

the American Rescue Plan that President Biden proposed and this Congress passed last month, sadly without one single Senate vote from our Republican colleagues; nor were there any House Republican votes in favor of it.

The American Rescue Plan, exclusively passed with Democratic votes, also included \$1,400 emergency stimulus checks to a majority of Americans, assistance for schools, small businesses, and State and local governments. Enhanced unemployment benefits, which were scheduled to stop last March, will continue until September. This is an economic lifeline for millions of Americans who lost their jobs during the pandemic.

The American Rescue Plan expanded the child tax credit and makes it fully refundable so that families who need it most can benefit from it now. America's child poverty rate today is one of the highest in the developed world. This action taken in President Biden's American Rescue Plan could cut child poverty in America by 40 percent.

We have been waiting for more than 40 years for the benefits of a tax cut for the rich to trickle down and solve these problems, to help working families, and to end poverty. It didn't work. Income inequality in America grew under the Republican plan, and now it is greater than it was at the start of the Great Depression. But in less than 40 days, the American Rescue Plan is already working. Here are the indications:

Last month, the number of families behind in rent fell by 2 million.

The share of adults who say they don't have enough to eat fell from 1 in 7 to 1 in 11.

The U.S. economy added 916,000 jobs.

In December, economic projections from the Federal Reserve had a forecast of the U.S. economy growing by 4.2 percent in 2021. After we passed the American Rescue Plan, that estimate jumped to a healthy, strong 6½ percent.

Last month, consumer confidence in America hit its highest level since the pandemic shut down the economy a year ago.

President Biden is also restoring America's role as a global leader. He used his first speech to a global audience at the Munich Security Conference in February to announce: "America is back, [and] the transatlantic alliance is back." And "diplomacy is back at the heart of U.S. foreign policy."

President Biden is consulting with our allies, not insulting them, and he is countering authoritarian strongmen instead of cozying up to them. Earlier this month, the Biden administration announced new sanctions against Russia and expelled Kremlin diplomats over Russian interference in the 2020 election. The SolarWinds cyber-espionage campaign that targeted important U.S. Federal Agencies and Fortune 500 companies and other hostile acts certainly merited that action by

the United States against Russia. Once again, America has a President willing to defend this Nation against attacks by a hostile government.

President Biden is also reasserting American leadership in the fight against climate change. On his first full day in office, he began the process to rejoin the Paris Agreement. Remember when President Trump withdrew from the Paris Agreement, making the United States the only Nation in the world that hadn't signed up for this effort? On Earth Day last week, President Biden hosted a virtual summit of leaders from 40 nations and announced that the United States will cut its carbon emissions by half by 2035. Under Joe Biden, America is ready to lead the global effort to avoid climate catastrophe and create good, new green jobs and industries of the future. Don't we owe that to our kids and grandchildren?

President Biden is returning normalcy and dignity to the Office of the President. At a townhall meeting in Wisconsin in February, the President told the Nation:

The next four years, I want to make sure all the news is about the American people.

He has replaced ego with empathy, chaos with competence, and division with decency and unity.

White House briefings are filled with information, not insults. The @POTUS Twitter account no longer fires off tweets in the middle of the night that are unsettling to Americans and even our allies.

One of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle complained. He recently bemoaned President Biden's Twitter feed when he said "unimaginably conventional." He meant that as a criticism. Most American people find it a relief.

Polls show that the majority of Americans approve of President Biden's leadership on the coronavirus and the economy. A new poll by the Kennedy School at Harvard finds that among young people between the ages of 18 and 29, 56 percent—a solid majority—say they are hopeful about America's future. That is the highest for any President in the 21-year history of the poll.

The challenges that President Biden and Vice President Harris inherited were historic. They won't be solved in a hundred days, maybe not in a hundred weeks. But in his first hundred days as President, Joe Biden has kept his promises and has begun to restore the most precious commodity of all—America's sense of hope and common purpose. Those qualities built this Nation, and they will build our future.

(Ms. HIRONO assumed the Chair.)

AMERICAN JOBS PLAN

Madam President, last week, a few of my Republican colleagues introduced their counterproposal to President Biden's American Jobs Plan. The senior Senator from Mississippi called the proposal a "good-faith effort." He wishes to engage with Democrats on an

issue that touches every community in America on a subject we all know—infrastructure.

I think I speak for the entire Democratic caucus in welcoming this effort from our friends across the aisle. As I mentioned earlier, when it came to the American Rescue Plan for vaccines and vaccinations and cash support for families and help for small businesses and schools, not a single Republican would join us. It is time for us to come together and work on a bipartisan basis. Maybe this is a start.

After all, infrastructure is what should unite us. Whether you live in Laurel, MS, or the Lake View section of Chicago, our roads, bridges, and our fiber-optic networks keep us connected and keep us moving.

As we emerge from this pandemic, it is clear that Americans are ready to get to work building a stronger country, a healthier country, and a more prosperous country. Sadly, though, the proposal from my Republican friends really fails to meet the once-in-a-generation opportunity test to transform America and make America a winner in the 21st century.

At a time when millions of Americans lack access to reliable, efficient transportation and millions more lack access to reliable high-speed internet, we can't settle for just repaving old roads or filling potholes. We need to invest in this Nation's future and put people back to work building a sustainable economic foundation for our children and grandchildren to grow and thrive. We need an infrastructure plan that is a blueprint for the world of tomorrow, not just a patchwork quilt focused on yesterday.

The way I see it, we are on the cusp of a world where America owns the clean energy economy and exports our union-made electric trucks and cars across the globe. Where workers can get to work easily by bus, train, or bike and working parents don't have to worry about finding a safe and affordable place to leave their kids when they are working. A world where, rather than reading about the Mesozoic Era in an outdated textbook, a child can throw on a virtual reality headset in the home or classroom and watch in awe as a T. rex swings its massive tail over their head. A world in which America makes and sells the new technologies of the sustainable economy to the world rather than buying them.

That is a future powered by the infrastructure of tomorrow. Under the American Jobs Plan, it is a future made in America. But we need to start building it today because, if we don't, I guarantee you somebody else will.

My friends, take a look across the ocean. Do we really believe that China, for example, is skipping on investing in its future? Absolutely not. They are already using technologies like artificial intelligence to ease traffic congestion in cities. They are installing facial recognition systems on their streets to keep tabs on jaywalkers and, sadly, tabs on ethnic minorities like Uighurs.

That is the difference between us and China. In China, the Communist Party uses technology to broaden the scope of its surveillance state. In America, we have an opportunity to show the world that technology and innovation can actually strengthen democracy by giving people the freedom to work the way they want with universal broadband and to move around the way they want with new forms of transportation.

The President's American Jobs Plan will give our kids an honest shot to thrive by eliminating lead pipes and service lines from our drinking water systems and making safe, affordable housing a reality for millions of working families.

I can't help but acknowledge my colleague Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH when it comes to clean water and new lead pipes and service lines for our drinking water systems. I am proud of the initiative and leadership that she has shown, working with other Members of the Senate, to make this a reality.

This is a unifying vision for the future. It is a model for global leadership. So let's not balk at the cost of making it a reality. This is not the time to think small. We are talking about a transformative undertaking, and that is part of what America has always been about.

More than half a century ago, Republican President Dwight Eisenhower launched the Interstate Highway System. It changed America. Today, the program's nearly 50,000 miles of expressway carry about one-fourth of all traffic in the United States. These roads connect our communities, have created communities, and serve as a bedrock for our economy.

In today's numbers, if you tried to rebuild the Interstate Highway System, it would cost half a trillion dollars—probably much more, to be honest. It is not a small sum. But, boy, it is an investment that paid off. The program generated \$6 in economic activity for every dollar spent to build those roads and highways.

And the fact is, today we need to invest in order to build our future. When President Eisenhower launched the Interstate Highway Program, we didn't have e-commerce or same-day shipments. It was more than 10 years before Neil Armstrong stepped foot on the Moon. Now, each of us carries around a pocket-sized device with more than enough computing power to get him to the Moon and back.

The world has changed—in many ways, for the better. Today, it is not sufficient for an infrastructure plan to begin and end with bridges and roads. If we want to support a modern economy and sustain growth for generations to come, we need to invest in the infrastructure for tomorrow.

This isn't to say that we have all the answers on this side of the aisle. But there is one answer we should all get behind: Go big; go bold. We can't penny-pinch America into first place.

And don't take it from me: Americans of all political stripes—Democrats, Independents, and Republicans—support marshaling the resources of the Federal Government to go big and bold on infrastructure. They want us to not only repair our highways and bridges but to rebuild our waterways and airports and make high-speed broadband internet available to everyone.

Americans support a plan that puts us on track to have an American century in the 21st century. That is our plan, and victory is within our reach.

There was an architect and designer in the city of Chicago in the transition from the 19th to the 20th century who helped design the Columbian Exposition, "White City," and a lot of history was made with those decisions. His name was Daniel Burnham. When he was asked about planning something like the White City, the Columbian Exposition, in the city of Chicago, he had a quote that you will turn to almost every day if you follow what is going on in planning in Chicago. Here is what he said: "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood"—and I might add, women—"They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized."

They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will not themselves be realized. I think we understand that.

As President Eisenhower gave America a vision with the Interstate Highway System, a connected nation and a new America, we need to do the same. President Biden has challenged us to do it. We need to do it on a bipartisan basis. I look forward to working with my colleagues to make it a reality.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY WILDCATS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, over the weekend, the University of Kentucky's women's volleyball team made history. The Wildcats hoisted the program's first NCAA volleyball national championship trophy after defeating Texas on Saturday night. The falling confetti in Omaha closed out an incredible 24-win season. The Wildcats' unmatched athleticism and resilience fueled their paths to the title.

Yesterday afternoon at UK's Memorial Coliseum, enthusiastic fans welcomed home their champions, including Madison Lilley, who was named the tournament's "Most Outstanding Player."

So I would like to extend the Senate's congratulations to the players,

Head Coach Craig Skinner, and the entire program. Kentucky and all of Big Blue Nation couldn't be prouder.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, on another matter, it has been nearly a month since the Biden administration rolled out its so-called infrastructure plan. It quickly became clear that their proposal mainly focused on everything but the things normal people call infrastructure.

The day this plan was introduced, the White House messaging document mentioned the words "climate" and "union" more often than "roads" and "bridges." And the numbers back that up. Out of more than \$2 trillion in proposed spending, less than 6 percent would go to roads and bridges. Even when you add in airports, ports, rail, and waterways, the total would still be exceeded by the amount going to electric vehicles alone. Even an Ivy League expert said using "infrastructure" to describe the totality of the bill "does a bit of violence to the English language."

So after a few days of trying to battle the English language, Democrats began to pivot. I understand this is no longer an "infrastructure" plan. Now it is a "jobs" plan. But that turns out to be just as dishonest. This proposal isn't any more focused on creating jobs than it is on fixing roads.

Even by the favorable metrics that the White House likes to use, this plan would cost Americans more than \$800,000 for every new job that would exist 10 years down the road.

Serious, bipartisan legislation to rebuild American infrastructure could have a big impact at a fraction—a fraction—of the cost. This plan is bloated, unfocused. It is not a targeted recipe for better public works.

When America actually puts our mind to things, we can do them. Remember Operation Warp Speed? But this isn't like that. This is a sloppy liberal wish list that would spend a lot and get very little in return.

The far left has been bragging about all the social engineering and welfare spending that is stuffed into these proposals. They have boasted that the DNA of the Green New Deal is all over this administration's agenda.

Roads, bridges, and ports are bipartisan priorities. Water infrastructure and broadband are bipartisan priorities. That is why when the Senate tackles honest-to-goodness infrastructure in a smart way, we almost always have wide bipartisan margins.

Last week, our colleague from West Virginia, Senator CAPITO, got together with the other ranking members of committees that deal with actual infrastructure. These Republicans put forward a smart proposal that would meet pressing needs in actual infrastructure.

So now comes the critical moment. Now is the time we learn whether Democrats really want to jump start