

Well, let me offer a few ideas.

For starters, it might be a good idea to cut out the sections of the Democrats' bill that have nothing to do with combating COVID. The Democrats are calling this a COVID relief bill, but in actual fact, much of this bill has little to do with the coronavirus. In fact, less than 10 percent of the bill is directly related to combating COVID.

If President Biden wants to know what sections of the bill to cut, I might suggest starting with the bill's minimum wage hike. The Democratic bill would more than double the Federal minimum wage at a cost of an estimated 1.4 million jobs—that according to the Congressional Budget Office. That would be problematic enough at a time when we are already dealing with substantial job losses, but it is even worse when you realize that the people most likely to lose their jobs as a result of this hike would be lower income workers.

I would also suggest that the President cut his \$86 billion bailout of multi-employer pension plans, which has nothing to do with emergency COVID relief.

The President could also consider cutting his \$350 billion slush fund for States and localities, which would be used mostly to reward States that shut down their businesses for extended periods and, therefore, have higher unemployment rates.

It has become clear the majority of States are doing OK financially despite the pandemic. A number of States actually saw higher tax revenues in 2020, and a majority of States have the resources needed to weather the rest of this crisis. Three hundred fifty billion dollars far exceeds projected State need.

And while we are on that topic, the economic stimulus provided by President Biden's bill, in general, far exceeds the economic need and may actually harm the economy.

Even without a dollar more of stimulus spending, our economy is expected to grow at a robust 3.7 percent in 2021.

The massive amount of spending that the President is proposing to inject into the economy runs the very real risk of overheating the economy and driving up inflation, and you don't have to take my word for it. Even some liberal economists have expressed their concern over the size of the Democrats' coronavirus legislation and the damage that it could do to the economy.

Then, of course, there is the money the bill includes for schools. Now, while children in some places, like South Dakota, are in school, we need to get all kids back to in-person learning. In-person learning is important for kids' academic, social, and emotional health, and as Republicans have demonstrated, we want to ensure that schools have the resources they need to get back into the classroom safely.

Our previous coronavirus bills contained more than \$100 billion for education, and I think it is safe to say that

every Republican would support additional dollars, if needed, but the fact of the matter is, schools still have billions of dollars from previous coronavirus legislation that remains unspent. And the Biden bill would appropriate an additional \$129 billion for schools that schools would get—they would get—whether or not they get kids back into the classroom.

On top of that, most of that money would go to schools beginning next year and stretching all the way to 2028; in other words, long after the pandemic will be over. In fact, less—if you can believe this, less than 5 percent of the education spending would occur this year.

Ultimately, the Biden bill's school funding ends up looking less like a plan to get our kids back in schools and more like caving in to the teachers' unions.

So if President Biden would like to know what to cut, I would suggest he start with some of the things I have highlighted. And I would ask—I would ask that he and the Democratic leadership abandon their plan to shove through a bloated, partisan bill, paid for with all borrowed money—every single dollar goes on the debt—and to start trying for the unity that the President has talked about.

The President could show that he really meant what he said in his inaugural address by sitting down, in a serious way, with Republicans to develop targeted relief legislation.

We are ready to come to the table. The ball is in the President's court.

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

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

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the nomination of Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield to be the United States Ambassador to the United Nations.

Our next U.N. Ambassador will inherit the monumental task of rebuilding our frayed alliances after four years of isolation and division, in which the United States retreated from our leadership role in promoting democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law. There is no person better suited to this task than Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

In a Foreign Service career spanning more than three decades, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield served with distinction both in Washington and around the globe, including at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations that she will now lead.

As the son of a Foreign Service Officer and cochair of the Senate Foreign Service Caucus, I am also acutely aware of the significance of President

Biden selecting a career Foreign Service Officer for this position. For 4 years, members of the Foreign Service have been maligned, demeaned, and marginalized by the people trusted to lead them. The selection of a career Foreign Service Officer to represent the United States at the United Nations marks a sharp turn away from that shameful chapter.

I look forward to working with Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield as we take on the difficult work of restoring our standing in the world, rebuilding our alliances, and investing in the men and women of our Foreign Service. I am proud to support her nomination.

VOTE ON THOMAS-GREENFIELD NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Thomas-Greenfield nomination?

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent; the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

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

The result was announced—yeas 78, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 61 Ex.]

YEAS—78

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Risch
Blumenthal	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Blunt	Inhofe	Rosen
Booker	Johnson	Rounds
Boozman	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Burr	Kennedy	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Capito	Klobuchar	Shelby
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lee	Smith
Casey	Lujan	Stabenow
Cassidy	Lummis	Sullivan
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Thune
Cornyn	McConnell	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Crapo	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Moran	Warnock
Durbin	Murkowski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Fischer	Murray	Wicker
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	Young
Hassan	Peters	
Heinrich	Portman	

NAYS—20

Barrasso	Ernst	Rubio
Blackburn	Grassley	Sasse
Braun	Hagerty	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Hawley	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Hoeben	Shelby
Cruz	Lankford	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	

NOT VOTING—2

Paul Toomey

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid

upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

**CLOTURE MOTION**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative 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 Calendar No. 11, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, of Louisiana, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

Charles E. Schumer, Robert Menendez, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Thomas R. Carper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patrick J. Leahy, Brian Schatz, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Michael F. Bennet, Debbie Stabenow, Chris Van Hollen, Ron Wyden, Martin Heinrich, Bernard Sanders, Edward J. Markey, Cory A. Booker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 Linda Thomas-Greenfield, of Louisiana, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 77, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 62 Ex.]

**YEAS—77**

Baldwin	Cornyn	Kaine
Bennet	Cortez Masto	Kelly
Blumenthal	Crapo	Kennedy
Blunt	Duckworth	King
Booker	Durbin	Klobuchar
Boozman	Feinstein	Leahy
Brown	Fischer	Lee
Burr	Gillibrand	Lujan
Cantwell	Graham	Lummis
Capito	Hassan	Manchin
Cardin	Heinrich	Markey
Carper	Hickenlooper	McConnell
Casey	Hirono	Menendez
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Merkley
Collins	Inhofe	Moran
Coons	Johnson	Murkowski

Murphy	Rounds	Tillis
Murray	Sanders	Van Hollen
Ossoff	Schatz	Warner
Padilla	Schumer	Warnock
Peters	Sinema	Warren
Portman	Smith	Whitehouse
Reed	Stabenow	Wicker
Risch	Sullivan	Wyden
Romney	Tester	Young
Rosen	Thune	

**NAYS—20**

Barrasso	Ernst	Rubio
Blackburn	Grassley	Sasse
Braun	Hagerty	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Hawley	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Hoeben	Shelby
Cruz	Lankford	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	

**NOT VOTING—3**

Paul	Shaheen	Toomey
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 77, the nays are 20. The motion is agreed to.

**EXECUTIVE CALENDAR**

The clerk will report the nomination. The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Linda Thomas-Greenfield, of Louisiana, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

**RECESS**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

**EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Thomas J. Vilsack, of Iowa, to be Secretary of Agriculture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 20 minutes of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I am very pleased today to rise to support the nomination of our former Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack. We are very lucky that he is willing to serve again. He is certainly no stranger to all of us, and we are very fortunate that he is willing to once again be part of public service. In serving as Agriculture Secretary during all 8 years of the Obama administration, Secretary Vilsack presided over the USDA with decisive, effective leadership. It was a pleasure to work with him.

The Agriculture Committee held a bipartisan hearing earlier this month, and mere hours later, we voted to advance his nomination without any objection. His deep knowledge of agri-

culture and rural America is needed now more than ever, for our farmers, our families, and our rural communities have so many challenges right now.

The COVID-19 crisis is continuing to disrupt our food supply chain for farmers, food processors, and essential workers. Tens of millions of families still don't have enough to eat and are lining up at food banks in order to put food on the table. The climate crisis is posing an extremely grave threat to the long-term viability of our economy and our food supply. Farmers of color, who have long faced civil rights abuses and systemic racism, continue to experience economic disparities.

On top of all of this, there is a lot of work to be done to rebuild the USDA workforce so that the Department can fulfill its very important mission.

American farmers, families, and rural communities need strong, effective leadership now more than ever. When it comes to strengthening our food and farm economy, I am very confident that soon-to-be-confirmed Secretary Tom Vilsack will be more than up to the task. He has a proven track record and will embrace new ideas in a new era at the Department.

I know he is committed to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, and I know he is committed to focusing on feeding our families in need. We have more than 50 million Americans today who are in a hunger crisis, themselves and their families. I know he cares deeply and is committed to making sure they are able to feed their families.

I know he is very focused on tackling the climate crisis and has done a lot of work, since leaving as the Secretary of Agriculture a few years ago, focusing on voluntary, producer-led, farmer-friendly efforts that can make a real difference and allow agriculture to lead in addressing the climate crisis.

I also know he is very focused and committed on addressing the racial discrimination that we have seen systematically over the years in agriculture and addressing those issues in a very fair and equitable way. I look forward to partnering with him on these issues.

Senator BOOZMAN and I enjoyed our first hearing, which was his confirmation hearing. I look forward to partnering with Senator BOOZMAN and our entire committee to be able to move forward on a whole range of issues that are important for all of us, for everybody in our country. To do that, we need a great partner and an effective partner in the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, and I know with great confidence that this person is Tom Vilsack.

I yield the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, as the United States is facing its worst hunger crisis since the Great Depression and family farms are struggling, President Biden has nominated Thomas Vilsack to reprise his role as Secretary of Agriculture and capably steward the Department to address