

be increased, but the guy controlling the spigot—his name is Vladimir Putin. One of Russia's top priorities is Nord Stream 2, a pipeline to carry more gas directly from Russia to Europe. This project, of course, has been years in the making and has faced considerable opposition around the world, especially among our colleagues on this side of the aisle.

President Biden has already handed Moscow a massive victory by stepping aside and refusing to impose sanctions on the company building Nord Stream 2. Now Putin is withholding desperately needed gas from Europe until the pipeline is approved. Yes, he is using energy as a weapon against those who are totally dependent on Russia for that energy.

This is a problem with the global efforts to quickly move—too quickly—before we are ready, away from fossil fuels. Phrases like “energy transition” appeal to some activists but fail to deliver results in the real world in real time. Renewables are great, but they don't come close to generating enough reliable energy to power our world because the wind doesn't always blow, and the Sun doesn't always shine.

We can't just sit in the dark until Mother Nature lets us turn the lights back on. We need a base supply of reliable energy, and as much as some of our colleagues hate to admit it, natural gas is our best current option. If the United States and our allies scale back production to pursue arbitrary emission benchmarks, they will leave the world turning to countries like Russia, Iran, and Venezuela for their energy. Today, we are experiencing how costly that reliance is, and in years past, we acknowledged how downright dangerous it is. In January 2009, Russia effectively turned the gas off to Ukraine for almost 3 weeks, and at least 10 countries in Europe were affected.

By transitioning solely to renewables before the output matches the demand, we are placing ourselves in a very, very vulnerable position, and the same is true for our allies. President Putin has demonstrated as much.

Unfortunately, I don't expect those kinds of real-world concerns to dominate the conversations at this summit in Glasgow, and President Biden certainly won't be advocating for America's energy independence—to the contrary. We were only a few hours into the Biden administration when they launched the first attack on American-produced energy. Within hours of taking the oath of office, President Biden canceled the permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline. For some strange reason, he is OK with Nord Stream 2 from Russia to Europe, but he is not OK with the Keystone XL Pipeline here in America. I don't get it.

There is no question that the biggest losers from this decision were the energy workers whose jobs evaporated and the communities that stood to benefit from the tax revenue. The biggest

winners, unfortunately, from President Biden's decision include countries like Russia and Saudi Arabia, who now hold too much power on the global energy market. We will see how that is playing out.

That same day, the Biden administration halted all new leasing permits on Federal lands and waters. Rather than responsibly harvest our greatest natural resources and share those resources with the rest of the world, the administration sent more business to our adversaries and to OPEC producers.

President Biden piled on with another attack on our energy producers by rejoining the Paris climate accord—an agreement that no one seems to follow. Yes, they will pay lipservice to it, but they actually don't do anything about it. A report published last week found that countries around the world aren't sticking to the lofty commitments that they made. The world's major economies are not on track to meet the climate goals set in the Paris accord. In fact, according to this report, by 2030, these countries are expected to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels required to meet the goals of the Paris climate accord.

Then there is the fact that China, which plays by nobody's rules except their own, which also happens to be the world's leading polluter, is completely AWOL from any of these efforts. Not only is China ignoring global efforts to curb emissions, the country is in the process of building hundreds of new coal-powered powerplants. Last year, China built three times as many new coal powerplants as any other country in the world combined—three times all the other countries in the world combined.

Rather than pull out of the agreement that is weakening our global energy security, President Biden is making even bigger promises—promises that he cannot keep. He nearly doubled the emissions reduction goals set by President Obama in 2015. President Obama pledged to reduce emissions by 26 to 28 percent by 2025, and we are nowhere close to meeting that goal. But President Biden has doubled down and vowed to cut emissions by 50 to 52 percent by 2030—a complete fantasy. He hasn't explained how he would accomplish meeting that goal, nor, if he tried, would he be able to explain it because it is simply infeasible.

To be clear, I am a strong supporter of efforts to reduce emissions. There are more ways than one to skin the cat. Texas has been a leader, in fact, in efforts to develop cleaner and more diverse sources of energy. We are truly an “all of the above” State. We produce more electricity from wind turbines than any other State in the Nation. New solar farms are being built all across our State, and private companies are making incredible investments in carbon capture and other emission-reducing technologies. I am proud of this work and a staunch supporter of efforts to preserve our great-

est natural resources for future generations. But what we are seeing from the administration isn't a thoughtful effort to reduce emissions; it is virtue signaling.

When the President addressed a joint session of Congress earlier this year, he spoke about the challenges to reduce carbon emissions. He said: If we do it perfectly, it is not going to matter. How he expects to do it perfectly, he did not say, nor could he. But if that is what he is thinking, why drive up energy costs to the point that Americans can't afford to turn the heat on in winter? Why would he give Putin the power to regulate Europe's only source of energy—natural gas? Why curb domestic energy production and let China run wild? These actions may earn votes in support from some corners, but they will inflict serious pain on the American people, as well as our allies around the world.

As an armada of Biden administration officials pack their bags for Glasgow, I want to remind them that there is far more at stake than just the President's credibility on this score. It is our future economy. It is our ability to provide good, well-paying jobs to hardworking American families, and it is our ability as Americans to export energy, which allows some of our friends and allies around the world not to depend solely on the tender mercies of Vladimir Putin.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, it has been a while since congressional Democrats have used the words “defund the police.” That was a very popular phrase in 2021, but after the last election, Democrats learned how truly toxic those words were with ordinary Americans. Now they dare not say the words “defund the police,” but make no mistake about it, liberals are still trying to defund the police.

A recent nominee for a high-level post at the Department of Justice said that she wasn't in favor of defunding the police, but she talked about it—“overspending on criminal justice system infrastructure and policing.” That was just a fancier way of saying “cut police budgets.”

Fortunately, the voters are standing up to these people, and I want to give just two examples.

First, voters in Minneapolis will go to the polls November 2 and decide whether to replace the city's police department with a department called the Department of Public Safety. This supposed Department of Public Safety would take a “comprehensive public

health approach” in trying to keep the city safe. Under this idea, police officers could be employed if necessary. Well, the American voters have news for the people who got this initiative on the ballot in Minneapolis: Police officers are absolutely necessary in Minneapolis, and they are necessary in every other community as well.

Another example. In Austin, TX, voters will have a chance to restore funding for their police force—funding that the city council slashed a great deal last year.

The murder rate in Austin is higher than it has ever been. So far, 71 people have been killed in Austin, passing the previous record of 59 murders set all the way back in 1984. And with 71 murders, we still have 2 months left in this year, if you want to compare it to all the murders that took place in 1984, a previous high.

Some Austin voters have had enough of this sort of thinking, and they are trying to restore some common sense there in Austin. Under the Proposition A ballot initiative, the city would have to maintain at least 2 police officers for every 1,000 residents, which is more than they have at the present time.

But not everybody likes that, and liberal dark money groups have pumped a half million dollars into defeating this Proposition A because they want to keep defunded police still defunded.

Those same groups recently subsidized the campaigns of hard-left district attorneys all throughout the country. That includes the San Francisco district attorney, who has let drug and property crimes skyrocket. San Francisco is now getting hammered with out-of-control drug use, and shoplifting there happens to be a way of life.

That isn't CHUCK GRASSLEY saying that; that is anybody watching television who sees pictures of people just going into stores and just picking up whatever they want. In one city, if it is under \$950, you won't be prosecuted. So it is a license to shoplift.

I hope Austin, TX, voters will make sure that their city doesn't go the same way. I would like to think they would want to be safe from criminals and the drugs that criminals push.

Liberal politicians are no longer saying it out loud, “defund the police.” But make no mistake about it, many of them still want to defund police.

If Minneapolis and Austin let their police forces wither away on the vine, voters all across the Nation and all across the political spectrum will send a very clear message to the hard left in the next election. So voters everywhere should stand up and say no to defunding the police.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, last week, a Tennessee director of schools named Russell sent me an email about a problem he is having with some of his students. The so-called devious lick TikTok trend caught on in his district, and it is more than just a viral gag. The idea behind this devious lick TikTok trend is to destroy school property and document it on TikTok so that all the world can see—the more violent, the better.

Here is how Russell described what is going on in his schools:

In Cleveland City Schools, we have seen fire extinguishers stolen, mirrors removed from walls, a toilet was removed from its foundation, and multiple other acts of vandalism. I know of stories from other school districts, where even more serious types of vandalism and theft have taken place.

He went on to tell me that this trend has caused thousands of dollars in damage, and that he has had to resort to threatening suspensions, court citations and other actions to deter students from demolishing school property—all from a TikTok video trend.

I want to state for the record that this is absolutely insane. This is not normal teenage behavior. It is criminal activity, and these kids are posting it online thinking that they are building social media clout.

TikTok banned the trending hashtag, but last night, it took a member of my staff about 10 seconds to unearth posts featuring students trashing their school bathrooms.

Russell is at a loss as to how to get his students to stop body slamming doors off their hinges, and so are thousands of parents all across Tennessee who are wondering how it is even possible that a tech company is getting away with encouraging criminal behavior in its underage users.

They want more than just an apology and a tweak to an algorithm. They are looking for accountability, and I am happy to say that we at the Senate Commerce Committee are working to get that accountability from these Big Tech companies.

The issue of Big Tech's toxic influence on children and teens is finally getting some much-needed bipartisan attention from the Senate. Earlier this month, I hosted a hearing in the Commerce Committee's Consumer Protection Subcommittee with Chairman BLUMENTHAL, where we examined Facebook's role in promoting content to teenagers that drove young users into spirals of despair, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts.

Now, our ideas about what Congress should do to force accountability into the equation might differ a bit, but maybe for the first time ever, the relationship between Republicans and Democratic tech watchdogs in this Chamber is far less contentious than the relationship between Big Tech and Members of Congress. And, Madam

President, that is something worth noting.

If we keep this up, Silicon Valley, as they currently operate, is in for some big changes because, as much as I appreciate our role as lawmakers, I also believe in the importance of our ability to compel transparency from officials and companies that refuse to offer it up voluntarily. Sunlight is often a better disinfectant than legislation.

Fortunately, at least some players in tech are reading the writing on the wall. Tomorrow, representatives from YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok will testify before the Consumer Protection Subcommittee regarding safety protocols they have inserted between underage users and the seediest corners of the internet. Yes, I did say “underage users.”

I want to thank them in advance for agreeing to appear because we are not going to take it easy on them. They should not expect a comfortable day. We have evidence that these platforms have endangered children and teens while collecting—yes, collecting—their personal data and leveraging it through the advertising side of their businesses. The danger is real.

As we were preparing for the hearing, my staff hopped on YouTube and searched for “how to slit your wrists,” and the videos YouTube spit out—well, let's just say that any questions about how to do such a thing were answered in full, unfortunately.

Earlier this year, a 9-year-old boy in Memphis died trying to participate in a TikTok “strangulation challenge” that had gone viral.

And we know for a fact that child predators use Snapchat to troll for victims. This spring, law enforcement arrested a 48-year-old man for statutory rape after they caught him with a 16-year-old girl.

Where did he meet her?

On Snapchat.

We also have serious questions about data collection and disclosure policies and whether or not the market research tactics that are used by YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok are as invasive and dangerous as the ones that we now know Facebook uses.

As the saying goes, if the service is free, you are the product. And if we let them, tech companies will continue grooming our kids into accepting status as commodities and being their product, regardless of who it hurts.

Big Tech's relationship with children is a problem, but we also need adult tech enthusiasts to care about their own entanglements with these companies. We need everyone to care about how their own “virtual you” is harvested and sold to the highest bidder.

Many adult users believe that, because they have lived so much of their lives online, these things don't matter anymore. But, yes, indeed, it does matter, and I will give you just one example of why.

For a long time now, we have raised serious concerns about the connection