

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of the quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I want to start by congratulating President Biden and Vice President HARRIS, who took office yesterday. We have a team of former Senators in the White House.

Yesterday was a hopeful day. The Capitol Building, so recently besieged by violence and lawlessness, resumed its rightful place as the seat of our democracy and backdrop for the peaceful transfer of power from one President to the next that is a hallmark of our system of government. The faith of many Americans has been shaken in recent weeks. But yesterday reminded us that our democracy still stands and our Nation endures—bruised, maybe, but unbroken.

I also want to express my profound gratitude to the Capitol Police officers and other law enforcement who, though outnumbered and overrun, defended this Capitol on January 6, and to the soldiers and the law enforcement who have guarded this building in the days since. We live in peace and freedom because of the service and sacrifice of our military and our police officers.

After the election of November, President Biden gave a victory speech in which he pledged to be “a President who seeks not to divide, but to unify. Who doesn’t see Red and Blue states, but a United States. And who will work with all my heart to win the confidence of the whole people.”

He reiterated that commitment in yesterday’s speech, stating: “On this January day, my whole soul is in this: Bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our nation.”

That is what we need right now—a President who will unite us. If President Biden can truly be a President who governs for all Americans, who respects all Americans, and who works to win the confidence of the whole people, he will have done our Nation a great service.

And I do think President Biden is capable of doing this, but I do want to sound a cautionary note. It is common to talk about unity at Presidential inaugurations. But all too often that commitment to unity is forgotten—by the President or by the members of his party. I hope this commitment will be backed up with action and that Democrat leaders in Congress will embrace the President’s words. That means respecting those Americans who didn’t vote for President Biden as well as those who did.

It means working together to confront our Nation’s challenges, instead of adopting an “our way or the highway” approach. It means preserving minority rights in the Senate when it comes to legislation, the heart—the heart—of what makes the Senate special and something Republicans, I might add, defended during our time in the majority.

For the President, it means nominating individuals who represent a majority of Americans, not the far left fringes of his party. I have seen some hopeful actions from President Biden. Several of his nominees for important posts, while perhaps not those whom I would have chosen, are public servants whom I believe will serve our country well in positions like Director of National Intelligence, whom we voted on yesterday. And the President has demonstrated both his leadership and his concern for all Americans by prioritizing the pandemic and focusing on getting Americans vaccinated.

But there have been troubling things as well. While the President has nominated some mainstream candidates, other nominations raise serious concerns on issues like overregulation of the economy and life and conscience protections.

While I applaud the President’s focus on the pandemic, I am concerned that a number of the measures in his pandemic relief proposal are heavily partisan—and, certainly, not things that should be rushed through Congress without serious consideration of the long-term impact they would have on our economy and American families.

If there was any mandate given in this election, it was a mandate for moderation. A historic number of Americans voted for President Biden, but a historic number voted for President Trump as well. Democrats lost seats in the House of Representatives, and the Senate is evenly divided.

I hope—I really hope—that Democrat leaders and the President will remember that and not allow the far left, which has sought to hijack the Democratic Party in recent years, to determine their agenda. We have a chance—a chance—for a new day here in this country, and I believe that President Biden is committed to leading us there.

I pray that that commitment will endure and that we can spend the next months and years working together, legislating together, and ensuring the voices of all Americans are respected and heard.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, there have been few other times in American history when the need for economic growth through strategic, responsible, pro-business policies has been as great as it is today. Nothing is more important to a family than a

good-paying job. That is where the American dream begins.

Today, as our Nation fights to overcome the horrendous health and economic impacts of COVID-19, we must balance our approach. We have to protect American families and individuals who have been hurt by this crisis, support commonsense public health policies and an aggressive vaccine distribution effort, while also keeping businesses open, incentivizing future growth of businesses, large and small, and standing up to our economic adversaries, like Communist China, by reshoring our supply chain back home.

We also need to continue cutting regulations to make it easier for businesses to operate and for entrepreneurs to create jobs.

President Biden and his Cabinet have the important task of revitalizing our economy amid one of our Nation’s worst economic crises. In my 8 years as Governor of Florida, we balanced our budget each year, cut \$10 billion in taxes, paid off one-third of our State debt, and Florida companies added nearly 1.7 million jobs. But instead of looking to innovation and approving policies of States like Florida that will create jobs and help Americans and small businesses, the Biden administration is already making promises to go in the opposite direction—promises that are being championed by his nominee for Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen.

Let me be clear. I support targeted relief to help our small businesses and individuals who are hurting because of the coronavirus. With the start of a new administration, I was hoping to hear some fresh, new ideas on how to accomplish our shared goal of addressing this crisis. But that is not what we are hearing from the Biden administration. Their answer is the same as it always has been for Democrats: more government, more spending, higher taxes, no accountability.

Voters are befuddled by the claim that while families cannot borrow without limits or consequences, somehow the Federal Government can. It is irresponsible, and I won’t stand for it. We have to get serious about how we are spending taxpayer dollars. We already have more than \$27 trillion in Federal debt.

If interest rates return to their 50-year average, the interest on our Federal debt will make it impossible to fund our military, Medicare, and Social Security.

President Biden wants to spend more than \$350 billion to bail out wasteful, liberal States for their decades of mismanagement, and his nominees, including Ms. Yellen, support this nonsense.

Andrew Cuomo has threatened the New York wealthy that if they don’t help him get a Federal Government bailout, he will raise their taxes.

I was elected Governor of Florida when Cuomo was elected Governor of New York. While Governor of Florida, I lowered taxes each year. Cuomo raised

taxes. Since we were both elected, families and businesses have increasingly left New York for lower taxes, better schools, better roads, and warmer weather in Florida.

Asking taxpayers to bail out failed politicians in liberal States like New York and Illinois and save them from their own bad decisions isn't fair to the taxpayers in fiscally responsible States like Florida. After all, many Florida taxpayers left New York because of Cuomo's tax policy.

It makes no sense. Congress has already allocated more than \$4.5 trillion to address this crisis. Think about it. We just passed a nearly \$1 trillion relief package 4 weeks ago. This is all borrowed money. The Federal Government doesn't have savings for a rainy day, and we still don't know how much money is unspent from the previous coronavirus relief packages. How can we possibly justify spending more money right now? We don't even know what we might need to spend money on.

And for States like California, we know they don't need it. California's tax revenues for this fiscal year is running \$9 billion, or 18 percent, above projections. Personal income tax revenue in October was \$1 billion—15 percent higher than in the previous October, and sales taxes were up 9.2 percent. For the last 4 months, overall revenue in California has exceeded spring forecasts and even 2019 collections. But that hasn't kept Governor Newsom and his far left buddies in Congress from keeping their hands out for more money.

We cannot simply throw massive spending at this with no accountability to the current and future American taxpayer. It is shameful.

We have also heard the Biden administration and its nominees call for a new national minimum wage of \$15 an hour. It is clear that these folks haven't talked to business owners. Small businesses in America are struggling like never before, especially in liberal States, where repeated lockdowns have exacerbated their work to stay open. And President Biden believes now is the time to slap another mandate on their back and drive even more Americans chasing the dream of this country out of business? I am not sure how you could possibly be more detached from reality.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, a federally mandated \$15 minimum wage would cost as many as 3.7 million Americans their jobs.

Let me tell you, I know what it is like to be poor, to live in public housing, to not have enough money to afford healthcare for a family member. I watched my parents struggle for work. I don't want any family to go through what I went through.

I ran for office because I wanted to help struggling families like the one I grew up in to have the chance to live the American dream. So when I hear folks like Ms. Yellen say that job loss

from a minimum-wage mandate is "very minimal, if anything," it really leaves me at a loss. Watching 3.7 million Americans lose their jobs will not be minimal.

Adding insult to injury, we have heard great praise for the implementation of a carbon tax. Let's remember, this was part of the Green New Deal, which would be a disaster if passed. According to estimates from the Heritage Foundation, a carbon emissions tax would cost the country 1.4 million jobs while decreasing our GDP by \$3.9 trillion and reducing income for a family of four by \$40,000, with disproportionate costs falling on low-income families. Again, how can this be seen as the logical step when so many in our Nation are simply trying to recover and rebuild from the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic?

If the administration has its way, Americans should prepare for higher taxes, less income, less opportunity, and more government mandates.

Ms. Yellen seems to think the solution to America's economic woes is more government, more taxes, more regulation, not more individual opportunity. That is wrong and will only send us further into debt and our families further into despair.

Based on what I have heard, I am concerned and, frankly, disturbed by what is being offered as the future of America's economic policy. When I ran for the Senate, I did so to fix Washington's broken way of doing things. We have to address Washington's unconscionable need to waste tax dollars on things that don't actually help or even hurt American families, especially working families and those on fixed incomes. I will never give up this fight.

In 2018, Ms. Yellen was quoted speaking about the unsustainable U.S. debt and said: "If I had a magic wand, I would raise taxes." We know that is not the real answer to solving our debt issue. It is simply the lazy, liberal approach.

It is time to get value out of every dollar we spend and make hard choices that actually help families and ensure a strong economic future for our Nation.

I cannot support the nomination of a candidate who proudly promotes Joe Biden's policies to mortgage our kids' and grandkids' futures with irresponsible and shortsighted tax spending.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, there is a lot going on in the Senate, a lot of activity behind the scenes right now. Leadership of both parties is negotiating a 50-50 power-sharing agreement, which is very important for the Senate and very important for our Nation.

One issue that is being discussed is the status of what is going to happen, possibly—hopefully, nothing is going to happen—with a really important element of the U.S. Senate: the legislative filibuster—something that has been a hallmark of this body almost since the founding of the Republic. This shouldn't be a hard issue.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter, led by Senator COLLINS and Senator COONS, dated April 7, 2017, to the then-majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, April 7, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Democratic Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER SCHUMER: We are writing to urge you to support our efforts to preserve existing rules, practices, and traditions as they pertain to the right of Members to engage in extended debate on legislation before the United States Senate. Senators have expressed a variety of opinions about the appropriateness of limiting debate when we are considering judicial and executive branch nominations. Regardless of our past disagreements on that issue, we are united in our determination to preserve the ability of Members to engage in extended debate when bills are on the Senate floor.

We are mindful of the unique role the Senate plays in the legislative process, and we are steadfastly committed to ensuring that this great American institution continues to serve as the world's greatest deliberative body. Therefore, we are asking you to join us in opposing any effort to curtail the existing rights and prerogatives of Senators to engage in full, robust, and extended debate as we consider legislation before this body in the future.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Collins, Orrin Hatch, Claire McCaskill, Lisa Murkowski, Christopher A. Coons, Joe Manchin, III, John McCain, Patrick J. Leahy, Roger F. Wicker, Luther Strange, Angus S. King, Jr., Michael F. Bennet, Amy Klobuchar, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Martin Heinrich, John Boozman, Lindsey Graham, Richard Burr, Mark R. Warner, Jerry Moran.

Roy Blunt, Marco Rubio, Jeanne Shaheen, Thom Tillis, Sherrod Brown, Shelley Moore Capito, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Brian Schatz, Michael B. Enzi, Dean Heller, Cory A. Booker, Mazie Hirono, Dianne Feinstein, John Thune, Bill Cassidy, Heidi Heitkamp, Jeff Flake, Chuck Grassley, Maria Cantwell, Rob Portman.

Lamar Alexander, John Kennedy, Jon Tester, Thomas R. Carper, Pat Roberts, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tammy Duckworth, Jack Reed, Thad Cochran, Joe Donnelly, Ben