

This proposal also pays lipservice to the importance of getting students back into the classroom, while asking this body to vote for things that would do exactly the opposite.

Even though almost \$70 billion of the funds dedicated to schools in December's relief bill still hasn't been spent, this American Rescue Plan would give them nearly \$170 billion more. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle say this money is necessary for a majority of K-8 schools to safely reopen in the President's first 100 days, but their bill would reserve 95 percent of that new money for the years 2022 to 2028. How does that help families today who want their kids to get back to school? They want them back in school now; so how does it help?

This bill goes even further than that. It would treat schools that choose to open and schools that remained closed the same way, which does nothing to incentivize them to get their kids back in classrooms.

This plan would also give \$350 billion to States, cities, and localities. A big chunk of that money will be used to bail out States like New York and California, which have kept people away from their jobs and their children out of schools for months on end.

Even worse, this bill tallies States' and localities' level of funding based on raw unemployment numbers, not their unemployment rate. That would punish both red and blue States that have handled this pandemic well. It leaves behind States like mine—like Nebraska—which has the lowest unemployment rate in the country because we have succeeded in balancing safety and reopening where other States have failed. It would also hurt Minnesota, Vermont, and New Hampshire—three blue States that have kept their unemployment numbers low.

When you look under the hood, this bill is more about passing that partisan wish list than getting the United States through the worst public health crisis that we have faced in over a century.

At best, the name "American Rescue Plan" is misleading. At worst, it is deceptive.

I stand ready to work with the administration and my Democratic colleagues in Congress to address these issues and to give Americans the help they need in a targeted, reasonable, and productive way. We did that with the CARES Act, and we could do it again if our colleagues on the other side are willing.

That is the way the Senate is supposed to work—in a bipartisan way. It is how we reach consensus and deliver the policies that the American people need and that the American people deserve.

I know I share the sentiments of many of my colleagues when I say that I am disappointed in how this process has been conducted. Without an effort to compromise and to make major changes in the stimulus package, I will be voting no.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate Texas Independence Day. One hundred and eighty-five years ago today, on March 2, 1836, the Republic of Texas declared our independence from the nation of Mexico. Fifty-nine delegates who adopted the Texas Declaration of Independence on that day gathered at Washington-on-the-Brazos. The delegates adopted a declaration, modeled in significant parts after the Declaration of Independence of the United States.

The declaration decried the arbitrary acts of oppression and tyranny from the Mexican Government under the dictator General Santa Anna. In particular, it noted that that government had "ceased to protect the lives, liberty, and property of the people from whom its legitimate powers are derived." And the Texans signing that declaration sought to protect their rights of free speech, their rights to keep and bear arms, and their rights of freedom of religion.

Signing that declaration commenced the Texas Revolution, our battle for independence, where we won independence from the nation of Mexico. And for 9 years, the State of Texas became the Republic of Texas, an independent nation. That, of course, ceased in 1845, when we joined the United States. And today, we celebrate that spirit of independence that is still found throughout all 29 million Texans.

NOMINATION OF GINA MARIE RAIMONDO

Mr. President, I rise today to express concern over President Biden's nomination of Governor Gina Raimondo to lead the Department of Commerce.

We are a year into a deadly pandemic that originated in Wuhan, China. The Chinese Communist Party censored and disappeared doctors and journalists who were trying to tell the truth about how the coronavirus was spreading, and the Chinese Communist Party lied to the world about the nature of the virus. Over 2½ million people worldwide have died, including over a half million Americans.

The Chinese Communist Party's lies and censorship and propaganda didn't stop with the pandemic. They pervade everything the Chinese Communist Party does. Many of us are increasingly concerned that China is gaining access to American secrets using non-traditional all-of-government—or even all-of-nation—approaches to espionage against the United States and our allies. That includes using companies like Tencent and Huawei, which masquerade as telecom companies when they are, in fact, government espionage operations. This is deeply troubling and dangerous.

China is, in my judgment, the greatest long-term geopolitical threat to the United States for the next century. Presidents in both parties have be-

lieved for decades that the United States could somehow turn China from a foe to a friend through trade and diplomacy or that allowing China into rules-based institutions would turn China into a rules-based country. Instead, sadly, the opposite has happened.

The United States, of course, can't sever all commerce with one of the biggest economies in the planet, but we must recognize China for the threat it poses to our national security. To counter the threat that China poses, we should do four things:

No. 1, we should protect ourselves from Chinese espionage and interference.

No. 2, we should insulate the supply lines of our critical resources from China, including by bringing them back to the United States.

No. 3, we should insulate all commerce from enabling the Chinese Communist Party's human rights abuses, including their systematic pattern of torture, murder, and genocide.

And, No. 4, we should vigorously compete to secure our interests.

On the first point, one important thing the Department of Commerce does is maintain an Entity List, which is a list of foreign parties and companies that engage in activities contrary to American national security interests. When a foreign company is put on the Entity List, they are barred from acquiring American technology.

In 2019, I led an effort to add to the list of companies, and in 2019 and in 2020, the Trump administration added several Chinese technologies companies to the Entity List.

When Governor Raimondo came before the Commerce Committee in January, I asked her if she would keep those Chinese technologies companies on the Entity List. She refused to make that commitment. In fact, she wouldn't even commit to keeping Huawei on the Entity List, which is unabashedly an espionage agency of the Chinese Communist Party.

In questions for the record, I gave Governor Raimondo a second chance to clearly and explicitly answer these questions, and yet she still refused.

Similarly, the Governor provided vague nonanswers or no answers at all in response to questions for the record on her ethics problems and her conflicts of interest as Governor.

As my colleagues know, nominees will never be more engaged, more transparent, or more forthcoming than during their confirmation process. That Governor Raimondo has refused to be any one of these speaks volumes to how she would act if confirmed as Secretary.

The fact is that there has been a rush to embrace the worst elements of the Chinese Communist Party in the Biden administration, and that includes Governor Raimondo. That is why I placed a hold on her confirmation, and that is why I will be voting not to confirm her to lead the Department of Commerce.

Governor Raimondo's nomination is part of a pattern. So far, every action, every nomination that we have seen from the nascent Biden administration, insofar as it concerns China, has lessened the scrutiny, has lessened the sanctions, has lessened the pressure on communist China. We are seeing a steady and systematic embrace of communist China, and that is dangerous. That is dangerous for our nation. It is foolhardy.

I recognize that there is a lot of pressure from Big Business and Big Tech to get in bed with China. That is profoundly contrary to American interests.

Now, we are just about 6 weeks into the Biden Presidency, and the Biden administration has already been keen on lifting the restrictions on Huawei since the very first week. Where will we be 6 months from now, a year from now?

Prohibiting the use of platforms like Huawei and safeguarding American technology from being exploited by Chinese espionage infrastructure are commonsense measures to protect American national security.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the understanding of the threat posed by communist China was more limited. It was more limited in Washington, where both Democrats and Republicans mistakenly believed China was our friend, and it was more limited internationally.

For 8 years in the Senate, I had been calling out the threat posed by Communist China—sometimes a lonely position in this town. But as events transpired the last year and the world saw the systematic pattern of lies, deception, and death coming from the Chinese Communist Government, eyes have been open, and the severity of the threat has been underscored.

Before this pandemic, our ally, the United Kingdom, was moving forward with plans to allow Huawei to install significant telecommunications infrastructure in the UK. The U.S. Government had vigorously urged the UK not to go down that road, that it would open up the United Kingdom to espionage from the Chinese Government. The United Kingdom is one of the members of the Five Eyes intelligence sharing network, a network of our closest allies where we share our most sensitive, our most important, our most confidential national security secrets.

I had the opportunity to sit down with Nigel Farage on a podcast I host and to talk about Brexit, to talk about Europe, but also to talk about Huawei and the threat from China. As I said to Nigel on the podcast, as much as we love the Brits, as valuable a friend as the UK is to the United States, if the UK went forward with allowing Huawei to install significant telecom infrastructure in its country, we might have to reassess the UK's participation in the Five Eyes security network. As I put it then, "four eyes are better than six eyes."

Well, I am grateful to say that following the coronavirus pandemic, the United Kingdom reconsidered its decision. It saw the threat of Communist China and Huawei, and it stepped back from the brink. That was the right thing to do, and it did so in response to considerable pressure from the U.S. Government.

I very much hope that this pattern we are seeing of the Biden administration embracing Communist China will not reverse that pressure, will not lighten up on our allies and tacitly encourage them to move forward with Huawei to allow the espionage architecture to be put in place their nations. That would render America more vulnerable. It would render our allies more vulnerable. It would render the world more vulnerable.

It would have been a very simple matter for Governor Raimondo to commit to keeping Huawei on the Entity List. It would have been a very simple matter for Governor Raimondo to commit to keeping the Chinese technology companies that I urged be added to the list, keeping them on the list. She refused to do so repeatedly.

As I said, this appears to be a part of a pattern of a systematic decision to embrace Communist China. If that is indeed the direction the Biden administration is going, I hope that Members of both parties who have seen the threat posed by Communist China will urge the President, will urge the Cabinet, will urge this administration: Stop the embrace of communist China. Defend the interests of the United States of America.

Because she was not willing to make these commitments, I will be voting against the confirmation of Governor Raimondo, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. CRUZ. I withhold my request.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:34 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON RAIMONDO NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Raimondo nomination?

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 84, nays 15, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 70 Ex.]

YEAS—84

Baldwin	Grassley	Paul
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Portman
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Risch
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Braun	Inhofe	Rosen
Brown	Johnson	Rounds
Burr	Kaine	Sanders
Cantwell	Kelly	Schatz
Capito	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Lankford	Sinema
Casey	Leahy	Smith
Cassidy	Lee	Stabenow
Collins	Lujan	Sullivan
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Cornyn	Markey	Thune
Cortez Masto	Marshall	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Moran	Warnock
Ernst	Murkowski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Fischer	Murray	Wicker
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	Young

NAYS—15

Barrasso	Hawley	Sasse
Cotton	Hoeben	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Lummis	Shelby
Hagerty	Rubio	Tuberville

NOT VOTING—1

Blackburn

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 13, Cecilia Elena Rouse, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Thomas R. Carper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patrick J. Leahy, Brian Schatz, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Michael F. Bennet, Debbie Stabenow, Chris Van Hollen, Ron Wyden, Martin Heinrich, Bernard Sanders, Edward J. Markey, Cory A. Booker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.