

they want to be treated. And, finally, when leaders know they are right, they are sure they are right, they don't give up. They just don't give up.

Michael Regan is that kind of leader. We need that kind of leader, and I am convinced that he is the leader we need for his critical role at this critical time in our Nation's history.

So, Madam Chair and colleagues, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I urge all of my colleagues to support his nomination.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The junior Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today to discuss my opposition to the nomination of Michael Regan for Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Now, before I begin, let me be very clear. I really liked meeting and getting to know Michael Regan. He is a dedicated public servant and an honest man. He had a beautiful family with him, and he answered the questions as straightforwardly as I think he thought he could. I have enjoyed getting to know him through my role as the ranking member on the Environment and Public Works Committee, and I appreciated the willingness he expressed to visit my home State of West Virginia. But this vote is not based on what Mr. Regan might do if he had his say; this vote is about confirming someone to execute President Biden's agenda, which Mr. Regan said he would faithfully do, and I cannot support that agenda. I cannot support that agenda that Secretary—if confirmed—Regan would be tasked with implementing.

Throughout his confirmation process, Secretary Regan did not commit to a different policy agenda than that of the Obama administration—an agenda that absolutely devastated my State and other energy-producing States.

In his nomination hearing, Secretary Regan, because he is secretary of North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality, would not comment as to whether the so-called Clean Power Plan or something worse would be re-instituted. He did not rule out a return to the WOTUS rule. He could not say whether the EPA would again claim overarching authority to force States to shift their electricity generation sources. He could not commit to real changes, and that is because the agenda is already set. Climate czar Gina McCarthy and others have already set the table.

InsideEPA recently reported:

Administration observers are questioning whether Michael Regan . . . could face a di-

minished role if he wins Senate confirmation due to the large number of Obama-era officials who have returned to the agency and the White House to work on implementing Biden's environmental agenda.

The article went on to say:

[T]hese sources also say that because there are so many officials now working on climate change policies across the Biden administration, this could lead to "turf wars" between EPA and the White House on this issue.

Well, I share those concerns.

For almost 2 months now, unaccountable czar Gina McCarthy has been working both behind the scenes and in front of the press to lay the groundwork for the Biden administration's agenda. She is wielding her power publicly to make it clear who is calling the shots and directing the troops.

McCarthy herself said recently:

I've got a small stronghold office, but I am an orchestra leader for a very large band.

She is operating this "stronghold" office with no transparency outside of the Senate confirmation process. It would be bad enough with just a turf war between an equally matched White House and EPA, but we know that McCarthy is poised to have influence within the EPA too.

In addition to the Obama EPA alums already in place, the nomination of Janet McCabe to serve as EPA Deputy Administrator has only increased my concern and made it worse.

In 2019, McCabe, McCarthy, and another alum of the Obama EPA wrote an op-ed fully backing the overreaching Clean Power Plan. They admitted that their Clean Power Plan was a War on Coal. They stated:

The best way to cut emissions is to shift electricity generation from the dirtiest plants, which happen to use coal.

So they were willing to say it outright once they were out of public office. They are willing to admit to their War on Coal. It upsets me because they wouldn't say it to the people of my State when they were in the office. They didn't have the courage to look the people in West Virginia—they didn't even come to our State to talk about it—to look them in the eye and admit they wanted to wipe coal off the map. Had they come, they would have had to hear in person, eye to eye, the harm, the devastation that workers in our coal industry and many other associated industries in West Virginia were facing.

WVU economist John Deskins put that harm into perspective in testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee at a hearing in 2015. He observed:

In Central Appalachia, coal production has fallen by 51 percent since 2010, compared to a decline of 10 percent from the nation's other coal-producing regions. . . . [N]early all of the coal job losses that have occurred in West Virginia have come from our state's southern coalfields. The concentration of these job losses has created a Great Depres-

sion—

Great Depression—in six southern counties—Boone, Clay, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, and Wyoming

[Counties]. Job losses over the past four years range between—

Remember, this is in 2015—

25 and 33 percent in each of these counties.

That is how many jobs were lost.

John Kerry stood alongside Gina McCarthy in the Oval Office in January and talked about how workers in the fossil fuel industry can just become wind turbine technicians or solar panel technicians. John Kerry doesn't really know what it actually means to be any type of these workers.

Brad Markell, a representative from the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council, explained some of the differences to the Washington Post. He said:

You get guys that are coming off of fossil jobs in the Dakotas or the wind belt, and are making, you know, eighty, ninety, a hundred thousand a year. [To put wind turbines up], they're looking at thirty to thirty-five thousand, with either no or substandard benefits.

In President Biden's White House, we have unaccountable—and either misguided at best or uninformed at worst—czars trying to do what they think is best for this country.

So let's go back to Secretary Regan. In his hearing, he talked in depth about his work with Republicans in North Carolina and his commitment to transparency, and both of the Republican Senators from his home State came and introduced him to our committee and spoke very well of his ability to work across the aisle.

I appreciate that greatly, and I welcome that, but the fact remains that I can't support Secretary Regan when Gina McCarthy is the self-described orchestra leader for the Biden administration and Kerry is basing so-called "transition" policies on a fantasy world that does not exist.

I am very skeptical that the next 4 years will be any better than the 8 years of economic devastation brought on by President Obama's EPA. So, without commitments to different policies than what were pursued in the Obama EPA, I cannot support Secretary Regan today. But, you know what? I hope he proves me wrong. I hope he makes good on his promise to work with Republicans to help address climate issues.

As ranking member of the EPA Committee, I stand ready to just do that. We have so much common ground on climate issues. I hope Secretary Regan can cut Gina McCarthy out of power and let her know who is calling the shots for environmental policy in the Biden administration. I hope Secretary Regan embraces President Biden's mandate of unity and works with both red and blue States to take care of our planet. Until then, I will continue to look out for my State and practice aggressive oversight on what I think may be coming.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The Senator from Virginia.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. KAIN. Madam President, good afternoon. I rise today to talk about

the American Rescue Plan and its effect on my economy.

It has been a tough year. It was a year ago tomorrow that I sent my Senate staff home for a trial-run, 2-day telework in case we ever were to need it, and they never came back. Until now, as people are starting to get vaccinated, they are coming back personally to the office after having worked, in a pretty amazing way, virtually for the year.

It was just about a year ago that I got coronavirus. It was just about a year ago that I gave my wife coronavirus. It has been a long, long year: more than 500,000 Americans dead, more than 10 million still out of work. After sizable work by Congress in five bills in 2020 to inject resources into the economy, we are still down 10 million jobs.

But today is a bright day. Just within the last few hours, the House of Representatives passed the Senate bill that we sent to them Saturday afternoon on the American Rescue Plan, building off the original House proposal, and that bill is filled with things that will make a tangible difference nearly immediately in the lives of so many Americans: payment to everyday families, individuals, children; acceleration of the vaccine deployment; resources so that we can open our schools and our colleges and our childcare centers, which are all preconditions to seeing the economy reopen.

In Virginia—just making this about my home Commonwealth—State and local governments in Virginia will receive about \$6.8 billion to cover costs of COVID, revenues lost due to COVID, but also projects that can help the economy accelerate so that we can climb out of the economic catastrophe that has been COVID.

Eighty-four percent of Virginians—that is more than 7 million people, 2 million of whom are children—will receive stimulus checks because of the bill the Democrats got passed in the House and Senate.

Just think of that. Seven million Virginians will receive stimulus checks. The average per filer—and many file jointly, so this will be sort of a household average—would be nearly \$3,000.

The child tax credit portion of the American Rescue Plan will provide additional resources on top of those checks to 1.6 million Virginia children, lifting 85,000 currently below the poverty level to above the poverty level. Just in my State, 85,000 children below the poverty level will no longer be there.

The expanded earned income tax credit in Virginia will affect nearly 420,000 adults, enabling them to work with more dignity, with less financial stress, as they try to manage the challenges of their life in this tough time.

Also, 250,000 adults whose unemployment benefits were in danger of expiring are now protected through early September because of the bill.

Small businesses, which have suffered so much, will get a significant uplift—just restaurants, with the \$28 billion restaurant fund in the American Rescue Plan. There are 15,000 restaurants in Virginia, all of which have suffered because of COVID, because of social distancing requirements, supply chain challenges, workers who have been out sick. That \$28 billion fund offers great hope for my restauranters.

For Virginia education, our local school systems—134 cities and counties operate K–12 systems—will receive more than \$2 billion to deal with the costs of COVID, including expanded broadband so that their students can have better access to online course curriculum, including money that could be used for summer instruction, for example, so that we can tackle learning gaps that occurred during the last year; and \$845 million for Virginia higher education institutions.

And something that I am particularly excited about—I have a child who is an early childhood worker. That is what he does. Forty percent of Virginia childcare centers were closed for much of the year because of the pandemic. Virginia will receive nearly \$800 million in additional childcare support so our childcare centers can be open, which will not only be good for children but will enable their parents to return to work more easily.

In the healthcare space, accelerations of vaccines, lower healthcare premiums because of expanded subsidies for those who are purchasing insurance, mental health expansion to deal with the significant psychological and emotional traumas of the last year, housing, food, transit, broadband, pension reform.

There is so much in this bill for Virginians. There is so much in this bill for the residents of red States, blue States, in-between States. Every ZIP code in the United States, every family in the United States will see some impact that they can see, touch, and feel.

It is not often that you pass a bill where you can say this about it—that the tangible results for virtually every American will be seen so quickly.

I want to focus a little bit, having talked about the tangible benefits in Virginia, just on the analysis of the bill nationally, and I have a couple of charts I want to show.

Coincidentally, or maybe not coincidentally, the size of the American Rescue Plan was pretty close to the size of the Trump tax cuts that were done in December of 2017. The Trump tax cuts were about \$1.9 trillion, and the American Rescue Plan ended up being at about \$1.75 trillion. So they are pretty close.

And what these two plans demonstrate, if you look at the Trump tax plan and you look at the American Rescue Plan, is that you will see how very, very different the priorities of the two parties are. The recovery plan passed in this body with every Democratic vote and no Republican votes.

The Trump tax plan passed in 2017 with every Republican vote and no Democratic vote. I believe these two plans are almost a perfect representation of the priorities of the two parties right now in this body—not just in this body but all around the country.

If you analyze the content of these two bills, which were nearly identical in size, you can definitely understand a lot about the priorities of the two parties. On the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the Trump tax cuts, 54 percent of the \$1.9 trillion benefit went to people making more than \$75,000 a year, 16 percent went to people making less than \$75,000 a year, 31 percent were tax cuts for businesses.

If you look at the American Rescue Plan, you see something very, very different: 44 percent of the aid was aid to individuals, 21 percent was pandemic and other policies that focus on getting us out of the healthcare crisis, 9 percent is to our schools and universities, 18 percent for our State and local governments to try to forestall massive layoffs of governmental employees, and then 8 percent are tax cuts to individuals.

These are very different priority sets between the GOP's key accomplishment with the 2017 tax cuts and now this accomplishment that the Democrats have worked so hard to achieve in the American Rescue Plan.

This tells you about priorities, but the next chart is probably my favorite because I think it makes it even clearer. This is a chart that shows the benefits of both the American Rescue Plan in blue and the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in red, and I don't think those colors were coincidentally done by my staff.

It shows how the benefits of these two bills—they are identical in size—were arrayed across the income groupings, income quintiles of the American public. The top 20 percent of the American public in income got 65 percent of the benefit from the Trump tax cuts. They get 11 percent of the benefit from the American Rescue Plan.

In the 60-to-80-percent quintile, you will see that the two plans were pretty close to equal. Not exactly—the Democratic plan was a little bit better in terms of the benefits at that level. But as you move into the 40-to-60-percent quintile, that midrange of Americans, the Democratic proposal gave much more of the benefit to people in that income frame, that income quintile, than the Republican proposal.

In the 20-to-40-percent range, it is quadruple the Democratic allocation of benefits to that lower middle-class portion of the American public, quadruple what the Republican tax plan allocated.

But what you really see is, in the lowest quintile income of the American public, the people who struggle the most and during the pandemic were hurt the most, 23 percent of the benefits of the American Rescue Plan went to that lowest 20 percent of the American public while only 1 percent of the

benefit of the Trump tax cuts was allocated to that hard-hit, struggling group of people.

Again, if you want to look at the priorities of the two parties by analyzing these two sizable bills that each side claims is an accomplishment they are proud of, you just need to look at this particular chart and understand who each side, each party, is battling for and who is each side, each party, trying to help.

Finally, one last chart and then a concluding comment. The last chart shows the poverty rate in this country beginning in 2007. Now, we know we had an economic challenge in 2008, 2009, 2010 that was significant, and then the poverty rate started to come down late in the Obama first term and continued to come down into the Trump first term. But you will see what has happened since 2017 with the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. If that had not happened, the poverty rate would have started to tick back up again after having come down for a number of years.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act did have an effect on the poverty rate. It knocked it down a little bit. So there was a positive effect on the poverty rate from the Republican tax proposal, but it was not very significant.

But the projection about the American poverty rate following the passage of the American Rescue Plan is a dramatic reduction—a dramatic reduction of poverty from more than 12 percent down to poverty just above 8 percent—and we would expect to see that by the end of the year.

We are not talking about by the end of the decade or by the end of 5 years or by the end of this Congress. We are talking about by the end of the year.

I think these charts—and, again, particularly this chart that arrays the benefits of both the tax cuts bill of 2017 and the American Rescue Plan and shows to whom the benefits were allocated—speak volumes about two very different philosophies about the economy, two very different philosophies about equity, two very different philosophies about how to truly include everyone in legislation that is big, tough, challenging legislation.

Finally, I will say this as I conclude: The passage and the signing of the American Rescue Plan will also start a realtime economic experiment because the Republican tax plan was done in 2017, and we can measure what that has done and what it hasn't done from 2017 to the beginning of the pandemic. You would not want to include the pandemic necessarily; that wouldn't be a fair way to measure. But if you look at the passage of the tax cut plan in December of 2017, say, to March of 2020, you can get a pretty good view of what that tax bill did or didn't do to the American economy.

Now, in the passage of the American Rescue Plan and the allocation of the benefits of the plan, as demonstrated here, we are going to start the clock on a realtime experiment of a different

economic philosophy. If you take government action and you try to direct the focus of it on middle and lower income people, my surmise is, those dollars will likely be spent; they will be spent in community institutions and stores and purchasing properties or maybe buying a car. They will be spent, and they will have a multiplier effect throughout the economy. They are not going to be used to buy back stock. They are not going to be used or socked away because there is nowhere to spend it.

I think you will see that the spending effect of allocating benefits in this way is going to have a significant, positive effect on the American economy at a time when it needs it and at a time when the people who are most helped are most in need.

We need to build an economy coming out of this crisis that is not only robust but that is also sustainable, meaning environmentally sustainable but sustainable and less subject to boom, busts in areas that leave people high and dry. We also need to build an economy that is more equitable, not measured just by GDP increase or stock market increases that can affect some but measure more in statistics like wages, reduction of poverty, startup of new businesses that demonstrate an economic vitality that is spread broadly among the population.

We are starting the realtime clock on that experiment today. We will be able to compare the value of the \$1.9 trillion tax cut to the \$1.75 trillion American Recovery Plan in years to come. And I am very, very excited to understand that because I think it may point the way forward to additional economic advances that will make us stronger.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL STANLEY REGAN

Mr. BURR. Madam President, I rise today to support the nomination of Michael Regan to be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. One look at Michael's resume should make it clear to my colleagues that he is immensely qualified for this position, not only in qualifications but in his demeanor.

Michael is a proud North Carolinian who, over the last 4 years, has ably served as secretary of the North Carolina department of environment. You will consistently hear from those who have worked with him in this role that whether they agreed or disagreed on a given policy, he always listened and looked to find agreement.

This type of praise is not easy to come by on environmental matters, but it is exactly what we should ask of any nominee to ensure everyone gets a fair hearing at their Agency. That is exactly why North Carolina's agricultural community supports his nomination.

It is our job to ascertain whether a nominee has the knowledge and experience to do the job that the President

has nominated them for, but, too often, we overlook whether a nominee has the right character to lead an organization. In this case, there is no question that Michael Regan has that character.

I have had the pleasure to get to know him over the last several years and to see firsthand his sincerity and love for his family. I know when a man of this caliber is confirmed, he will bring those same qualities to the Agency he leads, bolstering the EPA and ensuring that communities reliant on agriculture for their livelihood will be listened to.

In closing, Michael Regan is a good man. He is the right man to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. And I would urge you and urge my colleagues to confirm him to be the next Administrator of the EPA.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I am here this afternoon to speak in opposition to H.R. 1, the so-called For the People Act. Every American—no American should be fooled by the wholesome title of H.R. 1. H.R. 1 is an affront to the U.S. Constitution, and the drastic impact this legislation would have on federalizing elections, restricting free speech, and accelerating the divide in this country—that divide between left and right, rural and urban, red States and blue States—would be terribly damaging to our Nation.

We often hear that elections have consequences. In November, Americans voted for a Congress that is nearly a 50-50 split between the parties in the House and precisely a 50-50 split in the Senate. If elections have consequences, then the consequence American voters may have had in mind was to encourage Congress to put aside partisan differences and to work together to do its job on their behalf.

Americans did not vote to give one party free rein to implement an unprecedented power grab, to nationalize elections, and to strip power from States and localities from now into perpetuity, forever.

I am a conservative, and I believe in the primacy of individual liberties and in a Federal Government that exercises restraint. I believe that State and local units of government are inherently more responsive to the wishes of our citizens. Article I, section 4 of the Constitution states that "Time, Places and Manner" of congressional elections "shall be prescribed [by the States]." My adherence to the Constitution thus instructs deference to State governments to oversee their own elections, as they always have and always should.

There are so many problematic and, frankly, unconstitutional aspects of