

Mr. Buttigieg agreed to work with me on this issue.

I also enjoyed discussing autonomous vehicle legislation with him. He shares my interest in the technological, environmental, and safety benefits self-driving vehicles can offer, and I look forward to working with him on this issue.

Highway bills have always been a place for bipartisan cooperation, and the bill released last Congress by Senators BARRASSO and CARPER was no exception. I hope that bipartisan tradition will continue in this Congress and that Democrats and Republicans can work together to deliver a significant infrastructure package in the near future.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, on the subject of bipartisanship, I am disturbed by the rumors that Democrats plan to use reconciliation to force another COVID bill through Congress on partisan lines before even giving good-faith effort to bipartisan negotiations.

Republicans are more than willing to work with Democrats on additional targeted COVID relief legislation.

Now, I won't pretend that we don't have reservations about some of the measures that Democrats have proposed. For instance, I don't think an emergency COVID relief bill is the place to push through a change that would more than double the Federal minimum wage and directly increase expenses on businesses that have been decimated by the pandemic. That is a policy with a lot of economic consequences, and it shouldn't be pushed through Congress in a hasty fashion.

Republicans are also concerned about the enormous amount of money that Democrats want to spend. We have already spent more than \$4 trillion to address this pandemic, and we need to be very careful—very careful—about additional spending and appropriate only what is necessary to respond to this pandemic and with an eye to the burden that we are putting on the economy and on young Americans as we increase our national debt.

The higher our national debt, the greater the drag on economic growth and the more likely it is that young Americans will face increasingly burdensome tax bills in the future to meet our debt obligations.

But let me be very clear. While Republicans certainly have concerns about some of the Democrats' proposals, we are committed to defeating this pandemic and to getting Americans vaccinated, and we are ready to work with Democrats on any necessary COVID relief legislation that would achieve that objective.

It would be very disappointing if Democrats decided to shove a partisan bill through Congress without even attempting to work with Republicans.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, before I close, I want to take a moment to recognize those South Dakotans participating in the virtual March for Life tomorrow.

We have gotten used to saying "it is going to be a little different this year" during the pandemic, and that applies to the March for Life as well. Usually, tens of thousands of Americans travel to Washington, DC, every January to participate in the march—Americans from every State in the union, of every political persuasion, of every religion or none at all—all united by their commitment to defending the dignity and value and humanity of the unborn child.

This year the march will be virtual, but pro-life Americans will still be united in spirit. To all of those South Dakotans virtually marching tomorrow and to all those Americans everywhere united in the pro-life cause, thank you. Thank you for standing—standing up every year on the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision.

Most of all, thank you for everything that you do throughout the year, because the biggest work of the pro-life movement happens outside of the March for Life. It happens in churches around America, where congregations collect money to support prenatal care for pregnant women in need or gather diapers and baby supplies to give to struggling mothers. It happens on college campuses, where pro-life students educate their peers about the reality of abortion. It happens in crisis pregnancy centers, where moms and dads facing unplanned pregnancies are met with resources and love and support. It happens at maternity homes, where single moms get the support they need to have their babies and to build job skills or get an education.

Every day, you are building a culture of life in this country with your work and your political action and your prayers. I know that is not always easy, but the race is not to the swift nor the strong. It is to those who endure, and I am confident that, sooner or later, right and justice will prevail because we have the truth on our side—the truth that every human being, no matter how old or how young, no matter the race or the color of their skin, no matter their religion or political persuasion, is created in the image and likeness of God and has infinite dignity and worth.

So keep standing up for the babies, and tomorrow I will be joining my prayers with yours that one day soon the right to life of unborn human beings will be protected in law.

May God bless you all.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, our Nation was founded on an incredibly powerful and truly audacious idea. The idea was that every single human being was created equal, with rights that come from your Creator, from God—not from the government, not from the laws, not even from the Constitution or your leaders. You are born with those rights. Inherent in that is our powerful national commitment that I think remains to this day, the belief that everyone should have freedom and that everyone—because freedom comes with those rights—and that everyone be treated fairly.

For 244 years, our story has been that of a nation on a continuous and a steady march to live up to those ideals. Tomorrow, thousands will come to Washington once again for a different march but one that I believe is tied directly to this Nation's ongoing quest to fulfill the promise of its founding.

Almost half a century ago, the Supreme Court of the United States decided that within our Constitution, there was the implicit right to end the life of an unborn child. Since then, every single day in this country, unborn human beings have had their life ended before they even drew their first breath. They are, in essence, denied the freedom to live, not because they did anything wrong; they are denied this most basic of rights unfairly because of circumstances they have nothing to do with and do not control.

That this occurs here is shameful enough, and I believe that is how history will regard it; that we use taxpayer money to promote it and export it abroad is outrageous.

Before we even passed a bill to deal with the pandemic or to bring back good jobs to the United States or any of the other major issues confronting our country, in one of his first acts as President, President Biden decided to prioritize tearing up the so-called Mexico City policy—a policy that rightfully bans our taxpayer dollars from being sent to organizations that use them to perform or promote abortions overseas.

Abortion is a very difficult and uncomfortable topic. No one can pretend that if some 15-year-old girl is pregnant and afraid—afraid of her parents, afraid of what others might think, afraid for her future—that she faces an easy choice. It is not.

It doesn't feel fair, it doesn't feel like freedom to have laws that tell people what they can or cannot do with their body, but in this case, the challenge we have is that it is a case that puts the fundamental rights of two people into direct conflict—the right, as most definitely exists, of a mother to choose what to do with her body versus the right of an unborn child to live. It

forces us to decide which one of these two rights wins out in those circumstances.

I personally, for one, and those who march tomorrow have chosen life—not because it is an easy choice but because, to me, it is a clear one because the right to live is the one right upon which all the other rights we claim depend. Without life, there is no speech to protect, and there is no religion to practice. Without life, frankly, nothing else matters.

I would point out that being pro-life is not just about the right to be born; it also means the right to live and to thrive. Once a child is born, that child depends on their parents or whoever their guardians are who are raising them, and they have a moral and legal duty to care for them—not just to feed them, not just to clothe them, not just to house them, but also to promote a safe and stable home and the chance at a good education and a better future.

That is why I deeply believe that pro-life must also mean being pro-parent. Being a parent is the most influential role anyone will ever have. It is the most important job any of us will ever have. That is why I worked to and we were successful in expanding the child tax credit 2 years ago. That is why I stand ready now to work with President Biden to expand it even further.

I am concerned about some of the details of the policies he has outlined. For example, his proposal appears to unfairly benefit parents who send their children to commercial childcare over stay-at-home parents or grandparents or other caregivers. But this is an area where we have a common goal and one where I believe we can find a way to work together.

It is also why I support creating the opportunity for every parent in America to have access to paid family leave, because no one should be thrown into welfare or debt or bankruptcy because they got pregnant, because they had a child.

It is also, by the way, why I support school choice. In America, rich parents can afford to send their kids to any school they want, and they do. Upper middle class parents can move to neighborhoods with good public schools. But it is unfair that the only parents in America who are forced to send their children to the school the government tells them—even if that school is failing their children—are the parents who don't make enough money to have another option.

For 21st-century America to move closer to fulfilling our founding principle of equality, of freedom, of fairness, every child deserves the right not just to be born but also the right to live and to thrive, the right not just to exist but the right to pursue and fulfill their potential.

I believe that what is at stake is nothing less than our identity as a nation. If we become a place where your right to be born and your ability to succeed is determined by who your par-

ents are or by the circumstances of your conception, then we may remain, indeed, a rich and a powerful and an important country, but we will no longer be a special one.

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

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

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, it is nice to see you in the Chair, Mr. President. I haven't seen that for a while. Congratulations to you.

I feel like yesterday I was in the movie "Back to the Future." I rise today to voice my deep concern with the lengthy Executive order that President Biden issued yesterday pertaining to climate, and my larger concerns about where the Biden administration is moving with regard to their energy and environment agenda.

President Biden, very passionately, as we sat out on the steps, called for unity in his January 20 inauguration speech. But as his first actions, President Biden managed to kill thousands of jobs and paralyze America's industry—the energy industry.

His order yesterday put a moratorium on new oil and gas leases on Federal lands. This is an economic, energy, and national security disaster, in my view. This order moves America from energy independence back to relying on foreign sources for fuel—and a lot of times these are the countries that have much more lax environmental policies than we have right here in the United States.

The order also usurps our States' rights—the States' rights which are to manage their own energy industries.

As you know, I come from an energy-producing State. We have a proud heritage of that. So what about the States that rely on tax revenues from the energy industry to fund education? We see what has happened with education now under the pandemic. More headwinds into how do we deliver a great education product is a question we are going to be answering over the next several months and years. So any ideas?

I wonder if President Biden actually talked to any of the Governors of these States to see what the impact of what he was doing might have.

But what we saw yesterday in the press conference was President Biden and Gina McCarthy and John Kerry's ultimate goal, which is to ban fossil fuels. They were pretty upfront about that.

So my skepticism, when I hear that the administration is going to give industry time to transition and give workers a clean energy job—that is

where I found myself thinking: I am in "Back to the Future." I have heard this before because I vividly remember the empty promises of the past.

This is a deeply personal issue for me because I have lived through this. I have seen this playbook before. So we are back to the future.

The Obama administration said the very same things to West Virginians. In fact, I remember the same people saying the same things, and I remember the utterly unachievable regulatory requirements that Gina McCarthy created in her position as head of the EPA that decimated my State.

I remember the thousands of jobs lost—and still lost—and the hopelessness and then the succeeding opioid epidemic that followed.

I remember begging the Obama EPA to come to West Virginia to see how the regulations, with no time to transition, were destroying more of our State's economy. They were destroying our families. They really didn't seem to care. The only response I got in one of my hearings was, well, they will come to Pittsburgh. Well, that is not coming to West Virginia.

Look, I am not here to just put down the Biden administration. I want to work with the administration, and I am going to be in a position to do that as ranking member on EPW. I want to be a part of the solution. I am not a climate denier. We all need to take care of our planet. We must be good stewards of our Earth, of our water. We know it is the right thing to do.

The free market is already moving in that direction, which was part of the presentation yesterday. Private companies are cutting their emissions. That is awesome. And as we see the emission figures, they have gone way down over the last 15 years.

Consumers moving toward greener products? That is great. I find myself doing that in my everyday living, and it is great. I feel like, in some ways, I am doing my small part at home.

But a national energy transition really needs time, and the Biden administration needs to be very clear about what their timetables really are.

They also need to be very clear about who is really in charge here. This is another one of my concerns. President Biden's nominees—Michael Regan; Jennifer Granholm; Brenda Mallory, at CEQ, Janet McCabe; and even Pete Buttigieg—have all been tasked with addressing climate. They are going to be tripping all over each other, before you even consider those avoiding Senate confirmation, process all of this together—McCarthy, Kerry, and a whole host of other czars who aren't accountable to Congress. So who is really going to be making the decisions? I think, from yesterday's press conference, it is pretty clear what the answer to that question could probably be.

Will this Cabinet actually wield any power or will the decisions be made in the White House in an effort to avoid public and congressional scrutiny?