

of what Democrats are trying to achieve this year through the American Jobs and Families Plan, helping middle-class families stay in the middle class and breathe easier and helping poorer Americans climb that ladder to get there.

And nothing—nothing—will do more to advance that goal than the bill we are working on this year. The budget resolution agreed to by Democrats on the Budget Committee this week is the first step down a long road toward enacting a transformational change in our economy. It will allow us to pass the most significant legislation to expand support for American families since the era of the New Deal and the Great Society. If not quite Rooseveltian in scope, it is certainly near Rooseveltian. It is dramatic change to help average families do better.

The best way to understand the emerging legislation is in three broad categories: jobs, which will come through major infrastructure investments; families; and climate. We are going to create thousands upon thousands of good-paying jobs by investing in infrastructure and the training and apprenticeships that will help more Americans, including many of those who have been left out, get those jobs.

We are going to expand and strengthen the programs that support American families and introduce new ones, like paid family leave and a robust expansion of Medicaid to cover vision, dental, and hearing. I salute Senator SANDERS for putting it on the map and now making it a real possibility to happen.

And we are going to act on climate in a bold and comprehensive way, to reduce emissions, make our infrastructure more resilient, and create the green jobs of the future to meet the President's goals of an 80-percent reduction in dirty carbon that goes into energy production and a 50-percent overall reduction in the carbon we send to the atmosphere.

When Republicans held the majority in the Senate, unfortunately, their signature legislative achievement was a massive tax break for corporations and the wealthy. From one report I read, the top 1 percent got 83 percent of the benefits when the Republicans had power. What a difference when Democrats are in power. You know what the top 1 percent got in the ARP bill? Zero. Nada. Nothing.

God bless them. They are doing great. They don't need it.

Democrats, instead, are strengthening the backbone of the middle class, and that is what we are going to do in this jobs and family plan. American workers, American families are going to benefit while we address the generational challenge of climate change.

And as I have said from the start, Madam President—as I have said from the start—the two tracks of infrastructure are going to move in tandem. We are making good progress on both tracks.

We in the Democratic caucus heard from the President yesterday on the budget resolution. The meeting was wonderful. The excitement was palpable. The opportunity to do so much good for so many American families was in the air in that meeting. It was exciting. And, as that happened, the bipartisan working groups had many meetings on the bipartisan infrastructure framework as well.

Today, I am announcing that I intend to file cloture on the vehicle for a bipartisan infrastructure bill on Monday of next week. Senators will have until Wednesday of next week before the initial vote on cloture on the motion to proceed.

Everyone has been having productive conversations, and it is important to keep the two-track process moving. All parties involved in the bipartisan infrastructure bill talks must now finalize their agreement so that the Senate can begin considering that legislation next week.

And I am setting the same deadline, next Wednesday, for the entire Senate Democratic caucus to agree to move forward on the budget resolution with reconciliation instructions. The time has come to make progress, and we will. We must.

CANNABIS ADMINISTRATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Madam President, now on another issue, marijuana, 20 years ago, roughly a third of the population supported the decriminalization of marijuana. Today that number is almost 70 percent. Even deep-rooted South Dakota voted to legalize the adult use of marijuana.

Americans' perception of marijuana has, justifiably, changed, and it is time that Congress caught up and reformed our laws to reflect the popular wisdom and the science. So, yesterday, I joined with Senator BOOKER, who has been such a leader on this issue for so long, and Chairman WYDEN, who has been active on this issue as well, our Finance chairman, to introduce the Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act, which represents a monumental change because, at long last, it would take steps to right the wrongs of the failed War on Drugs. It would remove marijuana from the Federal list of controlled substances and expunge the criminal records of those with low-level marijuana offenses.

Many States are rapidly moving toward legalization, including my home State of New York. The legislature did that in this past session. These States show the potential for new industries that can give opportunities to long-forgotten entrepreneurs. Our law would establish fair administration so small businesses and communities of color can get their fair shake in the marijuana business.

And we would deal with expungement—the tragedy of a young person being arrested because they had a small amount of marijuana in their pocket but, because of the historic overcriminalization, they have a per-

manent, serious criminal record that prevents them, inhibits them from moving forward in their lives.

Now, I am the first majority leader to say it is time to end the Federal prohibition on marijuana, and as majority leader I am going to push this issue forward and make it a priority for the Senate.

In short, the Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act would help the Federal Government catch up with what much of the country already understands, that we need to rethink our approach to marijuana and end—end—decades of overcriminalization.

CHILD TAX CREDIT

Madam President, on a final matter, the CTC, I have a little chart here. Over the past 20 years, the cost of raising children in America has become ludicrously expensive. Everything—from diapers to housing, to healthcare, to college tuition—has risen in price, some of it rather steeply and dramatically.

Wages, unfortunately, have not kept pace, putting strain—ever more strain—on American parents. The cost of childcare alone can be roughly equivalent to buying a new car every single year. That is a big burden for so many families.

The pandemic, of course, made life even harder on America's families. So, in the American Rescue Plan, Democrats made sure that it included a dramatic expansion of the Federal child tax credit, to give families a little extra help during the once-in-a-century crisis.

And today—today—I am very proud to announce that tens of millions of Americans are going to see extra money land in their bank accounts, the first of monthly checks that will be disbursed through the expanded child tax credit. Let me say that again. Because of this law passed by Senate Democrats—sadly, unfortunately, not a single Republican voted for this much needed measure that will help the middle class and the poor—a vast majority of Americans, because of what we did, what we Senate Democrats did, will begin receiving a monthly check of \$300 for each child under 6 years old, and they will also receive \$250 every month for each child between 6 and 17.

Combined with the credits that apply next tax season, these payments total up to \$3,600 for every child under 6 and \$3,000 for every child 6 to 17. In short, it will amount to a substantial and potentially life-altering tax cut—tax cut—for American families.

If you are a middle-class mom or dad, this money will help defer the cost of groceries, rent, childcare, and maybe diapers, if you have an infant. Boy, they are expensive. I remember when my kids were little, compared to today, the cost. You can spend that money on something else if you need it, and it is going to go a long way to reducing the burdens that families face.

It also helps those kids in poverty. The expanded child tax credit will cut

childhood poverty nearly in half. Four million American children, they expect, will be lifted. And when you are a child born into poverty, through no fault of your own, you may not have proper nutrition and food. You may not have proper education or healthcare or housing. And, by the time you are 14 or 15, you are in a big ditch. Now, many, to their credit, climb out on their own, but this will prevent so many from going forward into that ditch.

So it helps the poor, and it helps the middle class. We are proud of that.

To all of America's moms and dads, check your bank accounts this week. Check your bank account. You may not even know this is happening. If you filed taxes in either of the past 2 years, or in both of them, and you qualify for the credit, you will see this money automatically. If you didn't file taxes in either of the past 2 years, you can go online—irs.gov/childtaxcredit—and sign up today. Let me repeat that, folks, for you listening. Go to irs.gov/childtaxcredit and sign up. It is very simple and easy to sign up, and as long as your kids have a Social Security number, they can get it.

Republicans have for a very long time claimed to be the party of tax cuts, but when you read the fine print, it turns out that the Republican Party is the party of tax cuts for the wealthy and the well-connected.

Democrats are sending this check to American parents for the child tax credit, \$300 per month, courtesy of President Biden and Senate and congressional Democrats. Again, unfortunately, every Republican voted no.

And I want to give a lot of credit to Senator BENNET of Colorado and Senator BROWN of Ohio and Senator BOOKER of New Jersey and Senator WYDEN of Oregon and so many others who fought for this issue and helped make it a reality that today is going to happen.

So we say to the parents of America: Starting today, help—real help, significant help—is on the way, not just for the wealthy, as the Republicans like to give it, but for the poor and the middle class.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

CUBA

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, throughout my career, I have been proud to amplify the voices of freedom fighters around the world, brave men and women working to secure the blessings of liberty that we enjoy here in America. And I have repeatedly shone a floodlight on the oppressive regimes that stand in their way. I have championed the pro-democracy movement in Burma, the brave advocates for freedom in Hong Kong.

Right now, the loudest cries for liberty are coming from pretty close to home. After enduring 60-plus years of socialist tyranny just 90 miles from American soil, the people of Cuba are

telling the world they have had enough—had enough. They have had enough of a regime that has stolen their dreams for decades. They have had enough of its stranglehold on information and on prosperity. They have had enough of its intimidation and its repression.

The past week's demonstration in the streets of Havana should represent a major turning point in the Cuban people's movement toward liberation. The regime's failed communist ideology has saddled generations of Cubans with a backward economy, inadequate services, and no means of justice or dissent.

Now, some naive Americans on the left seem intent on once again running interference for the Cuban regime. They still buy the propaganda that Cuba is a socialist paradise—paradise—with a model healthcare and education system that we should actually emulate. But the Cuban people see a different reality: an open-air prison that communism has run right into the ground.

Since the 1950s, the blight of Castro rule has driven many Cubans to flee to the United States. Generations of immigrants and their descendants have lived out and are living out American dreams of prosperity, achievement, and service. We are blessed to call them fellow Americans.

As Senator RUBIO put it so well this week, "The only country on this planet where Cubans are not successful is Cuba."

My hometown of Louisville is actually home to one of the largest Cuban-American populations in any American city outside of Florida. In recent days, this vibrant community has rallied by the hundreds in support of Cuban protesters. As one of these fellow Kentuckians of mine put it, "The only voice they have is us."

The brave men and women who have taken to the streets in Cuba are demanding freedoms they have been denied their entire lives. They deserve our strong support. I am proud to co-sponsor a new resolution with Senator RUBIO and several other colleagues to communicate precisely that.

APPROPRIATIONS

Madam President, on another matter, this week, Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee are doing something so radical that it hasn't been done for decades. They are advancing an annual funding bill that leaves out the Hyde amendment, the commonsense prohibition on forcing taxpayers to fund abortion.

Since the 1970s, abortion has claimed the lives of more than 60 million unborn children. But at the very, very least, the mainstream, bipartisan Hyde amendment has ensured that taxpayers' hard-earned money is not funneled into this brutal practice.

A broad, bipartisan coalition agreed the American taxpayers should not be forced to underwrite this nightmare. And, by the way, a strong majority of Americans still agree with that proposition.

For decades, nearly his entire career, then-Senator Joe Biden was a reliable supporter of Hyde protections. One letter to a constituent read like this:

Those of us who are opposed to abortion should not be compelled to pay for them.

But a couple of years ago, on the President's campaign trail, our former colleague changed his tune. He let the demands of the increasingly radical left overcome a principle he had held literally for decades.

So earlier this year, the President's budget request obligingly proposed ending this longstanding protection. Yet another way in which the administration that sold itself as moderate and unifying is now spiraling way, way to the left. And this week, the House is following through.

In today's Democratic Party, there is no room to dissent from the far left's culture war, even in the most modest, most longstanding, most widely popular ways.

Senate Republicans are going to continue standing up for life, standing up for taxpayers, and standing up for the conscience rights of millions, millions of Americans who don't want the government laundering their hard-earned money to abortion providers. Republicans will stand with the majority of the American people, even if our colleagues across the aisle have given in to the most radical voices.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Madam President, now, on one final matter, earlier this week, new June figures further confirmed what working families across America already know all too well: Runaway costs are hitting the American people where it hurts.

Sadly, this was 100 percent predictable. Even top Democratic experts, like Larry Summers, warned that the jaw-dropping \$2 trillion that Democrats borrowed and spent back in March might unleash inflation and do more harm than good.

The economy was already packed with dry powder. Households already had record savings. Supply chains and inventories were already strapped. American families did not need a grand socialist experiment. They just needed the government to let things finally, finally, get back to normal.

But the President, the Speaker, and the Democratic leader still slapped another \$2 trillion on the country's credit card, and it has bought us a level of inflation that is unprecedented in recent memory.

Costs for working families have shot up. Inflation is running so hot that even though American workers have seen a 3.6-percent pay increase on average since last year, it has been completely swamped, wiped out and then some by inflation. In real terms, American workers' pay has actually gone down—down—nearly 2 percent since last July.

So let me say this again. On Democrats' watch, inflation has turned a 3.6-percent annual pay raise for Americans