

doesn't, let's say, trickle down to everybody in this country.

Despite having the best hospitals and the best doctors in the world, deaths are going up, not down. The legislation Alyssa has championed would help expand coverage options for pregnant mothers so they can get the care they need to have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.

Thanks to her hard work and thanks to my colleague and my friend Senator WYDEN, we included a provision from the Healthy Moms Act that would provide postpartum women with 12 months of Medicaid coverage in the Build Back Better bill.

I mean, think about that—these women now who give birth will have 12 months of Medicaid coverage—what that can mean, actually having insurance, not having to worry as your colicky baby at several weeks old is keeping you awake at night and suffering, and you are thinking also in your mind: How am I going to pay if I take her to the doctor? How am I going to pay? How am I going to afford this coverage?

This does that.

Another major contribution Alyssa has made to our office is her leadership informing and guiding our Economic Justice Task Force. Economic justice is central to everything we do for the people of Ohio.

I would notice—and I know I am not allowed to wear this on the floor. So I will just hold it up, if that doesn't violate the rules.

I ran in today and I met briefly with one of the workers who makes food in this building. They just joined and formed Local 23 of UNITE HERE. What that is going to mean for her life, what that is going to mean for workers, that they have somebody now representing them, bargaining for better wages, better benefits—we know the cafeteria workers here, the people who work to serve us, were making as little as \$11 and \$12 an hour.

This Economic Justice Task Force will mean our office will do better to engage communities that are overlooked, to discuss and champion issues that are central to Ohio communities and to the workers here and all over the country, communities that don't often have much of a voice in the government.

She has been the driving force behind this task force for 2 full years now, organizing meetings, facilitating discussions, encouraging colleagues to get involved and speak up. She coordinates with other staff. She plans quarterly events. She circulates ideas for feedback.

One colleague said: All around, she is so inclusive and empathetic. As you work in this job and work in these jobs, having staff that is kind and inclusive and empathetic is sort of everything because they will treat the citizens of Alaska or Georgia or Ohio with that empathy and with that kindness. She has been that kind of asset to our of-

fice and to our work for the people of Ohio.

We will miss her dearly. I know she will continue to do wonderful things to ensure more Americans get the compassionate and affordable and effective healthcare they need.

I am excited. We hate to lose her, but we like her next challenge, and we are excited to see how far she will go.

Thank you, Alyssa, for your service to Ohio and to our country. We will miss you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to come down to the Senate floor and commend a number of Senators, but I want to particularly commend the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator REED, and the ranking member, Senator INHOFE, and their staff, and all the staff on the Armed Services Committee for the exceptional work they have done over the last several months to produce the strong National Defense Authorization Act that just passed in a very strong bipartisan vote here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

That vote was 88 to 11. I think it is a prime example of something that I mention a lot back home; and that is that there is a lot more bipartisan work that gets done here in the Senate that isn't often recognized, and there is nothing more important than having Senators from both sides of the aisle come together with regard to national defense and supporting our troops and their families.

We have been doing that over 60 years in a row, where we have passed the National Defense Authorization Act—one of the most important bills that comes to the floor of the Senate and the House and the Congress. And, once again, we have passed it. And I think Chairman REED and Senator INHOFE—Ranking Member INHOFE—deserve a lot of the credit.

So I just want to touch on a couple of the key provisions here, a lot of what was in it, and then mention a few things. A lot of times it is important to recognize, actually, what is not in a bill because that can be just as important as what is in it.

But I would start with the No. 1 issue here, and it is the top-line budget increase for the Department of Defense.

I have been outspoken on the disappointment and damage that President Biden's budget, which he proposed, with regard to the Pentagon, supported, unfortunately, by many here—the majority leader, the budget chairman—that that was unacceptable—unacceptable. Why was it unacceptable? Because our Nation is facing many threats right now. Just read the paper every day—China, Russia, Iran. Yet that budget that was actually provided by the White House was a cut—a pretty dramatic cut—if you look at it as adjusted for inflation.

The Armed Services Committees in the Senate and in the House thoroughly rejected the Biden budget to cut defense spending.

We have in this bill a 3-percent real increase. That is a little over \$25 billion. This amendment, which I cosponsored with Senator INHOFE and others, to increase our defense spending, when it came to a vote in the committee, every Senator on the Armed Services Committee voted for it, with the exception of one. That is about as bipartisan as it gets.

There are many important things in this bill in terms of the significant increase to the top-line budget, but readiness, in my view, of our military is one of the most important things we do here as U.S. Senators, and now is certainly not the time to cut defense spending. I think today's vote was a strong bipartisan showing that this body does not agree with the Biden budget, and that was one really important aspect of today's NDAA.

Second, I want to talk a little bit about the great State of Alaska and its role in our military and some of the provisions in this bill that relate to Arctic security.

I like to say that Alaska constitutes three pillars of America's military might. We are the cornerstone of missile defense. Almost all the radar systems and all the ground-based missile interceptors protecting the whole country are located in Alaska.

We are the hub of air combat power for the Arctic and Asia Pacific. By the end of this year, we will have over 100 fifth-generation fighters—combat-coded, fifth-gen fighters. That is F-35s, F-22s, stationed in Alaska—over 100. There is no place on the planet Earth that has over 100 fifth-generation fighters. Supersonic stealth can get anywhere—anywhere—very quickly: Russia, China, Taiwan. That is another area of Alaska's pillars of military might.

And, finally, we are a platform for expeditionary forces, the 4-25, the only airborne brigade combat team in the entire Asia Pacific; the First Striker Brigade; and many others that can get to places all over the world, because of our strategic location, very quickly, and also because of our strategic airlift in Alaska.

But this NDAA is going to add another element of Alaska's military might to our Nation, and that is the center of gravity for America's Arctic security operations.

Last year in the NDAA, we were able to get the first and only and much needed Department of Defense Center for Arctic Security. The Department of Defense named it the Ted Stevens, after the great, late Senator. The Center for Arctic Security is going to be in Anchorage, AK.

And now, in this year's NDAA, we have what is called the Arctic Security Initiative. I was honored to cosponsor that with my good friend Senator KING

from Maine. And this gets the Pentagon to focus on a 5-year strengthening of our national security in the Arctic region.

As you know, that is becoming an area of great power competition, and America has very strong, strategic national security and economic security interests in the Arctic. And this NDAA will cement not just the Arctic as an important national security imperative of our country but Alaska as the focal point for Arctic security endeavors for the United States and our allies.

The other element here in the NDAA which is so important, of course, is taking care of our troops and their families. This bill authorizes a pay raise of almost 3 percent for both military members and Department of Defense civilians. It has numerous initiatives relating to military health and housing leave policies. One that I was proud to get into this bill is an important provision that allows the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration to do facility sharing.

What does that mean? It enables both the Pentagon and the VA to work on agreements to plan, design, and construct facilities to operate as VA and DOD shared medical facilities. That is going to help with readiness. That is going to help train our young Active-Duty medical forces. It is going to help with taking care of our veterans. And it is going to save money.

These are the kinds of provisions that we need. They are win-win-win between the VA and our veterans and the Active-Duty and Reserve forces that also need healthcare. And we are looking forward to taking advantage of that in Alaska and in other places in the country.

As I said at the outset, oftentimes what is not in a bill is as important as what is in a bill, and some of our Members—some of the far-left Members of the House—tried to plug into the NDAA—and they did so over in the House—a number of bills that really didn't have a lot to do with the military, but they were trying to move forward on a far-left agenda that they tried to attach in the NDAA.

Ironically, many of these Members really have no intention of ever voting for a strong NDAA, but they tried to plug things in, in the House bill. They did that in the House bill, but we were able to get rid of pretty much all of those—again, things like redflag laws that would confiscate firearms without due process.

There is another provision that I am really glad was not in there. There has been this narrative on the far left that somehow the men and women of our military—that our military institutions—are filled with a bunch of extremists. There are news reports that say this. None of it is based on data. None of it is based on data. And I have been pressing officials, saying: Give me data. You make these charges, which I dislike. I happen to know many, many

members of the military. They are some of the finest people in the country.

So we were able to get rid of some of the provisions in the House bill that—one was going to set up an office in the Pentagon on essentially trying to, in my view, do witch hunts on so-called extremists. It is an issue that the Pentagon needs to come up with data on and not make these false charges.

So, overall, this is a good day for our troops, for their families, for the Senate. It is a very bipartisan bill, with people coming together—Democrats and Republicans—on, in my view, one of the most important issues, if not the most important issue, we deal with here in the Congress: the national security of our Nation; keeping a strong, lethal military.

And when we do that, like we did today, that also sends a message to our adversaries: The United States, despite some challenges, still has the best, most lethal military force in the world, the most professional military force in the world. And this bill is going to help enhance that, and our adversaries need to take notice.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

ENERGY SAVINGS AND INDUSTRIAL
COMPETITIVENESS ACT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am really pleased to be on the floor this afternoon with my friend and colleague Senator ROB PORTMAN to talk about an issue that we have been working on, literally, for a decade, and it has been a bipartisan effort to focus on energy efficiency as a response to the energy needs in this country.

In 2011, Senator PORTMAN and I introduced S. 1000, which was the first version of the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act. Over the years, it has been known as Shaheen-Portman, when we were in the majority on the Democratic side, or Portman-Shaheen, when the Republicans were in the majority.

But it doesn't matter what you call it. Our bill has proposed substantial investments in energy efficiency in this country, and what we did in the bill was to focus on the most energy-intensive sectors in our economy: buildings, residential and commercial, which is about a third of our energy use; the industrial sector; and the Federal Government. And, in the United States, the biggest user of energy is the Federal Government.

In a Congress that is divided along partisan lines on so many issues, energy efficiency is one priority that can bring us together on a bipartisan, bicameral basis to get things done. I always like to say that energy efficiency is one of those energy sources that you can support whether you are from New England or Ohio or Wyoming. Whether you support oil and gas or wind and solar, energy efficiency is the fastest, cheapest way to meet our energy needs.

Our legislation has always focused on low-cost tools and adoption of off-the-shelf technologies to save money for consumers and businesses, to make America more energy independent, and to reduce emissions.

And over the years, over the last decade, we have had some big wins. In 2015, President Obama signed a targeted version of Shaheen-Portman, the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act, into law. That bill helped align the interests of commercial building owners and their tenants to reduce energy consumption, and it allowed certain water heaters to help with demand response programs in rural areas.

Now, we have also made great strides through annual appropriations and administrative actions on things like energy efficiency standards for appliances.

Of course, we have also had some real defeats. But, though frustrating, as those defeats were, our resolve on this bill has never wavered, and when we re-introduced Portman-Shaheen last Congress, we worked to again incorporate feedback from stakeholders. For 7 months, our staffs held back-to-back meetings with constituents, stakeholders, and committee staff to ensure the bill addressed the energy needs in New Hampshire, Ohio, and the rest of the country.

Improving the efficiency of residential and commercial buildings through energy-saving building codes remained central to our bill, as did industrial energy efficiency provisions and improvements to Federal energy efficiency programs.

We also, again, included energy efficiency bills from our colleagues. So in that piece of legislation, we included Senators MURKOWSKI and MANCHIN's Federal Energy and Water Management Performance Act. We included Senators HOEVEN and MANCHIN's All-of-the-Above Federal Building Energy Conservation Act. And we included Senator COLLINS and WARNER's legislation coordinating the energy retrofitting for schools. Finally, as part of that, we included Senator BENNET and Senator ISAKSON's Sensible Accounting to Value Energy Act, or the SAVE Act.

So there were a lot of reasons why a number of Members of this body were interested in that legislation. But it was also a real savings because, according to the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, the policies from that bill would save consumers over \$51 billion on their energy bills. It would reduce carbon emissions by 1.3 billion metric tons, which is the equivalent of taking 280 million cars off the road for a year. And it would save 32 quadrillion Btus of energy, which is nearly the total energy use of all U.S. industries for 1 year.

Now, a previous study from ACEEE also estimated that the legislation would add more than 100,000 jobs to the economy. That bill passed the Energy and Natural Resources Committee by a vote of 14 to 6, and it was the fifth