

cost of the bill. That is \$2 to \$2.5 trillion that would be added to the already \$30 trillion national debt.

Let's just say, for example, that these ideas they have to partially pay for this bill seem to change on a daily basis. A corporate tax hike? No, let's change it to a corporate minimum tax. A new death tax? No, let's change it to a new tax on wealth—something we have never talked about before in this country, taxing unrealized gains. That is taxing income before people have actually seen the income—the realized income.

Funding for their bill seems to be a matter of throwing spaghetti at the wall on a daily basis to try and see what sticks. There isn't a day that went by in the last couple of weeks, when we were in session the week before last, where there wasn't another horrible idea that came from that side of how to raise revenue to finance this massive, reckless, and radical spending bill. And of course all of Democrats' current funding proposals put together will not be able to pay for their legislation, especially when you remove, as I said earlier, the budget gimmicks that are disguising the true cost of their plans.

As their narrow majorities made clear, the 2020 election did not give Democrats a mandate for Big Government socialism. And if that wasn't clear to Democrats in 2020, it should certainly be clear to them now after the election for the Virginia Governor this month, which saw Republicans win statewide for the first time since 2009. Voters in Virginia sent a clear message to Democrats that they weren't looking for far-left government or a far-left social agenda that would seek to circumvent parents' role in their children's lives and education. But just as inflation concerns have not stopped Democrats, it has become clear that their rebuke in Virginia won't stop them either. In fact, some Democrats seem to think that their response should be to run faster and further to the left.

So the big agenda item for Democrats for the rest of the year continues to be passing their partisan Build Back Better tax-and-spending spree, which means Americans will be able to look forward to further inflation and a weaker economy, not to mention increased government control of their decision making.

It is a poor legacy for Democrats' first year in office, but it seems to be the legacy Democrats are determined to secure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I am glad to follow my colleague from the Dakotas because I would certainly never attempt to interpret the electorate of another State.

I can tell you about the Virginia elections that happened a couple weeks

back. The message, I think, from our voters pretty loud and clear was: We want you to get stuff done. If we in the Senate and in the House had passed the infrastructure bill and passed the Build Back Better bill before the Virginia election, I think the outcome would have been different.

What we were hearing again and again from voters is: We gave you a majority. Please act on it, especially at this time when Americans are so challenged by now nearly 20 months of pandemic and economic devastation.

So I stand on the floor as a proud Virginian, very focused on celebrating the accomplishment of yesterday—President Biden's signature on the infrastructure bill—but also saying we have to pass the Build Back Better bill in order to respond to what our constituents are asking of us at this challenging time.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Mr. President, I want to speak today, sort of, maybe not so much as a Senator but as a former city councilman and mayor.

I am sort of unique. There are 30 people in the United States who have been a mayor, Governor, and U.S. Senator—1 of only 30 in our entire history. The first time I was introduced and someone said that, I thought, that clearly cannot be right. So many Governors become Senators, that clearly cannot be right. I asked the Historian to research the matter because someone introduced me that way. And it came back that that is correct. Only 30 people in the history of this country have been a mayor, a Governor, and a Senator. And as I pondered the reason for that, it suddenly occurred to me: Being a mayor will kill you.

Governors can become Senators, but mayors often make everyone mad, and it is hard to go from being a mayor to having a post-mayoral political career because the job is so tough.

And yet, when people ask me: Which job do you like better, Governor or Senator, I always say: Look, I like them all. But if you made me give up every title I ever had except one, the one I would hold on to is mayor. I would hold on to being a mayor because when you are a mayor, it is 24/7, 365. There is no recess for a mayor. City councils and mayors don't go into recess. You are dealing with people on the issues that are the closest to them. You can make people happier or madder.

You can convince people in local government, in a nation of 330 million, sometimes they think: What does my vote matter? What does my voice matter? No one will listen to me. In local government, you can convince people that actually they will be listened to.

So I would hold on to that mayoral role, and, frankly, if I had not been mayor, I never would have been a Lieutenant Governor or Governor or a U.S. Senator. So I owe anything that I am or do in politics now to the fact that I started in local government.

I spoke yesterday to the Virginia Association of Counties, the gathering of all county supervisors of all 95 counties around Virginia. They gather once a year, usually in person. Last year, it was by Zoom.

They were so glad to be back together, in person, in Norfolk yesterday, hundreds of them in a conference room. And they asked me to come and talk about what is going on in Congress. And I said: How much time do you have? But what I really focused on was three things, and I want to focus on those three things now, speaking about them from the perspective of local officials not just in Virginia but all over this country: first, the American Rescue Plan, which was passed in March, but it is just beginning to have an impact in Virginia's cities, counties, and towns; second, the bipartisan infrastructure bill that was signed at the White House yesterday; and, third, the education and workforce bill that we are working on now that I believe will reach the President's desk in December.

I started off by telling these county supervisors what I truly believe; that anybody in public life right now, elected or a first responder or any classroom teacher, when we are all finished with our times in public life, I think we will look back on this period of time, beginning March 2020, as the most important period of our public service careers. The pandemic has created such destruction, death, economic catastrophe, illness, and division that we have all been tested in our personal lives and our work on behalf of our citizens. Our constituents have needed us in unparalleled ways since March of 2020.

Last year, on a cold Saturday in March, we passed the American Rescue Plan. It contains significant funding in four basic pillars: healthcare, relief to individuals and families, aid to businesses, and then, finally, aid to State and local governments, including educational institutions.

The American Rescue Plan immediately affected millions of Americans—families, healthcare, institutions, businesses—through measures like massive vaccine deployment, checks to individuals, business grants. These kept families afloat and helped protect themselves against COVID, and they also kept the lights on for many of our local businesses.

But what I want to focus on is the aid that we gave to State and local governments and, again, particularly—to local governments. Virginia and its localities, through the American Rescue Plan, received \$7.2 billion in the American Rescue Plan; \$4 billion to the Commonwealth of Virginia and \$3.2 billion to our cities, counties, and towns.

And as soon as we passed it, I started to go around and talk to our cities, counties, and towns: How are you going to spend these local moneys? What they told me was interesting in April

of last year. They said: Well, first, we are going to wait and see how the State decides to spend their \$4 billion because we don't want to spend on something and have the State spend on the same thing. So we are going to let the State, the Governor, Governor Northam, the General Assembly program the \$4 billion. But while the State is doing that, we are going to go out and dialogue with our citizens.

And I really applaud my local governments. Recognizing this was one-time money that wouldn't happen every year, they had intense public dialogue with local constituents about what can we do to really transform? How can we use this money? And they have done it in fascinating ways.

As I traveled around the State and talked to these local governments, I see them advancing long-delayed capital projects, water and wastewater upgrades, closing the digital divide by investing in broadband, constructing community centers in parts of the community that haven't received investments in the past.

Many gave hazard pay to first responders. The American Rescue Plan helped people fund police, ambulance, fire, mental health workers, public health workers, grants to local nonprofits and churches that supported the community during COVID, grants to shore up Virginia's hard-hit businesses that were engaged in the tourism industry as people stopped traveling. This is what our local governments have done with these dollars.

The investments are supplemented by more than three and a half billion additional dollars to Virginia childcare providers, K-12 school systems, colleges, community colleges, with billions more for other local priorities like transit and broadband infrastructure.

So it was heartening to talk to these county officials. And there are more red counties in Virginia than there are blue counties, so I was talking to county officials from all over the State, and more would have been in Republican counties than Democratic counties. But they were thrilled that Congress—that the Senate by a one-vote margin, as we all remember—passed the American Rescue Plan to invest in these key local priorities.

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

Mr. President, on the bipartisan infrastructure bill, I told them: I am going to leave this floor and race to Washington and hope that there aren't any State troopers nearby because I need to get to Washington to go to the signing at the White House of the infrastructure bill.

This is the Nation's biggest commitment to infrastructure since the Interstate Highway System initiative in the Eisenhower administration. It will employ hundreds of thousands of people and raise the platform for economic success for decades.

The Presiding Officer was in local government just like I was, and if you

are in local government, you care about infrastructure. When I was a mayor, I had a transit system, I had roads, I had bike trails, I had an airport, I had an Amtrak station, and I had a port on the James River, which is connected to the Chesapeake Bay. There is a lot of oceangoing and freight going out of our port. I had all of that. If you are in local government, you care about infrastructure. That is why it was exciting to see so many mayors and local officials at the White House yesterday when the bill was being signed.

I was proud to cheer on my colleagues who worked on that bill, and I thank all of them. I am especially proud that a provision that I had with Senator WICKER, of Mississippi—to enable our historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions to be involved in training the workforce and creating the innovations that we will need to make this infrastructure investment—was included in the bill.

I want to give a special thanks to my Virginia colleague, MARK WARNER, who, I think, was sort of an unsung hero in the negotiations around the infrastructure bill.

The impact of the bill is going to be felt in Virginia for generations: billions for roads and bridges, ports and dredging, airports, rail to trails, railroad, climate resiliency, broadband, energy grid modernization, waste and wastewater infrastructure. The infrastructure bill contains a significant investment for Chesapeake Bay clean-up—that really matters to us—and a significant investment in the Appalachian Regional Commission. That really matters to southern and western Virginia, the parts of our State that are in Appalachia.

Allocating these dollars to States in smart ways will allow them to prioritize the use of the funds in our cities, counties, and towns in a way that will ensure that each State gets to tackle the most important priorities, because the Virginia solution wouldn't be the California solution or the New Hampshire solution. Every State can use these funds to fund the projects that are the most important there. Virginia is going to receive a minimum of \$100 million for affordable broadband, at least \$7.6 billion for roads and bridges, and at least \$2.7 billion for transit, among other sizable investments.

As I explained this to my Virginia Association of Counties yesterday morning, they were overjoyed because they all had—and the Presiding Officer remembers this—their local capital improvement projects lists, with projects that had been bumping along for years, and there were never enough dollars to really advance them. Now the dollars will be there to get the projects done and cross them off the lists.

BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

Mr. President, I want to now talk about the third bill. The administra-

tion calls this bill the Build Back Better bill, and some call it the reconciliation bill because of the Senate budget procedure that we are using to pass it. As a member of the Budget and the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committees, I call it the education and workforce bill. This bill, to me, is fundamentally about preparing America's workers for tomorrow and making sure that our workforce has the training and the childcare and the housing and the healthcare to outcompete any country in the world.

If we want to make good on the promise of the infrastructure bill, who is going to build it? We just signed an infrastructure bill, but it didn't have the training and the education component. Who is going to build this? We have to have a workforce to build this massive infrastructure improvement, a once-in-a-generation improvement. That is what the Build Back Better bill is about.

We are not going to outcompete China just by diplomacy or tariffs or tough talk. We aren't going to outcompete China just by growing our military budget. The best way to outcompete China is to invest in America's workers.

The success of America's economy in the next 50 years will depend on our making the same investments that allowed us to thrive in the 20th century—investing in infrastructure, investing in people—and that is the basis of Build Back Better.

This education and workforce bill also provides sizable investments in community colleges to train workers for infrastructure jobs, to train the next generation of K-12 teachers, and to train workers to enable America to lead the world into a new and innovative energy economy. There will be investments in rural economic development, a Pell grant increase, an extension of the child tax credit, and additional healthcare and housing funds to reduce costs for American families. The bill will close the Medicaid coverage gap, lower healthcare costs and the costs of prescription drugs, and will fund better public health infrastructure.

The thing about this bill that maybe excites me the most is this: We will be able to provide funding for States to make prekindergarten universally available for every 3- and 4-year-old in this country, and we will do it through a mixed delivery model that supports high-quality public and private providers. This will help an additional 140,000 3- and 4-year-olds in Virginia have pre-K, and we will also fund childcare for the kids younger than 3 years old to bring down costs of childcare for working families. When you combine both the pre-K and the childcare support in Virginia, it will mean that 500,000 more kids just in my State will have access to quality and affordable childcare and early education. When kids get a strong start, it