

under her leadership, the FCC will make immense progress in addressing these challenges.

Americans don't want to see their internet bills go up and up and up. They don't want to have to drive long distances at late hours just so their kids can finish homework at public libraries. And they want telemedicine to be available so they can be in the best of health.

No. Every American wants and deserves fast, affordable, and reliable internet access directly in their homes. Already this year, as a result of the President's infrastructure bill, we have made tremendous strides in closing the digital divide. We will build on that progress by confirming Ms. Rosenworcel today so that Americans can rest assured that they will have an FCC fighting for them.

BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

Mr. President, on Build Back Better, Senate Democrats continue our work to pass the President's Build Back Better Act before Christmas. Making progress on Build Back Better has been no small task, but sticking to our deadline will be worth it for one simple reason: at its core, Build Back Better is the best shot we have had in decades to help families lower costs, to cut taxes for working and middle-class Americans, and create good paying jobs while fighting the climate crisis.

Economists across the ideological spectrum have said it will not—will not—worsen inflation, something we are seeing happening across the world, not just in the U.S.

Here is something just about every American can appreciate: Build Back Better will make it cheaper for parents to raise their kids. For that alone, it is more than worth the effort. By providing the largest investment in childcare in American history, Build Back Better will make it so the vast majority of families will pay no more than 7 percent of their income on childcare for kids under 6. That single investment could save parents hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year. I think it is a pretty great deal for American families.

It will also help our economy. Everywhere you go you hear about shortages of labor. One of the main reasons is inadequate childcare. We rank way low on the list of developed nations. The United States' provisions for childcare come out near the very bottom. That is something we cannot tolerate anymore. And that is just one item, childcare.

Build Back Better will also provide, for the first time ever, free universal pre-K for millions of American families. By one measure, pre-K can cost parents up to \$8,600 a year per child. Under Build Back Better, many parents will pay zero. Think about that: pre-K, for the first time in U.S. history, the greatest expansion of free education that the United States has seen in a century. When we made high schools available to everyone, it made

our economy the strongest in the 20th century. We have got to learn that lesson here in the 21st century with pre-K.

Build Back Better, of course, will also extend the child tax credit that Democrats passed under the American Rescue Plan. This simple lifeline—a \$300 check in the mail each month for each child—can be a game changer—a game changer—during the winter months, and under Build Back Better, we can make sure this benefit stays in place.

None of this approaches the many other ways that Build Back Better will save Americans money. It will provide the largest investment in affordable housing ever. It could save Americans hundreds—even more—by making prescription drugs, like insulin, cheaper. And it will take necessary and long-overdue steps to fight the climate crisis, which costs our country tens of billions each year every time hurricanes, wildfires, and floods wreak havoc across the country.

Creating jobs, lowering costs, fighting climate change, and keeping more money in people's pockets—these are the things Americans want. These are the things Americans need, and it is what Build Back Better does. We are going to continue working to get these things done before the Christmas holiday.

REMEMBERING GIL HODGES

Finally, Mr. President, I close with a bit of joyful, long-awaited news not only for Mets fans all over the world, but for Brooklynites and those who have ancestry in Brooklyn that have spread across the country.

Sunday night, the National Baseball Hall of Fame announced that, after decades of waiting, Brooklyn's wonderful Gil Hodges—one of the great defensive first basemen of his era, a long-time member of the Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodgers, and a manager of the Mets presiding over the "Miracle Mets" 1969 World Series championship—has finally, finally, earned his place in Cooperstown.

Some of the earliest memories I have are listening and watching the Dodgers with my dad. Gil was an essential figure of that era—a hero of the 1955 World Series, an eight-time All-Star, three-time Golden Glove winner. I think he was the first to win the Golden Glove. He was such an amazing fielder at first base, as well as Greg Gibbons.

And what a nice guy he was. One of the highlights of my life each year was to go trick-or-treating and knock on Gil Hodges' door. Who would come out and give us candy? The great man himself while he was a Brooklyn Dodger. That was an incredible, incredible situation. And so it shows you what a nice guy he was. He is a caring guy.

As much as he was a titan of the game, he was a central part of our Brooklyn family, and we all admired the fact that he lived in Brooklyn, right near all of us. Year after year, from one decade to another, Mets fans

have waited for this great player to receive Hall of Fame recognition. The wait is over. Gil is in that hall.

I congratulate Mrs. Hodges and the whole Hodges family for receiving this honor. And I want to congratulate, of course, all the other inductees in the Hall of Fame, among them many history-making, barrier-breaking athletes who have made the sport what it is today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the last time Washington Democrats pushed through a huge change that disrupted families' arrangements, it earned President Obama the "Lie of the Year" award.

Democrats insisted that if you liked your healthcare plan, you could keep your healthcare plan. It turned out that was totally false. Their reckless government takeover threw many families into chaos.

This year, many of the same Democrats want to write a sequel. They want to ram through a radical, reckless, multitrillion-dollar taxing-and-spending spree between now and Christmas. And a huge part of their bill would completely upend childcare and pre-K as they exist for families all across our country.

If you like your childcare, you can keep your childcare. Well, buckle up, parents. What could possibly go wrong?

The Democrats have written their toddler takeover in ways that would turn families' finances literally upside down and make already expensive childcare even costlier. So let's walk through how they did it.

First, their reckless taxing-and-spending spree would make childcare dramatically more expensive through an avalanche of new mandates, regulations, and micromanagement—the usual Washington, DC, routine.

State and local governments are panicking about the childcare inflation this would cause. Here in the District, as one liberal analyst uncovered, local officials have formally estimated—listen to this—that the per-child daycare cost for a toddler or an infant would jump up \$12,000 a year—increase the cost of childcare \$12,000 a year; \$12,000 more per child per year. President Biden's inflation is coming for daycare.

That is why the other half of their clumsy scheme is to dump subsidies onto some families. They want to borrow and print even more so they can

throw money at the same thing they have just made more expensive.

But here is where the bad idea turns literally into a terrible one. The Democrats wouldn't help families directly. This isn't some simple voucher that families can use as they please. My colleagues have produced an insanely tangled scheme where the truckloads of money go from Washington to State governments, to the childcare centers, one leaky bucket after another.

The problems run deeper than that. Democrats want States to sign up for badly underfunded mandates. That is the effect, because the retirement programs would surely last forever; but, for accounting purposes, Democrats are pretending the money stops after a decade. Many States will not be keen to be socialist guinea pigs.

Then there is the fact that the assistance is doled out in incredibly confusing and uneven ways. The subsidies start and stop with no rhyme or reason.

Listen to what a left-leaning organization, the People's Policy Project, has uncovered. They have found that, in year one, a family that earns \$1 over their State median income "will be eligible for zero subsidies, meaning that they will be on the hook for the entire unsubsidized price," which they estimate will now cost "at least \$13,000 per year higher than" it does right now.

The researcher repeats himself because it is so unbelievable. Here is the quote:

Having a family income just \$1 higher than [your State's median income] would result in you being ineligible for child care subsidies in 2022 even as the unsubsidized price of child care skyrockets due to the wage and other mandates in the Democratic proposal.

This is obviously a perverse outcome and it's not clear whether lawmakers even realize what they are about to do.

This isn't just one technical glitch. It is emblematic of how ill-conceived their whole experiment is. There are 10 problems like this on every single page.

I should add, the families who even get to participate in the mess I've just laid out, they are actually the lucky ones because Democrats want Big Government to pick winners and losers among different families who make different choices.

Many American families make one set of sacrifices so that both parents can work full time. These are the people the Democrats are trying to reward, although their plan fails in practice.

But Americans are allowed to have different aspirations. Some families make different sacrifices to have a parent at home full time. Others prefer flexible middle grounds that involve part-time work plus in-home childcare. The Democrats' toddler takeover wouldn't give any of them a dime—no diversity, no flexibility. Institutional daycare or nothing. In fact, it is worse than nothing, because a family who wants a provider to come to their house part time or wants to participate in a neighborhood nanny share will

now be stuck in an inflated market. They will have to bid against the employers the Democrats have blessed and subsidized.

This is the essence of what the Democratic plan would do: Big Government and Big Labor work together to reward some family arrangements and punish others.

Our all-Democrat government is already botching the things that actually are government's job—projecting strength abroad, maintaining energy independence—but they can't even do that right. Just look at the poll numbers. The last thing families need are for Democrats to appoint themselves national daycare czars and then botch that, too.

I haven't even touched on one of the most sinister parts of this whole proposal.

For parents who do use childcare outside the home, faith-based options are incredibly popular. The Bipartisan Policy Center estimates that 53 percent of parents who use center-based care use ones that are linked to faith-based organizations, but the same Democrats who are letting far-left propaganda trickle down from the universities into K-12 schools are now declaring war on faith-based childcare. Washington Democrats want to unleash the woke mob on church daycare. There are at least two parts of their bill that are direct attacks.

First, liberals are trying to chase faith-based providers out of the daycare industry by denying funds to any facility they deem discriminatory. Of course, today's radical left tosses around these kinds of accusations at any remotely traditional institution. Faith-based childcare centers could potentially get their subsidies ripped away if they don't hire who secular bureaucrats want them to hire, set up their facilities the way secular bureaucrats want them set up, or even—listen to this—if they give preference to kids of their own faith. Orthodox Jewish daycare centers could get kicked out if they say Orthodox Jewish families get first dibs. Evangelical centers could get punished by bureaucrats if the families who belong to the church are accommodated first.

This is a joke. The left is trying to weaponize the word "discrimination" to push faith-based childcare out of business.

Another part of their bill goes out of its way to deny money for facility upgrades to buildings that are used for "sectarian instruction or religious worship." If a faith-based center leads kids in prayer or teaches them their families' faiths, they don't get the funding that everybody else gets? We see this over and over from the culture warriors. They pretend they are happy to have religious groups in the public square but only if they check their beliefs at the door.

Now, a few years ago, the Supreme Court had to strike down a similar policy that penalized faith-based organiza-

tions. A State had tried to deny a church a widely available grant to fix up its playground. The Court took a look at it and struck down the law 7 to 2.

But the political left is right back at it. Just look at which Federal bureaucrat would oversee this giant mess. Well, of course, it is none other than Secretary Becerra, the hard-left culture warrior who got famous by suing the Little Sisters of the Poor for being too Catholic and by suing crisis pregnancy centers for being pro-life. This is the person whom Democrats want to give sweeping new powers over families' private choices? Secretary Becerra gets a giant slush fund to bring President Biden's inflation into childcare and discriminate against people of faith—just one more way Democrats' reckless taxing-and-spending spree would hurt working families.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise in support of the nomination of Rufus Gifford to be Chief of Protocol with the rank of Ambassador.

Rufus, a native son of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, transitioned to a career in public service after a very successful career in the private sector.

In 2013, President Obama nominated Rufus to be U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, and he was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

In Copenhagen, Rufus was the headliner in a reality TV show, "I Am the Ambassador." The show's innovative approach to public diplomacy gave Danish viewers, particularly young people, an all-access pass into the life of a U.S. Ambassador and the U.S. diplomatic presence in the country. In a country of just 5 million people, 200,000 Danes tuned in to see how the U.S. Ambassador advanced his country's core interests. One Danish viewer said that "it is the type of show you would watch with your mother-in-law, and she would say, oh, he is a lovely man, that Rufus Gifford."

Rufus's effusive personality makes him the perfect choice for this new role as Chief of Protocol. In Copenhagen, Denmark, Rufus opened the Ambassador's residence to thousands of visitors. As Chief of Protocol, he will once again play host to foreign dignitaries at the White House and Blair House. His hand will be the first outstretched to greet a Prime Minister, President, or Monarch at a time when diplomacy is most needed.

Ambassador Gifford was unanimously confirmed by this body in 2013 and was