

resulting in a de facto pay cut for many Americans.

One of the price hikes hitting Americans hard is the increase in the price of gas. Gas prices have risen 40 percent since President Biden took office—40 percent. That takes a tremendous toll on family budgets. And, of course, high gas prices and other energy costs contribute to price increases on a whole host of other goods. Manufacturers facing higher transportation costs thanks to high gas prices, for example, are likely to pass on at least some of those increased costs to consumers in the form of price hikes.

In my home State of South Dakota, families are facing an increase in home heating costs as high as 50 to 100 percent, depending on how severe of a winter we face.

Nationwide, concerns over high heating costs this winter have been tempered by mild weather so far, but predictions of huge energy bills could return with a period of sustained harsh weather. And that would be another financial blow for families whose budgets are already severely stretched by our current inflation crisis.

It is easy for, say, a wealthy Democrat politician to dismiss the consequences of inflation, but for families living paycheck to paycheck, an increase in the grocery bill or heating costs or the cost of a tank of gas could mean tough decisions, like choosing between adequately heating the house or filling the car to get to a job.

So what has President Biden been doing to help alleviate rising energy prices and inflation? Well, the answer is not much. First, he pleaded with the OPEC cartel to increase oil production and increase global supply, which is the single most influential factor when it comes to gas prices. OPEC was unmoved.

Then the President recently announced the release of 50 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Oil Reserve, a move that Congress had, in part, already mandated.

Unfortunately, this is nothing more than a short-term relief measure, if that, as it will do little to give our energy sector the certainty it is seeking to bring production and American energy jobs back online.

While Democrats helped create the inflation crisis that we are experiencing by flooding the economy with unnecessary government money earlier this year, the President is not solely to blame for high energy prices, which have also been driven up by COVID-related issues. However, the President is certainly to blame for the hostile attitude his administration has displayed toward conventional energy production. And he is certainly to blame for the reckless tax-and-spending spree he is pushing, which would further drive up energy prices for American families.

The President made clear that his attitude toward conventional energy production on day 1 of his administration, when he canceled the Keystone XL

Pipeline, an environmentally responsible pipeline project that was already underway and that would have delivered more than 10,000 construction jobs and helped decrease energy costs by increasing regional energy supply, all while being offset with a \$1.7 billion investment in renewable energy.

The President also almost immediately banned new oil and gas leases on Federal lands, sending a clear signal to oil and gas producers that his administration would be reluctant to work with them to increase American energy production.

Then, of course, there was the release of the first outlines of the President's reckless tax-and-spending plan, which displayed a clear hostility to conventional energy.

Given this record, it is no surprise that many energy producers have been less than enthusiastic about coming fully back online as we emerge from the pandemic. The market signals to increase production are being muted by this administration's burdensome policies and clear intent of sidelining American energy development.

Then there is the current version of the reckless tax-and-spending spree, which Democrats are pushing to pass in the very near future. This legislation will not only likely worsen our current inflation situation, it will also make our energy less reliable and more expensive.

If Democrats succeed in passing their legislation, American families will have to brace themselves for even higher energy bills. One major driver of those higher energy bills will be the bill's new fee—or tax—on methane, which is targeted at crippling the natural gas sector that spurred America's recent energy renaissance and has actually been the largest driver of coal displacement.

The American Gas Association says the proposed fee could add as much as 34 percent to natural gas bills. And that is on top of any increases Americans may already be facing.

As I mentioned earlier, home heating bills are already projected to rise as much as 50 to 100 percent in my State this winter—and that is without the reckless tax-and-spending spree piling on.

And if progressive Democrats have their way, Democrats' tax-and-spending spree could also penalize our oil and gas sector by ending longstanding tax provisions like the percentage depletion deduction, which underpins an overwhelming number of independent producers representing roughly 90 percent of wells drilled in the United States.

Simply put, this administration wants to make it more expensive and more difficult to develop our abundant energy resources in favor of their preferred energy technologies and electric vehicles, with predictable consequences for Americans' pocketbooks.

And just a word about those electric vehicles. The President's Transpor-

tation Secretary recently suggested that families feeling the pinch of high gas prices could solve their problem by buying an electric vehicle, which would allow them to "never have to worry about gas prices again."

Well, I have news for the President's Transportation Secretary. A lot of Americans can't afford to replace their car with an electric vehicle, not to mention that electric cars and trucks are still not a practical option for many Americans for other reasons. Secretary Buttigieg's statement shows just how far out of touch Democrats have become with ordinary Americans.

I know Democrats are deeply invested in their Green New Deal fantasies of an instant, mostly electric energy regime. But the reality is that American consumers will need to use liquid fuels and electricity and heat for natural gas well into the future. And punishing or discouraging responsible energy development in oil and natural gas will do nothing—nothing—but drive up energy prices for consumers and force our Nation to rely more on oil and gas imports from unstable areas of the world.

We should be encouraging American energy development of every kind—from oil and natural gas to wind, solar, and biofuels—not artificially picking winners and losers and discouraging essential energy production.

And with American consumers struggling with long-term inflation, the last thing we need to be doing right now is passing legislation that will drive up energy prices. Unfortunately, if Democrats have their way and succeed in passing their tax-and-spending legislation, Americans will soon be able to add even higher energy bills to the list of challenges that they are currently facing.

So much for building back better for the American people.

ENERGY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, while I am on the topic of energy, I would like to briefly comment on yesterday's announcements from the EPA and USDA concerning biofuels. To put it simply, the administration can't have it both ways on the renewable fuel standard, something agriculture stakeholders in South Dakota know all too well.

Yesterday, the EPA announced a proposal to take the unprecedented step of clawing back previously set biofuel blending targets; 2020 volumes would be reduced by 2½ billion gallons, and 2021 would see a reduction.

Now, the EPA is trying to sell this by simultaneously proposing an increase in the 2022 blending volumes, which on its own would be favorable, but it is far from enough to make up for the lost gallons.

And keep in mind that the EPA's proposal pulls back blending obligations from a final rule, giving stakeholders little confidence that this promised 2022 increase won't meet the

same fate. Again, not every component of yesterday's announcement is bad on its own.

Signaling an end to the out-of-control small refinery exemption program is long overdue, and it is consistent with the renewable fuel standard and a Tenth Circuit Court ruling. It is also good to see the Department of Agriculture moving forward with assistance funds for biofuel producers, but this was funding signed into law last December. It is almost as if it was withheld from our producers for months so that USDA could help the EPA sell our ag stakeholders a bill of goods.

I urge the administration to make good on its commitments to our farmers and to finally leverage American biofuels for the energy and environmental solutions they can provide.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

REMEMBERING ROBERT J. DOLE

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, much is grown on Kansas' plains. Crops and pastures stretch as far as the eye can see. Grain elevators replace city skyscrapers, and the whisper of the wind substitutes the screech of sirens and traffic.

What truly makes the prairie special, however, is the people, the people of the plains. Kindness and resilience define Kansans. Churches that seem entirely too big for the tiny towns they tower over are filled on Sundays; and neighbors are checking on each other, sharing food, sharing laughs, maybe sharing a cup of coffee and even a few beers.

And perhaps this is why Senator Bob Dole reminded me every time I saw him: Roger, always remember where you are from.

In every speech I ever heard him give, he always said: Always remember where you are from.

I thought a lot about that this week. What was Senator Dole saying? Why was that so important?

And I think, reflecting, he always wanted to make sure that he remembered his Kansas values and that the people of Russell, KS, shaped his life, to pay honor to them and respect.

This week, Kansans lost a great friend and neighbor. Senator Bob Dole, a personification of the gentle toughness cultivated in the rural Midwest; an advocate for the disabled, the hungry, our veterans and our American way of life; a genuine once-in-a-generation, from the "greatest generation," American hero has been called home.

It was to these same plains that a young Robert Dole returned from war, critically wounded from injuries sustained in 1945 on a battlefield in Italy. The people of Russell had chipped in money—\$1,800 to be exact—into a cigar box on the counter of Dawson's Drug Store, where a young Bob Dole once worked as a soda jerk. These funds were used to help offset the costs of his

recovery, and it was a grueling recovery. During his 3-year hospital stay, he spent time in a body cast. He fought horrible infections that shot his temperature to over 109 degrees, which forced the doctors to pack him in ice. He literally underwent dozens of surgeries on his shoulder, his arm, and even to remove a kidney. Bob Dole was once a strapping, muscular three-sport varsity athlete at Russell High School, as well as a KU Jayhawk athlete. Dole was now paralyzed and his weight had dropped to 122 pounds.

All the while, during his recovery there in the hospitals, he listened to one of his new favorite songs, a source of inspiration, "You'll Never Walk Alone." I quote from that Rodgers and Hammerstein classic:

Walk on with hope in your heart and you'll never walk alone.

Walk on with hope in your heart and you'll never walk alone.

Americans know of Bob Dole's record of public service, whether it was passing the Reagan agenda through the Senate, saving Social Security from bankruptcy, fighting hunger in the United States and abroad, the Americans with Disabilities Act, his work for veterans that includes the construction of the World War II Memorial, and so, so much more.

Americans know of his time at the helm at the Republican National Committee, the U.S. Senate, and the party's Presidential ticket. They may even be aware of when, in 2014, he regained the strength to travel and visited all 105 Kansas counties to simply say "thank you"—thank you—for the life they had given him.

People may also know that most Saturdays of the past decade, Senator Dole quietly sat on the south side of the World War II Memorial to greet and thank veterans as the Honor Flights came to Washington, DC. It was only fitting that Kansans gathered there this morning to pay homage and respect and remember our hero. All of this, he did with humility, with charm and wit—that famous wit that made him so likable, so effective, and so Kansan.

As we in the Capitol honor Senator Dole, I remember the days that followed his famous salute of President George H.W. Bush's casket in the Capitol Rotunda—a moment that inspired and captivated the world—when he, with the help of his caretaker and fellow veteran Nate, stood up from his wheelchair and showed his reverence for his once rival and friend. He, of course, didn't understand what the big deal was. He just wanted to honor a fellow veteran and public servant. It was just a reflex for him to show that respect, and his humility in its wake was his classic style.

I remember the morning earlier this spring when Senator Dole called me to tell me that he had stage IV lung cancer. He wanted to make sure that my wife Laina and I knew before the press did. But all the while, what I remember

from that conversation was how upbeat he was, how positive he was, worried about me and not himself.

But he, again, beat the odds and spent more quality time with all of us. And every time I saw him, even up to just a couple of weeks ago, he was always cracking jokes, imparting wisdom, and spending time with all of his friends.

I am so grateful for the blessing of each moment spent with him before and after that call. I can't express what I would give for another one of those moments, as I know is true for his wife, our friend, Senator Elizabeth; and his most steadfast supporter and advocate, his daughter Robin.

The same goes for his devoted staff, who are like family to the Doles. Whenever you visited the Doles, that staff were all family members. I want to mention Pia, Marion, Mo, Ruth Ann, and so many more. We mourn your loss and you are in our prayers.

There are so many scores of friends from all ages and so many walks of life. So many people reached out to me this week to say: We are thinking of you, we are praying for you, give the Dole family our condolences.

Now, as his incredible work here is done—and I am going to miss my friend—the boots that my fellow Kansas Senator and I have to fill are very large, but, fortunately, he left me with some good advice to fill those boots.

It was in 2017, shortly after I had been elected and I was facing my first tough vote, and Senator Dole and myself were able to have a late morning brunch. I had my notes prepared. I was going to discuss this issue in great depth and I was prepared for every one of Senator Dole's questions.

But as I started the conversation, he said: Well, what is going on, on the Hill?

I said: Senator Dole, I have a tough vote tomorrow.

He took another sip of his lobster bisque and looked at me and said: Roger, go back to Kansas. The people of Kansas will tell you the answer.

I know I am going to never measure up to his standard. He set a tremendous bar for us to reach. While Senator Dole is done, the lessons we can all learn from his life will be lived out and passed on. Certainly, the spirit of Bob Dole, the spirit of patriotism, hope, loyalty, respect, service, and genuine kindness and concern for others will never fade.

One of the best days of my time in Congress was watching Senator Dole receive the Congressional Gold Medal in 2018, in our Nation's Capitol Rotunda. It was a special honor. As a freshman Congressman, I had to kind of fight my way to the front row or near the front row, and I was surrounded by other Members of Congress as well. As the President recited Bob Dole's story, one by one they would look at me and nod. You know that nod you get, the nod of respect. You don't have to say anything. I was so proud to