

State of Maryland and across the country. And his leadership in shepherding through the Great American Outdoors Act has allowed for serious investments in our Nation's public lands, our conservation efforts, and our outdoor economy. Senator ALEXANDER's commitment to bridge-building presents a model for how the U.S. Congress can come together, despite the nature of these divisive times. He will be dearly missed.

Lastly, I would like to extend a warm farewell to my colleague Senator CORY GARDNER from the great State of Colorado. CORY GARDNER and I first met in the House of Representatives in 2011. I had just started my fifth term representing Maryland in the House, and then-Congressman GARDNER was being sworn in for the first time as the Member from Colorado's fourth. We got to know each other even better in 2017, when I joined the U.S. Senate and served as the chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee opposite Senator GARDNER, who was chairing the National Republican Senatorial Committee. We didn't always agree on how best to move our country forward, but I have no doubt in my mind that Senator GARDNER has served our country with unceasing optimism and love for his State. He possesses a profound and deep respect for our Nation's history and institutions. I send my best to him and his family.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, the Federal Government brought in \$3.3 trillion in revenue last year and spent \$6.6 trillion for a record-setting \$3.3 trillion deficit. If you are looking for more COVID bailout money, we don't have any. The coffers are bare. We have no rainy day fund. We have no savings account. Congress has spent all of the money. Congress spent all of the money a long time ago.

The economic damage from the pandemic is not the reason for this runaway spending. This has gone on for decades. Today's money is gone, so Congress is spending tomorrow's money. When you look at a graph of our projected spending, you see a big spike this year. The spike is a mountain of money doled out to pay for the economic ruin of the government mandates.

When we talk about spending tomorrow's money, this is not just money we will need next month; this is money we will need in a decade—money we will need in one, two, and three generations from now. For national defense. For infrastructure. This is money that your children and grandchildren will pay back with interest, and it is going up by more than a trillion dollars every year.

Instead of enjoying the same wealth and opportunity that we have enjoyed in this country, our children will be stuck paying our bills—with interest. Every taxpaying American already

owes \$136,754 today, and they are starting at a red-ink projection into the future. We are \$27 trillion in total debt today. How do we expect a child to have economic opportunity when crushing debt is their inheritance from Congress?

The numbers are mind-boggling. It is hard to conceive of a billion dollars, much less a trillion dollars. How big is a billion? Well, a billion seconds ago was 1988 and Reagan was still President. A billion minutes ago, Jesus walked the shore of the Sea of Galilee. A billion hours ago, man still lived in caves. But a billion dollars ago—as spent by the Federal Government—that was just 80 minutes ago. That is right, the Federal Government spends a billion dollars every 80 minutes.

All of this should be setting off alarm bells, but the only alarm bells in Congress are sounding the alarm for more spending, more debt. No cuts. No offsets. No pay-fors. No prioritization. Just debt. Spend all the money and leave the future to figure itself out. Our budget deficit for 2020 was \$3.3 trillion, and we are projected to have a deficit of nearly \$2 trillion in 2021. And that was before any additional spending on another round of coronavirus bailout money.

By refusing to acknowledge the debt crisis, we are only hastening the day of economic reckoning. Total debt was 55 percent of GDP 20 years ago; today it is 128 percent. The World Bank estimates there is a tipping point of debt to GDP at about 77 percent. Every percentage point after that costs about one-tenth of 1 percent of economic growth. We are at 128 percent, which means Congress's continued borrowing is costing the U.S. economy about 8 percent growth each year.

We are borrowing and worsening this debt crisis, in part, because too many Governors and mayors have imposed heavyhanded restrictions that crush businesses. The pandemic itself was disruptive, but Congress is being asked to help perpetuate lockdowns and shutdowns through bailouts and debt. Every bailout dollar printed and passed out to Governors only allows these tin pot dictators to perpetuate the lockdowns. Their rules are arbitrary, and Governors and mayors across the country are picking winners and losers. Businesses, some that have been in families for generations, are being wiped out because they are not allowed to offer their services. Restaurants have to close for indoor dining, but then they are told they can stay open at limited capacity, but then they are told they have to close again, but then they are told that they can reopen but bars have to close. Confusing doesn't explain the half of it.

Bars are told they can only serve alcohol if people are sitting and not standing and only if they have heavy foods on their menus. Restaurants are told they can serve outdoors, then have that permission revoked after they have sunk time and money converting

their restaurant to outdoor service. But a caterer can still serve outdoors.

Businesses are told they have to close at an arbitrary time determined by government officials, as though the virus only comes out late at night. A business in one Zip Code can be open but one in the adjoining Zip Code has to close, as if the virus can't cross an imaginary line.

Airlines are allowed to fly but hotels have to limit their occupancy, so you may not have anywhere to stay when you get there.

Mom-and-pop stores and specialty stores are forced to close, but big box competitors are allowed to stay open because they have a grocery aisle. But then other States roped off random sections of stores. How is any business expected to survive that kind of regulation?

Meanwhile, many schools remain closed despite overwhelming evidence showing kids can safely learn in-person with basic precautions, which means parents can't go to work, which has forced many parents to leave their jobs to take care of home-bound kids. Now they have no income because the government forced them to leave their jobs to take care of their kids, and many kids are struggling with an improvised virtual school.

The need for help is real. I hear it every day from Kentuckians and across the country. But it is clear that government has worsened the economic damage and acted as the biggest obstacle to economic recovery.

There is no free money to get us out of this situation. In fact, there is no more money at all. The answer is not printing up and distributing "free money" to everyone. The answer is immediately opening the economy. We can choose to let our economies open, with guidance and precautions but not obstruction. Let people rebuild their livelihoods. Reopen our schools so kids can learn and parents can go back to working and earning a living. Congress should do away with automatic spending increases and scrutinize where in our budget we can find savings to pay for the pressing needs arising from the pandemic. This is what I prefer and what I have proposed. Or Congress can follow the status quo: Congress can continue to borrow from our kids—the same ones whom we have locked out of schools. Congress can keep enabling the shutting down of business by force, spend all of today's money and all of tomorrow's money. Then good luck figuring out how to pay for all of this massive debt.

It doesn't have to be this way. This debt crisis is a preventable crisis. It is not too late to change our course. Cut unnecessary spending, eliminate waste, stop fighting a \$50 billion per year forever war in Afghanistan. Make the hard decisions now. We can't keep pretending that more debt is a sustainable policy course. Leadership is not passing on the problem to someone who can't protest, leadership is making the

hard choices now. That is what we have to do. I will oppose this new debt, and I will continue to sound the alarm until we change our course here in Congress.

#### RECOGNIZING THE SHEPHERD COMMUNITY CENTER

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Shepherd Community Center's 35 years of service to individuals and families on the near eastside of Indianapolis, IN. Since 1985, this faith-based, inner-city ministry has operated with the mission to "break the cycle of poverty on the near Eastside of Indianapolis by engaging and empowering the community to cultivate healthy children, strong families, and vibrant neighborhoods through a Christ-centered approach that meets the physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic needs of our neighbors."

Shepherd Community Center serves the near Eastside of Indianapolis, where poverty rates in the area reach as high as 38.6 percent and 8 of 10 children rely on school as their primary source of food during the week. Shepherd provides hope and support to its neighbors through a unique and holistic approach Shepherd calls its Continuum of Care. The Continuum of Care is a full set of programs that allows Shepherd to be continuously engaged in the lives of neighborhood children, teens, and their parents. It is designed to help area families overcome the challenges they may be facing in all areas: physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic.

Shepherd's approach has consistently yielded positive results, and families in its programs have become stronger physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially. Shepherd's students also attain higher academic achievement. In an area where only 33 percent of entering freshmen graduate high school and only 75 percent of those who graduate go on to college, nearly 90 percent of Shepherd's seniors graduate and go on to college, job training, or the military.

Shepherd's history dates to the fall of 1984, when the Westside Church of the Nazarene sent a group of volunteers to Central Nazarene Church to serve a Thanksgiving meal. In February 1985, that simple meal blossomed into an organization: Central Nazarene Mission. A few years later, the name was changed to Shepherd Community Center. Reverend Dean Cowles was the founding director and served in that role for Shepherd's first 4 years. Reverend John Hay, Jr. served for the next few years. Following Hay's departure, Cowles returned and served yet another 4 years. After a few years of transition, Reverend Jay Height was named executive director in 1998 and continues to serve today.

And my friend Reverend Height has been a tireless champion for families on the near Eastside every day since then. In a 35th anniversary year when

the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the challenges facing families in the area, Reverend Height and the Shepherd Community team met those challenges head on, and arm-in-arm with their neighbors. In a recent article in the Indianapolis Star, Reverend Height said, "Hope is a precious commodity. When it's lost, the consequences for human life are devastating."

I agree, Reverend Height. And I know the countless families of Indianapolis that Shepherd has served in its first 35 years are eternally grateful that Shepherd has been a custodian of hope for our capital city. On behalf of those families and the State of Indiana, I congratulate you on the 35th anniversary of Shepherd Community Center, I thank everyone who has worked and sacrificed in order to bless their neighborhoods through the work of Shepherd and wish the Shepherd Community Center all the best as it carries on that good and crucial work.

#### TRIBUTE TO MIKE ANDERSON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I would like to recognize a critical member of my staff, Mike Anderson, who left my office in August to pursue a legal career his hometown of Anchorage, AK, something he has aspired to do since a young age.

Communications director was a more than appropriate title for Mike. He directed so much of our communication, both internally and externally. You would often find Mike going from staff member to staff member, asking them questions, relaying information from one team to the next. In our office, if you had a question about what anybody was up to, you would ask Mike. That is a special quality. We miss it very much.

Mike is no stranger to Alaska political offices. Fresh out of college at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, he took a job with Congressman DON YOUNG, and then worked for Senator LISA MURKOWSKI. In 2014, I was looking for someone to help with communications on my campaign. It was the first time I had run for office, and I was running against an incumbent with big name recognition. Mike came on board. He took a chance on me—it is something I will never forget.

He had been taking law classes at night at the Catholic University of America for the past few years working in my office. He balanced it all, was on the clock around the clock, and did it with grace and humor. He was our office communicator, but he was also the office friend—the person you would go to for advice on things big and small, the person you would call on for an assist if you needed to move. It helped that he is a short 6'8". Mike always showed up. Working together—as one team, one fight—we got big things done for our State.

Mike is going to make a great lawyer in Alaska. As a State, we have so much potential: the biggest fisheries in the

country, the largest energy fields, an array of military complexes, and fascinating Alaska Native legal issues. More than anything, Alaska needs good leaders with integrity—hard-working people like Mike, who love their State and give it their all. We haven't seen the last of Mike. He will always be a part of our team. And I am sure that we will always work together to make sure Alaska thrives.

So good luck to you, Mike. You left a mark and a hole. Best wishes on a bright future ahead.

#### TRIBUTE TO KAREN ROBB

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize an extraordinary member of my staff who retired from the Senate earlier this year, Karen Robb.

For 15 years, Karen Robb served as a critical senior member of my staff, first in my House office and then in the Senate. Karen is a trusted adviser, skilled leader, and wonderful friend. Over the years she has been a key partner in many of our successful legislative initiatives and was a tireless advocate for the people of Maryland. A humble and committed public servant, Karen is driven by her deep-rooted values and a strong commitment to public service and the institution of the Congress.

Karen was already a seasoned pro on Capitol Hill when she joined my team as chief of staff in the House of Representatives office 15 years ago. She had previously served as Deputy Assistant to President Clinton in the Office of Legislative Affairs, chief of staff to Senator John Edwards, democratic staff director for the Senate Judiciary Committee under then-Senator Joe Biden, and chief counsel to Senator Dennis DeConcini. Her extensive experience in both the legislative and executive branches helped us achieve significant victories for Maryland and pass priorities important to the American people.

An attorney, Karen has always identified first as a policy wonk with particularly deep knowledge of the judiciary, and I drafted her into becoming an expert on campaign finance reform and election issues. She worked with Fred Wertheimer of Democracy 21 and other reformers to change the political finance system through legislation and the courts. Karen worked tirelessly to help draft the Lobbying Transparency Act, legislation I introduced to shine a light on lobbyist bundling of political contributions that ultimately became law as part of an ethics reform package. Many Members of Congress opposed the effort, but it was the right thing to do, and with the support of Speaker PELOSI, it passed in the House, while Senators Obama and Feingold pushed it through in the Senate.

After the Supreme Court's notorious decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, we worked for