

Debating the right way to confront Russian threats to America and our allies and equip our friends in Ukraine is certainly worth the Senate's time. Putin is massing tens of thousands of troops on Ukraine's border, but the Democratic leader is trying to block a debate about responding to Russian aggression? It makes no sense.

Considering sanctions on the pipeline that fuels Putin's encroachment over Europe—including provisions from Senator Risch that closely mirror language that the House added unanimously—is certainly worth the Senate's time. Setting the record straight on our resolve to maintain a strong and credible nuclear deterrent that can check the worst impulses of our adversaries is also worth the Senate's time.

Yet, once again, the Democratic leader seems to want to put national security last. My colleague is trying to overcorrect for poor planning by cramming a 2-week bill into 2 or 3 days' time. I imagine there might be finger-pointing at the Republicans if that proves impossible.

So nothing less than the safety of the American people is at stake. This is more important than political time-tables or partisan wish lists. So if the Democratic leader insists on forcing a cloture vote later today, I will oppose cutting off these important debates prematurely when they have really just begun.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now on a related matter, why do our Democratic colleagues want to short-change our national defense? Well, to free up their time and attention for another massive, reckless taxing-and-spending spree, a radical wish list that would hurt American families and help China.

Working families are already getting slammed by runaway costs because the Democrats' last massive spending spree drove up inflation. Gas prices are up about 50 percent, used car prices are up more than 25 percent, and grocery prices across practically every category are up significantly over this time last year.

But, in response, Washington Democrats want to print, borrow, and spend trillions more. Even if you accept all their budget gimmicks at face value, this bill alone would unleash \$800 billion in not-paid-for spending in the next 5 years. Years 5 through 10 are when their crushing tax hikes and phony accounting would actually begin to kick in. But even then the bill is not paid for.

President Biden promised Americans over and over that this legislation would cost zero dollars. Obviously, that is false. The Congressional Budget Office says that after 10 years, after their tax hikes and fake offsets are factored in, their spree would still add up to \$367 billion and add that all to the deficit.

President Biden said the deficit impact would be zero. In reality, it is

hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars.

President Biden promised Americans something else too. He said he would never raise taxes on the middle class. People earning less than \$400,000 per year were not to pay a penny more. He has completely broken this promise as well.

Among the \$1.5 trillion in job-killing tax increases are new burdens for small businesses, family farms, and direct hikes on middle-class families earning less than six figures. Meanwhile, amazingly, Democrats did find room in their plan to include \$300 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest blue-State ZIP codes in New York and California. Our colleagues want to pretend they are launching another New Deal. Yet one of the biggest components is a direct cash giveaway to their richest constituents.

So the cost of this spending spree would be astronomical, and the massive tax hikes that would only partly pay for it would literally crush an already fragile economy.

Well, what about the content of the liberal wish list? If Democrats get to steal the American people's credit card for this historic spending spree, what would our citizens even get to unwrap?

Well, there would be massive government giveaways to supposedly green initiatives, giving rise to a whole new generation of waste and abuse like Solyndra.

There would be a gigantic slush fund so that HHS Secretary Becerra, the culture warrior who sued Catholic nuns, could take over daycare and pre-kindergarten across America. He would be in charge of subsidizing certain kinds of private family choices but not others and tilting the playing field against faith-based childcare.

There would be a continuation of inflationary welfare payments that Washington is sending out with zero work requirements whatsoever, and illegal immigrants would get the money as well. Oh, and, as we speak, Senate Democrats are still trying desperately behind the scenes to get sweeping amnesty included in the bill as well.

So it goes on and on like this, a hodgepodge catalog that is built to satisfy the demands of activists, not the needs of families. If you ask any working-class or middle-class American family for their top concerns, you aren't going to hear many people pinning for massive tax hikes, electric car charging stations, and woke bureaucrats getting control of their kids' early childhoods.

My colleagues across the aisle seem determined to spend the weeks ahead on ways to waste Americans' money while making Americans' problems even worse. So let's hope enough of our Democratic colleagues step back, take stock, do the responsible thing, and kill this bill.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4350, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4350) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reed/Inhofe modified amendment No. 3867, in the nature of a substitute.

Reed amendment No. 4775 (to amendment No. 3867), to modify effective dates relating to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration and the Service Acquisition Executive of the Department of the Air Force for Space Systems and Programs.

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

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

HUNTER BIDEN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today I am going to highlight a new Hunter Biden record that I have recently made public.

Before I get to that point, I am going to take a trip down memory lane—yes, down memory lane.

On September 23, 2020, Senator JOHN-SON and I released our "Biden Report," as it has been called. That report focused on questionable financial transactions between the Biden family and foreign, government-linked individuals.

On November 18, 2020, we released a supplemental to that report. I am going to read several statements from the media and my Democratic colleagues about our report.

So, to start with, on September 23, 2020, a New York Times article by Nicholas Fandos described it in two ways: "lack of meaningful new information" and "overlap with a Russian disinformation campaign."

And the then-Democratic minority leader was quoted in the same article

and said the report read “as if Putin wrote it, not United States senators.”

A September 23, 2020, Salon article by Igor Derysh quoted a Democratic Senator saying that the report was the culmination of a “sham investigation.” In that article, the same Democratic Senator described our investigation as being “rooted in disinformation” from Russian operatives.

Separately, a Democratic Senator also said about our report: “Bottom line: The Johnson-Grassley investigation is baseless. It’s laundering Russian propaganda for circulation in the U.S.”

In a September 23, 2020, CBS article by Melissa Quinn, another Democratic Senator said about our report, meaning the Johnson-Grassley report: “The chairmen have amplified a known Russian attack on our election,” and “It is unconscionable that the chairmen are continuing to advance false information intended to undermine our democratic process at the expense of bipartisan work that we should be doing to protect our national security.”

That same CBS article said that our report “reveals little new information.”

And one Washington Post columnist, Josh Rogin, said: “Even after accepting disinformation from Russian agents, Johnson and Grassley couldn’t come up with anything new or interesting on Hunter Biden.”

So understand this: Week after week, month after month, year after year, the media and my Democratic colleagues falsely attacked our investigation with reckless disregard for the truth. I have spoken at length on the Senate floor rebutting all these false charges with example after example. I did so on May 11, 2021; March 18, 2021; December 14, 2020; December 10, 2020; October 19, 2020; and September 29, 2020.

Well, on November 15, this year, Senator JOHNSON and I publicly released a record that I placed in part on this poster next to me, and I will get to this in a minute. The full document illustrates an assignment and assumption of business interests.

The part next to me is a signature block in unaltered form, including one typographical error. The signature block includes Hunter Biden, two of his companies, and individuals connected to the communist Chinese regime. These are the main companies that Hunter Biden and his associates used to funnel money all over the world: Hudson West III, Hudson V, and then the other ones are ColdHarbour Capital and Owasco. Owasco is Hunter Biden’s firm that was the recipient of millions of dollars from questionable financial transactions.

Gongwen Dong was the right-hand man for the owner of a company called CEFC China Energy Company. Mervyn Yan was his associate. CEFC was an arm of the Chinese Government. Hunter Biden was a close business partner of these men and their companies. Therefore, this signature block shows a direct financial and legal relationship

between Hunter Biden and individuals connected to the communist regime.

Now, these are the same folks and companies that we discussed at length in our September 2020 report. This new document is yet another record that substantiates our report that we issued September 2020—that same report that the media and my Democratic colleagues said was based on Russian disinformation.

So I now say to the media and I now say to my Democratic colleagues who said our report was Russian disinformation, this question: Is this signature block Russian disinformation? Are the names of these companies Russian disinformation? Is this document disinformation?

No. This is a legitimate record that my staff uncovered, and it didn’t come from the Hunter Biden laptop. This is the same type of record that Senator JOHNSON and I based our report several months ago on.

To my Democratic colleagues who falsely smeared our report: You are in the majority. You are now committee chairs, and you have jurisdiction over these matters. So I want to challenge you to use the same effort and energy that you exerted in the Trump-Russia investigation to expose the extensive ties between the Chinese regime and members of the Biden family.

I think I speak with some credibility on this point because you know there was a President Trump, and at the time there was a President Trump, I investigated Donald Trump, Jr., on things that were appropriate at that time to ask legitimate questions about in the constitutional role of congressional oversight.

#### EDUCATION

Madam President, on another matter—and this will be my last statement for the day—I have always been a critic of one-size-fits-all government, and there are few places where this is more inappropriate than education. Each child is different, and if we offer a cookie-cutter, assembly-line education, it will hurt all students.

Whether we are talking about students with gifts and talents or those with learning disabilities, students with unique learning needs must have teachers trained to address their way of learning. It may seem like common sense to say that, that students benefit when their education is tailored to their individual needs. Any parent can tell you that. You can’t expect all students to learn at the same speed and depth in every subject.

Unfortunately, those like outgoing New York Mayor de Blasio want to scrap programs for gifted students. Citing the fact that White and Asian students were overperforming compared to students from other ethnic categories, de Blasio tried to end the city’s program.

His focus on maintaining equality of outcomes by preventing any students from excelling is a misguided policy. It would have the perverse effect of re-

ducing opportunity for the very students who need it most, including historically disadvantaged minority groups.

Now, we all know that wealthy families can afford to put their kids in private schools or pay for services outside of the schools. It is those students who aren’t as well off who need access to services to address their unique learning needs. Families from less advantaged backgrounds are not helped by limiting opportunities for all students in public schools. They are the ones who have the most to lose when public schools cancel needed services.

Thankfully, the incoming New York mayor recognizes the importance of gifted and talented programming and has pledged to keep it.

I introduced the TALENT Act to address these unique needs of gifted and talented students and ensure that they don’t slip through the cracks. Thankfully, much of this bill was included in Every Child Achieves in the year 2015. But I am also a strong supporter of Javits Gifted and Talented Education. This is the only dedicated Federal program to develop and help teachers implement teaching methods that meet the needs of gifted students, and it is targeted specifically to disadvantaged gifted students.

Thankfully, my State of Iowa is a leader in this area. Iowa law requires gifted education services for kids who need to be challenged. This applies to all students, whether or not they can afford private schools. Iowa has recognized that we should aim to challenge kids with gifts and talents and give them the resources they need to excel. We should help all students achieve their potential, not try in vain to find one identical education for every kid.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, here we are, following the Thanksgiving holiday, where I hope that people got to get together with friends and family and enjoy a little respite from the hectic schedule here in Congress. But here we are now, with just a few short days intervening between now and Christmas, and the end-of-the-year legislative mad dash is officially upon us.

This year, our Democratic colleagues, who control the Senate agenda, have ignored some of the Senate’s most important and basic responsibilities, leaving us with a whole lot to do and not a whole lot of time in which to do it.

In September, when the Senate should have passed a group of bills to

fund the government for the next fiscal year, our colleagues instead kicked the can down the road. You would have thought they would have used the past couple of months to pass the annual appropriations bills, which is one of most basic and fundamental responsibilities of Congress; but, no, they chose not to do that.

Instead, our Democratic colleagues found time for partisan, dead-on-arrival messaging bills while they failed to bring a single appropriations bill to the floor with a December 3 deadline.

As things stand today, it looks like these funding bills are nowhere near ready. This risks leaving millions of Americans without a paycheck right before the Christmas holidays or punting on our funding responsibilities once again.

And that is not the only potential fiscal disaster we are careening toward. At some point in the coming days, weeks, or months—we don't know exactly when; only Secretary Yellen knows—the U.S. will run up against the debt limit. That is, we have maxed out our credit card and, unless our Democratic colleagues decide to raise that credit limit, we will exhaust the credit of the United States Government.

It kind of feels a little like “Groundhog Day” because we saw this movie just about 2 months ago.

Democrats had a clear roadmap and ample time to increase the debt ceiling on their own and avoid a financial crisis, but they stubbornly refused. They said they didn't have enough time. Well, they don't have that excuse now.

And, even then, they have known since July that Republicans would not help them with another partisan spending spree. So we find ourselves staring down the barrel of a potential economic crisis, but our colleagues can't blame the calendar for not having enough time again.

If our Democratic colleagues want to exclude Republicans and continue spending on a purely partisan basis, they will have to raise the debt ceiling in a partisan fashion. They have proven they are OK with spending trillions of dollars of borrowed money without a single Republican vote. It is not too much to say that they should be held accountable for that reckless course of conduct.

Of course, before the Senate addresses either one of those crises, there is another item on the agenda: The National Defense Authorization Act.

Congress has passed the National Defense Authorization Act each year for the last 60 years, and for good reason. It is the case, I believe, that our national security is the single most important duty that we have here in the Senate. But this bill has been waiting in the wings for months, ready for floor action, and both the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the ranking member have had to push the majority leader to actually bring this to the Senate floor, even at this late date.

So 2 weeks ago, before the Thanksgiving holidays, the Senate finally began consideration of the Defense Authorization Act, and we hope we can actually do what the Senate is supposed to do, which is to vote on amendments to that bill and then pass it in the coming days. But the fact is, it is nearly December, and the fact that it has not been done yet is simply inexplicable.

Now, with such a big to-do list and so little time to do it, you would think our colleagues would be laser focused on this hefty end-of-the-year agenda: funding the government, avoiding a debt crisis, strengthening our military, and supporting our volunteer military forces and their families.

None of the Senate's most basic responsibilities have been attended to; and, as it stands today, the Senate is only scheduled to be in session for a handful of days before the Christmas holidays.

Well, unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues think they have an even more important job to do. Forget the millions of government employees who could be left without a paycheck before the holidays, or the economic crisis that will cripple our country if we defaulted on our debt. Our Democratic colleagues are laser focused on their multitrillion-dollar tax-and-spending spree.

After months of party infighting and countless iterations of this bill, the Democratic leaders in the House—most notably Speaker PELOSI—finally managed to pass a partisan version of this bill. They couldn't even convince every Democrat to vote for the bill, which is an indication of how problematic it is.

What we are talking about is an absolutely massive bill that would increase the role and power of the Federal Government and Americans' lives in an unprecedented fashion. It would reshape how we take care of our children, our healthcare system, our energy, our educational systems. Virtually every aspect of American citizens' daily lives would be affected by this monstrosity.

And, of course, these programs don't come cheap, but Democrats have pulled every gimmick in the book to hide the true cost. They have filled this bill with arbitrary sunsets and cliffs and expirations that make these programs appear to cost less than we know they actually will.

One example is the expanded child tax credit. As originally drafted, this policy was a temporary measure in their bill that became law in March, just 8 months ago. Earlier drafts of the so-called Build Back Better legislation would have extended that policy through 2025, even though it seemed all but certain that Democrats would later try to make it permanent.

When Democrats needed to cut the overall pricetag of the bill to convince their own Members to vote for it, the expanded child tax credit was scaled back to a 1-year extension. But nothing

has really changed. I have no expectation that this or a number of other so-called temporary programs in this bill will actually expire.

As President Ronald Reagan once famously said, the closest thing to eternal life on Earth is a temporary government program.

If all the temporary provisions in this bill are made permanent, it will cost a whole lot more than is advertised. And the budget experts at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business have given us an estimate of how much more it will cost.

Of course, there is President Biden, who said it will cost zero. Nobody believes that. Others have said, well, it is a \$1.75 trillion bill. And I would argue that, based on all the budget gimmickry, you can't really believe that either.

The University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business pegs the price at close to \$4.6 trillion over 10 years—that is the budget window—more than 2½ times the amount Democrats have previously stated.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget agrees with that estimate. They estimate that the true cost of this bill would be approximately \$5 trillion over the next 10 years. That is \$5 trillion in largely borrowed money that would have to be paid back by somebody. That is a whole lot more than the \$1.75 trillion pricetag that the press has reported based on the incredible estimates that our Democratic colleagues have provided.

Of course, that flies in the face of President Biden's estimate that it would cost nothing. Well, again, we understand that is not true, and the 1.75 trillion pricetag is not true either.

Last week, I sent a letter to the leaders of the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation requesting a true cost estimate for this bill. The American people deserve a full and complete picture of the real-world price of this legislation. And before voting on the bill, every Member of the Senate, both Republicans and Democrats, should want to know how much this legislation is going to end up costing the American people.

The pricetag of this bill is deeply concerning, but that is only part of what makes this legislation so dangerous. As I said earlier, it dramatically increases the role of the Federal Government in every aspect of our lives. It drives up taxes on working families; it harms our energy security; and it hurts our competitiveness on the global stage, which hands a big win to China.

That, apparently, is the priority for our Democratic colleagues right now, not the looming debt crisis or potential government shutdown. They are focused on legislation that actually does more harm than good.

Our Democratic colleagues control the Senate agenda. They control the House, and they control the White House. They control every lever in the

legislative process here in Washington, DC, and this is how they have chosen to use that power.

Our Democratic colleagues continue to prove that they are not doing what is best for the American people. If it was, then there would be an effort to build a bipartisan consensus for this legislation.

Instead, they are using raw partisan political power to jam through an agenda that they know will end up costing somewhere around \$5 trillion and that will permanently alter the relationship of the American people to the Federal Government.

For our country's sake, I hope something changes between now and the time we actually take up this partisan tax-and-spending spree bill that has been passed by the House of Representatives.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I imagine many of us in this Chamber had a wonderful week talking with Tennesseans—with our constituents.

In Tennessee, I will tell you this: We had a fabulous week. And everywhere I went, whether it was the grocery store or somewhere with the grandchildren, I was hearing from people about the issues that are in front of us, and they are really curious to see what is going to end up happening as we take up issues here in DC.

And I talked with a lot of our county mayors, who are quite concerned about what is happening with the American Recovery Act funding and how they are going to be able to use that funding.

They are very concerned about the infrastructure bill, and, you know, they were really a little bit surprised to find out that so little of the bill actually goes to infrastructure. I think they were really disappointed in that because what they are interested in is money for roads and bridges and highways and ports and broadband, and were really disappointed in the emphasis in the bill on mass transit.

So what we have realized is that they have a lot of questions. They look around and they say: Well, in Washington, you have got a lot of spinning wheels going on and not a lot of forward motion.

And I have to agree because, in Washington, it does appear that the President and many of my Democrat colleagues are spinning their wheels in the same rut that they were stuck in before the holiday, proving once again that, while they understand very little about the economy, they understand even less about where the American people are.

Since day 1 of this administration, the White House has made it clear that governing is not a priority. Governing—working with the House, working with the Senate to find solutions.

But, instead, this administration is doing all it can to force the country

onto a path that the people have said time and again they don't want to travel this path. It is not where they want to go.

By all accounts, businesses are, at least, a year out from a return to normal, which we continue to hear a lot about that. Everybody would like to be back to prepandemic normal.

Our supply chains are a mess. Ships that are loaded with goods cannot get to ports. Inflation is, unfortunately, here to stay. It definitely wasn't transitory. Families are having an increasingly difficult time putting food on the table and gas in the car because a dollar doesn't go as far as it once went, and this is something every family is wrestling with. Even with all of this right in front of their faces, my Democratic colleagues are more concerned with how they will leverage these problems rather than how they are going to solve these problems. What solutions that they have proposed are completely divorced from reality and come loaded with more internal political strife than they are worth. This, of course, is the logical conclusion of a year where consensus took a backseat to the whims of the loudest and most radical leftist wing of the Democratic Party.

Over the past week, the media has dripped out story after story covering the cost of inflation, the consequences of failing to fund the government, and the upcoming debate over the debt limit. And if you thought the message coming from the White House and from my Democratic colleagues in response to all this was jumbled before, prepare yourself for something even more chaotic in the days to come.

My colleagues across the aisle, unfortunately, still seem to be under the impression that Senate Republicans are going to band together to save them from the hole they have dug for themselves. They think we are going to endorse fiscal policy so destructive that many experts who are normally friendly to the White House have refused to support these ideas—and with good reason. They are a socialist, government-controlled agenda.

We have been down this road before. So my Democratic colleagues know that going through the motions of bipartisanship isn't going to be enough because we went through this months ago with the debt ceiling and on the matter of funding the government. We would have settled all of these issues months ago if the majority had their priorities in line and if they could articulate clearly to the American people what the priorities are, what the problems are, what the challenges are, and bring forward solutions for the American people to look at and say: Yeah, that makes sense. But that is not what they have done and what they continue to do.

Here is the problem with where they are: The priorities of the Democratic Party are not the priorities of the American people. Out in the real world, inflation is a problem. Spending and

debt—all of that means something. How you spend your money means something. People understand that. They get it.

But according to the majority here in the Democratic-controlled Senate, none of these things actually matter in practice. In fact, the past few months have shown us that among Democrats, there is no real consensus about what, if anything, these major debates mean to them or what is the end game. It is amazing. They can't tell you. If you are here to solve problems or create problems, people are going to figure that out—the American people are. And they know that the question should be: Are you here to solve problems or create problems for your political enemies in a way that ensures you are punishing people?

Now, that is the question that people are asking. Is the debt limit a legal fiction or a meaningful check on reckless spending? That is a question that we have heard. Is it just something that gets tossed around? Is funding the government part of your duty or is the appropriations debate just fuel for talking points? I think we know the majority's answers to all of these questions, and I think their answer is probably coming down on the wrong side of where the American people are.

Those looking for good faith from the White House are seeming to not find it, nor are they finding any evidence that Democrats in Congress are aware of their moral obligation to be discerning and truthful about how they plan to spend trillions in taxpayer money.

There is a reason that the Democrats lied about the costs associated with their massive social spending bill, which reflects the priorities of liberal, leftist activists rather than the priorities of the American people. They claimed it was paid for, but in reality it will add \$367 billion to the deficit and cost taxpayers more than another \$400 billion. That is why they have not been truthful with the American people that needed more buy-in in order for the Democrats to make this happen—even when they knew the CBO report was going to come and show how much debt was going to be added if this bill got passed.

They know the people don't want this big spending bill. They know that the American people know that we cannot afford this. Our children and our grandchildren cannot afford this bill.

As my colleague from Texas was saying, it is not \$1.5 trillion or \$1.75 trillion. It is trillions—trillions—of dollars in spending. And we know how some across the aisle are kind of, with a wink-wink and a nod-nod, saying: Yes, let's get these on the books, and then things will take care of themselves.

This week, we are facing the prospect of yet another government shutdown, which means another eleventh-hour opportunity for my Democratic colleagues to complain about Republican obstruction. But what the Democrats in the media and the liberal activists

need to realize is that Republicans are not the problem here. The Democrats are in charge of this Chamber, the House, and the White House.

And not even the Democrats in power can agree on how much they want to spend and how they want to spend it. If they had consensus and if that consensus came from listening to the people that elected them to serve, we wouldn't be staring at the prospect of another government shutdown. No, you would see Democrats marching to the Chamber in lockstep to vote for a continuing resolution that reflects goals that don't change with the news cycle.

But there is no consensus. The people driving the ship have lost all sense of direction, and in doing so, they are losing the faith the American people have put in them.

In Tennessee, we would say that our friends across the aisle are in the middle of a good old-fashioned come-apart, and there is one way and only one way to reverse the damage, and that is to stop worrying about politics and pushing a leftist agenda and start worrying about meeting the needs of the American people—not only today but the needs of our children and grandchildren. What are we going to do to their hopes and their dreams for living their version of the American dream?

So we should agree, no more blame, no more budget gimmicks—open our eyes to the reality of the situation that we are dealing with. We have a job to do here, and the sooner my Democratic colleagues remember that fact, the sooner they will be able to earn back the faith and the trust of the American people. That is priority No. 1, and it is time for my colleagues to prove that they understand it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. KING. Madam President, I want to talk about the national defense bill, but first I do want to respond just in one particular to the comments of the gentlelady from Tennessee because I have heard this before, the idea that the infrastructure bill isn't infrastructure.

I don't get how anybody is making that claim. Here is the list: roads and bridges, highway safety, public transit, rail, broadband, ports, airports, the electric grid, water, and Superfund cleanup. Yes, there are some items for EVs and for the facilitating of the electrification of our transportation system, but the vast bulk of it is what anybody would call infrastructure.

Infrastructure is something you can kick. Infrastructure is something you can feel. And that is what we are talking about here—roads and bridges,

ports, airports, rail, broadband. That is the infrastructure of the 21st century. This is an infrastructure bill, and it ought to be recognized as such.

There are plenty of things we can argue and differ with around here, but this shouldn't be one of them. And people are confused about it because they are being given confusing information. They are being told it is not an infrastructure bill; there is no infrastructure. I have heard that. It is simply not true. So let's argue about the things that, you know, we have genuine policy differences, but let's not talk about things that just aren't the case. Ports, bridges, railroad, public transit—and, yes, public transit is infrastructure. It may not be in Tennessee. It may not be so much in Maine, although I suspect there is some in Tennessee and there is some in Maine, but public transportation is critical to our citizens.

Broadband, airports, electric grid, water—that is infrastructure.

H.R. 4350

Now, in a few moments, we will have what I hope is not a historic vote. It shouldn't be a historic vote. It ought to be a boring vote. The vote is to proceed to the National Defense Authorization Act for 2022, just as we have done for 60 years' running. But I understand that there is a movement afoot to derail it because there haven't been enough amendments. "I didn't get my amendment in; therefore, I am going to block this bill."

Well, let's talk a little bit about the history of the bill. I serve on the Armed Services Committee, as does the Presiding Officer, and both of us can attest that the Armed Services Committee is one of the most nonpartisan committees in the U.S. Senate. In fact, in the Armed—let's talk about amendments for a minute. In the Armed Services Committee, during our markup, we adopted 145 amendments—most by agreement, by bipartisan agreement, by unanimous consent. There were a few rollcall votes but not very many. And in my experience in 9 years on that committee, there have only been a handful of party-line rollcall votes in the Armed Services Committee.

It produces some very odd bedfellows, and some combinations that don't make much sense politically, but it is because the members of the committee put the interests of the United States of America first and make their decision on that, not on politics.

So there were 145 amendments in the committee. Then there is a managers' package that we are going to be voting on today that has 57 amendments in it—27 supported by Republicans and 27 by Democrats and 3 that are entirely bipartisan. So we are up to 202 amendments. That is a lot of amendments to a piece of legislation, not to mention the fact that the managers' package within the committee was developed largely by consensus between the two party leaders, Chairman REED and Ranking Member INHOFE. So this process is replete with amendments and

compromise, and that is how it has been done for the past 60 years.

Now, last week, before we left, we had another 18 amendments that were agreed upon by both parties to bring up as a package—not as a package; I am sorry—to be considered one at a time and be voted on.

That process was killed by a group of Senators who said: No. I want my amendment. I am not on the list, and, therefore, I am going to object to the unanimous consent request, so nobody gets their amendments.

So, today, we are going to be voting on the motion to proceed to the substitute amendment that is chock-full of bipartisan amendments. It doesn't have all of the amendments everybody wants. It doesn't have a couple of amendments that I feel are very important.

But do you know what? To quote my favorite philosopher, Mick Jagger: You don't always get what you want, but, if you try sometimes, you just might find you get what you need.

And that is what we have got right here, is what we need.

This is the defense of the United States of America. Why can't we do just one bill without politics and without stamping our feet, saying, "I didn't get my amendment, so I am going to vote against it"?

By the way, this is a vote on a motion to proceed, which, in my view, ought to be just the most routine possible vote. It is not a vote on the bill itself. Let's proceed to this bill. Let's proceed to the bipartisan managers' package that has been worked out, painstakingly, over the last several months.

Let's think about what this bill is all about. This isn't ordinary policy. This is the national security of this country. This is a pay raise for our troops. This is national security that our people depend upon. That is our most fundamental responsibility. In the preamble of the Constitution, one of the key responsibilities is to provide for the common defense. That is why you have governments in the first place.

We have done it for 60 years in a row. I urge my colleagues—this isn't a moment for partisanship or for complaining about, you know, "I didn't get my amendment, so I am not going to vote for it." You know, suck it up.

I am going to vote for it. As I say, there are a couple of amendments that I felt very passionately about involving cyber and the protection of the country. They aren't in, but I am still going to vote for it, because that is our responsibility.

This is the most fundamental responsibility we have around here. We have a bipartisan process, and it came out of committee 23 to 3. Two Republicans and one Democrat voted against it. That is as close to unanimity as you can get on an important piece of policy legislation.

So I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the motion to proceed, and then to

move the bill later this week—to meet our responsibility to the American people, to meet the responsibility that every Congress has met for the last 60 years.

If we don't do that because we are angry that we didn't get something in or there weren't enough amendments—there are 202 amendments built on top of, already, a bipartisan package that was produced in the chairman's markup in committee. That, to me, is pretty full consideration.

I hope my colleagues will vote yes to proceed to this bill. It is our responsibility and, more than that, it is what is necessary to protect this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, let me, first of all, say that I would have a hard time finding a better friend than the Member who just spoke. We have been good friends for a long period of time, and we have not been apart on very many votes; yet we are not of the same party. Nonetheless, we are going to have to do something that is the same thing we had to do 5 years ago, and really for kind of the same reason.

Every year, when the Senate turns to the NDAA, we call it our must-pass bill. It is a must-pass bill, and it is a bill that will pass. It is a must-pass because it gives our troops the pay that they have earned and the tools and the training that they need to fight and to win against our enemies.

That is why we have passed the NDAA every year for 60 straight years. This year will be 61. This is pretty much the only authorization bill that gets done the way it should year after year. In fact, it is pretty much the only bill—period—that Congress does every single year without fail.

However, no matter how important it is, that doesn't mean that we will accept the fact that Senator SCHUMER wants to jam it through the Senate without adequate consideration.

Let me be clear. Senator SCHUMER has put us in this position today. He waited more than 2 months after we filed the NDAA to bring it to the floor. For 2 months, we could have been discussing this and having it and treating it like we should.

He tried to tack it onto his unrelated legislation just as many of us, including my Democrat colleague in the House, ADAM SMITH, guessed that he would, and now he wants a floor vote on this bill—the most important bill that we do all year—to be enough, despite the fact that he isn't giving us ample time to debate the bill, and he certainly hasn't been willing to entertain an open amendment process.

We have been trying to get this for a long period of time, and we haven't gotten it—the most important bill of the year.

I think Americans back home are smart enough to understand that our servicemembers deserve more. They deserve to be our priority in the Senate,

and we need to show them, by providing a robust and open debate on the annual Defense bill, that that is how we will do it.

We are in this place right now because Senator SCHUMER won't prioritize national defense and fund our troops because the majority leader mismanaged the Senate's schedule. He won't allow votes on bipartisan amendments that make our country more secure. We heard that argument the last time we were in session.

These include an amendment that would inflict sanctions against Russia to stop its power grab over European energy supplies, which simply builds on our previous bipartisan NDAA's and aligns with the House's version of the NDAA.

Another amendment on which Senator SCHUMER would not give a vote would tighten import restrictions on China to ensure goods sold in the United States aren't made by Uighur forced labor. This already passed the Senate by voice vote.

Good amendments like these shouldn't fall victim to the majority leader's failed leadership.

We all understand how important this bill is. It shouldn't be a partisan thing. This is the most important bill we do every year. In fact, we have said this every year. In fact, I have said this more times than any other Member has stated it. It is even more important now because we are in the most threatened position of our lifetimes. I can't tell you how many times I have demonstrated that fact on the floor of the Senate.

I echo the minority leader's frustration. I understand the frustration from my colleagues who wanted, in realtime, to debate this bill. I think they pled their case very effectively. We wouldn't be in this position if the majority leader had brought this bill up earlier, which we kept insisting that he do, over and over again, on a bipartisan plea.

While I want to be clear that we are in this position because Senator SCHUMER is forcing this unfortunate action, I also want to be equally clear that I am still very supportive of this bill, and I hope we will pass it soon, but I stand with my colleagues who are voting against the majority leader's irresponsible management of the bills. We have got to get it done, but we can't rush it, and that is why I will be voting no on cloture. That is not an easy thing for me to do, but I believe we can get this bill in better shape. My vote against the process is not against the bill; it is against the process.

We are not delaying national security, no. This is just the opposite. We are demanding that we show, through open and robust debate, that our men and women in uniform are our priority.

I have heard this from many of our people that I have talked to over the weekend and over this past week who are really wondering why we didn't have this on the table earlier so we

could get the debate. I hope that a lot of the American people heard the six different Republicans who were demanding to have their votes and amendment process. This is the first time, in my memory, that we have not had this kind of a process take place, and for that reason I will be voting no.

I do want to hear, of course—and let me say something because this might be an area of disagreement between my partner and myself.

Senator REED, we have worked on these bills together for a long period of time. We have been successful, and we are going to be successful this time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, it would be a very disappointing moment if we would fail to invoke cloture.

This bill, from the very beginning, has been completely bipartisan and open to amendments. In the course, as Senator KING eloquently remarked, of the committee hearing, we included over 100 amendments on a bipartisan basis. We came to the floor with a bill that passed our committee 23 to 3—overwhelmingly bipartisan.

We also brought to the floor a substitute amendment, including, approximately, 60 amendments that were also bipartisan. And then we had another series of nearly 20 amendments that was bipartisan, that would have been voted on, but they were objected to because several Members did not get their amendments.

Now, just to point out, the majority of those amendments aren't even within the jurisdiction of the Armed Services Committee. They don't relate directly to the men and women of the armed services. They might have foreign policy implications, but they are not something that is essential to the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act.

I can recall many times on this floor when the NDAA was brought up; both sides could not agree on amendments; we went through the process; we invoked cloture; we voted on the substitute bill; and we went off to conference. So this would not be the first occasion on which, ironically, a few people did not get their amendments. In fact, on previous occasions, there were many, many people who did not get their amendments.

And so, again, I go back to the point that we have produced a bipartisan piece of legislation. I commend the ranking member. We worked with closely the subcommittee chairs and the subcommittee ranking members. The staff has done a superb job. And we are here, just one procedural vote away from moving forward, and I think we should move forward for the benefit of the men and women of the armed services, as Senator KING, again, so eloquently described.

I think the other factor, too, is that eventually we have to reconcile whatever we do or attempt to do with the



House of Representatives. Certainly, I think it gives us much more credibility, much more clout, and much more leverage when we have a strong bill that has passed on the floor of the Senate.

We are not talking about 100 amendments that we have to consider. We are talking about a handful of Senators who didn't get their way, even though many others were frustrated. I think, again, our duty is to move forward to pass this cloture vote this evening, then to move forward to final passage, and then to reconcile our differences with the House and come back with legislation.

At this point—and I think the ranking member would agree with me—as it stands right now, I would be proud to pass this legislation because it is bipartisan, it responds to the needs of the men and women of the Armed Forces, and it establishes robust resources for the Department of Defense much more than were advocated by the President in his budget.

So we are taking a strong step forward, and I just would hate to see this as a sidestep away from final passage.

I would urge all of my colleagues to vote for cloture.

Mr. KING. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REED. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. KING. Madam President, my recollection is—and we have passed this bill, as we both have recognized, every year for the past 60 years, including over the last 4 or 5 years—in the last several years, there weren't that many amendments.

There were a few, and it was always agreed in advance. There was a package, just as we had the other night, but everybody didn't get—there wasn't an unlimited number of amendments or votes on amendments. There was generally an agreed-upon number of amendments, and it wasn't very many.

Is that correct?

Mr. REED. That is absolutely correct.

There have been occasions where we have had—once we got the substitute adopted—in some cases, no amendments and we went to final passage, ultimately, and in other cases, just a handful of amendments. Last year, I don't believe we had the kind of amendments we are offering this year, some of them have nothing whatsoever to do with the national defense. The nearly 20 amendments we were proposing were nearly equally divided to be bipartisan.

And, frankly, to your point, I think this would represent more amendments than in the many years I witnessed the passage of the NDAA.

Mr. KING. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

#### 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 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 Reed-Inhofe substitute amendment No. 3867, as modified, to Calendar No. 144, H.R. 4350, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Catherine Cortez Masto, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jeanne Shaheen, Tim Kaine, Angus S. King, Jr., Kyrsten Sinema, Christopher Murphy, Maria Cantwell, Mark Kelly, Brian Schatz, Patrick J. Leahy, Mazie Hirono, Debbie Stabenow, Mark R. Warner.

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 amendment No. 3867, offered by the Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. REED, as modified, to H.R. 4350, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 45, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 473 Leg.]

#### YEAS—45

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Ossoff
Bennet	Hassan	Padilla
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Peters
Booker	Hickenlooper	Reed
Brown	Hirono	Rosen
Cantwell	Kaine	Schatz
Cardin	Kelly	Shaheen
Carper	King	Sinema
Casey	Klobuchar	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lujan	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse

#### NAYS—51

Barrasso	Hawley	Portman
Blackburn	Hoeben	Risch
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Braun	Inhofe	Rounds
Burr	Johnson	Rubio
Capito	Kennedy	Sanders
Cornyn	Lankford	Schumer
Cotton	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Markey	Shelby
Daines	Marshall	Sullivan
Ernst	McConnell	Thune
Fischer	Merkley	Tillis
Graham	Moran	
Grassley	Murkowski	
Hagerty	Paul	

Toomey  
Tuberville

Warren  
Wicker

Wyden  
Young

#### NOT VOTING—4

Blunt  
Cassidy

Crux  
Sasse

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 45, the nays are 51.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion was not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider the failed cloture vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote on the underlying bill, H.R. 4350, ripen upon disposition of substitute amendment No. 3867, as modified.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to express my great disappointment that some of my colleagues have indicated by their vote that they are preventing the adoption of the National Defense Authorization Act, and they claim that more amendments and more debate are needed.

This bill has been bipartisan from the beginning. It incorporated over 100 amendments at the committee level. There were approximately 60 additional amendments in the substitute, which were agreed to on a bipartisan basis.

Last week before we adjourned, we offered nearly 20 more amendments on a bipartisan basis, and they were rejected by my colleagues on the Republican side, just as this evening, this motion for cloture was rejected by the Republicans. They had their opportunity to consider more amendments. We had 19 amendments ready last week that were brought forward on an equal basis to be debated and voted upon. But that was blocked by several of my Republican colleagues.

One of the ironies this evening is that many of my colleagues, who had their amendments denied by fellow Republican objections, came down and voted against the bill. That doesn't seem to be particularly logical, in my mind.

Now, in the course of NDAA's—and I have done a few—there have been periods in which there has been extensive considerations of the bill with very few, if any, amendments. There have been times in which only a handful of amendments were presented before we voted on cloture, passed cloture, and passed the bill. So this is an unusual departure from procedure, particularly with a bill that has so much bipartisan support.

The bill passed out of committee 23 to 3 because it represented all of the principled points that my colleagues wanted. In the course of the committee deliberations, there were 300 amendments presented, and we adopted 143.

Mr. President, let me yield to the majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my friend from Rhode Island. I want to make a brief statement about the vote, and then I will turn it over to him.

My colleagues, there should be no misunderstanding about the absurdity that just played out on the floor. For a while now, Republicans have claimed they want to pass the Defense authorization legislation immediately. They said we couldn't afford to wait any longer. They called it a core duty, a bare minimum, and they called on me to bring it to the floor for a full vote.

But a few moments ago, Republicans just blocked legislation to support our troops, support our families, and keep Americans safe. Republican dysfunction has, again, derailed bipartisan progress. The Republican choice to block our bill and, by an extension, legislation to support our troops and protect the homeland can be summed up in two words: inexplicable and outrageous.

I hope the American people are watching. Don't tell me we aren't offering a fair process. We have had ample debate. We had amendments from both sides. We had a huge number of managers' amendments, equal numbers Democrat and Republican. We offered to debate—I believe it is 18 amendments—more than has been on most other bills of this type.

In any other time in history, what we offered Republicans would be considered a very fair and generous compromise, but just because a few Republicans didn't get every single concession they insisted on, they are now halting the process.

Despite this vote, Democrats will continue to work to make sure our troops get paid and our vital defense programs can continue.

I thank my colleague for his courtesy and yield the floor back to him.

Mr. REED. I thank the majority leader for his comments and just to elaborate, this represents what the majority leader just pointed out—a few Members on the other side frustrated the entire process and, ironically, frustrated many of their own colleagues in their caucus who had amendments, either in the substitute agreement or were ready to be voted on.

So this is really a question of doing our utmost, as we have in the past, not for individual points but for the support of the men and women in the military. That was the spirit that guided our efforts in the committee.

Working closely with Senator INHOFE and all the Members on both sides, we recognized that what we do ultimately affects the safety and the welfare of our men and women in uniform and their families. And this legislation

would accomplish a great deal. This is, in my sense, one of the most bipartisan bills we have ever considered. It is unfortunate that we can't move forward on a bipartisan basis, consider this bill, and then go to the House and come back with a final legislation for consideration by this Senate.

We will have to do an NDAA. It will be done. I think Senator INHOFE is committed to that, as I am, and we will have to use procedures that are appropriate to get it done. But we just missed an opportunity to send a clear message that we support this legislation, we support our troops. We are going to get to final passage, and then we are going to go to the House, and then we will send the bill to the President of the United States.

I should note that one of the other reasons that many amendments were not brought up for debate is because they are not in the purview of the Armed Services Committee. There were foreign policy issues; there were sanctions issues, et cetera. The NDAA often serves as a vehicle to move those issues along, but it is not central to the purpose of the bill.

Our nation faces an enormous range of security challenges, and it is more important than ever that we provide our military men and women with the support they need to keep Americans safe. To that end, this bill makes great progress. It addresses a broad range of pressing issues, from strategic competition with China and Russia, to investing in game-changing technologies, to modernizing our ships, aircraft, and vehicles. It provides our servicemembers with the resources and support they need to defend our Nation, while at the same time taking care of their families.

That is why we are here on the floor with the national defense authorization act. It is not only an opportunity, but a responsibility. Tonight, we demonstrated irresponsibility to those who serve and their families. I regret it immensely.

Now, I look forward, again, to working with my colleague Senator INHOFE and all Members of the committee, to continue forward to develop legislation that will be acceptable to this body and pass, as we have for 60-some-odd years, the National Defense Authorization Act.

I recognize and thank my colleague from Ohio for yielding to me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I always laud and so appreciate the principled leadership of the senior Senator from Rhode Island, who never would have done what just happened on the floor when we were in the minority. JACK REED is always there for the troops and always there for our national security, and I join my colleagues in showing our appreciation. I know the Presiding Officer from New Mexico thinks the same thing.

#### SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

Mr. President, this weekend, we celebrated Small Business Saturday for Ohioans. And people around the country showed their support for local businesses in their communities by shopping local for holiday gifts.

Small businesses and their workers drive this economy. There is always talk on this floor about small business, but the focus is rarely, in this body, actually on small business and their workers. They create jobs and economic growth in our communities and the heartland, in small towns and overlooked neighborhoods, places that often don't get a lot of outside investment.

The stakeholders in these businesses aren't nameless, faceless shareholders. They are our neighbors, our family members, the people you see at church and at the grocery store, and they are vital to our economic recovery. It is why we passed the bipartisan Paycheck Protection Program last year. It is why Democrats and President Biden expanded the American Rescue Plan.

Last week, I asked Ohioans on social media to tell us about their favorite local businesses to support this holiday shopping season—businesses that go above and beyond to help their community.

This was a little bit, Mr. President—and I have gone to the floor on this before, and you and I have talked about this—when I post on my website, “What did the child tax credit mean to your family,” and the effusive outpouring and excitement from so many people saying this should be the role of government. This is what really matters. That is what we found when we posted asking people to share your stories about favorite local businesses. I want to share a few of them.

Beth talked about Mootown Creamery in Berea. She said they are “so involved in the community, never say no when help is needed.”

Robin gave a shout-out.

And that is in northeast Ohio near Cleveland.

Robin gave a shout-out to Snazzies's in Oxford for local arts. That is in southwest Ohio, north of Cincinnati, the home of Miami University.

I would add that Berea is the home of Baldwin Wallace College too.

Sarah mentioned “Sunset Bistro in Bowling Green. They not only support their local community, they are devoted to honoring our veterans”—another community with a big State university in northwest Ohio.

Heather wrote about Let's Eat Cake in Urbana. She said: “Owner Tina is always doing something for the downtown business association and the greater community.”

Donna said: “I can't say enough about Scott, the owner of Salad KraZe. Scott goes above and beyond to make the city of Avon Lake”—a city on Lake Erie, just east of Lorain—“a great place to live and raise our children.”

Loria said: “Pouka Art & Photography in Grove City”—in central



Ohio—"does amazing digital printings and photography. She restores old photographs into digital paintings."

Tia said: "Gemini Gems & Creations in Lancaster"—a small city southeast of Columbus—"wonderful people who started selling out of their home and during town events"—out of their home and during town events—"and now finally have their own shop."

Teresa mentioned "Chris Fultz's sign company, Fultz Signs and his pizza place, Bluelick General, in Lima."

Lima just swore in this week a new mayor, Sharetta Smith, and the mayor of Dayton, my friend Nan Whaley, attended the swearing in.

Adam mentioned the Copper Penny Salon in Pettisville.

Vickie mentioned the Charmed Farmhouse in Wellington. She said: "They take food drives and donate to those in town who directly help our community. They survived shutdown and thrive still."

Think about that: They survived and they thrive. This pandemic hit small businesses hard. For so many of them, they are still paying their workers and serving their communities because of PPP, because of our work through the American Rescue Plan to get people vaccinated.

PPP has helped Ohio businesses survive. Vaccines are bringing back customers, allowing these small businesses to thrive again.

The bipartisan infrastructure plan the President signed just last month is going to mean investment—earlier this month. Excuse me. It is going to mean investment in these businesses' local communities.

People in Ohio and across the country remember how after the last economic crisis in 2008 and 2009, the biggest corporations recovered—they always do—while large swaths of the country were left behind.

Many of these same communities have watched for decades as factories closed, as investment dried up, as storefronts were boarded over. We can't make that mistake again, and we are not making that mistake.

We are investing in rebuilding roads and bridges and bus and rail systems to revitalize downtowns. We know businesses can't survive on their own. They need safe streets and sidewalks. They need other businesses around. They need bus stops nearby. They need customers with money in their pockets.

As part of the American Rescue Plan, as I said earlier, we passed the largest tax cut for working families ever. Ninety-two percent of families in Ohio who have children under 18—92 percent of those families—will get at least a \$3,000-a-year tax cut.

It is essential that this Congress, that this Senate extend that tax cut for at least another year. It is giving millions of Ohio families that tax cut every single month—\$250 or \$300 per child every single month. We need to make sure they continue.

We need this holiday season to commit to shopping local, and in the Sen-

ate let's commit to protecting small business—putting small businesses and workers at the center of our economy.

The workers who shared these—the Ohioans who shared these stories—know the vibrancy and the dynamism and the diversity of working-class towns in neighborhoods that Senator PORTMAN, who is in the Chamber this evening—that we represent. We need to get to work to invest in them. We need to get to work to ensure that these places—Ohio's Main Streets, America's Main Streets—are at the center of a better economy.

## MORNING BUSINESS

### HOSSAM BAHGAT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, in June of this year, Egyptian prosecutors opened a criminal investigation concerning human rights defender Hossam Bahgat, in relation to a December 2020 tweet criticizing Egypt's flawed parliamentary elections. The acts he has been accused of would not be considered crimes in the United States, nor in any other country that respects freedom of expression.

Hossam Bahgat is the executive director and founder of one of the most respected Egyptian human rights organizations, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, EIPR. His work has been recognized around the world, and in April 2021, Mr. Bahgat met with Secretary of State Blinken as part of a group of leading human rights activists. Other EIPR employees have also been targeted, along with many others as part of the government's crackdown on independent civil society organizations. In February of 2020, EIPR researcher Patrick George Zaki was forcibly disappeared and reportedly tortured. A year ago, three of EIPR's senior employees, Gasser Abdel-Razek, Karim Ennarrah, and Mohamed Basheer, were also arbitrarily detained, effectively silencing them.

Mr. Bahgat faces up to 3 years in prison and almost \$20,000 in fines for reportedly doing nothing more than expressing views the Egyptian authorities consider to be "insulting" or "false news". This is not the first time Mr. Bahgat has been targeted for his courageous and important reporting. In 2015, he was detained for 3 days after reporting on officers convicted of planning a coup and was only released when the case received international attention from human rights groups and the United Nations.

I have consistently spoken out about human rights in Egypt and in other countries, especially when governments crack down on human rights activists. The State Department publicly expressed concern in July of this year. Today, I am adding my voice to others who have raised concerns about Mr. Bahgat's wrongful detention. A verdict in his case may be imminent. I hope the Egyptian Government will abandon

its persecution of Hossam Bahgat and his fellow human rights defenders. Like the Department of State, I have been urging the Egyptian authorities to make progress on human rights so our two countries can expand cooperation in other important areas. Further attempts to silence Mr. Bahgat and the other EIPR employees will needlessly impede those efforts.

## VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmations of Executive Calendar No. 537, Cole Finegan, of Colorado to be United States Attorney for the District of Colorado for the term of four years; No. 538, Kenneth L. Parker, of Ohio, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio for the term of four years; No. 553, Cindy K. Chung, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania for the term of four years; and No. 554, Gary M. Restaino, of Arizona, to be United States Attorney for the District of Arizona for the term of four years.

## SWITZERLAND

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about the unique partnership between the United States and Switzerland. I had the opportunity earlier this month to meet with President of Switzerland Guy Parmelin to discuss the U.S.-Switzerland partnership on apprenticeship and workforce training. Our meeting came on the heels of a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing considering the nomination of Scott Miller to be the Ambassador to Switzerland. My questioning of Mr. Miller covered many topics, to include the recent decision by the government of Switzerland and Swiss voters to purchase Lockheed Martin F-35s as their next-generation fighter jet.

In the following weeks, I have received more information on the benefits of the F-35 and the incredible opportunity this security cooperation provides for both Switzerland and the United States. In fact, prior to making a selection, the Swiss Federal Council completed a comprehensive analysis and determined that the F-35 offered the highest benefit, at the lowest cost: \$2 billion less than the next lowest bidder.

In making their choice, the Government of Switzerland and Swiss voters clearly recognized the value of the F-35, as well as the superior capabilities the F-35 offers. The deal has my enthusiastic support, and I appreciate our continued partnership with the Swiss Government and the Swiss people.