

arrival of a major, magnificent Sprint Center; hotels, new, large, elegant—all have arrived in Kansas City in just the last few years.

I am confident the entire Kansas City region is ready to make the 2026 FIFA World Cup a resounding success and is excited to add this prestigious tournament to its sporting history.

Again, we welcome the World Cup selection committee to Kansas City today and to the State of Kansas and to the State of Missouri. We welcome them. They are being welcomed to a world-class city known for its heartland hospitality.

I yield to the Senator from Missouri. Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to thank my good friend Senator MORAN for actually all he has done to try to make it possible to see the FIFA World Cup games come to Kansas City.

This is the biggest sporting event in the world. Frankly, soccer has become a bigger part of the entire American society. Kids are playing soccer out there before they can really focus on which way the soccer ball is supposed to go. There is maybe nothing more fun than watching the 3- and 4-year-old soccer match just to see what happens in that match. But around the world, it is important. It is important where Jerry and I live. Giant banners with the phrase “We Want the Cup” are proudly displayed on buildings. They are on the streetcar. They are everywhere you want to look. The Kansas City Chiefs’ quarterback, Patrick Mahomes, and the Royals’ catcher, Salvador Perez, are leading the charge to bring the World Cup to Kansas City.

There is no question that sports are a major part of where we live, professional and nonprofessional. The Women’s World Cup in 2019 was celebrated by fans watching games in the Power & Light District. They were broadcast on TV all over the world. Watching Kansas City fans watch the World Cup, we saw hundreds of thousands of fans flood the streets to join the Kansas City Royals in celebrating their World Series title in 2015. We saw an incredible crowd when the Kansas City Chiefs brought home the Lombardi Trophy in 2019. In 2023, Kansas City will host the NFL Draft.

So if our friends from the World Cup selection team are watching, there are others things that have happened to give evidence to the great sports heartbeat of Kansas City. There is plenty to look at and plenty to see. We have the infrastructure we think we need to meet that world sporting event.

Arrowhead Stadium, as Senator MORAN mentioned, is top notch. It is a great place for fans. It is a great place to feel the sense of the game and what can happen there. Local leaders have done everything they could, I think, to secure the right kind of practice fields, the right kind of facilities. Children’s Mercy Park would be one of those. In 2021, the Concacaf Gold Cup was hosted there.

Mayor Quinton Lucas is here today. In fact, he is here watching us today

from the Gallery. He is here advocating for all things Kansas City but is a particular advocate for seeing this world-class event come to Kansas City.

Location is another advantage we have. We are right in the middle of the country. We are close to the host cities in Canada and in Mexico that would be part of this event. I think we are better positioned than the other 16 cities to really move forward on this bid.

The new airport, as Senator MORAN mentioned, will be welcoming to whoever comes to this event if they come to Kansas City. They are going to be pleased with that facility.

There are lots of opportunities in Kansas City to spend your free time and enjoy what we get to enjoy all the time: the famous barbecue, the world-class museums, the Negro Leagues Museum in Kansas City, the Nelson-Atkins art gallery. There is really a vibrant nightlife and music scene in Kansas City today.

Nearby States have agreed that Kansas City is the right choice. It has become the Midwest choice for this event. In May, associations that represent 310,000 youth soccer players, coaches, and referees from the Midwest came together to endorse the Kansas City bid.

The financial benefits are obviously benefits that we would be excited about if we get a chance to host this. According to the Kansas City Sports Commission CEO and president, Kathy Nelson, the economic impact on the region could be up to \$1 billion.

With a rich sports culture, endless entertainment options, strong infrastructure, and an easily accessible central location in our country, Kansas City is the right choice for the 2026 FIFA World Cup host city, and Senator MORAN and I and our colleagues from Kansas and Missouri endorse this effort and are glad that the selection team is looking today at what they are going to get if they decide to come to Kansas City.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, right now, the end of the pandemic may be—I underline “may be”—within our reach. The Delta surge is finally waning. Over the past month, coronavirus case numbers have fallen by more than 40 percent, thank goodness. The average number of daily vaccinations has increased by more than 25 percent—not an unrelated statistic—and COVID death rates are finally starting to decline. These are all promising developments, and they demonstrate that President Biden’s response to the coronavirus is working.

But as winter approaches, we need to ask ourselves a serious question: Will we continue to take the steps that are necessary to save lives and beat this virus once and for all? Or will we do nothing, as some of our Republican colleagues seem to urge, and allow the

pandemic to come roaring back for another deadly wave?

Millions of American families have already suffered the consequences of denial, deception, and inaction. A report released earlier this month found that since June—just since June—nearly 100,000 American lives could have been saved if there were more vaccinations. But we can save the next 100,000 lives in America if we rally behind the President’s call for his vaccination policy. The American people are already with him. The majority of people support mandating COVID-19 vaccinations for students 12 and up.

Business owners across the country have followed President Biden’s lead by instituting their own vaccine mandates. They have helped increase vaccination rates by more than 20 percent. In Texas, where the Governor is seeking to outlaw vaccine mandates, one hospital CEO said that requiring his workers to be vaccinated is “unequivocally . . . the best decision we ever made” and that 98 percent of his staff has now been vaccinated.

President Biden’s vaccine policy is supported by parents and business owners alike because they recognize a very simple truth: The only way to keep our kids in school, keep our economy on the road to recovery, and stop the spread of this deadly virus is vaccination. A do-nothing strategy is deadly and disastrous for our economy. Yet that is exactly what many of our Republican colleagues continue to propose that we do: nothing. It is the same response they had earlier this month when it came to raising the debt limit.

Let me reflect for a moment on the effort that is underway by State attorneys general. The Republican attorneys general across the United States represent 24 different States. They have threatened to file lawsuits to try to stop vaccine mandates and mask requirements.

I think it is fair to take a look at the period of June 15, 2021, to September 15, 2021, and ask how the States are doing represented by these attorneys general who are fighting President Biden’s coronavirus policy. Well, we took a look at the average of the 24 States that are threatening these lawsuits. Their infection rate is more than twice than all the other States’. So the people in their States where they are supposedly fighting for their well-being are losing when it comes to the infections of coronavirus.

How about the death rates? Of the 24 States in this period of time threatening lawsuits, we have a death rate almost three times the death rate in the other 26 States. The vaccination rate is lower in the 24 States represented by these Republican attorneys general.

So what are they winning? Some political war? What the heck difference does it make who wins a political war when we are talking about a life-and-death issue? And that is frankly what we are faced with.

When it comes to the debt limit, we see the same negative default approach

by the Republicans. Senate Republicans were ready to let go of the steering wheel and swerve into oncoming traffic with the debt limit. Right up until the eleventh hour, they wanted to use the filibuster to block Democrats from addressing the debt, the limit of the debt. Do you know when that debt was incurred? It was incurred during the Trump administration, with many of these same Republicans voting for the spending that stands behind it.

Now the minority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, has once again pledged that Republicans refuse to lift a finger to deal with the debt limit when it expires in the first week of December. Think for a moment what defaulting on the debt would mean to American families. It is fodder for even more inflation.

So don't come to the floor with your posing for Holy pictures on the issue of inflation and then turn around and say: I don't care what happens to the debt limit. Americans will pay more each month because of that for their mortgages and credit card bills and student and car loans. Fifteen trillion dollars in household wealth and retirement savings would be wiped out if Senator MCCONNELL and the Republicans have their way in the first week of December.

If our Republican colleagues are truly concerned about the economic well-being of America, work with us to put together a sensible response to the debt limit. Senator SCHUMER and the Democrats have said to the Republicans: If you won't lead, if you can't follow, then get the heck out of the way. Democrats, with a majority vote, will enact a new debt limit. We understand our responsibility to this Nation.

BUILD BACK BETTER

Mr. President, "denial," incidentally, seems to be the watchword on the Republican side. Certainly it is when it comes to climate change. Some of our Republican colleagues insist, despite all of the evidence, that climate change is a phony, fake news, a hoax. Others acknowledge it is real but say we just can't afford to do anything about it. In fact, what we can't afford to do is nothing. Climate change is here, and the cost of it is disastrous.

One in three Americans live in a county that has been hit by an extreme weather event this summer—one in three—with family homes consumed by wildfires, farms ravaged by unprecedented droughts, and lives lost in floods of Biblical proportion.

Last year, our Nation was hit by 18 climate disasters costing at least a billion dollars each—18. The total tab for climate-related disasters that year was \$95 billion. This year is worse. Remember Hurricane Ida? It caused \$100 billion in damages. Think about that. One storm: \$100 billion.

And don't believe that that is just a matter of private citizens contacting their insurance companies. You can bet that the Federal Government and many State and local governments will

be investing heavily to overcome the damage that has been done.

Climate change is the gravest threat to our economy, bar none—not to mention our children's and grandchildren's future. We have waited too long. Climate change must be addressed today. Tomorrow is too late. Delay and denial would not make it disappear. They will only increase the damage and lessen the opportunities for solutions that we might consider.

America is the world's can-do Nation. We are the Nation who looks at problems and says: We can fix it. And here is something that our Republican colleagues either don't get or won't admit: Dealing with climate change has the potential to be the biggest job creator in generations. We have an opportunity to put millions of Americans to work building a sustainable, resilient future for our country.

Let me give you a recent example from last week. I had a chance to meet with the public transit officials in Champaign-Urbana, IL. Of course, Champaign-Urbana, IL, is home to the University of Illinois. They were there to showcase a new zero-emissions bus and a charging infrastructure that is cutting edge. You see, these buses run on hydrogen fuel cells powered by solar energy. They will save tens of thousands of gallons of diesel fuel and prevent more than 130 tons of greenhouse gas emissions every single year.

Imagine if every city in America followed the lead of Champaign-Urbana, reconstructing their public transit system, making them sustainable and dependable. Think of all the Americans we could put to work assembling buses and trains, building charging stations, training workers to maintain and repair these fleets.

That is what President Biden's bipartisan infrastructure bill will help do. It is the largest infrastructure proposal in decades, and it will invest billions in green transit alone.

And, for the record, the previous President, Republican President Donald Trump, had no transportation package. He talked about it in the campaign, and for 4 straight years he delivered nothing.

President Biden's Build Back Better agenda is also an investment in our future. If you are worried about our worker shortage—and you should be—the Build Back Better plan will enable parents, especially mothers, to return to work by making safe and affordable childcare resources and senior care available for every family in this country. And it is a blueprint for America to win the 21st century and boost every family's economic security by investing in schools, education, and first-class job training.

Continuing to do nothing while China and our other competitors pass us by is a strategy for finishing in second place, which appears to be the Republican strategy. Our Republican colleagues say: We just can't afford to invest in America's workers, families, and eco-

nomical potential. Boy, are they wrong. What we can't afford is to do nothing—nothing.

That is what they did when it came to the American Rescue Plan. Not a single Republican would support our efforts for the American Rescue Plan to address the COVID-19 crisis.

The vaccination program, which has vaccinated most of Americans and continues to do even more, was funded by that program. Money was in that program to help businesses get back on their feet after the pandemic. It was a real investment in the future of America. Unfortunately, it did not have support from the other side of the aisle.

NOMINATION OF TANA LIN

Finally, Mr. President, on another matter, this week, the Senate is going to vote to confirm Tana Lin to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of the State of Washington.

Ms. Lin is an accomplished litigator whose credentials, skills, and decades of experience have prepared her for this assignment. If confirmed, she would be the first Asian American to serve on a Federal district court in the State of Washington.

She graduated from Cornell University and New York University School of Law and began her career here in DC as a public defender. She then continued defending the rights of the most vulnerable as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.

Following her time there, she moved to my home State of Illinois to work in the Chicago district office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She litigated cases under title VII of the Civil Rights Act, age discrimination cases, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Today, Ms. Lin works as an attorney in private practice, where she primarily litigates cases involving antitrust, consumer protection, the environment, and labor and employment issues. And as a pro bono civil rights attorney, she has combated racial discrimination, advocated for religious accommodations in the workplace, and helped protect our elections from political interference.

Her nomination is another example of the Biden administration and Senate Democrats working together to advance highly qualified judicial nominees.

Ms. Lin received a unanimous—unanimous—rating of "well qualified" from the American Bar Association, and she has the strong support of her home State Senators, MURRAY and CANTWELL.

I urge my colleagues to support Ms. Lin's historic nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Alaska.

REMEMBERING CHUCK BUNDRANT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, this afternoon I come to the floor to recognize the life and the contributions