

been pushing, literally, for months now.

They cooked up this massive multi-trillion-dollar spending spree back when they were saying inflation wasn't a major problem and it was still time to spend like crazy. But now, miraculously, that same spending binge happens to be their prescription to fight inflation.

Give me a break. This is just a sweeping socialist wish list in search of a justification. This is another megadose of the same radical recklessness that Republicans have warned against all along, that American families are already paying dearly for, as we speak.

But, so far, Democrats seem intent on grabbing the hot stove yet again, and its American families who stand to get burned.

VETERANS DAY

Madam President, one final matter. Last week, I had the honor of spending Veterans Day at the groundbreaking ceremony for Louisville's new VA hospital. We are finally going to replace the city's original VA medical center that was built almost 70 years ago. Kentucky veterans are going to get new, expanded options for the cutting-edge treatment that they richly deserve.

The long-awaited groundbreaking was a special day for Kentucky and our heroes. But for me, the celebration also underscored how unfortunate and unacceptable it is when it comes to our legislative duties here in Washington. This Democratic Senate majority is coming up short on supporting our servicemembers past, present, and future.

Today is November 15. The full Senate should have considered, amended, and passed an annual defense authorization bill months ago. That is how it normally works. It is a major bipartisan priority that the Senate majority focuses on as a matter of basic governance.

But this unified Democratic government has been distracted from the people's business. They have spent months behind closed doors putting together another reckless taxing-and-spending spree. And this obsession with party-line wish lists have led Democrats to drop the ball on basic duties. Keeping our servicemembers and our commanders waiting months for an NDAA is just one example.

The Democratic majority has also completely dropped the ball on a bipartisan appropriations process. Oh, and by the way, President Biden's proposals for funding the government would have us cut defense spending after inflation.

According to reports, China recently tested a hypersonic vehicle that is capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Just this morning, according to some early press reports, Russia may have tested some new anti-satellite weapon system. In the Middle East, President Biden's own advisors are saying that his rushed retreat from Afghanistan

will open the door for a terrorist resurgence.

It is against this dangerous backdrop that our Democratic majority does not move an NDAA until mid-November, and President Biden doesn't want defense spending to keep pace with President Biden's inflation.

Madam President, better late than never. I am glad the Democratic leader says we will finally let the full Senate consider an NDAA in the coming days. The Senate will need to have the kind of robust bipartisan floor process that is customary for this important bill, and we will need to leave extraneous items on the sidelines.

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. TUBERVILLE. Madam 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.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, our great country was founded on the idea that freedom leads to prosperity, which is better known as the American dream.

I have always said this country owes you only one thing, and that is an opportunity to succeed. This country gives you the opportunity to live the life you dream of because, with hard work, anything is possible. For a couple, the American dream may look like saving enough to buy their first home. For a small family business, it might look like opening its doors for the first time. For a first-generation college graduate, it might be walking across the stage, and for a soldier, returning from war with the hopes of starting a family. The American dream takes on many unique forms reflective of the opportunity that countless generations have strived to realize.

At the core of the American dream, you will find the American family because for centuries, the American dream has been rooted in the idea of family and freedom. Strong families are the foundation of strong communities. That is why we need to uplift the American family rather than to continue to rip it apart.

But recently, we have seen policies from the Democrats that inject politics into parenting, that insert the heavy hand of the Federal Government into the American home and stop at nothing to tell parents: We know best when it comes to raising your children.

Threats to the American family are knocking on the front doors of homes across the Nation as the left becomes focused on telling the American people what they want rather than listening to what they need. A prime example is the Democrats' socialist spending spree, designed to create a cradle-to-grave welfare system that does more to tear the American family down than to

build it up. Just look at the child tax credit—a once bipartisan policy initiative that has now been weaponized to benefit some families at the expense of others. If you are a working-class, married couple with children, you drew the short end of the stick. Then there is the Democrats' Federal childcare program. It is more focused on perpetuating government dependency than giving low-income families the means to stand on their own two feet.

With these proposals in their reckless tax-and-spend spree, the Democrats are picking winners and losers, and the losers are the American family. Anti-family policies like these grow the size of the government while chipping away at American freedom. We should focus on pro-family policies that put families first, policies that make achieving the American dream a reality, not something to feel shameful about.

If you are born with two parents in this country, you hit the lottery. So many children don't have the stable family that some have; they grow up with one parent or are raised by another family member. Then there are children who grow up with no parents, thrown into the foster system. It is a shame because we know stable families can provide foundations that children need to seize the American opportunities.

As we talk about supporting the American family, I want to focus on an important issue to many families across the country; that is, adoption.

November is National Adoption Month in the United States. In the United States, over 400,000 children a year don't have a safe place to call home or a loving family to care for them. The idea that children have a safe and stable home, with a family who loves them, should be something we should all agree on.

In my career, I have traveled across the country for 40 years. People from all walks of life welcomed me into their homes. I have seen firsthand the immeasurable impact that family can have on a child's life. I have seen parents who provide stable foundations, who instill the belief that with hard work, grit, and determination, anything is possible.

Success stories can be found across my State of Alabama. In fact, in 2019, Alabama had 731 adoptions—the highest number in Alabama's history.

One of those is Katie, who was adopted through the Heart Gallery of Alabama. Katie's parents adopted her at the age of 12, after years spent in and out of foster care. Her forever family provided her with the secure foundation she needed to jump-start her future. Now, Katie just completed her first year at Yale University.

Like Katie, children in our foster care systems have endless potential but need the stability that having a family brings to unlock it. While we celebrate the heartwarming stories of families being made whole, we cannot forget about the children waiting for

their forever home. Those are the stories of kids who deserve these families and families who deserve kids.

As a Christian, I believe life begins at conception, but too often, when discussing pro-life issues, we often refer to that life as the child's time in the womb. We should, however, be focusing on the life of a child after they are born, and that philosophy should apply to children all around the world.

Many other countries don't place the same value on life as we do here in the United States. In some countries, parents may choose to abort babies who might have disabilities, and if a child is born with a disability, they are put up for adoption at much higher rates.

China is one of these countries. Right now, there are several hundred American families who have been matched with or have begun the process of adoption with children in China, but the pandemic has indefinitely halted most of the adoptions from China moving forward.

Back in May, I sent a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken asking for the State Department to have diplomatic discussions with China so these kids could go home to their new families, but here we are in November, and I have yet to receive a response from the State Department.

Over 400 children are still stuck in China, with their families unable to bring them home. Most of these children have some type of medical or special need and are currently living in Chinese orphanages.

One such child is Cherry. She is stuck in China while her forever family is waiting with open arms here in the United States. Cherry has Down syndrome and needs medical attention, which is currently being delayed.

When speaking about Cherry, her forever family said:

The sooner we can get little Cherry into our home, the sooner we can give her all the attention, therapy, and love to bring out her fullest potential in life.

Cora Lee has lived in an orphanage for 3½ years, ever since she was an infant. Cora Lee has a medical condition that needs to be treated or could eventually lead to blindness. Here in the United States, there are parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, and a church family who are waiting for her to come home so they can help provide help in the future.

Then there is Charlie, who recently had a fourth birthday. He has a family in Alabama who cannot wait to welcome him home. The first several years of Charlie's life have been tough. He needs specialized care that only a loving family can provide.

Given that the Biden administration just reopened our borders to so many international travelers and that one of our COVID vaccines for children age 5 through 11 has just been authorized, I believe it is past time for us to get these children home to the families who have been waiting years to love them and care for them.

Adoption is the gift that keeps on giving by providing children the opportunity to rise above difficult circumstances. We need to work together towards policies that make this gift more attainable for all who can provide a stable home. After all, family is the heartbeat of the American dream.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. REED). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTECTING AMERICA'S FIRST RESPONDERS ACT
OF 2021

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Senate has unanimously passed a bill entitled Protecting America's First Responders Act. I authored this legislation to expand benefits to first responders who are injured in the line of duty.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program, or PSOB for short, offers a one-time lump sum payment to first responders who are killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty. I think that legislation has been on the books since the 1970s.

I started investigating this program when I heard complaints about long delays in processing payments. Those delays reached up to 3 years, on average. It is just not understandable why it should take 3 years for somebody who is killed in the line of duty to decide if the family should have help from that program. We fixed that particular issue with my 2017 bill entitled the Public Safety Officers' Benefit Improvement Act.

However, my investigation uncovered a lot of other problems with that program, now 50 years old. The Justice Department was denying payments to folks who should have received those payments. In one case, a disabled police officer suffered a traumatic brain injury. The Department said that he wasn't disabled because he held a part-time position at Home Depot as a greeter.

In another case, again, a police officer with brain injury was denied the benefit. Why? Because the officer tinkered around with motorcycles in his garage. It would take this officer months to do simple things that would otherwise have taken him just days. Still, the Department said that he wasn't disabled. They said it. It is unreasonable.

But my bill that I described to you, which has now passed the Senate recently, will correct this problem. This legislation clarifies that first responders who are totally and permanently disabled but can still perform some very simple tasks can still get benefits. It adds a fair boost in payments to first responders who have waited years for

these benefits. It provides the Justice Department with more tools so that it can process claims more quickly.

Finally, my bill extends a presumption in the law that ensures that first responders who contract COVID on duty don't have to jump through hoops to prove it, because, you know, with COVID—did you get it when you were actually policing, or did you get it when you were in a restaurant, or did you get it when you were in church?—you don't really know. This bill will go a long ways in helping our first responders where it is impossible to show whether you got it when you were actually on duty.

I would like to thank Senators GILLIBRAND and BOOKER, as well as all the other cosponsors.

I also want to thank our House counterparts, specifically, Congressman PASCRELL and his staff, who led the effort to pass the bill in the House of Representatives.

Lastly, I want to thank the Justice Department for working closely with us to improve this language.

Before I wrap up, I just want to say a few words about our first responders. Whether it is police officers, firefighters, or EMTs, first responders are the embodiment of the best qualities of Americans. Their daily sacrifices make our society better and safer.

I am proud to have sponsored this legislation, and I urge the President to quickly sign the bill.

HUNTER BIDEN

Now, Mr. President, on another shorter issue, I want to bring up something that deals with something I deal with a lot, what we call oversight, to make sure that we have transparency to our government, because transparency brings accountability, and this is something we are having a hard time getting answers on.

On July 30 of this year, Senator JOHNSON of Wisconsin and I sent a letter to the White House Counsel. That letter was based on media reports—yes, media reports—that then-Vice President Biden used private emails for government business. If that happened, that is wrong, and we ought to know about it.

As part of that use, he sent government information to his son Hunter Biden. The news reports provided details about then-Vice President Biden's email addresses at that time and the fake names that he used for that email.

As one example from the reported emails, in 2016, an employee of the Office of the Vice President emailed Biden his schedule and copied Hunter Biden. In another email in 2016, the same employee reportedly emailed Vice President Biden about an early morning preparation for a 9 a.m. phone call with the Ukrainian President. Hunter Biden was again reportedly copied on that email.

As we all know, Hunter Biden served on the board of a corrupt Ukrainian energy company at the time of these emails. Certainly, Hunter Biden would