country. When Xi Jinping ascended to the head of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012, many assumed he was going to act as a reformer and turn away from the Maoist thought, but, predictably, he did not.

We cannot simply wait for this problem to go away. Last week, Beijing escalated tensions by ordering Americans to vacate our only consulate in western China, distancing its abuses in Tibet and Xinjiang from American diplomatic personnel. You know what. It is not going to stop with this. They are accelerating their aggression.

We have to become more independent of China. We are too dependent on them at this point. It is time for the United States to deny this era of Chinese impunity and change the way we are doing business. It is time to reestablish rules to guide the global economy, to encourage our allies to join us, and to hold Beijing accountable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, if cloture is invoked on the Kan nomination, the confirmation vote occur at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 30. I further ask that the cloture vote on the Kaplan nomination occur at 2:45 p.m. today and that,