

Mr. MARKEY. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The Republican whip.

REMEMBERING MARCELLA LEBEAU

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to take just a few minutes to honor two members of the "greatest generation" whom we lost recently, Marcella LeBeau and Bob Dole.

Marcella LeBeau died on Sunday, November 21. She was from my home State of South Dakota and a member of the Two Kettle Band of the Cheyenne River Sioux who served in the Army Nurse Corps during World War II, including time on the frontlines treating the wounded at the Battle of the Bulge. She was decorated by both France and Belgium for her service.

After the war, she returned to South Dakota, spending 31 years working for the Indian Health Service, including as Director of Nursing, while raising eight children.

She was a powerful advocate for Native Americans throughout her entire life and was a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Council for 4 years and a founding member of the North American Women's Association.

Even in retirement, Marcella continued to advocate for Native Americans and also found time to open a quilting shop with her granddaughter featuring, among other things, the Lakota star quilt, used for honoring and naming ceremonies, memorials, and various life achievements.

Earlier in November, she traveled to Oklahoma to attend the ceremony for her induction into the National Native American Hall of Fame.

REMEMBERING ROBERT J. DOLE

As we know, Bob Dole died on Sunday. Bob served as an officer in the 10th Mountain Division during World War II. Late in the war, he was seriously wounded in action during an attempt to rescue a fellow soldier, and he bore the resulting injuries the rest of his life.

Forced by his wounds to abandon his plans to be a surgeon, he quickly found another way to help his fellow Americans: public service. He was elected to the Kansas House of Representatives in 1950 and never looked back. In 1960, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; and, in 1968, he won election to the U.S. Senate, where he served for 27 years.

He was a Senator's Senator, a master of procedure, and a true legislator whose achievements ranged from Social Security reform to veterans legislation, to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Even after he ended his long career in public service, Bob continued to serve. He was an important supporter of the World War II Memorial here in Washington, DC, and could often be found there visiting with his fellow veterans who had traveled on Honor Flights.

Marcella and Bob came from different places and different backgrounds and, so far as I know, never crossed

paths in this life, but they had in common that abiding commitment to service that characterized so many members of the "greatest generation." Both Bob and Marcella spent their entire lives serving their country and their fellow citizens, and even retirement didn't slow them down.

The "greatest generation" was a fixture of American life for many decades, but its members are rapidly slipping away. Fewer than 250,000 of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II are still with us, and that number dwindles every day.

We need to make sure that the passing of the "greatest generation" does not mean the passing of the virtues that they modeled for us: humility, patriotism, quiet service, duty, and perseverance.

We need to remember Bob Dole and Marcella LeBeau and the many others like them who, in war and in peace, lived lives of service to our country.

My thoughts and prayers are with Bob and Marcella's families, with Bob's wife Elizabeth and his daughter Robin, and with Marcella's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

Mr. President, Democrats continue to work on their reckless tax-and-spending spree—or perhaps I should say their reckless tax-and-spending disaster.

Tax hikes, deficit spending, inflationary spending—it is all there in Democrats' spending package—plus, of course, that tax break for wealthy Americans. Yeah, that is right, a tax break for millionaires. I am talking, of course, about Democrats' expansion of the State and local tax deduction known as the SALT deduction, which would overwhelmingly benefit affluent taxpayers in mainly Democrat-led States and do almost nothing for middle- and lower-income families.

For months and months, Democrats have been going on about the need for the wealthy to pay their fair share of taxes, which is, I find, at the height of irony that the Democrats' current bill contains a substantial tax break for wealthy Americans. I am not surprised that Democrats kept that SALT provision out of the Ways and Means Committee markup in the House of Representatives. After constantly talking about making the wealthy pay their fair share, it is a little awkward to publicly debate your tax break for the wealthy.

Instead, Democrats stuffed the tax break into the reconciliation bill under the subtitle of, of all things, "social safety net." Yes, that is right, social safety net.

Well, who benefits from this particular safety net exactly?

About 94 percent of the tax benefit would go to the top 20 percent of earners. About 70 percent will go to the top 5 percent of earners. And nearly one-third of this tax benefit would go to the top 1 percent of households in this country.

The average tax savings for middle-income households from raising the SALT cap would be 20 bucks—\$20. Meanwhile, millionaires would receive an average tax cut of almost \$15,000.

Well, I guess the priorities of wealthy Democrat donors in blue States trump Democrats' plans to make wealthy Americans pay their fair share. Not only does the bill contain a tax break for millionaires, this tax break is one of the most expensive parts of the bill. In fact, it is the second most expensive item in the House-passed bill over the next 5 years.

That is right. According to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, only Democrats' childcare and pre-K programs would exceed the cost of raising the SALT cap.

Now, given their rhetoric, you would think that Democrats might have chosen to forgo this tax break for the wealthy and spend the money on one of their other programs that they fund for only part of their bill's 10-year budget window. But no. This tax break is apparently so important to Democrats that they are willing to shortchange some of their other priorities in order to include it.

We have also heard a lot from Democrats about how corporations need to pay their fair share, which, I guess, is whatever Democrats determine it to be. The Democrats' bill does include a corporate minimum tax—except it turns out that it is not really a corporate minimum tax and some corporations won't have to pay the full tax.

Democrats have carved out certain exceptions to the corporate minimum tax, including clean energy tax credits. So if you are a corporation engaged in Democrat-approved activities, you will be able to avoid paying some or all of the corporate minimum tax. If you don't qualify for Democrats' approved carve-outs, on the other hand, you can look forward to paying the full tax bill.

Democrats' hypocrisy might be amusing if this bill weren't so dangerous, but, unfortunately, there is not much to laugh about when it comes to this bill.

Democrats' Build Back Better spending disaster will pour \$1.75 trillion in government money into an already overheated economy, which will likely prolong the serious inflation we are currently experiencing.

Democrats' helped create our current inflation situation by flooding the economy with a lot of unnecessary government money earlier this year, and now Democrats are going to pour another \$1.75 trillion onto the inflationary fire.

American families are already experiencing the worst inflation in more than 30 years. I don't even want to think about what inflation will look like if Democrats succeed in passing on another \$1.75 trillion in spending.

Now, I say \$1.75 trillion, but, of course, Democrats only arrived at that number through a series of shell games and budget gimmicks. The real cost of

the Democrats' bill is much, much higher. An honest accounting of the bill puts the number in the range of \$4.5 to nearly \$5 trillion—\$5 trillion. To put that number in perspective, the entire Federal budget for fiscal year 2019 was \$4.4 trillion—the entire Federal budget.

Democrats are proposing a major expansion of government, and they are deceiving the American people into thinking that it can be paid for with \$1.75 trillion. That is simply not true. Democrats have arrived at that number by putting some of their provisions, from tax measures to new programs, into place for as little as a year. But, of course, Democrats don't have the slightest intention of having those tax measures or new programs expire after a year or 2, or ever.

Take the child allowance. Democrats' legislation would have their child allowance sunset in 1 year—1 year. But, of course, Democrats fully intend for their child allowance to be made permanent. But by only funding the child allowance and other measures for a fraction of their bill's 10-year budget window, they can disguise the true cost of permanently implementing these measures and how much these measures will end up costing the American people.

And, make no mistake, these programs will cost them. Democrats may talk about funding their legislation with taxes on corporations and the wealthy, but ordinary Americans are going to be paying for a major part of the bill. A substantial part of the Democrats' tax increases on business and investment would be passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices or reduced services, and those price hikes will come on top of the inflation that we are already experiencing and the additional inflation we are likely to experience as a result of this bill.

Americans are also likely to pay for this legislation with decreased economic growth and fewer economic opportunities, and they may pay in further tax hikes when Democrats try to extend their programs and need to come up with money to at least partially pay for them.

I am hard pressed to think of anything more irresponsible than Democrats passing this legislation at this time. As I mentioned, inflation is currently at a 30-year high. American families are struggling with high gas prices, high grocery bills, high rent prices, the high price of used cars—and the list goes on. Yet Democrats are planning to pass a bill that is likely to worsen our inflation situation and extend our current inflation crisis even further, not to mention driving up our deficit and worsening our country's fiscal health.

We don't know what government money will be needed down the road. We are emerging from a pandemic that required a lot of unexpected government expenditure, and we don't know what other challenges our country will

end up facing in the future. Yet Democrats are planning to keep spending as if there is no tomorrow with absolutely no regard—absolutely no regard—for our current inflation situation or for possible future needs.

It is deeply, deeply irresponsible, and if Democrats succeed in passing their spending spree, the American people will be paying a very steep price for decades to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join my friend and colleague from South Dakota to oppose the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending spree.

There are 18 days left until Christmas. So who is on the Democrats' shopping list this year?

Well, it is the same people who are on the list every year: illegal immigrants, union bosses, professional activists, and the donor class of millionaires.

In the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending bill, they all get big presents from the government. The rest of America gets more spending, more taxes, more debt, and higher prices as they are already struggling and suffering under the largest, highest inflation in the last 30 years.

Democrats call the bill Build Back Better. For most Americans, it is a break-your-back bill.

In this bill, CHUCK SCHUMER's hometown will get tens of billions of dollars to bail out their public housing authority.

Joe Biden likes to say, if you want to know somebody's values, he says, look at their budget.

Well, let's look at the budget that the Democrats are putting forth, because the second most expensive item in this bill is a tax break for millionaires and billionaires in New York, in New Jersey, in California, and in Chicago.

The cost of that sole component: \$275 billion, which will have to be paid by the hard-working men and women in this country.

This is one of the bill's top expenses because it is a top priority for Democrat elites. Under the Democrats' bill, the bottom 60 percent of Americans would get zero of those dollars; \$275 billion to the richest of the rich.

In 2016, nearly half of the money went to just four States: California, New York, Illinois, and New Jersey.

Rural States like Wyoming, Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia received the lowest amounts of tax relief. Democrats want the people in States like Wyoming and West Virginia to pay for these tax cuts for the millionaires of California and New York.

Under this legislation, low-tax States would essentially subsidize high-tax States. What is this going to do to the high-tax States? Well, it will encourage them to raise State taxes, which is probably another reason that Democrats support it.

Democrats also have lots of Christmas presents in this bill for people who come to this country illegally. The Parliamentarian said Democrats can't pass amnesty for illegal immigrants in a previous version of the bill, but Democrats want illegal amnesty so badly that they are going to try all over again.

Let me remind you: This is a spending bill; it is not an immigration bill. Democrats know that they don't have the votes to pass the immigration bill that they would like to see. Frankly, they know they will never have enough votes in the Senate for an amnesty bill for illegal immigrants. So they are trying to cram it into a spending bill. Democrats are hoping that the American people won't notice.

If Democrats have their way, this spending spree would be the most consequential immigration bill in half a century. The bill would give amnesty to 6½ million people in the country illegally. It would also give them five new entitlements.

The bill includes new permanent welfare programs. There would be no work requirements—not a single one—and no citizenship requirements. This includes free childcare, free preschool, and even free money for college. Now, this is in addition to the \$300 check every month for every child Democrats already send to illegal immigrants that they have sent earlier this year.

So it is shaping up to be a long December for American workers and taxpayers, and people know it because we already had the most expensive Thanksgiving ever.

On Friday, we saw one of the most disappointing jobs reports in a disappointing year. The jobs report says we created less than half the number of jobs that the experts predicted we would produce last month. Still, there are almost 4 million fewer Americans working than before the pandemic. At the same time, inflation is only getting worse.

People in all our States are wondering if they are going to be able to afford to have presents under the tree this year; wondering if they can afford a tree at all because, of course, the cost of Christmas trees are up 30 percent—30 percent more this year than last.

More and more Americans find they are heading to shop at the dollar stores. Yet many dollar stores, you have seen in the press, aren't dollar stores anymore. Dollar Tree is selling more and more items for \$1.25. Dollar General is opening new stores with a \$5-or-less business model. Prices are going up everywhere you look.

One of the reasons for inflation in Joe Biden's economy is the rise in cost of energy. Natural gas is at a 7-year high. Winter is almost here, and prices are up dramatically. The price of gas at the pump is at a 7-year high as well. Yet Biden and the Democrats say everything is fine.

It is just fascinating. Last week, the Democrats' headquarters sent out a

tweet. It was a graph showing gas prices had dropped by 2 cents over a week. The caption was “Thanks, Joe Biden.” I actually thought it was a joke. It was serious. They actually said: Hey, good, the price of gas is up \$1.25 since he took office, but it dropped 2 cents last week, and let’s celebrate the success of Joe Biden.

This is just another example of Democrats’ bad math. It is an example also of Democratic leaders who are completely out of touch. Gas is up \$1.25 a gallon since Joe Biden took office. A 2-cent drop is hardly enough.

So here is my 2 cents’ worth: The American people don’t want pennies from Joe Biden; they want a refund from the last election. That is what they deserve. They want affordable, available, reliable American energy.

Joe Biden said last week:

I have used every tool . . . to address price increases.

On the contrary. President Biden has used every tool to drive up prices. He has attacked American energy. He has driven up costs for all Americans. He has shut down the Keystone Pipeline. He is threatening other pipelines. He has blocked oil and gas leases on Federal land. He has threatened to raise taxes on the production of natural gas. We are now producing about 2 million barrels of oil a day less than before the pandemic.

The Secretary of Transportation thinks he has a simple solution to the energy crisis. This is what Pete Buttigieg said. He said it is easy. He said last week that families who buy electric cars “never have to worry about gas prices again.” Well, it is simply false. You would think somebody as educated as the Secretary of Transportation would intuitively say: Gas prices affect grocery prices. Gas prices affect retail prices and the price of just about everything else.

Look, even for the Biden administration, this is really out of touch with mainstream America or people who live anywhere outside the bubble of the beltway. People who are struggling with inflation can’t afford to go out and buy an electric vehicle. Seniors and families just starting out aren’t going to go out and buy an \$80,000 electric vehicle.

We know who buys these luxury vehicles. More than 80 percent of the Federal subsidies for electric vehicles go to people making more than \$100,000 a year, and, unlike the rest of the people on the roads, these drivers use the roads for free. Yet Democrats make sure to include electric vehicle owners on their shopping list this year.

This bill would give \$12,500—\$12,500—to couples making up to half a million dollars a year if they buy a luxury electric vehicle. This includes vans, SUVs, and trucks costing up to \$80,000. The bill also includes \$900 payouts to people who buy electric bicycles.

It has already been a long December for the American people, and we are only at December 7. Yet it must be an

exciting time for the Democrats’ favorite groups. Democrats have always liked to play Santa Claus, and this year, they have a list of who they consider America’s good little boys and girls. Who is on the list? Well, as I said a few minutes ago, it is illegal immigrants, union bosses, professional activists, and the millionaires who live in the penthouses of New York and the mansions of San Francisco and Hollywood. Working-class, Middle America, those families—they are the ones who are going to get stuck with the bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks prior to the scheduled votes.

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

TRIBUTE TO RON BARBER

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, today, I rise to honor one of Southern Arizona’s own—known to many here as former Congressman Ron Barber—for a long and impactful tenure in public service. Ron has been a pillar of Southern Arizona for decades. He is also a close friend and trusted adviser to both me and Gabby.

Ron has deep roots in Tucson. His dad was stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base when Ron was a teenager. Ron attended Rincon High School and graduated from the University of Arizona. He married his high school sweetheart, Nancy, who is here today, and built his family and his home and his career in Tucson, AZ.

Safe to say, Ron embodies what it means to be a Tucsonan. It is written everywhere, from the art that hangs in his house to the bumper stickers on his car, and there are a lot of them. His love of Tucson is something that rubs off on others—myself included.

I first met Ron at a meeting when Gabby was hiring folks to begin launching her first campaign for Congress. At the time, Ron had just retired from his senior post at the Division of Developmental Disabilities. He had spent decades serving as an advocate for families and vulnerable populations.

For almost anyone, that would be a sufficient career in public service but not for Ron Barber. Ron was moved by Gabby’s commitment to serving others. Now, he may not have had any experience in politics, but he showed up ready to help send Gabby to the U.S. Congress. Now, I wondered “Who is this guy?” but never really had to wonder again. He believed in her, and he did it early on. That is what makes Ron who he is—always believing, always early. And this is still true today. Really, Ron is literally always early to each and every event that he has staffed me for, and I am pretty sure that is the case with every person he has served alongside.

His punctuality is matched by his generosity and his knowledge of South-

ern Arizona. That is why when Gabby was elected, she wanted him on her team. He joined as her district director, her eyes and ears back home.

On January 8, 2011, Ron was doing that job when a gunman opened fire at the Congress on Your Corner event. He was standing next to his boss. Gabby was shot in the head. Ron was shot in the face and the leg. Eleven others were injured. Six died. We could have lost him that day too.

Those events rattled the Tucson community that Ron loves so much, and there was so much grief. But in the days, months, and years that followed, we found out just how strong our community was because of people like Ron Barber. Southern Arizona needed Ron, and Ron needed Southern Arizona.

Even through his own injury, he was there for me and Gabby and our family and countless others, as selfless as always. It is that exact selflessness that meant Ron never thought of himself as the right person to run for Gabby’s seat after she stepped down.

I remember sitting in a room with Ron and Gabby during her recovery. We were discussing what was next for Gabby and who would run for her seat in the House of Representatives. There was a long list of names that was thrown out, and at the end, Gabby said that it should be Ron. He was sitting right there, and I think he was probably pretty shocked, but, you know, he wasn’t exactly in a position to refuse, either. He was reluctant at first but eventually rose at the chance to continue serving the community he loved in a way that he never imagined—in the U.S. Congress—and he did that job with grit and independence.

Ron fought to protect our military installations. He worked on lowering healthcare costs and to get mental health services to Arizonans and Americans across the country. He was a public servant through and through or better yet, a “citizen legislator”—a term he used to describe his vision for Washington lawmakers.

After leaving Congress, Ron continued finding ways to serve. When Congresswoman ANN KIRKPATRICK was elected to his old seat, Ron went back to work as her district director for nearly 2 years. For Ron, it is never about ego; it is only about helping in whatever way he could and wherever he could.

Then, the day after my election last year, I called Ron and asked him to serve on my transition team.

And then I asked him to join my office as our southern Arizona director, and he signed up for that as well, once again delaying his retirement to go back into public service one more time.

I can’t tell you what an asset it has been for our office and for the people of Arizona in that role.

Now, we are going to miss Ron, but we also know that he is not really going anywhere either. While Ron might be retiring from his day job, he will still volunteer his time at several