

scrutiny, and we proved it would actually cost money to close Ellsworth. We also pressed the Commissioners not to put all of our eggs in one basket when it comes to our Nation's security interests, highlighting the organizational risk of consolidating all of our B-1s at one location. The outlook was grim, but we stood our ground and we won the day and we were removed from the BRAC list that August.

But we didn't stop there. We got right to work on building up the base so that we would never again find ourselves in the same position. In 2007, we saw the Air Force Financial Services Center open at Ellsworth; 2011, saw the arrival of the 89th Attack Squadron and its command and control stations for MQ-9 Reapers. In 2015, a decade-long mission paid off with the quadrupling of the training airspace for the base. The Powder River Training Complex is now the largest training airspace in the continental United States and can be used for large-force exercises that draw combat aircraft from across the country, and it is well suited for B-21 training. This is just one of the efforts that we undertook to put Ellsworth in the best position possible to secure this new mission, and it is wonderful to see it pay off with yesterday's announcement.

I know that while South Dakota is celebrating today, others are disappointed in this decision. For those who were seeking to have the Main Operating Base 1 in their State but will now follow Ellsworth in the sequencing and wait a little longer for the B-21 mission to arrive, know this: My support for the B-21 enterprise will not lessen because we are at this milestone.

As I said, we argued 15 years ago that the United States should not put all its eggs in one basket when it comes to strategic assets. I stand by that reasoning to this day. Under the current bomber roadmap, every bomber base will keep a bomber mission well into the future. The Stealth B-21 will eventually replace our B-1s and Stealth B-2s at bases around the country. Meanwhile, our fleet of B-52s will be given new modern engines through a service life extension program. All of our bomber bases which have played and continue to play an essential role in our national security will continue to do so. Long-range strike will remain a team effort.

The core of our military strength is our men and women in uniform. They volunteer to lay down their lives, if necessary, in the service of our Nation, and it is incumbent on us here in Congress to do our part to ensure that they have the tools they need to succeed in their missions.

The B-21 is an essential part of that equation. I remind my colleagues that the United States is one of only three countries in the world that operate a strategic bomber. The other two countries are Russia and China, and they are both working to develop their own

next-generation bombers. We cannot afford to cede any ground.

The B-21 is scheduled to take its first flight in 2022 and should enter service around 2027. It will replace our aging B-1s, which have proven a workhorse over the last several decades, as well as two squadrons of B-2s.

But our small bomber fleet is growing smaller. Seventeen of the most structurally fatigued B-1s are being retired this year, which has actually permitted maintainers to concentrate resources on the remaining aircraft. Flight hours are up, and the B-1 has been a key component of the new Bomber Task Force missions.

But that doesn't mean a smaller bomber force is sustainable in the long run without reinvestment and modernization. Our national security requires that the B-21 Program move full-speed ahead. Fortunately, public reports indicate the B-21 Program is on-budget and on-time. "B-21 speeds to IOC," or initial operating capacity, reads a headline recently from June 3.

In an interview, the Air Force Global Strike Commander, Gen. Timothy Ray, detailed the agile and adaptive B-21 process. He noted that adding certain capabilities to the bombers could take one-tenth of the time it has for previous airframes.

The ability to incrementally add new capabilities and upgrades, instead of being forced to make wholesale block upgrades, should keep B-21 development moving quickly. And Congress—Congress can do its part by providing stable funding for the B-21.

Now, with the record of decision for Main Operating Base 1 signed, we also need to restart in earnest on the investments necessary to prepare Ellsworth for the B-21. We can now get to work building the high-end maintenance facilities for the B-21's stealth coating, training, and operations buildings for the new missions and a secure weapons facility for the nuclear mission.

Ellsworth has come a long way since it was placed on the chopping block 16 years ago.

I am grateful to the Air Force for this decision and the hard work by so many to get us here today. From BRAC to B-21, I am humbled to have been a small part of this effort, and I remain steadfast in my support for the mission and the men and women of the 28th Bomb Wing. I can't wait to get to work on this new chapter of Ellsworth's story.

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.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning, the Labor Department announced that it had observed the largest uptick in prices since the depths of the great recession back in 2008, and core inflation has reached a nearly three-decade high.

The latest data reinforced what too many Americans have already been experiencing firsthand: The Biden administration's partisan spending bill has blunted our Nation's economic recovery with higher prices at the gas pump and the grocery store, a tougher time for small businesses trying to staff up, and unemployment policies that incentivize too many Americans to simply stay on the sidelines.

Republicans and outside economists warned that the worst of these conditions actually could have been avoided, but Democrats chose to go it alone. As recently as a few days ago, it appeared that President Biden was open to a new, more consultative approach to major legislation. He and the leading Republican on a committee of jurisdiction were engaged in what appeared to be good-faith, bipartisan negotiations on infrastructure spending, but then the President decided to walk away.

Now, at the White House's direction, Democrats in Congress are making preparations to muscle through a bloated spending bill on a unilateral, partisan basis, and it is becoming clear that the sort of united, bipartisan action Ranking Member CAPITO has made possible within the EPW Committee is getting harder and harder to replicate.

The bipartisanship that has defined infrastructure policy for years is becoming the exception to Democrats' new partisan rule. It might have something to do with the fact that our Democratic friends have taken to using "infrastructure" as a code for a growing wish list of unrelated liberal spending.

The Biden administration's first infrastructure plan made that much clear from its rollout back in March. Remember, this was a multitrillion-dollar bill that proposed to spend more on electric vehicles than on actual roads and bridges. It contained so many leftwing pet projects that the authors of the Green New Deal boasted about just how much of their manifesto's DNA had actually rubbed off.

Well, the administration's approach clearly influenced a number of Democrats right here in the Senate. Last month, on the same day that Chairman CARPER and Ranking Member CAPITO were guiding a surface transportation bill to a unanimous vote, the Finance Committee was busy marking up a partisan plan to pick winners and losers in the market for reliable domestic energy.

Just this week, we watched their go-it-alone approach replicated by Democrats over in the House. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee had a perfect opportunity to reach consensus on surface transportation. Our

colleagues on the EPW Committee had left a clear roadmap on exactly how to cut a consensus deal, but instead, the House chairman forced his committee to mark up \$547 billion littered—littered—with Green New Deal policies.

Compared to the last multiyear highway bill, it nearly doubles the share of resources for mass urban transit projects, while upping the road-and-bridge funding Middle America relies on by not nearly as much. In contrast to smart permit-streaming steps taken by our colleagues' Senate bill, it largely neglects to help the communities and builders who spent years wading through Federal redtape before they can even break ground.

The recent history of investment in roads, bridges, waterways, airports, and broadband tells us that smart, targeted solutions are capable of earning overwhelming support. But until Democrats get serious, the road ahead for consensus action on our Nation's infrastructure will only get steeper.

ABORTION

Mr. President, now on another matter, unfortunately the administration's radical left turn touches much more than just infrastructure policy. In fact, it includes an unprecedented new threat to the basic dignity of human life.

On the campaign trail last year, President Biden announced that he would abandon a mainstream position he had held literally for decades: that taxpayer dollars should not be used to fund abortions. It was an alarming reversal. But under immense pressure from the far left, President Biden kept his radical campaign promise, shrugged off a commonsense precedent upheld by administrations of both parties for more than 40 years, and proposed a budget that entirely erases the protections of the Hyde amendment.

When asked about it at a hearing yesterday, the Secretary of Health and Human Services confirmed that the President's change of heart was not a mistake, saying: "The budget is a reflection of what the President has said." This new fringe stance on taxpayer-funded abortions aligns much more closely with the Secretary's own views, as our colleagues may recall from his confirmation process.

Now, it is no secret that the Democratic Party has been hurtling to the left on abortion in recent years. Here in the Senate, our colleagues have repeatedly blocked efforts to limit elective abortion after the 20th week. Their opposition keeps the United States in a rather inglorious company alongside China, North Korea, and just four other countries that fail to offer this basic protection to the unborn.

So President Biden's decision to abandon the Hyde amendment aligns him with an increasingly radical consensus among elected Democrats, but it puts him way out of step with the clear majority of Americans who oppose taxpayer-funded abortion.

The administration's budget request continues to make headlines for all the

wrong reasons, but its plan to sell out on longstanding protections for the most vulnerable Americans might just be the lowest of the low.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, now on one final matter, the latest data from Customs and Border Protection show that the current fiscal year has seen the highest number of migrant apprehensions since 2006. Let me say that again. We are 8 months into fiscal year 2021, but the CBP has already apprehended more migrants at our southern border than in any full year since 2006.

It is hard to overstate the humanitarian and security crisis that has unfolded this year. Monthly arrivals of unaccompanied minors reached their highest levels on record. Higher border traffic concealed an alarming rise of flows of deadly drugs like fentanyl. CBP recently announced its apprehensions even included individuals who are on the terrorist watch list.

The origins of this crisis are certainly not a mystery. The Democrats who have spent the last few months in the White House focusing on what to call it instead of how to fix it are the same Democrats who spent last year sending potential migrants dangerous mixed signals from the campaign trail: "You want to flee. . . . you should come." That was future President Biden. "No . . . they should not be deported." That was then-Senator KAMALA HARRIS.

Sure enough, CBP officials are reporting that many migrants they encounter believe that "there has been a change in immigration laws . . . a gap in enforcement on the U.S. border" under the new administration.

But if you ask now-Vice President HARRIS, the administration's point person on the border, there is apparently blame to be found everywhere but her own party's rhetoric on immigration, and there is value in going just about anywhere but the border itself.

This week, the Vice President's investigation of the root causes of migration brought her to Guatemala and Mexico. The administration's delegation was apparently keen to talk about factors like corruption and climate change, but the President of Guatemala had a different agenda. As he put it, "We asked the United States Government to send more of a clear message." Sound familiar?

Of course, one place Vice President HARRIS did not stop on her trip was the U.S.-Mexico border, and, bizarrely, when she even plans to do that remains completely unclear. When asked about it in an interview this week, the Vice President responded with a laugh: "I don't understand the point that you're making."

For months, the Biden administration has assured the American people that when it comes to our southern border, Vice President HARRIS has it covered, and they are betting on it. The White House budget request proposes no increase in funding for DHS,

whose agents are working overtime to contend with the crisis on the ground. Well, there are a lot of folks on both sides of the border who are still waiting for the point person to actually take charge.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 131, Zahid N. Quraishi, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Sherrod Brown, Jon Ossoff, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Tammy Duckworth, Brian Schatz, Chris Van Hollen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Robert Menendez, Richard Blumenthal, Patty Murray, Martin Heinrich, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patrick J. Leahy.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Zahid N. Quraishi, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

(Mr. WARNOCK assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. BALDWIN assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. WARNOCK assumed the Chair.)

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 83, nays 16, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 228 Ex.]

YEAS—83

Baldwin	Grassley	Peters
Barrasso	Hagerty	Portman
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Risch
Booker	Hickenlooper	Romney
Boozman	Hirono	Rosen
Brown	Hoeven	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cantwell	Kaine	Sanders
Capito	Kelly	Schatz
Cardin	Kennedy	Schumer
Carper	King	Scott (SC)
Casey	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Collins	Leahy	Sinema
Coons	Lee	Stabenow
Cornyn	Luján	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lummis	Thune
Cotton	Manchin	Tillis
Cramer	Markey	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Van Hollen
Daines	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Moran	Warren
Ernst	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wicker
Fischer	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Young
Graham	Padilla	