

date for the vote and announced it, my colleagues on both sides have worked very hard on finishing this legislation. I am grateful for their work. We all want the same thing here: to pass a bipartisan infrastructure bill. But in order to finish the bill, we first need to start.

So I hope my Republican colleagues will join Democrats this afternoon in voting to move forward on an infrastructure package. As majority leader, I have every intention of passing both major infrastructure packages, the bipartisan infrastructure framework and a budget resolution with reconciliation instructions, before we leave for the August recess. That is the schedule I laid out at the end of June, and that is the schedule I intend to stick to.

Now, if Senators had any doubt about the impact of this important work, they should be assured by a new report this morning by the chief economist at Moody's, Mark Zandi. Having analyzed both the bipartisan bill and the agreement by Senate Democrats on the Budget Committee, Mark Zandi concludes that the twin legislative packages will provide a massive boost to the economy and that both—both—are essential.

Specifically, his report says that the two bills are “designed to lift the economy’s longer-term growth potential and ease”—ease—“inflation pressures.” Again, despite the sometimes hysterical warnings about inflation from Republicans, the chief economist at Moody’s concludes that those concerns are “misplaced,” “overdone,” and that our two infrastructure bills are designed to “ease”—his words—“inflation pressures.”

The report goes on to say that our investments in infrastructure and social programs will “lift productivity and labor force growth” and “direct the benefits of the stronger growth to lower-income Americans and address the long-running skewing of the income and wealth distribution.”

In other words, it will help strengthen the middle class and those trying to get there and not have all the income, so much of the income, disproportionately flowing to the top 1 and 10 percents.

I hope my colleagues are listening to those benefits: long-term economic growth, easing inflation pressures, lifting productivity, strengthening the labor force, reducing income inequality. That is what one of the Nation’s leading economists predicts our two infrastructure bills will achieve.

The report by Moody’s should light a fire under all of us. I will be sending the full report to the Senate Democratic conference, and I commend it to my Republican colleagues to read as well.

It has been decades since this Chamber has made significant stand-alone investment in our Nation’s infrastructure. We are the largest economy in the world, but our infrastructure ranks 13th. You would find better infrastruc-

ture in the United Arab Emirates than in the United States. Meanwhile, middle-class and working Americans have watched the American dream fall out of reach as globalization, technology, and vicious inequalities of income have sapped much of America’s fundamental promise of equal economic opportunity.

We must restore that promise, that hope, that American dream. If we want Americans to prosper in the 21st century, if we want to restore that fundamental promise, we need to invest in our infrastructure, create jobs, support families, strengthen the backbone of the middle class, help underserved communities, and rekindle the sunny optimism that has been a hallmark of the American spirit for more than two centuries.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today, the Democratic leader appears to be intent on calling a vote he knows will fail. For several weeks now, Republican and Democratic Senators have been working together, trying to assemble a bipartisan package for our Nation’s infrastructure.

It is an important and a complex subject. They are talking about big projects and big sums of money. They are still talking, still working, still negotiating in good faith across the aisle. But these discussions have yet to conclude. There is no outcome yet, no bipartisan agreement, no text, nothing for the Congressional Budget Office to evaluate, and, certainly, nothing on which to vote, not yet.

So, obviously, if the Democratic leader tries to force a cloture vote on a bill that does not exist, it will fail.

Around here, we typically write the bills before we vote on them. That is the custom. Of course, here in the Senate, a failed cloture vote does not mean no forever.

In the middle of the early COVID crisis, back in March of 2020, with Americans under stay-home orders and financial markets plummeting, Senate Democrats withheld cloture on the CARES Act multiple times so they could continue hagglng behind the scenes.

Now, this was during a real emergency. Every day, every hour, was crucial. But Senate Democrats blocked cloture multiple times until various details were fine-tuned to their liking.

Here is what the Democratic leader said while his side tanked those cloture votes last March—March of 2020:

The Majority Leader was well aware of how this vote would go before it happened, but he chose to move forward with it anyway, even though negotiations are continuing. So who is playing games?

That was the Democratic leader in March of 2020, in the middle of a national emergency.

That, of course, was a fast-moving global crisis, with bipartisan text already in hand. There was a bill. Yet Senate Democrats insisted on taking their time in the middle of this national 100-year pandemic. Now, we are talking about long-term infrastructure investments that will play out over many years, but he wants to vote before any agreement even exists.

So this stunt is set to fail. The Democratic leader will be free to change his vote and move to reconsider whenever a bipartisan product actually exists.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, now, on another matter, President Biden campaigned on a pledge not to raise income taxes on the vast majority of Americans. But the latest reckless taxing-and-spending spree that Democrats are cooking up would crush our country with a historic set of sweeping tax hikes.

Here is one of the targets in their crosshairs: Family farms.

It appears our colleagues’ plan will eliminate tax rules that allow family property to be passed down to the next generation without facing a new devastating tax burden.

Without the fix in question—the so-called stepped-up basis for capital gains taxes—scores of family businesses across America will feel a massive squeeze.

In States like mine, family farms drive the rural economy. But as I have heard from many of my State’s family farmers, it is operations like theirs that are especially—especially—at risk.

One Kentucky farmer said his family has worked the same land in Muhlenberg County for 150 years. He had hoped—hoped—to one day pass his property along to his children, just like it was passed along to him. But after generations spent improving and investing in the same farm, he is worried it could all be gone in the blink of an eye.

Another Kentuckian described how her family, like many farmers, is asset rich but cash poor. If the stepped-up basis is eliminated, her family could lose the home, barns, machinery, and fields that have been their life’s work.

The Farm Bureau in my State warned that what Washington Democrats are trying to do would penalize farmers for wanting—for wanting—to continue a tradition, which we all depend upon. If the stepped-up basis is eliminated, generations of accumulated work would be ripped—literally ripped from the hands of America’s farming families.

Family farming in the Commonwealth isn't just a way of life; it is considered a birthright. But if Democrats foist this bill for their reckless taxing-and-spending spree on rural America, a lot of this heritage could be literally ripped out of families' hands and put on the auction block.

And who will gobble it up then? Who will buy this land?

One recent report suggested that one of the biggest bidders for American family farmland these days is actually the Chinese.

Later today, Ranking Member BOOZMAN and some of our colleagues on the Agriculture Committee will be coming to the floor to sound the alarm about the ways that Democrats' reckless tax-and-spend spree could threaten farm families and rural America.

Deaths should not be a taxable event. The family farms that help feed us deserve our support, not sabotage from Washington.

IRAN

Mr. President, on one final matter, earlier this month, the FBI uncovered a plot by Iranian intelligence operatives to kidnap a journalist and vocal critic of the regime from her home in New York.

Let me say that again: Iran tried to abduct a U.S. citizen right here—right here—on American soil.

For years, Masih Alinejad has made a habit of getting under the mullahs' skin. She has called out injustices and organized protests like White Wednesdays, when women across Iran would challenge their nation's strict dress code.

The regime tried to lure Ms. Alinejad out of the U.S. to make her an easier target. That failed. So they decided to try something even more brazen.

Federal prosecutors have charged four Iranians in a plot to kidnap Ms. Alinejad. But with the exception of one accomplice, those responsible for this outrageous planned assault on a U.S. citizen right here on U.S. soil won't see the inside of a courtroom anytime soon. So without nonjudicial steps to impose consequences on the Islamic Republic, there will likely be no justice for Ms. Alinejad and her family.

And why should Tehran think twice about trying again?

Sadly, this has a familiar ring to it. Flagrant disregard for international law is certainly not a new addition to Tehran's playbook. Remember, back in 2011, Iranian intelligence was caught up in a plot to murder the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United States by blowing up a restaurant right here in Washington. One of the Iranian officials indicted in that case is, actually, still at large.

Of course, extrajudicial activities on American soil aren't the only bits of Iranian behavior that read like old news. Ms. Alinejad has been vocally reminding us that Iran's disgusting disregard for human rights is not unique to American soil. Obviously, it is felt in Iran itself and throughout the Middle East.

This spring, the skies over Israel were filled with reminders of Iran's longstanding support for terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. Battlefields in Syria and southern Arabian Peninsula testify to the strength of Iran's proxies.

And just this year, on President Biden's watch, we have seen a surge—a surge—in attacks on U.S. interests and facilities in Iraq not seen since the height of our military presence in that country.

So history continues to repeat itself in Tehran. And, unfortunately, the Biden administration appears keen—keen—to follow a familiar playbook of its own. Inexplicably, the White House's response to Iran's latest troublemaking—now listen to this—has been to consider lifting sanctions and offering new concessions to produce a new nuclear deal.

Iran just tried to kidnap an American right here in America. This is not the occasion to desperately reward bad behavior. It is time to work even more closely with our allies and partners in the regions to stare it down.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF DAVID H. CHIPMAN

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last week, I came down to the floor to discuss how the "defund the police" movement has contributed to the surging crime we see around the country. And as I noted, the Democratic Party bears a substantial degree of responsibility to the situation we find ourselves in because this is a party that either actively contributed to defund the police rhetoric or implicitly endorsed it largely by staying silent.

Now, however, Democrats have come to realize that attacking the police and the sharp spike in crime could hurt their electoral chances next year. And so the President and other Democrat leaders have, all of a sudden, announced their concern about rising crime rates.

But as I said last week, they are still trying to have their cake and eat it, too, because missing from their messaging is any real condemnation of defund the police rhetoric and the toll it has taken on our cities and police departments. And their plans for confronting the surge in crime are long on punishing gun dealers and gun manufacturers and short on going after those actually committing crimes.

It is typical of Democrats, for whom fighting crimes seems to involve controlling guns—specifically, guns owned by law-abiding gun owners—more than it involves controlling criminals. What Democrats should be doing is training

their attention on violent offenders, traffickers, and gangs, and illegal straw purchases; not finding ways to saddle law-abiding gun owners with burdensome regulations because it is not law-abiding gun owners who are responsible for most of the gun crimes in this country.

The majority of gun crimes are committed by individuals who have obtained their guns illegally—illegally—which is why fighting these crimes should involve improving enforcement of our laws and increasing prosecution of those who violate them, not creating new laws that will only serve to further burden the constitutionally guaranteed Second Amendment right of law-abiding individuals.

Unfortunately, as I said, Democrats are following their usual playbook during this recent crime surge, which they seem to see as a convenient excuse for pushing some of their gun control priorities.

The President recently delivered remarks on crime, and the first priority he discussed at length was going after federally licensed firearms dealers. That is right, firearm dealers.

While we can all agree that firearms dealers who violate the law should be punished, the rogue gun dealers that the President refers to are only responsible for a tiny fraction of guns being used in crimes.

Going after gun dealers as one of your top law enforcement priorities is not going to do much to stem the illegal flow of weapons or their use in crimes. Enforcement dollars and enforcement personnel are not endless. You can waste a lot of money and a lot of man-hours conducting checks of law-abiding gun dealers while criminals continue to use their illegally obtained weapons unchecked.

Nowhere are President Biden's priorities more clear than in his choice of nominee to lead the ATF, which is the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

David Chipman would come to the ATF directly from an organization where he has spent the past 5 years as a gun control advocate. He is well known for his at times extreme views on gun control and restricting the Second Amendment, including his support for banning probably the most popular rifle in the United States. He supports a so-called assault weapons ban, which usually refers to banning certain guns for their accessories and their appearance of lethality. But, alarmingly, he could not give a clear representation of how he would define such a policy in his confirmation hearing.

Equally as troubling is Mr. Chipman's clear disdain for gun owners. He claimed that most individuals with concealed carry permits are either untrained or irresponsible. During the pandemic, he mocked law-abiding gun owners and condescendingly said that first-time gun owners should put their guns away in their cabinets behind the beef jerky—behind the beef jerky—that