

of my team for many years, on the Rules Committee and in my leadership office. She has helped plan, coordinate, safeguard, and execute multiple Presidential inaugurations—and what a great job she has done in every one of them—and Capitol-wide ceremonies in general. She has been an indispensable resource to me and to my entire staff. I am very glad that Kelly is taking on this challenge.

One other note that I am very proud of—I think we all as Senators can be proud of—this will be the first time in the Senate's history that the Sergeant at Arms' leadership will be comprised entirely of women. I cannot think of a team better prepared than LTG Karen Gibson, Kelly Fado, and Jennifer Hemingway.

To all three of them: Congratulations on your new roles, and thank you for your many years of service to the Senate and to our country.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on the American Rescue Plan, as early as tonight, the Senate will move to take up the American Rescue Plan, a bill designed to immediately deliver help to American families, workers, and businesses struggling under the weight of the pandemic and to lay the foundation for our Nation's recovery, so needed.

Every day, we see signs of hope and signs of caution in our fight against the COVID pandemic. As of today, in good part because the Biden administration is really doing a good job, over 78 million doses of the COVID vaccine have been administered in the country and over 100 million have been shipped—well ahead of the rosiest expectations at the start of the year. Just yesterday, President Biden announced that there will be enough vaccines for every adult in the United States by the end of May—by the end of May—far sooner than most had thought. Again, President Biden and his team are doing a great job in moving the vaccine out quickly but fairly.

Still, the United States averages 66,000 cases of COVID per week. That exceeds anything we saw last summer during the worst months of the spread. So we cannot relax, and the need for the legislation that is before us is stronger than ever before.

It is a similar story with the economy. There are green shoots, but unemployment is still over 6 percent and 9 percent for African Americans. The economy has lost 10 million jobs compared to a year ago. Tens of millions of Americans report being thousands of dollars behind in rent and utilities. As Treasury Secretary Yellen and Federal Reserve Chair Powell have repeatedly warned us, our economy and its recovery remain deeply uncertain.

There are bumps but mainly because of the stimulus bills we have done. We did a bill in March, and the May and June numbers looked pretty good but

then sunk again over the summer and fall. We did a bill in December, and the January numbers looked pretty good. But that is not evidence that the economy is able to sustain things on its own; that is evidence that the Federal Government needs to continue its role to get us back on track.

We have come a long way, but we have a long way to go. The American Rescue Plan is designed to build on our early progress and finish the job, to help our country get through the final months of the crisis and then, equally important, bring our economy roaring back.

We cannot go through the situation we did back in 2009, where the stimulus wasn't strong enough and we stayed in recession for years. So just because the numbers are not as bad as they were doesn't mean we don't need a continued strong push to get us out of this ditch and go upward and forward.

Now, we had always hoped that this very important work would be bipartisan. Regrettably, it seems that too many of our Republican colleagues are resorting to the same predictable objections they raise about nearly every proposal supported by a Democrat. It doesn't matter what is in the bill; everything my colleagues oppose is "a liberal wish list". That is what many of them call it.

Let me tell you, this bill is not a liberal wish list; this is an American wish list. When people want checks to help them get out of the morass, that is not a liberal wish list; that is what the American people want. It is an American wish list. When people want resources to open schools quickly and safely, that is not a liberal wish list; that is an American wish list. When people want assistance for the hardest-hit small businesses, that is not a liberal wish list; that is an American wish list. Funding to keep teachers, firefighters, transit workers, first responders in Red States and Blue on the job, it is not a liberal wish list; it is an American wish list.

So many of the people affected by this bill are not liberals or Democrats. They may be Republicans, they may be Independents, they may be conservatives, but they are Americans who want some help to get out of this morass.

Money to expand the testing and speed of the distribution of vaccines, the cornerstone of ending this crisis once and for all—that is not a liberal wish list; that is an American wish list. Everyone wants the vaccine out there. Direct checks, as I mentioned, as promised to Americans struggling to keep up with expenses, to buy their groceries, medicine, to pay the rent and utilities—that is not a liberal wish list; that is an American wish list.

I would ask my Republican colleagues to go ask their constituents which of these things their constituents oppose. None. That is what the data shows.

The American Rescue Plan will be the single largest anti-poverty bill in

recent history, with crucial assistance for American families, particularly those struggling with the cost of childcare. It will give tax breaks for low-income workers, so when they work hard, they can afford the necessities of life.

So these things are "the liberal wish list" that Republicans are talking about—support for schools and jobs and families and workers and the vaccine? No way.

Ironically, the "liberal wish list" includes a whole bunch of bipartisan amendments that were accepted, including provisions to help restaurants, sponsored by Senators SINEMA and WICKER; a vaccine public awareness program, sponsored by Senators CARDIN and PORTMAN; and a provision to better target direct payments, sponsored by Senators MANCHIN and COLLINS.

Make no mistake, the American Rescue Plan is a very, very strong bill that will move our country forward in amazing ways. It should come as no surprise that support of the American Rescue Plan is coming from all over the country.

Hundreds of business leaders—not the most liberal bunch—have urged Congress to pass this bill. More than 435 mayors and State leaders, Democrats and Republicans, have said the same: They want the bill. As one Republican mayor from Michigan put it, "The need is real, and not just in Democratic communities." He went on to tell his fellow Republicans in Washington who oppose the bill to "talk to some of the Republican mayors."

But if my Republican colleagues here in the Senate don't want to listen to the words of their fellow Republican mayors and Governors, they can look at the polls, which show the vast majority of Americans, including a majority of Republicans, support this bill.

It seems like the only people who are dead set against this bill are Republican Senators—not Republicans out in the country, not Republican mayors, not Republican businesspeople, not Republican small businesses.

I guess all of this should be expected. COVID-19 is not a Red State or a Blue State crisis. Our Republican friends should know that. It is not a Democratic or Republican concern. They should know that too. COVID-19 is a menace to all of us, and we should be banding together to fight.

The economic crisis has affected all of us, and the plan that we are going to vote on this week is going to provide real, robust relief for all of us.

Whatever our Republican colleagues decide to do, the Senate majority is intent on going forward and helping the American people with bold action quickly.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

 RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

 CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last year, Congress rallied five times around historic bipartisan legislation to meet urgent and unprecedented needs. Our COVID-19 packages reinforced the healthcare frontlines, fueled the sprint for vaccines, and cast lifelines for the workers and small businesses hit hardest by shutdowns.

Together, those bills cost about \$4 trillion, but none of those measures passed the House of Representatives with less than a bipartisan supermajority of about 80 percent—completely overwhelming support.

Then, last week, House Democrats rammed through the American Rescue Plan Act on a razor-thin margin of 50.7 percent. The only thing bipartisan about their bill was the opposition to it. Their bill costs about \$2 trillion. That is roughly the same size as the entire CARES Act that saved our health system and economy through months of shutdowns last year. Even liberal experts admit this is far out of proportion to what is needed now, with vaccines going into arms and the economy already primed to literally roar back.

Amazingly, Democrats managed to allocate less than 9 percent—9 percent—of their massive bill to the entire healthcare response; 9 percent of the \$1.9 trillion related to the healthcare response, and—listen to this—even less than 1 percent of the \$1.9 trillion to the vaccines that will actually finish the fight.

They needed to save the other 91 percent of the borrowed money for a vast catalog of liberal spending with basically no relationship whatsoever to beating COVID-19. For example, they want to send wheelbarrows of cash to State and local bureaucrats to bail out mismanagement from before the pandemic. They are changing the previous

bipartisan funding formula in ways that will especially bias the money toward big blue States. This outraged a bipartisan group of Governors, largely from middle America, who went on record this week. There are generous new benefit packages for government employees. There are provisions to let abortion providers drain money from rescue programs that were built to save Main Street small businesses. There is a strange new Acela corridor kickback where they will make Medicare send more money to just New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Delaware.

Just looking at the timeframe for all of their spending belies any notion that this is an urgent rescue plan.

Take the K-12 funding which, contrary to science, Democrats say is a prerequisite for opening schools. Ninety-five percent of that supposedly urgent money would not be spent this fiscal year but, instead, over the next 7 years. Let me say that again. Ninety-five percent of the money for K-12 is not going to be spent this year, but over the next 7 years. That is not my definition of an emergency.

Grants for rural healthcare would be on a slow drip out through fiscal 2024. Agriculture-related funds would trickle out over the next—listen to this—over the next decade. It doesn't sound very urgent to me.

What the American people need are fast-acting plans to get schools reopened now, get laid-off workers back into jobs, and finish the fight against this virus right now. The Democrats have, instead, drawn up a liberal omnibus to fund miscellaneous government spending over the next decade.

We are adding all this money to the national debt, and they have a rescue package with most of the money being spent out far in the future. That is why there was bipartisan opposition over in the House. That is why aspects of the House bill are already dropping like flies before this thing even hits the Senate floor.

A pet project for the San Francisco Bay area is gone. Special upgrades for a bridge connecting New York to Canada, gone. Even CNN had to admit these were "controversial." Senator SANDERS' far-left minimum wage policy that would have killed 1.4 million jobs just as we try to recover appears to be gone, too—at least for now.

According to public reports, right now, as we speak, several of our Democratic colleagues are frantically trying to trim back other crazy provisions: the runaway government bailouts, the policies that will keep workers at home when we should be focusing on rehiring.

Just a few days ago, President Biden's Chief of Staff bragged that this smorgasbord of borrowed money will add up to "the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation."

So that is what you get when the Democratic leader persuades all of my distinguished friends across the aisle that their first undertaking as Senate

committee chairmen should be to outsource all their gavels to the House.

The Senate wrote the CARES Act. In the earliest days of the crisis, this Chamber took the bull by the horns. I personally assembled bipartisan task forces that crafted urgent solutions to help America weather the storm.

This time around, on the substance, the Senate has been largely missing in action. House Democrats are bristling and publicly pushing back if our Senate Democratic colleagues even try to make their mark on this partisan bill in small ways.

So these two radically different processes have generated two radically different pieces of legislation.

The Democrats had a choice. They chose to go it alone, tack to the left, leave families' top priorities on the cutting-room floor.

 IMMIGRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on a completely different matter, just 6 weeks into unified Democratic government, we already have another crisis brewing on our southern border. In January, Customs and Border Protection logged more than 78,000 encounters on our southwest border, more than double the figure from January of 2020.

Last week, HHS sources told reporters we just logged the busiest February in the history of the Unaccompanied Alien Children Program. The number of kids turning up on our border with no parents is soaring, and everyone expects the numbers to keep climbing.

Now the Biden administration is reportedly planning to reopen the same kinds of emergency shelters over which Democrats vilified the Trump administration a couple of years back. Both President Biden and his Secretary of Homeland Security have said this week they don't think this is a crisis. Not a crisis, they say? Well, if this isn't a crisis, with unaccompanied kids pouring in and exceeding the capacity in a pandemic, I would hate to see what one looks like.

The cause of this emergency is not some mystery. It is not mysterious at all. Everybody knows exactly what happened. The new administration explicitly campaigned on weakening border security, and 6 weeks in, they have reversed the "Remain in Mexico" policy, begun letting more people in in a haphazard way, and broadcast confusing mixed messages.

The L.A. Times says: "Biden immigration policy stirs confusion at Mexico border." They interviewed one woman who crossed the Rio Grande "on a smuggler's raft" and was only briefly detained before being released into our country. She explained she had specifically come because of the new Biden administration: "That gave us the opportunity to come."

Another reporter put it this way: "The message received in Tijuana and other Mexican border cities was