have been quite interested in any and all information relating to the U.S. Government's communication with the Ukrainian Government.

Now, if these reports are accurate, it is unclear whether Vice President Biden forwarded related emails to a government account to satisfy Federal recordkeeping requirements. It kind of sounds familiar, doesn't it? Just remember, the same issues came up with Hillary Clinton.

Given Vice President Biden's apparent pattern and practice with government emails, Senator JOHNSON and I would like to know if this pattern and practice has continued as President of the United States. That is why, on July 30, as I indicated, Senator JOHNSON and I asked exactly that question.

First, we asked, according to the letter: ''What steps did then-Vice President Biden take to ensure that all his government emails and related communications were properly stored and archived?'' In other words, did they follow the law?

Second, we asked: ''Does President Biden use nongovernment email to communicate government business or email his family members government information? If so, what steps have been taken to ensure that those communications satisfy federal recordkeeping and archival requirements?''

Now, these sound like pretty simple questions that President Biden can answer quickly. Moreover, it would be quite easy for the President to deny reports if these reports were not accurate. Our letter provided President Biden that opportunity.

To date, we haven't received a response. In fact, as you can tell from July 30, it has been nearly 3 months.

The fact that the White House Counsel's Office and President Biden can't find time to answer these threshold questions draws suspicion. One would think that the White House would gladly answer that the President isn't using government email to communicate government business with family members.

Now, wouldn't one think that the White House would very gladly say that it is properly archiving email records?

This is a matter of transparency, and it is a matter of transparency where the public deserves answers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am sure I am not alone in expressing concern for what the next few weeks in the runup to Christmas are going to look like, and certainly the Senate and the Congress have not operated as a well-oiled machine, to be sure.

Back in September, when the Senate should have passed a group of bills to fund the government for the next year, we saw the can get kicked down the road.

Last month, when our Democratic colleagues, the majority, had ample time and a clear roadmap to raise the debt ceiling, they punted and really depended on 11 of us on this side of the aisle to avoid a threat to the full faith and credit of the United States.

Despite a strong push from both the distinguished Presiding Officer, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and the ranking member, the majority leader has so far refused to bring up the National Defense Authorization Act even though it has been ready for months. I am hoping that will change this week. I am advised that it will change and it will be taken up.

These are not necessarily lofty goals we are talking about. We are talking about the bare minimum when it comes to doing the work of the Nation: funding the government, paying our bills, strengthening our military. But none of these basic responsibilities have been accomplished yet.

These delays weren't out of necessity. After all, the Senate hasn't been debating and voting on important legislation—just a series of nominations and dead-on-arrival messaging bills.

With such a long yearend to-do list, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, who control the agenda, don't have a lot of time. The Senate is only scheduled to be in session for 2 weeks before government funding expires, and there is just another additional week of scheduled legislating before the end of the year. You would think that would mean it is time to buckle up and start checking off these high-priority items, but our Democratic colleagues believe they have an even more important job. Forget the millions of government employees who would be left without a paycheck before the holidays or the economic crisis that would cripple our country if we defaulted on our debts or the servicemembers and their families who deserve a pay raise; our Democratic colleagues, the majority, are devoting all their time and agenda to a spending spree and the largest tax increase in American history, which apparently is the top item on the House agenda this week.

The size and scope of this bill has changed a lot over the last several months. The chairman of the Budget Committee, the Senator from Vermont, initially floated a $6 trillion spending spree and tax increase. It was later ostensibly pared back to $3.5 trillion, and now our colleagues claim it would cost a mere $1.75 trillion—hardly a bargain and certainly hardly for sure when it comes to the amount of spending and taxing because, until the bill is finalized and the Congressional Budget Office has time to score it, we don't know actually how much this beast of a bill will actually cost.

But the budget experts at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business say that the Democratic proposal has been dramatically understated in terms of its cost and its scope. Indeed, the folks at the Wharton School say the ultimate cost of this bill is really somewhere on the order of $4 trillion—more than double the amount that the advocates for this bill have stated.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget concurs. They estimate the true cost of the bill would double to almost $5 trillion over 10 years because of arbitrary sunsets and expirations and other gamesmanship when it comes to this expensive government proposal. That is a whole lot more than the President's promise of zero dollars in cost.

The President continues to insist that this bill costs nothing, but the American people are not deceived. They understand, when you talk about $1.75 trillion or $4 trillion, that somebody, somewhere, is going to have to pay for it; hence, the largest tax increase in American history.

Then there is the so-called temporary nature of some of these government programs. This is all designed to mislead the public and Congress into thinking these bills are cheaper than they actually are. As President Reagan famously said, ''Nothing lasts longer than a temporary government program.''

Despite the lofty promises that have been made, millionaires and billionaires won't be the only ones footing the bill for this spending spree. In fact, one of the last-minute provisions would actually give the ultrawealthy a tax cut, and that is from our Democratic colleagues. One of the latest additions to the bill allows blue-State millionaires and billionaires to pay less in Federal taxes. A former economic adviser to President Obama and current Harvard professor described this provision as ''even worse than [he] had feared.''

Under this tax break for millionaires and billionaires, nearly two-thirds of those making more than $1 million would get a tax cut. So we are not just talking about a few bucks; the wealthiest Americans would save an average of $16,800 next year alone. The party that talks about the need to tax the rich is actually plotting a massive tax cut for the rich.

While this bill will help the wealthiest Americans pay less in Federal taxes, it will ensure the middle class actually ends up paying more. Dating back to the campaign trail, President Biden has repeatedly said that ''if you make under $400,000 a year, I will never raise your taxes one [cent].'' His Treasury Secretary has made the same pledge, and the White House Press Secretary has restated this commitment again and again and again.

Well, I understand why the White House is so concerned about this huge tax increase, but the more we learn about this bill, the clearer it becomes that the middle class will be required to help foot the bill for this spending bonanza. The nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation found that significant numbers of families will see their taxes increased under the plan. In 2027, well over half of taxpayers earning between $75,000 and $100,000 will be paying

more in taxes under this proposal. That is a violation of President Biden's promise that families earning less than $400,000 will not pay a single penny more in taxes. You just can't reconcile those two positions.

That is only the beginning of the mounting costs this bill creates for hard-working American families and my constituents in Texas. The so-called free childcare in this bill will end up costing many families a lot of money. A left-leaning think tank found that middle-class families could pay up to $13,000 more a year for childcare. That is not a price increase on the top 1 percent; that is for people who earn more than their State's median income, which in Texas is just under $62,000. It is hard to imagine a family who brings home $62,000 a year being able to absorb another $13,000 in childcare expenses.

Then come the mounting energy costs. We all know, when we go fill up the tanks of our vehicles, that gas prices are up more than 60 percent from 1 year ago, and this year, energy bills are expected to soar by as much as 54 percent. Our Democratic colleagues, by pushing so much money out the door, chasing so many limited goods and services, are pushing for policies that will actually exacerbate inflation and make these prices climb even higher.

Specifically, they want to attack the fossil fuel industry by imposing a so-called methane fee on gas companies and resurrect an excise tax on each barrel of crude oil. But these price increases won't just be absorbed by the companies that produce oil and gas; this will be an expense that is passed on to customers. If families are struggling to cover their transportation costs today, they will be up the creek without a paddle once these new taxes and fees go into effect.

The cash grab does not end there. This bill would also require hard-working Texas families to subsidize the cost of our colleagues' preferred green initiatives. It provides hundreds of billions of dollars in so-called green subsidies for massive corporations to become eco-friendly. That is right—our Democratic colleagues are proposing more subsidies for corporations, as if Fortune 500 companies need taxpayer assistance to go green.

Wealthy Americans earning hundreds of thousands of dollars each year could receive up to $12,500 in taxpayer assistance if they buy an electric vehicle. Unfortunately, this also includes a little bit of cronyism in it because our Democratic colleagues are making sure that their party's most loyal supporters reap the benefits of this taxpayer-backed handout. The electric vehicle tax credits are even more generous if the car is made in a union shop even though there is no evidence that these vehicles are somehow better for the environment.

We all know what is happening here. It is all too clear. But, again, hard-working American families will be the ones footing the bill for these tax credits that disproportionately benefit the wealthy and organized labor.

To help cover the sky-high price of this bill, our Democratic colleagues want to ensure that Uncle Sam will be able to squeeze each and every penny possible out of middle-class families and small businesses. This bill gives the Internal Revenue Service, which has been notorious for its abuse of power, even more money and more authority. This bill would give the IRS $80 billion, more than half of which will build an army of auditors to poke and prod working families' finances. Instead of building back America, this builds up the bureaucracy, much to the detriment of Texas families. After all, it is going to take a lot of taxpayer money to pay for President Biden's zero-dollar bill.

This reckless tax-and-spending spree is not what our country needs, particularly not at this time, Mr. President. Families don't want an even bigger government that reaches deeper into their pockets and exerts more and more control over their daily lives. They want the freedom to make their own decisions for themselves and their families and the opportunity to succeed based on their hard work. That is not what we are seeing today from the national Democratic Party.

Our Democratic colleagues' bill takes steps toward Medicare for All by harshly penalizing States that didn't expand Medicaid. When the Affordable Care Act mandated a Medicaid expansion, the Supreme Court of the United States characterized that as a gun to the head for the States and said that was unconstitutional. But we know that Medicare for All will discourage medical innovation by slapping arbitrary price controls on things like prescription drugs.

It turns the IRS into the government's No. 1 welfare Agency by extending no-strings-attached welfare checks into perpetuity. It proposes the highest income tax rate in the developed world. It gives Washington bureaucrats unprecedented power to punish States that fail to meet arbitrary climate mandates. It forces hard-working taxpayers to cover the bill for another unnecessary partisan spending spree.

This far-left turn is not what the American people thought they were voting for in 2020, and, frankly, it is members of the President's own party who are beginning to tap the brakes in resisting this huge government expansion and huge spending spree, which will do nothing to address the rising concern of inflation in the country.

So we are simply not going to join our colleagues in voting for this reckless tax-and-spending spree, and we will continue to do everything we can to expose the components of this bill because, frankly, I think the more the American people learn about what is in the bill, the less likely they will be to support it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll, please.

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 (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS SEAN COOLEY AND SPECIALIST CHRISTOPHER HORTON CONGRESSIONAL GOLD STAR FAMILY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, last week, the Senate passed the Sergeant First Class Sean Cooley and Specialist Christopher Horton Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program Act.

I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who lent their support, because creation of this program was a long time coming.

I have spent the past few years working with and talking with Gold Star families, and the one thing they have consistently told me is that they want a more powerful voice here on Capitol Hill.

This legislation will create a Senate fellowship program open only to Gold Star family members. These fellows will have the opportunity to come to Washington, at no cost to their families, and work within the system our servicemembers work so very hard to defend.

And, Madam President, we thank you for your service in defense of this Nation.

Just as we here in the Senate are bound together by a duty to serve the country, Gold Star families are also bound together by a common thread of loss, grief, sacrifice.

It has been my privilege to work with so many of them, and I hope that these fellowships will create a renewed sense of healing and purpose in the hearts of those who come to work with us here in Washington.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, it is the week before Thanksgiving, and the American people are still looking for evidence that President Biden and his lieutenants in Congress took their oaths of office seriously.

I have said it before, but it does bear repeating. The anger and division that has held the American discourse hostage for the past 11 months was not created by an increased desire to engage in contrarian politics.

Nobody asked for this—for what is happening now, no. This is a direct result of President Biden and the Democrats' refusal to actually govern and deliver for the American people. They have been so focused on creating a narrative that they have neglected the fundamentals and, ultimately, the people who put them into their positions of power.

This isn't just my opinion. I have heard it from thousands of Tennesseans