

One thing is for sure: It is not because of a lack of opportunities to advance bipartisan legislation.

In fact, over the last year, I have been proud to work with a number of our Democratic colleagues on legislation to address some of our biggest challenges, so it is not impossible. For example, Senator WARNER, the Senator from Virginia, and I have partnered on the CHIPS for America Act, which became law earlier this year, and now we are working together to provide the funds to fund the programs that the bill created.

Then there is Senator SINEMA, the senior Senator from Arizona. She and I teamed up on legislation to deal with the humanitarian crisis and security crisis at our border and to make sure that migrants are treated fairly and humanely.

Senator PADILLA, the junior Senator from California, and I have worked together on legislation to make big investments in infrastructure projects across the country without increasing the deficit by a dime.

Earlier this year, State and local governments received huge sums of COVID-19 relief money—more than they could use—and they found themselves with more cash than they did eligible expenses. So the idea behind our bill was pretty simple: give State and local leaders more flexibility to invest in the most critical projects for their communities—largely, infrastructure and disaster relief.

In some places, this still means pandemic-related expenses. We don't require them to do anything; we just merely give them an option. Cities can continue to use Federal dollars to expand hospital bed capacities, increase staffing, or support vaccination campaigns.

The flexibility granted by this bill wouldn't interfere with any plans to bolster the fight against the virus. It simply gives States and local governments the ability to invest excess funding in infrastructure projects: constructing bridges, extending railways, modernizing ports, expanding broadband. This particular bill includes a long list of qualifying expenses.

State and local leaders know their communities best, and they should be able to use excess COVID-19 relief funds in a way that makes the most sense for their State and their community.

Senator PADILLA and I were happy to work with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make changes to the bill to gain bipartisan support. We added additional qualifying infrastructure projects to ensure unique but no less important infrastructure projects in some States were eligible. And we placed a cap, working with the White House, on the amount of funding that could be used because of the White House's concerns that it would take away from necessary COVID-19 expenses.

In October, this bill passed the Senate with unanimous support. Now,

nothing passes this Senate with unanimous support without a lot of hard work and a lot of input from a lot of people on both sides of the aisle. At a time when something as simple as K-12 curricula are controversial, the full Senate supported this legislation. Local officials, highway safety groups, and the transportation infrastructure construction industry all support this commonsense legislation.

Leaders from three dozen organizations representing these groups sent a letter to House leaders earlier this week encouraging the bill's passage. As they said, providing State and local leaders with flexible resources is the surest way to see that our Nation's preparedness and responsivity continue. And it is important to note that this money had already gone out the door, so all of these projects, all of this new infrastructure, can be funded without increasing the deficit by a dime.

As I said, all 100 Senators supported this legislation, and the bill currently has more than 120 bipartisan cosponsors in the House. So we would encourage our House colleagues to delay no longer and take up and pass this commonsense, bipartisan bill.

So my point is, even in times when we seem irreparably polarized, where some colleagues decide it is my way or the highway when it comes to trying to pass legislation in a 50-50 Senate—which is, admittedly, very hard to do—the truth of the matter is there are real opportunities to address some of the biggest challenges facing our country in a bipartisan way.

But none of these opportunities are contained in the Democrats' partisan spending bill. This legislation would, as Larry Summers predicted, continue to fuel the red-hot inflation that is already burning the American people. It will harm our energy security. It will give massive tax breaks to the wealthy while increasing taxes on the middle class. It cuts funding to our safety-net hospitals that provide charity care and care for Medicaid patients. And it will drive our national debt to unimaginable heights.

It will also hand the government control of decisions that should be made by families on everything from childcare to healthcare—basically hand those decisions to the Federal Government. This is not the type of legislation that should be on our Senate's agenda at all, let alone at the top of the list.

There are plenty of opportunities to work together to notch big bipartisan wins for the American people. It is a shame, though, that our colleagues across the aisle have chosen not to do that and that this partisan spending spree has prevented real progress from being made in so many other areas.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO SARA HOTTMAN

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, few things are harder in this job than when you have to say goodbye to a member of your team. With all of the time we spend together, it is impossible not to grow close to the men and women who make up that team. The team members become our colleagues, our friends, our families.

I am here on the floor today to recognize and bid farewell to a valued and integral member of my Senate family who, after more than 5 years, is leaving to start the next chapter of her career. She is my State communications director, Sara Hottman.

During her time on Team Merkley, Sara has not only helped communicate my message to the people back home in Oregon about the work I am doing on their behalf here in DC, but she has used her well-connected ear to the ground to help keep me in the loop on issues evolving back home.

I have come to depend on her to keep me on the right track. She never shies away from delivering hard truths when they are needed. She has used her vast experience in all different facets of the communications world—as a reporter, as the communications director for a municipality, as head of strategic communications for the Oregon Zoo—to help deliver our message to the people of the State. It doesn't hurt that in her spare time, Sara is a prolific kickboxer. So when she tells me something, I listen. She has been a real leader in our team, including participation in our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee.

She has done an amazing job time and time again putting together State events. We have traveled all across our sizable State for events that included press conferences to announce policies; press conferences to hear from stakeholders in our State—for example, roundtables with nurses and medical professionals who are on the frontlines fighting the pandemic. Our events included townhalls—a gathering with community leaders in every county every year, followed by a public townhall with people who will ask any question they want. Our events included tours of State disasters. She expertly organized every event, ensuring media exposure and successfully striving to bring together a wide variety of expert and local voices to ensure that I was always learning more insights and perspectives on the issues that face us.

At the end of the day, as we prepared to overnight somewhere around the State in preparation for another long day, she always knew the perfect local watering hole for the team to post up at to reminisce on how things had gone and to recover in preparation for the day that followed.

When something went off the rails unexpectedly, she found a way to turn

it into an opportunity. When I was surveying damage to a town incinerated by the 2020 Labor Day fires, I became so immersed in examining the fire damage that the rest of the delegation went on to the next event, and suddenly I realized we were left behind. She didn't miss a beat. She used that time to gather more local community members who had been so impacted by the devastation of losing their homes. She managed to find a reporter who had also been left behind and arranged an impromptu one-on-one exclusive. So I utilized that opportunity to learn more and to communicate more when it could have just been a misstep. Well, that is what she does—turns missteps into opportunities.

Cool and calm under pressure, she has a way of making everyone feel important and seen. She connects with folks everywhere she goes.

I was thinking back to one townhall we did in early 2020 before the pandemic hit and shut things down. It was a small gathering in a classroom of a local school, but in that group was a young girl who was simply entranced by Sara. Throughout the townhall, she was following her around, imitating when Sara would take photos and asking questions of Sara even though the townhall was underway. Sara, being the person she is, kept answering those questions, kept letting the girl shadow her, still managing to get all of her work done while also inspiring this admirer. That is kind of just the charming ability to connect with folks and to stay calm in unexpected situations that have made traveling around the State long, busy travel days a real joy for the entire team.

When the pandemic turned our world upside down in March of last year, she used her leadership and organizing skills to help me and the entire team transition to the new virtual world we were suddenly thrown into. She turned our townhalls and our weekly sessions of local Oregon reporters and television stations into virtual events so I could continue to provide information and connect with constituents during this extraordinary national crisis. She led the charge in updating our website to provide a one-stop shop of resources for residents and local businesses for information on how to get the help they needed.

To say that Sara will leave a large hole in our team when she heads off to her new responsibilities would be an understatement. Every member of our office, whether in Washington, DC, or back home in Oregon, is going to miss her bright smile, her sharp wit, her infectious energy, and her brilliant mind—not to mention that we will also miss her border collie, Liz, who has been a therapy dog for all of us.

Sara, if you are watching, and I hope you are, know that we all, the extended Team Merkley family, wish you well in the next phase of your career. Thank you for all you have done these past 5-plus years, and thank you for all you

will continue to do to help build a better world for the people of Oregon and the people of our Nation.

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

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

CHINA

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, 20 years ago this week, the People's Republic of China became a member of the World Trade Organization. There was great rejoicing across Washington by lobbyists and politicians and bureaucrats and, for that matter, among corporate CEOs and Wall Street bankers and perhaps most of all, the Communists in Beijing. But for Americans out in the heartland, in places like Arkansas, China's entrance into the WTO was nothing to celebrate. That was the moment their leaders left them exposed to the predations of the Chinese Communist Party.

Millions of Americans lost good-paying blue-collar jobs to the China trade shock in the years that followed. Countless small towns, Main Streets, and working-class neighborhoods were gutted and boarded up. Michigan lost 24 percent of its manufacturing jobs. Ohio lost 27 percent of its manufacturing jobs. My home State has lost 26 percent of all of our manufacturing jobs since China joined the World Trade Organization. Families were shattered and communities crumbled. The opioid crisis killed thousands of those who were left behind.

Twenty years ago was nothing less than the beginning of the great hollowing of our Nation's industrial base, economy, and working class. It is worth recalling what our leaders said and what they promised as they unleashed this disaster.

During the yearslong lobbying campaign for China, then-President Bill Clinton said it was "ironic . . . that so many Americans are concerned about the impact on the world of a strong China." From an economic standpoint, he said, "this agreement is the equivalent of a one-way street." In other words, it was all upside for America if only all those knuckle-draggers who opposed the Chinese Communist Party entering the World Trade Organization would get out of the way.

Now, that attitude was the conventional wisdom in Washington for years, and it was in both parties, to be sure. Four years after China joined the WTO, Republican U.S. Trade Representative Bob Zoellick reflected that "our policy has succeeded remarkably well: the dragon emerged and joined the world."

Well, it turns out—not surprisingly—that this dragon has fangs and claws, and now it is sitting on top of a vast pile of looted wealth. It is clear that our leaders and their naiveté have cre-

ated a monster by admitting China to the WTO. Let's just review some of the numbers.

Since 2001, China's economy has grown by nearly 1,200 percent, transforming a third-world backwater into the second largest economy, largest exporter, and dominant industrial power in the world. The PRC today makes one out of every four automobiles in the world—more than the United States, Japan, and South Korea combined. Combined. It makes one out of every three merchant ships. In the United States, we make basically none. In addition, China produces 40 percent of mobile phones, 70 percent of televisions, and 96 percent of shipping containers on which global commerce moves.

Equally worrisome, China has gained a stranglehold over the production of essential materials. China produces more than half of the world's steel, two-thirds of its active ingredients in our generic drugs, and processes 85 percent of rare earth elements, 85 percent which are used in everything from the smartphone in your pocket to advanced fighter jets.

China is also making strides in advanced technology. A few years ago, China's space agency sent the world's first quantum communications satellite into orbit. It already possesses 200 of the world's 500 fastest supercomputers. And Chairman Xi Jinping has pledged an astounding \$1.4 trillion over 6 years to help China take the lead in cutting-edge fields like semiconductors and artificial intelligence.

The stark fact is that China controls nearly a quarter of global trade. A stunning 70 percent—70 percent, 7 out of 10 countries—in the world trade more with China than with the United States.

Now, it would be one thing if China had gotten rich and powerful the honest way, through fair competition and trade with other countries.

Instead, China has gotten rich through a criminal spree of intellectual property theft, industrial espionage, strong-arm trade agreements, and illegal subsidies and protection or as the office of U.S. Trade Representative wrote:

China has continued to embrace a staled, non-market and mercantilist approach to the economy and trade, despite WTO members' expectations—and China's own representations—that China would transform its economy and pursue the open, market-oriented policies endorsed by the WTO.

"Despite WTO's members' expectations." WTO members are stupid if they expected China to change its ways.

But in other words, China lied, and the rest of the world has paid the price. China is the world's most prolific IP thief, stealing the equivalent of Arkansas' economy two times over every year, year after year. And that is just the beginning.

The Chinese Government recruits its citizens working and studying in our