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Senate

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 2022

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3076, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3076) to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Peters) amendment No. 4955, to modify the deadline for the initial report on the operations and financial condition of the United States Postal Service.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the eyes of the American people and the entire world are fixed on Eastern Europe. Vladimir Putin is continuing his unjustifiable invasion of a sovereign country and his unprovoked killing of innocent people.

Over the weekend, Senators were honored to speak electronically with Ukraine's brave leader, President Zelenskyy. His courageous leadership has helped rally freedom-loving people the world over to the Ukrainians' cause. One of his main pleas was that America and our partners continue providing Ukraine with additional

military assistance and to do so very quickly. Long before the invasion began, I was on this floor warning the Biden administration that we could not let assistance be trickled out at the speed of bureaucracy. I certainly hope that lesson has finally been learned.

IRAN

But even while one foreign policy nightmare plays out in Eastern Europe, inexplicably, the Biden administration is reportedly poised to announce a giant, gratuitous capitulation to our principal adversary in the Middle East as well.

The nature of the Biden administration's approach to Tehran thus far has concerned not just Republicans but Members of both parties.

Our Democratic colleague, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, recently exhorted the administration and our partners to "exert more pressure on Iran to counter its nuclear program, its missile program, and its dangerous behavior around the Middle East, including attacks on American personnel and [American] assets."

I would note that Senator MENENDEZ also stressed the importance of building bipartisan support for any new deal which the President's team wants to cook up with the Iranians. This is the same message I conveyed to the President and his top advisers at the beginning of the Biden administration. If he wants his policy or his deal to endure beyond his Presidency, he must bring Republicans on board.

Regrettably, President Biden appears to have ignored this good advice. Reports indicate a sequel—a sequel—to the bad 2015 nuclear deal may be imminent. Yet the administration has laid zero bipartisan framework.

Rumors of this impending deal—because rumors are all that Congress has—suggest it would be an enormous step in the wrong direction. It appears not to be a longer and stronger deal than the JCPOA, as was promised, but a weaker and shorter deal. It appears

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, mighty to save, lift high our vision that we may see clearly that You are still in charge of Your world.

Lord, give us the courage to follow Your precepts, realizing we have spiritual weapons for our warfare. In these trying and dangerous times, keep our lawmakers strong and pure and good. Remind them that we are fighting more than flesh and blood; we are engaged in combat with principalities, powers, and wickedness in the celestial realm. Give us all the wisdom to keep our eyes on You, comprehending that all things are possible to those who believe.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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not to safeguard and increase our leverage over Tehran and its Revolutionary Guard but instead to breezily, sort of, sign our leverage away.

President Biden appears to want to give Tehran enduring sanctions relief now in exchange for limited and short-term curbs on their nuclear program. A reminder of how bad President Obama's Iran deal was is the fact that these restrictions will begin to expire as soon as next year. That will put more pressure on Western negotiators, not on Iran.

This is extortion playing out step by step, and this administration seems prepared to sign on to it. Iran gets serious sanctions relief and expanded trade with Russia and China, their price is even fewer restrictions than the original failed Iran deal, and those restrictions begin to expire in just 2 years. This is really wildly reckless. This is an administration chasing a deal—a deal—instead of pursuing our interests.

There is some suspicion the administration is desperate for any excuse to ease sanctions on Iranian oil exports to help blunt the impact of the European crisis on American's pocketbooks. This White House seems determined to go hat in hand and beg every bad actor around the world to ramp up their own fossil fuel production but still will not stop their holy war against our own American energy production here at home.

If press reports of the deal are accurate, the President and the Democrats on Capitol Hill surely understand that it will not be accepted widely or quietly.

If the President seeks to remove sanctions on Iran, there will be votes. Democrats who now regret their recent vote to protect the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline should think twice before voting to help President Biden ease sanctions on Iranian entities that engage in terrorism, missile proliferation, or human rights abuses.

Given Chairman MENENDEZ's concerns, I hope and would expect the Foreign Relations Committee will hold major hearings. But I know this much for certain: The next time Republicans control the Senate, vigorous oversight will take place over the diplomatic mess that is unfolding in the Middle East: the failure to consolidate the historic gains of the Abraham Accords; gigantic unilateral concessions to the most active state sponsor of terrorism in the entire world; pointless capitulation to Iran-backed Houthi terrorists that has only yielded even more violence in Yemen and increased ballistic missile and drone attacks against Saudi and Emirati cities.

It is bad enough that Democrats in Congress have spent months actively fighting against sufficient funding for our national defense and our Armed Forces, but these dynamics are made even more dangerous by a White House that is actively choosing weakness in the Middle East.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, 260 years ago, a young nobleman from Poland and a military officer helped lead a rebellion against what he and many others saw as a Russian puppet King in what was known as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He was driven into exile in France, where Lafayette and Benjamin Franklin urged him to go to America to join in the fight, the Revolutionary War.

That young Polish nobleman's name was Casimir Pulaski. When he arrived in America, he wrote to General George Washington and said to him:

I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it, and to live or die by it.

Pulaski was at Washington's side and is credited with saving George Washington's life at the Battle of Brandywine. He is remembered fondly as the Father of the American Calvary.

Pulaski died at age 34 in the fight for freedom and independence in America.

Today is Casimir Pulaski Day, which we know full well in Illinois, where it is a State holiday. Today, however, we look at the world and realize that freedom is being defended in Ukraine. And today, we seek Casimir Pulaski's spirit and fierce commitment to freedom and human dignity in a historic young Ukrainian President and in Ukrainian men and women who are fighting to save their Nation from another would-be Russian czar.

I have been in Congress for a few years. Over the weekend, I had an experience unique to my service in Congress.

Early on Saturday morning, hundreds of Members of Congress joined a video call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. I have never seen anything like it.

With the Russian military laying siege to his country and a Russian bull's-eye on his back, President Zelenskyy spoke to us with remarkable dignity and courage. He didn't mince words about what is happening in Ukraine—the brutal Russian assaults literally trying to destroy his nation. He said we all share the same basic values and dreams: to live our lives in peace, watch our kids grow up, and to kiss them. He said the Ukrainian people are fighting for these basic freedoms, and they are prepared to be friends and share culture with their Russian neighbors, if they can.

But over the last 12 days, his country, Ukraine, has faced full-fledged war with barbaric attacks on kindergartens, nuclear powerplants, apartment buildings, infrastructure, and innocent civilians.

Last Thursday, Russia and Ukraine agreed to create humanitarian cor-

ridors in Ukraine, to allow civilians in areas under the heaviest Russian attacks to evacuate safely. Twice over the weekend, Ukraine was forced to close those corridors because Russia was attacking them mercilessly. This is Vladimir Putin's war, deliberately targeting women and children who have left everything and are trying just to reach safety.

This photo shows the result of one horrific attack by Russian soldiers on the people of Ukraine. Many people have seen it. It was on the front page of the New York Times this morning. It took place in the city of Irpin on Sunday. A Russian mortar struck an evacuation point where these civilians were waiting to board a bus to go to safety.

Irpin's mayor said the attack killed at least eight people, including a family. Sadly, you can see the children lying on the street. These are among the 364 Ukrainians killed during the last 12 days of Putin's barbaric war.

Mr. Putin, these deaths, like the death of that little girl I showed on the floor last week, are your doing. Your reputation as a war criminal and a bloody tyrant is now sealed in history.

More than 1.7 million Ukrainians have fled as refugees to neighboring countries, such as Poland and Moldova. The open arms of the Polish people and Moldovan people to their Ukrainian brothers and sisters is remarkable and a reminder to the rest of us that we do share common human bonds.

Some of you may have seen the moving stories last night on "60 Minutes" of the families with their children, desperately trying to reach Poland, other countries nearby so that they can escape the bonds of Vladimir Putin.

This strategy is like nothing we have seen in Europe since World War II. But Putin's war on Ukraine is not simply an attack on one young democracy; it is an attack on democracy itself.

I am proud to represent the city of Chicago, prouder still that it is the home of so many immigrants who have made a difference in that city and in America, Polish immigrants and descendants of Polish immigrants. Per capita, there is a larger number in Chicago than anywhere outside of Warsaw.

We are also home to many immigrants who trace their heritage to the Baltic States. I happen to be one who does as well.

We have such a long history of Ukrainian immigrants coming to our city that there is a neighborhood in Chicago called Ukrainian Village.

Last Friday, I went over to the Ukrainian National Museum. It is near their Orthodox church. I take great pride in it. One woman there, who is a Ukrainian artist, had displayed many of the creations she had made on the wall. She said to me: They are for sale, Senator.

And I said: Well, I am glad to know that.

And she said: All the proceeds are going to the Ukrainian Army.

Naturally, I left with one under my arm.

Putin's war on Ukraine and the wave of refugees pouring into Poland and other neighboring nations hits home in Chicago. People from all backgrounds are donating money and goods—whatever they can—to help.

Meest-Karpaty is a Chicago-area shipping company with experience in Eastern Europe. For 7 days now, the company's shipping facility on the Northwest Side of Chicago has been an operations center for an incredible volunteer effort to rush critical supplies to Ukraine. People and companies are dropping off supplies of first aid equipment, non-perishable food, diapers, and basic essentials: warm clothes, sleeping bags, tents, flashlights.

Scores of volunteers assemble the donations into first aid kits and baby kits—whatever is needed. They pack the donations in the boxes that will be flown and delivered to the Polish border, where more volunteers deliver them to Ukrainians who need them. People are doing everything they can to support Ukraine's fight for freedom and democracy.

Andriy Herha is a banking executive from Oak Brook, IL, who was born in Ukraine's capital city of Kyiv. His dad, in-laws, cousins, friends—they are still there in Ukraine. In one day last week, he raised \$40,000, personally, to buy bulletproof vests, helmets, first aid kits, and other supplies. When he learned that it would take weeks for the supplies to reach those who needed them, he decided to pack them into suitcases and board a flight to Poland and deliver them himself. As Andriy Herha told a reporter, "we are trying to do anything possible to help them."

We in this Senate must also do what we can to help Ukraine in its fight for freedom and democracy. Last week, I led more than 40 Senators—both parties, Democrats and Republicans—in asking President Biden to extend temporary protected status to the 75,000 Ukrainians who are currently in the United States, including on student and work visas. On Thursday, as I knew he would, the President responded favorably. He is granting that protection.

Congress should also act without delay to approve \$10 billion this week in emergency aid to assist Ukraine and bolster our NATO allies, as well as support neighboring nations like Poland and Moldova that are providing safe havens to the refugees.

And after listening to President Zelenskyy on Saturday, I thought to myself: How can we possibly be importing Russian oil and gas, giving the profits of those transactions to Vladimir Putin to pay for his war machine?

I believe now—and I have cosponsored the legislation that reaches this goal—that the United States should ban the purchase of Russian oil to further tighten economic pressure on Putin. I joined in the legislation introduced by Senators Murkowski and Manchin to do that.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken was talking with our NATO allies.

Many of them also seem willing to consider a ban on Russian oil.

Vladimir Putin is threatening not only the security of Ukraine; he is threatening the security of the world. We must not even indirectly fund his war machine. While Putin wages war on democracy, the world, including the United States, will likely pay more to fill our tanks at the gas stations and heat our homes. We have to be ready for that reality, but that is the price today of defending freedom and democracy. The Ukrainians are paying with their lives. We may end up paying some more at the pump.

Amid all this utterly outrageous and unnecessary suffering and destruction, all to assuage Vladimir Putin's warped sense of grievance and his twisted nostalgia for the dark days of the Russian Empire, President Zelenskyy ended his talk with us on Saturday morning on a memorable note. He said we are all one big, undefeatable army for freedom and that we should all live in peace and openness and, despite the horrors inflicted on his people, we must hold on to our humanity.

He was a standup comedian at one point. He did a movie, which was a spoof on someone as unlikely as himself being elected President. Lo and behold, in the next free election, he was elected President of the country.

Many people questioned whether he was up to the job. Boy, his detractors are very quiet now. This man has risked his life for his country, as so many are in Ukraine. It is time for us to stand behind Ukraine solidly—solidly for their leadership.

I hope this crisis ends soon. Until then, the United States and the rest of the civilized world must stand with Ukraine for freedom and democracy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I come to the Senate floor today to once again talk about the crisis in Ukraine and what we can do here to help.

Night has fallen in Ukraine and in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and other cities and towns. All through Ukraine, the bombing continues, the bombardment—artillery shells, missiles. Thousands of innocent Ukrainians have already lost their lives. We cannot let this stand. We need to work with our allies to stop these atrocities.

By the way, all over the country, people are standing up and speaking out.

A week ago Sunday, I was in Ohio with a thousand people—mostly Ukrainians, Americans of Ukrainian descent, but also people from everywhere: Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slo-

venia, and so many other countries, and people who have been Americans for generations—who were standing together to say: This cannot stand. We had a prayer vigil and a demonstration. The prayer vigil was in a huge church, but it was an overflow crowd pouring out into the streets.

Yesterday, I came to Washington to join such a rally. It was in front of the White House, and again it included so many Ukrainians, including from Ohio, but so many others as well. The rallying cry was: We are all Ukrainians today because we all believe in democracy and freedom and the right for a country to chart its own course and for people to be independent and free. We had rabbis there; we had ministers there; we had clergy there from four or five different denominations—again, praying for the people of Ukraine.

We were all standing together, hoping that through joint action, we can help during these dark days for the people of Ukraine. We prayed for protection for those in harm's way, of course. We prayed for the courageous Ukrainian troops, some of whom are civilian soldiers who have just joined the armed forces for the first time. Some are seasoned professional soldiers, and we prayed for their protection—all of them.

We asked for God's wisdom and blessing on the duly-elected Government of Ukraine—again, duly-elected. We prayed for strength and resolve for President Zelenskyy and for his protection. He has been amazing. He has been resolute and courageous, and he has shown the Ukrainian people that the way forward was just to stand up to these barbarous acts.

If you care about America, you should care about Ukraine. Every freedom-loving country should care because in Ukraine today is where the fight for freedom is being waged. It is not just about Ukraine; it is also about the rest of the countries in Eastern Europe, of course—Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Hungary, those countries. But it is also about the entire world, isn't it? It is about, can an authoritarian government step into a free, independent government and take over territory and kill its citizens?

By the way, Ukraine wants nothing but to live in peace. They are not looking to attack anybody. They just want to be able to lead a life where they can, in peace, pursue their dreams.

Just today, during the negotiations between the Ukrainian Government and the Russian Government, the Russian Federation, the Russians said that they would only allow humanitarian corridors to go from these cities that they are bombing, where they are killing civilians—they would only allow humanitarian corridors to go into Russia or into Belarus. Think about that for a minute. Innocent Ukrainian women and children who are fleeing the violence savagely and illegally brought on by Belarus and by Russia

are told: You can leave, but you will be forced to go to the land of your enemies. You are forced to go only to Belarus or Russia, the countries that are killing you and your family.

That doesn't sound like peace talks to me.

There have been numerous recorded war crimes in this assault on Ukraine. One is the way they are dealing with these civilians, obviously. President Putin and his generals and his officials must be held accountable. The Russian Federation's deliberate targeting of civilians is the most obvious example, but there are so many—the bombing of a nuclear powerplant.

It is now documented that yesterday—yesterday and into this morning—Russians shelled Ukrainian citizens who were fleeing the siege of Mariupol while they were transiting through a negotiated humanitarian withdrawal corridor—a corridor that was established for them to escape. They were shelled by Russian combat forces—civilians—because Russians did not keep their word to allow for a humanitarian escape corridor in the besieged southern port city of Mariupol. Hundreds of thousands of people remain trapped without food and water, under regular bombardments.

Again, this is a tragedy on a scale difficult to comprehend. That is why it is so important to show our support with actions, not just words.

A number of my colleagues and I spoke to President Zelenskyy this weekend. It was emotional, and it was inspiring. He pleaded for our assistance to help his people, and he told us he needs defensive weaponry, like fighter planes and drones, desperately.

After the call, I led a bipartisan letter to President Biden with my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN. We repeated what we had called for over the last several days, which is to help Ukraine be able to get what they need, which is more air power.

Our Eastern European allies, including Poland, Bulgaria, and Slovakia, have older, Soviet-era aircraft, such as the MiG-29 and the Su-25, that they are willing to provide to Ukraine, but they would like to have an agreement with the United States that they can backfill over time by purchasing advanced fighters, such as F-16s.

By the way, the Poles, as an example, already have F-16s, but they already have these older MiGs that they are willing to provide.

This seems like a win-win for everybody—for Ukraine certainly but also for Poland to improve their defensive posture in the wake of what is going on in Ukraine.

The Soviet aircraft are compatible with the Ukrainian Air Force. Their pilots have the requisite training to operate them.

Again, we have been told they are willing to donate these aircraft when they are provided these assurances and a roadmap, that they will be allowed to

purchase more advanced aircraft over time.

Let's make this happen. Let's not say we have to go through a long, bureaucratic process. Let's be creative here. They need these planes now. They needed them yesterday. This will help to stop some of the atrocities we talked about. Think of that column, miles and miles of armored vehicles and tanks heading towards Kyiv to kill more civilians. Some airpower would be very helpful right now.

And there are other capabilities such as communications gear, drones that can provide intelligence and surveillance and ammunition, all of it should be moving quickly into Ukraine. And I applaud the administration for what they have done, but we have got to do more.

We have all seen these horrible images on our television sets, families torn apart, the ravages of a needless war, the deliberate intentional targeting of civilians by rockets, even cluster munitions.

By providing lethal and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, the U.S. sends a strong message: We stand for freedom, and we stand with freedom-loving countries.

I commend the administration for some of the steps they have taken, as I say, but we have got to do more.

I appreciate that we have sanctioned Russian banks, Russian elites, placed limits on high-tech commerce, Russia's ability to do business in dollars. That is all good. The Treasury Department has imposed sanctions on economic measures to target the core infrastructure of Russia and more than 50 percent of the total banking system of Russia, which will have devastating economic effects over time.

But let's put all the banks into that system. Let's do everything we can to tighten the noose on the Putin economy.

Some have asked me: Why does what is happening in Ukraine matter? I was home this weekend, and a lot of positive response, but people were also saying: Ukraine is a long way away, why does it matter so much?

I would say that this is where, in our generation, in our time, the cause of freedom is being defended. This is where, in our generation, in our time, we must protect those who wish to chart their own course, protect their sovereign independent country. And this is where we are being tested—not just the United States, but our allies and all freedom-loving people around the world.

When the people of Ukraine chose to get rid of a corrupt Russian-backed government 8 years ago—for a second time, by the way—they chose freedom over tyranny. They chose democracy over authoritarianism. They chose to ensure that the people of Ukraine would have the ability to be free and independent. That is what we freedom-loving countries of the world proclaim every day.

Now is the time not to shirk our responsibilities, but to step forward and help any way we can shoulder to shoulder with the people of Ukraine.

They are defending their homeland fiercely. They have already denied President Putin his early goals. He has severely underestimated the power of freedom and the power of the Ukrainian people; there is no question about that. But in Congress, we can and should do more. And the international community must do more to hold Russia accountable.

I say to the Russian commanders in the field and to the officials in Moscow: There is another choice. Stop this atrocity. Refuse the orders to kill innocent neighbors. Stop this atrocity that has already taken the lives of thousands of innocent civilians—men, women, and children—who want nothing other than to live in peace.

I say to those commanders and these officials: The world is watching. The war crimes are being recorded. You have a choice.

Here in Congress, we can do more to tighten the sanctions. We can do more to provide more military assistance to Ukraine. There is bipartisan agreement on so much of this, including the need to cut off the funding that is going to the Putin economy and his war machine. One example of this, but one important one, is not to buy Russian oil and send blood money to Russia. Why would we be importing Russian oil, sending Russia \$40, \$50 million a day? That makes no sense.

Let's use our natural resources here in North America. We have the resources here. We should not be dependent on the Russian oil. We should not be sending them this blood money.

By the way, there is bipartisan agreement on this. Last week, I joined legislation with Republicans and Democrats alike, equal number, with Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator MANCHIN, to do just that.

We need to stop all Russian banks from their access to the international banking system—not some; all. I commend the administration's sanctioning of Russian oligarchs and wealthy citizens, but we need to do more. We need to move from freezing assets to seizing assets. We can do that. Other countries have done it. By the way, Germany has done it. France has done it. We should be out front as Americans and not just freezing but seizing. By the way, those assets that we seize should go to the people of Ukraine to help with the humanitarian effort that is underway.

Right now, our friends in Ukraine need our help. Right now. Immediately. Yesterday. They can't wait. We have an emergency supplemental bill we are working on here in Congress. Let's get it done. Let's do it outside of the omnibus or the CR or anything else. We know what needs to be done. Let's not wait. Let's not dither. The shells are flying tonight, raining upon the cities of Ukraine and its people.

We cannot let this call to action go unanswered. We cannot let the Ukrainian people continue to be at the mercy of a tyrannical dictator. We cannot sit by and watch as innocent civilians are being killed. In the West, in America, we must stand up—all of us—for freedom. The world is watching. Our allies are watching. Our adversaries are watching.

We must show the world that America does stand for freedom, and we stand with Ukraine.

God bless Ukraine. Or as the Ukrainian people say: Glory to Ukraine, glory to the heroes. Slava Ukraini, heroyam slava.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, before I start my speech today on another topic, I want to take just a moment to discuss what is on all of our hearts across the country and across the world, that we should be praying for the Ukrainian people. We have got a mess in Ukraine.

A lot of us have been to Ukraine over the last few months. We have made friends. I went over and met with the President a few months ago and a lot of his staff—and what good people. But they told us then that they needed help. And for some reason, this administration decided to drag its feet and tried to talk its way out of it.

Sometimes, when you try to talk your way out of it instead of putting facts in front of you, you have problems. Well, we have had real problems. President Putin, who is a murderous tyrant, thought this was going to be easy. He didn't realize that the people of Ukraine were going to stand up and fight for their country. And they have done just that. They have lost many lives, Ukrainian soldiers, men and women, and also many, many citizens, but it has made NATO stronger. Putin never thought that would happen.

So as I said earlier, I think that we all should remember every day and every night our prayers will go out to the Ukrainians, and, hopefully, in the near future, we can all come to some kind of consensus of what works best and that President Putin will come to his senses and call this off.

INFLATION

Mr. President, the other thing I want to talk about real quickly is rising prices, inflation. I was back in my home State of Alabama this week, and prices are at historic highs and getting higher every day. But we were told by this administration that inflation was transitory. We heard that all last year. The definition of transitory: not for long. Well, they were very wrong on that.

They also said inflation was due to COVID. Well, COVID is not gone, but it has died down, and inflation is getting higher.

We were told by this administration that it was due to corporate greed.

Well, we have had the same corporations for years and years. Inflation has been low, but now still going higher and higher.

And the last reason that this administration said inflation is going up is because of war, and there is probably something to that. Obviously, we have got an energy crisis in this country, and everything runs off of energy.

But one thing this administration didn't tell us was they didn't blame it on the trillions of dollars that we basically have taken and thrown out of helicopters all over this country. We have got more money now, 36 percent more money in circulation than we had 2 years ago in this country, and we have less goods. And that is when you have inflationary prices that creep up.

But we have got to get control of our energy crisis. If we don't do that, then the economy is not going to have a chance. That is the bottom line. That is the basics of the economy. Our farmers are getting killed with planting as we speak. They are in the fields paying more and more every day for their fuel. Small businesses are struggling with rates that are climbing at double and triple the rates in terms of being shipped their goods, and they are having to pay the price for that. And then the price goes up, and the American consumer pays that much more.

So we have got a problem, and we better get control of that in the very near future, or our economy is going to continue to go down and continue to get in debt.

So we have got those two problems, one at home and one on the road. It is a road game in Ukraine; and, hopefully, we can help out the Ukrainian people, give them what they need to continue to fight. But as we watch television each day, they continue to lose ground each day. But they are going to fight for what they believe in, and that is their freedom.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Mr. President, my topic today, though, is—I think it is something that we need to listen to from people across this country. It is not war. It is not inflation. It has something to do with basic life here in this country. To be their voice, I am advocating on the people's behalf of this country.

So let me read you a little bit about something that comes from my people in Alabama. A constituent from Talladega County writes:

Daylight savings time year-round means the elderly, like myself, will be able to be more active in early evenings.

Another from Mobile writes:

Please try and do whatever is necessary to have daylight savings time permanent in the State of Alabama and our country. Everyone I know and everyone that I talk to, they want more daylight in the evening.

And this is from a mental health professional:

I am writing to let you know of the negative effects of my population of having the time change the way it does in November towards an earlier sundown, less daylight

hours. It increases depression and decreases productivity in about half of my psychiatric patients.

In other words, he is having problems when the sun goes down, basically because people can't get outside. These messages make important points, and I couldn't agree more. That is why I co-sponsored Senator RUBIO's bill, the Sunshine Protection Act, which would make daylight saving time permanent. That would mean an extra hour of sunlight during the dark and cold winter months.

And ahead of this weekend, when we start daylight saving time this coming Sunday, I want to take a moment to discuss the many reasons why we should do away with the outdated practice of springing forward and falling back.

Daylight saving time should be a thing of the past, because it literally is. Introduced as a temporary measure during World War I, daylight saving time was originally called "wartime," and it was a way to help conserve fuel and better utilize resources.

Following the end of World War I, the 1918 Standard Time Act was enacted that discontinued daylight saving time nationally, but individual States continued to spring forward and fall back.

Then, during World War II, there was a renewed Federal push for full-time daylight saving time, which then was repealed in 1945. Finally, in 1966, Congress passed legislation to set a national standard time.

All this to say, changes to our clocks might have made sense when it first began, but it certainly doesn't now.

In fact, as recently as 2005, Congress moved the start of the date of daylight saving time 1 month earlier in the spring and 1 month later in the fall. This change was implemented in 2007, giving us the ratio of daylight saving time that we have now—8 months to 4 months.

The ways we consume energy have dramatically changed since the beginning of World War I. What started as an energy saver now just does not make sense for these modern times. To turn the clocks back each year is a nuisance and not smart policy.

You know, kids get out of school and the Sun is starting to set. Families in their kitchen are cooking dinner, and it seems more like a bedtime dinner. Weekends have less sunlight hours, limiting the amount of time folks of all ages can spend enjoying the outdoors.

Additionally, reduced levels of sunlight are known to disrupt the body's internal clock, which regulates sleep and alertness. It is no wonder that cases of SAD, S-A-D, or seasonal affective disorder, are much more common in the winter months than they are in the spring.

And for our farmers, longer days mean more time to work in the fields under sunlight, which translates to a more profitable bottom line.

From an economic perspective, the time change costs the U.S. economy an

estimated \$430 million annually when accounting for lost productivity in the change of sleep.

That is why Alabama, along with 17 other States, have passed legislation or resolutions to flip the switch on this outdated practice, permanently increasing our daylight hours.

However, for the will of the States to be enacted, the Federal Government—this body, this building—has to get involved. The 1966 law must be changed, and the Sunshine Protection Act does just that.

The Sunshine Protection Act makes sense from a health and economic perspective, and it is just common sense. It is time we passed the Sunshine Protection Act. Let's give Americans something to celebrate: longer days and more sunshine.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO BEN RAY LUJÁN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, let me start off with some great news. When we vote later today, all of us will be able to say these four wonderful words: Senator LUJÁN, welcome back.

He is not on the floor right now, but, BEN RAY, it was great to see you back here in this Capitol last week. It was great to see you today. We have missed you. We are thrilled to have you back on the job. We admire your strength and your courage and your fortitude—your quiet strength.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, now, over the week-end, Members from both the House and Senate met virtually with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and we reemphasized Congress's strong and unwavering commitment to providing robust and ample assistance to his country in this time of war.

I told the Ukrainian President he was an inspiration to Americans, and I assured him that his pleas for help will not go unanswered.

In particular, President Zelenskyy made a desperate plea for getting Eastern European countries to provide Russian-made planes to Ukraine. I strongly support the President's request, and yesterday I called on the administration to explore all feasible options to getting these fighter aircraft to Ukraine. These planes are very much needed, Ukrainian forces are familiar with them, and they will very much help in countering the Russians, especially as Putin massacres—massacres—civilians in Ukraine.

Democrats and Republicans broadly agree that this is a necessary step against Russia's illegal invasion, and

today I reiterate my call for the administration to explore how to ensure the Ukrainians have the capabilities they need.

I also spoke with the administration yesterday and was told they are looking closely at imposing a ban on Russian oil.

Meanwhile, there are other steps Congress can take in the coming days to support the Ukrainian people. Above all, we must finalize a more than \$12 billion emergency aid package to be included in the upcoming omnibus spending bill. This emergency aid will provide both humanitarian and military assistance for Ukraine—funding for refugees, medical supplies, emergency food supplies, as well as funding to support weapon transfers into Ukraine and help our eastern flank NATO allies.

The clearest signal Congress can send to Vladimir Putin this week is passing a bipartisan aid package, leaving no doubt that the democratic nations of the world stand with Ukraine and against Putin's deeply immoral and bloody war.

And again—let me say it again. The quickest—the quickest—way to secure an emergency aid package for Ukraine is through the omnibus, and I believe both sides are close—very close—to arriving at an agreement.

CORONAVIRUS

Now, on COVID aid, at the same time, there is another important matter that Congress must address in the spending bill: additional COVID relief aid, which the administration has wisely urged Congress to approve.

The Federal Government has completely exhausted all the public health funding approved last year as part of the American Rescue Plan. That means that to prepare for future variants, more Federal funding is needed now.

Across the country, thank God, we have seen signs that the United States is turning the corner on COVID. Schools are open. Mask guidelines are being reversed. Vaccinations have surpassed 216 million Americans. And last Friday, we learned that more than 7 million jobs have now been created since President Biden took office. This is all great news. Cases are falling, unemployment is falling, and the country is on the right track. But experience has taught us that new variants can come back with a vengeance if—if—we aren't ready.

The administration has been clear: If we want schools to stay open, if we want to preserve as much of normal life as possible when another variant arises—and the odds are quite high that one will—Congress must pass additional COVID funding now, not later. We have to have it ready. We have to have the therapeutics ready. We have to have the testing ready. We have to have the vaccines ready. We can't wait 2, 3 months after the variant hits to debate this issue and then allocate the money and then production starts. That would be terrible for the country. It will be too little too late. It is far

better to prepare now than play catch-up later. We should have learned our lesson a long time ago, but now we are, hopefully.

I have been strongly urging my colleagues to get a deal done on COVID. Failure to act is not an acceptable outcome.

H.R. 3076

Mr. President, another issue this week is postal reform. This week, the Senate is going to put the finishing touches on a bipartisan accomplishment weeks, months, and, in fact, years in the making: comprehensive postal reform legislation.

Six days a week, the U.S. Postal Service processes an average of 167 million pieces of first-class mail. It employs nearly half a million people. It has been a fixture of our country since the very beginning, since Benjamin Franklin. But over the last decade, the post office has been in serious need of reform. Everyone knows the frustration of waiting weeks for a package to come in the mail. So this week, the Senate is finally passing legislation that will deliver for the post office the long-overdue reforms it has been waiting for.

The fact that this bill has extraordinary bipartisan support is indicative of its importance, and I am glad that both sides have negotiated in good faith thus far. I want to particularly thank Chairman PETERS and Ranking Member PORTMAN for making sure this legislation has kept moving over the past few weeks.

For generations, the post office has delivered for America, and now Congress is delivering for the post office. By passing postal reform legislation, we can ensure that Americans will continue to benefit from a speedy, dependable, and well-run post office, just as we have for our entire history.

COSTS

Mr. President, now on costs, a few weeks ago, a Member of the Republican leadership released a platform that proposed raising taxes on tens of millions of Americans, focused on fanning the flames of division, and zeroed in on proposals that failed to address the biggest problems of our time.

Today, a new analysis found that a plan like that from the junior Senator of Florida could raise taxes on many American families by more than \$1,000 in 2022 alone. Democrats don't think that we should be raising taxes on working Americans as we recover from COVID. In fact, we are working to make sure Americans have more money, not less, in their pockets.

So, today, I sent my colleagues a letter outlining how Democrats will keep a laser focus over the next few months on cutting costs, building upon historic job growth, and finding bipartisan ways to help everyday Americans make ends meet. Democrats are the party offering ideas for how to combat inflation that is being felt around the world because of COVID. Democrats are taking aim at capping insulin prices to \$35

a month, while making prescription drugs much, much cheaper.

Democrats are working to repair supply chain bottlenecks that are hurting businesses, including in our seaports. And Democrats are zeroing in on policies to combat price hikes at the grocery store, including meat prices, which the President noted last week.

This week, our caucus will hold our annual DPCC retreat, where we will go over our proposals in greater detail. I want to compliment Senator STABENOW for putting this retreat together, and I encourage all of my colleagues to review my letter so we can all continue our work of lowering costs for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UKRAINE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, Russia's brutal and unprovoked attack on Ukraine intensified over this last weekend, bringing even more death and destruction to the Ukrainian people and more uncertainty to the rest of the world. It appears that Russia is now targeting noncombatant evacuation routes—the latest blatant war crime and a clear escalation following targeted attacks on civilians.

Russian forces fired on civilians as they fled for their lives, killing a mother, her two children, and a family friend. Over the last couple of weeks, hundreds of Ukrainians have been killed, and countless others have been wounded. More than 1½ million people have fled the country, making it the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.

Through the immense suffering Russia has inflicted, the bravery and resolve of the Ukrainian people has shown bright. The world has been awestruck at the courage of teachers, architects, grandmothers, Ukrainians from all walks of life who have taken up arms in defense of their democracy.

We have all been moved by the leadership of President Zelenskyy, who is fighting alongside of his fellow Ukrainians while pleading with the rest of the world to take action. We have admired the strength of those who were forced to say goodbye to loved ones, abandon their homes, and search for safety beyond Ukraine's borders.

People around the world have rallied around Ukraine, offering support in ways big and small. Families across Europe are welcoming refugees into their homes. People around the world have organized fundraisers and donation drives to get food, blankets, first-aid kits, and other critical supplies into the hands of the Ukrainians.

People all over the free world have cheered on and generously supported Ukraine at this critical moment, but now it is time for Congress to act. Since Ukraine is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, we have no legal obligation to support its fight against Russia, but we do have a moral obligation to help them defend themselves.

Russia has waged an unmistakable war on a sovereign democracy. It has targeted civilian areas and brought immeasurable destruction to Ukraine, and it continues to threaten further death and destruction outside and beyond Ukraine, even rattling its nuclear saber at the heart of Europe.

Yes, we have a moral duty to support the Ukrainian people as they defend their sovereignty in their beloved country. So far, the United States has provided military, humanitarian, and economic assistance for Ukraine. These resources have been critical in the fight so far.

The United States and our allies have also imposed harsh sanctions on Russia's economy, sending its currency into a downward spiral. This has, no doubt, made life harder for the Russian people, with whom we have no quarrel, but we should continue to use every tool at our disposal to impose costs on Vladimir Putin for his aggression in the hope that his own people will eventually rise up and say "enough."

Many businesses have suspended operations in Russia, inflicting even more economic pain on the Kremlin. I am encouraged by the global response so far, but we need to do more.

This is a seminal moment in American history and in human history, reminiscent of events most Americans today only know about from their history books and wars fought by our parents and grandparents. After this extended holiday from history, the United States must now take every possible step to stop this war by all available means.

This week, I expect the Senate to vote on an emergency funding bill to send even more resources to the fight in Ukraine. The White House has requested \$10 billion in military and humanitarian assistance, and there is strong bipartisan understanding that we need to move that quickly, as we just heard from the majority leader. The traditionally slow pace of legislation won't cut it.

This is a reminder of the importance of not only preserving but growing our military strength. Authoritarian leaders like Putin, Kim Jong Un, President Xi, and Iran's Supreme Leader are watching this test of the free world's resolve.

Our Democratic colleagues have consistently fought to shift funds from our national defense to domestic programs. When the case of inflation is accounted for, President Biden's first budget proposed an actual decrease in defense spending. We need to turn that around, especially in light of recent developments.

The war in Ukraine has proven that a well-funded and well-prepared military isn't a luxury; it is a necessity. Germany's dramatic reversal on defense spending illustrates how clear this point has now become. Our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee are still working through the details of an omnibus appropriations bill, and I hope

they are able to reach an agreement before the funding deadline this Friday.

While short-term bills are better than government shutdowns, they only hamper our ability to plan for the future. Our military leadership needs a predictable budget in order to prepare for the many threats we are experiencing now and those that are on the horizon. That was true before Russia invaded Ukraine, and it is absolutely critical now.

In a recent Washington Post op-ed, former Defense Secretary and CIA Director Robert Gates wrote about the need for "a new American strategy" to safeguard security interests. That includes predictable funding, strong alliances, new technologies, and reforms within the Pentagon. Bureaucracy and redtape come with a lot of overhead, and those dollars would better be spent on advanced technologies and equipment. As former Secretary Gates said, "Our executive and legislative branches must understand the new world we live in, set aside business as usual and embrace dramatic change to ensure that we and our democratic allies prevail in that contest."

Investments and reforms in our national defense will be critical to America's security for years to come, but there are immediate steps we should take to increase the cost of this unprovoked war by Russia.

The United States and our allies have imposed crippling sanctions on Russian banks and oligarchs, but the country's lucrative oil and gas industry remains virtually untouched. Russia continues to export energy to the rest of the world. In fact, many parts of Europe are completely dependent on Russian energy exports, and Putin is happy to use the revenue that he generates from those sales to sustain the attack on Ukrainian civilians.

The embarrassing truth is that the United States is one of Russia's customers. We cannot continue to supply Russia with the blood money they get from their exports to the United States. That is why there is strong bipartisan support for a ban on Russian oil imports.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of legislation that was introduced by our friend from Kansas, Senator MARSHALL, to ban the purchase of Russian oil in the United States.

We have the great fortune of living in a resource-rich country, and there is no reason why we should rely on anyone else—let alone a power-hungry dictator—for our basic energy needs.

Putin's aggression has lit a fire under the United States and our allies, and we need to take concrete steps to end our reliance on foreign oil and continue our pursuit of energy independence, at the same time making sure that our friends and allies around the world have access to more than just one choice when it comes to their energy needs. Again, we need to take that noose out of the hand of Vladimir

Putin when it comes to dissuading these countries that are dependent on Russia. We need to give them more choices and the freedom to make those choices.

Strangely, there are media reports today the administration is considering easing sanctions on Venezuelan oil to compensate for what nations import from Russia. But I have to ask, why on Earth would we trade one oil-rich dictator for another?

Instead, here is a novel concept perhaps the administration would consider: Why don't we boost our own production from here in the United States and sell it across the globe?

It is truly shocking that this administration is so against and so opposed to American oil and gas that they would rather make it easier to buy oil from the Maduro regime than from here at home in America. It is simply unfathomable and inexcusable. Energy security is something we have taken for granted here in the United States—so has Germany and so has Europe. But now they are learning that there are bitter lessons to be learned from that dependency on imports from a country like the Russian Federation. We simply cannot ignore the fact that energy security is national security, and we can't ignore the grave risks that accompany our reliance on foreign oil for our most basic needs or those of our allies.

Over the last couple of weeks, people around the world have rallied in support of the people of Ukraine. In ways big and small, the global community has sent an unmistakable message that Russia's attack on the sovereignty of Ukraine will not be tolerated. It is time for Congress to step up to the plate and provide even more support to our friends in that country.

As I said, we may not have a legal obligation, but we do have a moral obligation to supply Ukrainian forces and civilians with the resources they need in order to resist Russian aggression. That is the task before us this week, and I hope we can take strong bipartisan action that sends an unmistakable message to the world.

I hope we will also consider other more harsh actions against Russia. For example, I support our colleagues on the Finance Committee to strip Russia of its permanent normal trading relations status. This will place Russia in the same pariah category as North Korea and Cuba.

The Wall Street Journal made the point this last week that nothing can be the same after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. There are few seminal points in our life where we remember that everything changed thereafter, whether it is September 11, 2001, the assassination of a President, and now, after this post-Cold War holiday from history, the invasion of another democracy in Europe.

This is a watershed moment, and the United States must take every possible step to stop this war before the cost

grows even higher and spreads to other countries outside of Ukraine.

I yield the floor.

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

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

IOWA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on Saturday, deadly tornadoes swept through Iowa, destroying homes, parks, and leaving over 10,000 people without power.

The communities most affected are Winterset, IA, and Chariton, IA, but other communities as well. Tragically, seven people—five adults and two children—died, and many people have been affected because of this severe weather. This is the deadliest tornado in our State in 15 years. The one 15 years ago came close to my hometown of New Hartford, IA, and the adjoining community of Parkersburg, IA, and 13 people lost their lives that time.

So, with today's incident, as families, businesses, and communities continue to assess the damage and clean up from these storms, I want Iowans to know that I have talked to the Department of Homeland Security's Secretary Mayorkas about these tornadoes. He has been assuring that wherever the Federal Government has authority to help, they will step in and do that. I have also reached out to FEMA, the State of Iowa, and affected communities. I will do everything I can at the Federal level to assist.

Unfortunately, Iowa is no stranger to tornadoes and natural disasters. Once again, I am encouraged by the stories I hear from neighbors of strangers helping each other and their communities. Of course, we all know that that is the Iowa way: neighbor helping neighbor. These storms take time to recover, and I know that we will continue to reach out and help our fellow Iowans in need.

My thoughts and the thoughts of all Iowans and their prayers go out to those who lost loved ones and to those whose properties were affected by these tornadoes. I also pray for those who were hurt and for some who were hospitalized in that they will have speedy recoveries.

Iowans are strong and resilient people. We will recover, and we will rebuild. As Iowa's Senator, I will be there to help in any way needed.

FREE SPEECH

Now, Mr. President, another matter that I have spoken of on the floor of the U.S. Senate recently and, to some extent, a few times last year is the issue of freedom of speech in our colleges. In recent years, I have tried to highlight some of the most ridiculous impositions on freedom of speech in college, but so many of these cases get swept under the rug.

It can be hard to get an idea of whether typical students feel free to speak their minds in the university environment. So last spring, the Iowa legislature passed a bill strengthening free speech across our State's education system. In part, this bill was meant to find out how big a problem the restraint of free expression is at our State's public universities. Last month, that led to the results of a survey of 17,000 students in Iowa's public universities. The results raised serious concerns.

Now, get this: Fewer than half of the employees thought that their universities allowed them to say what they believed. A third of the students thought that their institutions "hinder[ed] free speech." A quarter of the students didn't even think that their campuses provided an "environment for [the] free and open expression of ideas."

A university that can't meet that basic bar is missing the whole purpose of a college or university. You have heard me say my definition of a "university" is one wherein controversy ought to run rampant. Thankfully, the bill that passed the Iowa legislature takes action to solve the issue that I just described.

This semester, students across the State have begun taking a course to instill in them the value of free speech. The goal is to ensure that students and faculty understand the value of the First Amendment: freedom of speech. The course emphasizes respect for another's speech and its impact both in and out of the classroom.

I am hopeful that this will start to steer us in the right direction in not only my State of Iowa; I hope it has some impact across the country, because letting students speak their minds is central to the idea of a liberal arts education. Yet the default has increasingly become to censor at the drop of a hat, only allowing free speech if administrators find blowback.

Just look to a case last month here in Washington, DC, at George Washington University. A student put up posters criticizing having the Olympics in China, given the repressive regime there. We know about that repressive regime because we talk about it quite often as the Chinese Communists deny freedom of religion and other freedoms to the Uighur minority. These posters at George Washington University were well done and well within the mainstream discussion. They speak to the concerns that I have myself about what goes on in China.

The university immediately responded by tearing them down and saying the posters were racist. They only reversed themselves when it came out that the artist himself—I had better say himself or herself—was Chinese and that the concerns were far from unique. I find it hard to believe the university's namesake would approve of this approach.

Examples like this are why we need Iowa's new free speech course. Hopefully, this example set in my State by our own State legislators is followed elsewhere. Students and administrators alike have forgotten why the First Amendment matters. I am glad to see States like Iowa are starting to remind everybody.

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.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UKRAINE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, like most of my colleagues, I spent the weekend monitoring the war in Ukraine. I took the opportunity to join the video conference with President Zelenskyy. I don't know how anyone could have hung up from that call confused about Vladimir Putin's intentions with Ukraine. Indeed, I think we saw that Vladimir Putin has ill intent for anyone who opposes him.

What is happening in Ukraine is not a "special military operation," as Putin likes to say; it is an all-out war. Putin has caused a massive humanitarian and human rights crisis, and even though the world is collapsing around him, he has given no indication of pulling back.

The sanctions imposed by the free world have had a devastating impact on Russia's economy. The ruble just crashed to a record low. The United States just instituted a ban on Russian flights over our airspace. Sports organizations, entertainers, and private corporations are all avoiding Russia like the plague.

If Putin's goal was to transform Russia into another "hermit kingdom," he is well on his way to making that dream a reality. The very idea seems insane, but remember, Vladimir Putin may be a madman, but he is a madman who is very intentional in what he is doing. He is reading the terrain, and he sees that the world's foremost superpower is too busy worrying about optics to do the one thing that would send Russia's economy back to the stone age.

Putin sent his army to invade Ukraine on February 24. The Ukrainian people have endured 11 days of savagery, and we still have not imposed meaningful sanctions on the Russian energy sector. But now, the entire world knows that Putin is using energy as a weapon.

Russia is now the U.S.'s third largest supplier of crude oil. The European Union gets about 40 percent of its gas imports and more than a quarter of its oil from Russia. We are feeling the pain every time we put gas in our cars, but looking at oil prices is still a bright spot in Putin's day.

Russia is really a great big oil depot with an army, and he knows that much of the world is depending on Russian oil. He is financing his war with every single tank of U.S. gas at a time. Every time you pull up to fill up your tank, this is what is happening. As long as Joe Biden refuses to tear us free from our entanglement with Russian energy, he is complicit with every single barrel of oil that he buys.

Energy is the most powerful economic weapon that Putin has at his disposal. It is his currency. The only way to neutralize it is to cut off the revenue stream. We must sanction the Russian energy sector, and we must do it now. We must end the purchasing of Russian oil. It is important to our partners in Ukraine and to our own Nation's security.

Last year, Joe Biden made the unilateral decision to destroy energy independence in the United States when he canceled the Keystone Pipeline and banned new oil and gas leases on Federal land—that is right.

Colleagues, in January 2021, we were energy independent. We were a net exporter of energy. But Joe Biden changed all that. He decided that by Executive order—not by a vote of the House or the Senate but by Executive order—he was going to end energy independence. So where does that put us? It has placed us right into the hands of a warmonger who is hellbent on recreating the U.S.S.R. And his weapon, No. 1 weapon, is energy. He does indeed think he has got you over the barrel.

Our energy sector needs certainty, not a series of actions based on the President's political whims, and we should give them that certainty by allowing us to move to energy independence.

I implore the President to see reason and to end this dangerously foolish entanglement with Moscow and Russian oil.

On that note, I think it should be made clear to everybody that the answer is not to go to Venezuela and negotiate to buy Venezuelan oil from another madman, and the answer is not to have the Russians working as an intermediary on a new Iran nuclear deal, which, by the way, the people of this country do not want to be entangled with Iran.

By the way, we hear they are negotiating to buy Iranian oil. This is about the dumbest damn thing I have ever heard of. It is amazing. You are going to go do business with Venezuela and with Iran and have the Russians involved in the middle of that? This is astounding.

This weekend, as I talked to Tennesseans, they could not believe that this administration would be stooping to such.

Sanction Russian energy. Restart the Keystone Pipeline. Open up capped wells. Stop flaring natural gas. Put it into the supply chain. Make certain that you are drilling domestically, ex-

ploring domestically. Do it before it is too late.

Our mission as Americans has not changed. We have a duty to preserve and protect freedom. The sheer availability of live footage and photographs flowing out of Ukraine has highlighted the importance of that mission to protect and preserve security.

This isn't the first time that Putin has invaded sovereign territory, but it is the first time that his crimes have been live-streamed for the entire world to see.

And as far as the free world is concerned, most of us have correctly identified the villain, but there are more than a few people out there who need persuading, and it is our job to help keep the information flowing.

Early on in the war, Putin launched cyber attacks to destabilize Ukraine and prevent communications with the outside world. Through my work on the Armed Services Committee, I have supported funding for domestic programs that would help protect State and local governments here in the United States from these types of attacks.

In the fiscal year 2022 NDAA, we created the Civilian Cyber Security Reserve Program to make sure that our Federal Government can keep up with cyber threats like the ones from Moscow being launched at the Ukrainians, but when it comes to defending freedom, shoring up our own defenses is not enough. We have to look outward and prevent the kinds of vulnerabilities Putin is trying to create.

Last week, I introduced the Internet Freedom and Operations Act with my colleague Senator MENENDEZ. This legislation builds off of the work we did together on the Open Technology Fund Authorization Act. It would authorize more than \$100 million to support programs and circumvention technologies that keep the internet up and running in conflict zones and under other repressive media environments. We have successfully used this technology to put control over information back in the hands of the people, right where it belongs.

Dictators like Putin suppress dissent for a reason. The truth is that free speech scares them to death. They don't want it. They want cancel culture—only one point of view, and it is theirs.

From where I am sitting, it is clear that Putin is right to be fearful of the resistance in Ukraine and around the world and especially in his own country, as his citizens are taking to the streets—thousands protesting, thousands being arrested—so that they can push forward with freedom in their countries.

I would encourage my colleagues to support the freedom fighters in Ukraine and elsewhere, support them by signing on to the INFO Act. Again, I thank Senator MENENDEZ for his work on that.

We have talked a lot lately about sanctions and Stingers and ammunition, but I would argue that what has

rattled Putin the most is how powerless he is to stop people from speaking. As I mentioned earlier, his war crimes are being broadcast in real time to anybody who has a screen and an internet connection.

Russian citizens are protesting in the streets against the Russian Government. His struggling military is the subject of intense ridicule on every digital platform. It is a propagandist's worst nightmare and the source of immense hope for the Ukrainian people. And—God bless them—they are in the fight.

We have a duty to help keep that hope alive, and I would encourage my colleagues who haven't yet realized this to join together this week to stand up for the people in Ukraine, to stand up for energy independence in this country, and to stand up for free speech.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

H.R. 3076

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I am here on the floor today to talk about Postal Service reform. We have another vote this afternoon.

And this is incredibly important to the people I represent and whom all of us represent. It is important because the Postal Service is something people depend on for so much. This legislation we are talking about has been in the works for years. It is a bill to try to save the post office from insolvency. And if we don't act on this, I believe in the next few years we will be back here with a big bailout for the Postal Service because they are having a tough time financially.

The combination of this legislation that we will pass and some internal reforms that the post office is making should be enough to get the post office back on track.

The Postal Service has a Postmaster General right now who is absolutely committed to that—making the post office more effective, more efficient—but he needs a little breathing room, as he says, and that is what we are doing here in Congress. It doesn't cost the taxpayer anything. By the way, if we don't do this, in a few years, it would cost the taxpayers a lot in terms of a bailout, and I am afraid it would happen.

The post office, again, is so important. It is definitely worth saving. Our country is pretty divided right now—let's be honest—but one enduring reality about our country is that we have a post office that ties us all together, and everybody depends on that post office.

By the way, it has been that way for a long time. In 1775, 3 months after the battles of Lexington and Concord—so this is 1775, before the Revolution was finalized in 1776. During that time, the delegates to the Second Continental Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin as the Postmaster General. And why was this so important? Franklin was

one of the Founding Fathers, and this was considered to be a really crucial post because the new Postal Service offered a way for the colonists to talk to each other, to communicate, for Revolutionary leaders to be able to strategize with each other outside of the official British channels.

So the post office has that rich history, and it continues to bind us today. In Ohio, it ensures that veterans get their medications that they get through the mail. And believe me, that is important to them, to get it on time.

It allows for absentee voters. In Ohio we have no-fault absentee. We have had it for years. It works well, but it requires the post office to do its job and obviously to not just deliver the absentee forms but to get the ballots in on time.

It is also crucial for people to get their rent checks in or to be sure that they get their utility bill on time. It is for people's financial statements from their banks. But, also, the post office still delivers birthday cards, thank-you notes, and personal letters that strengthen the bonds of family and friendship. So our Postal Service binds us together at a time when we are increasingly polarized.

Let's talk about what this particular legislation does. How does it save the post office? First, very simply, the bill makes sure the post office is going to be on a strong footing for the future by relieving the Postal Service of an obligation that virtually nobody else has—nobody in the Federal Government—which is to prefund retiree health benefits.

Now, if you are in a private company and you are listening to this, I am almost sure you don't prefund your retirement healthcare benefits. People don't do that. In the Federal Government, we don't do that. We don't do it here in Congress. Yet the post office has that obligation.

This would allow the post office, by getting out from under that obligation, to reconcile its books more accurately and to focus on immediate obligations. They should focus on those immediate obligations but not the prefunding.

Second, this bill requires postal employees who retire in the future to enroll in Medicare Part B and Part D. So hospitalization, Part A, people are already signed up for that—everybody is. But for Part B and Part D—doctors' visits, prescription drugs—about 25 percent of the people who work for the post office are not signed up for that. And by putting that 25 percent into there, it helps to save a lot of money for the post office and the taxpayers. Taxpayers will save about \$1.5 billion based on this legislation, and a lot of it is because of that change. The employee health benefit plan that they would otherwise be in is a more generous plan, and that is how you get those savings.

Third, the bill requires the post office to maintain its current standard of 6-day delivery. That is important to a lot

of my constituents, particularly in the rural areas—they like getting their mail—and to do it through an integrated delivery system of mail and packages together. That, of course, makes sense. You don't want separate systems going out for packages and for mail. That is what they do now, so this is really just restating the status quo, and that is very important. For some of the private-sector companies that provide delivery services, they want to know that this is just the status quo; we are not talking about any changes.

Both sides of the aisle have talked to me about this 6-day delivery. I know that wherever people have a rural area in their State, this is particularly important. It ensures that people are going to receive their medications, their checks, their correspondence on a timely and predictable basis.

So this bill shores up the post office, and it does it in a way that actually saves money. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates, as I said, this legislation will save taxpayers \$1.5 billion, so it doesn't cost taxpayers anything. It is not the appropriation of more money, but over 10 years it saves that money.

CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, which is the nonpartisan body up here that looks at the economic impact of legislation, has told us recently that this bill will not affect the solvency of the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund. That is the trust fund we talk about a lot here that we are concerned that it is going to become insolvent in only a short number of years and that that is going to cause problems for Medicare. That trust fund is not touched by this legislation.

CBO has also made it clear that the bill will not increase Part B or Part D premiums—again, Part B, doctors' visits; Part D, prescription drugs. That is very important because a lot of people have concerns about that. And one reason it doesn't affect it, by the way, is there is only a small number of postal employees—only 25 percent of them—who would become part of that, so it is a drop in the bucket compared to the number of people on Medicare. There are probably 60-some million people—that would be 61, 62 million people in Medicare, and this is between 14,000 and maybe 80,000 people who would be added to Part B and Part D. So it does not affect the premiums. By the way, these people have been paying into Medicare for their whole career, so it is appropriate that they go into Part B and Part D.

This is a good bill, and I think that is why it passed the House with such a strong vote. It passed with a bipartisan vote in the House of 342 to 92. That rarely happens, particularly in the House of Representatives. So that is an indication of what kind of legislation this is.

It is popular because it is about saving the post office, and it is popular because it does so without asking the taxpayers to step up and do more. In

fact, it saves some money. And it is popular because we have worked together on this. We have each side made concessions. Is it the perfect bill that I would have written? No. The same as my colleague from Michigan, who has just arrived on the Democratic side. He would have written it differently in a number of respects. I know that because he had to make concessions; we had to make concessions. But we ended up with legislation that does the job, and that is what is important: to put the post office in a position to succeed in its critical mission to provide essential services to small businesses, to our veterans, to our seniors, to our rural constituents.

Let's pass this bill, and let's ensure the post office is healthy for all those folks we represent back home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak 5 minutes prior to the commencement of the vote.

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

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, in just a few moments, this body will take an important vote to continue moving forward on the bipartisan Postal Service Reform Act. These vital reforms will help set the Postal Service on a more stable financial footing so that this trusted public service can continue delivering to every single community in the United States.

Millions—millions—of Americans are counting on the Postal Service to deliver essential mail, including medications, important financial documents, and other critical supplies. We have all seen firsthand how veterans and seniors, small businesses, rural residents, and others who rely on the Postal Service face serious hardships when the Postal Service is focused on cutting costs by making changes to delivery service.

This bill will help address the most significant financial burdens on the Postal Service by reversing an unnecessary requirement to prefund every cent of healthcare benefits that every postal employee will eventually use in retirement no matter how far off that retirement may be. By eliminating this aggressive prefunding requirement—I may add, something that no other business in America is forced to do—along with integrating postal retirees' healthcare into Medicare, like so many other private employers, this bipartisan, commonsense legislation will save the Postal Service more than \$49 billion over the next 10 years.

The bill also requires the Postal Service to deliver 6 days a week and improves transparency and accountability for Americans by requiring the Postal Service to publicly post weekly performance data on its website.

This legislation has been 15 years in the making, and tonight, we will get one step closer to making it a reality.

I am grateful to my colleagues who have shown strong, bipartisan support for this legislation, including my colead, Ranking Member PORTMAN from Ohio, and the 28 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle who have worked with us to make this a reality. Our cosponsors have played an important role in helping to build additional support for this critical bill.

Certainly, there is still more work to do to ensure even greater long-term success for the Postal Service and its customers, but tonight—tonight—the Senate will take a substantial step to continue advancing this incredibly important bill.

I urge my colleagues to join me in taking this meaningful action to protect the future of the Postal Service and the essential services that it provides to our communities all across our country.

I yield the floor.

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 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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 273, H.R. 3076, a bill to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Gary C. Peters, Mazie Hirono, Tina Smith, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jeff Merkley, Ron Wyden, Patty Murray, Debbie Stabenow, Jack Reed, Mark Kelly, Cory A. Booker, Robert Menendez, Jon Tester, Jon Ossoff, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on H.R. 3076, a bill to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 74, nays 17, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 69 Leg.]

YEAS—74

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

NAYS—17

Barrasso	Hagerty	Rubio
Blackburn	Johnson	Sasse
Braun	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lummis	Shelby
Crapo	Risch	Tuberville
Cruz	Romney	

NOT VOTING—9

Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Inhofe	Padilla	Sullivan
Kennedy	Paul	Toomey

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). On this vote, the yeas are 74, the nays are 17.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Ohio.

REMEMBERING PAUL FARMER

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, last month, the world lost one of its great champions for public health, Dr. Paul Farmer.

Few people did as much to save lives around the world as Paul. He was a giant. He changed how the world thinks about international aid and about public health. Millions of people, from Haiti to Peru, to Russia, to Rwanda, are living longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives because of Paul Farmer and because of the movement he launched.

Paul moved to Haiti immediately after graduating from college. He had a special relationship with that country for the rest of his life. It is where he met his wife Didi Bertrand—a school principal and preacher's daughter in Cange. Even during Harvard Medical School, Paul would fly back and forth to Haiti, setting up his own clinic and an expanding network of community health facilities.

In 1987, he and my friend Jim Yong Kim and their two colleagues, Ophelia Dahl and Todd McCormack, founded Partners in Health. They founded Partners in Health on Paul's radical idea, and it is a radical idea in so many ways; that all human beings, regardless of who they are and where they live, deserve equal dignity and equal healthcare.

In 2003, the very good writer Tracy Kidder wrote a book about Paul and his

life: "Mountains Beyond Mountains." After Paul's death, Tracy wrote a tribute to him and titled it "He Wanted to Make the Whole World His Patient," and he really did.

I met Paul on a trip to Haiti with my friend Joanne Carter, the executive director of RESULTS, which is a grassroots organization dedicated to ending the cause of poverty around the world. It was in April 2003. Partners in Health was working in Haiti, and the hospital and clinic Paul started in Cange had grown to a broad network around the country. Paul and his colleagues were working with community health workers to treat drug-resistant tuberculosis and to scale up AIDS treatment in the most impoverished place, by far, in the Western Hemisphere at a time when there was almost no antiviral treatment available in poor countries.

People claim that treating patients and getting antivirals out in countries like Haiti was just impossible. Paul proved them wrong. Partners in Health invited several hundred U.S. policymakers, journalists, and Members of Congress, over time, to Haiti to see firsthand how they were expanding access to lifesaving treatment. At the time, there was still a popular sentiment, even among health workers, that we couldn't do this; that it was impossible to get these antiviral treatments out on any kind of large scale in low-income countries. It was a transformational moment. Paul opened the world's eyes to what was possible.

We could and had to treat patients everywhere. The barrier wasn't that it couldn't be done; it was that no one had made it a priority. No one in rich countries like ours or in even middle-income countries wanted to or really had tried to make this a priority.

I remember we met a young man in a wheelchair in a hospital unit. I was with Paul. He was caring for this young man. He had tuberculosis of the spine. It is called Pott's disease. It is when tuberculosis bacteria migrates into the spinal column and causes paralysis. He was getting treatment that no one would have thought possible before Paul. We met HIV/AIDS patients and saw how antiviral treatments were transforming their lives. People called it the Lazarus effect. In a relatively short amount of time, this treatment revived them and brought them back from the brink.

Late at night, we sat around together, at Paul's little house in Cange, and talked about what would come next and what we needed to do to rouse the world to action. It was an exciting time. A global fund had just been created. Paul's ideas were gaining traction. Paul Farmer brought such a moral clarity to all of these conversations. Whether it was talking to policymakers or to public health experts or to community leaders or to his patients—his impoverished patients often—he began every discussion with the same fundamental principle: Everyone has the right to quality healthcare.

Rather than have a technical conversation, he would look at all of these health experts and leaders when they would say, "Unfortunately, there are just not enough resources to treat everyone, so we have to make choices," and Paul would say, "When we make these choices, we are always talking about somebody else's children." He didn't say it in an accusatory way; he wasn't judgmental; and he didn't look down on anybody. It was simply how he thought about it and how he wanted everyone to think about it.

The other thing that always struck me and that was so astonishing about Paul is that he cared so much about each individual person. He had uncommon and maybe even unparalleled empathy. He had an absolute commitment to his patients' care. He was a big thinker in change policy, but he was a practitioner up close who took care of fellow human beings. He had an absolute commitment to his patients' care literally right up until the moment of his death. He was talking about patients he was treating in Rwanda, and he was giving advice right up until the day he died.

Tracy Kidder reported that Paul had been up late the night before, seeing patients. Mr. Kidder said, in his experience with Paul, that being up late and seeing patients was the equivalent of a night on the town.

Over the past few weeks since we lost Paul, a remembrance of that empathy has poured out from people around the world—from former students and colleagues, patients, world leaders, public health luminaries. Everyone has a story about Paul Farmer's dedication to humankind and to his patients individually. They agree that Paul really did change the world. His legacy will certainly inspire many of us in this body. More importantly, it will inspire people around the world.

When I think of Paul Farmer, I think of one of my favorite passages in the Gospel, Matthew 25. We are all familiar with it—Christians, certainly—but nonbelievers, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims, I think know this passage from Jesus.

Jesus said: When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was in prison, you visited me. What you did to the least of these you did to me.

I thought, you know, that doesn't quite sound right, "What you did to the least of these," because I cannot believe that Muhammad or Buddha or Jesus or Maimonides or Moses would think that MARK KELLY is worth more or less than another human being. All of us in God's eyes are equal.

So I came across a friend of ours who lives down the street—a pastor—and she gave to me a Bible called the "Justice and Poverty Bible."

It says this in Matthew 25: When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was in prison, you visited me. What you did to those who seemed less important

you did for me—not what you did for the least of these but what you did for those who seemed less important.

That was how Paul Farmer lived his life. He understood that no human being was worth less than anyone else; that everyone is deserving of compassionate healthcare; and that everyone is deserving, as Rumi said, of generosity and helping others: Be like a river in compassion and grace. Be like the Sun. That is the way Paul looked at the world.

Our thoughts are with his family and his patients around the world. Let's recommit ourselves to following the example of Dr. Paul Farmer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EMMETT TILL ANTILYNCHING ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 55, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 55) to amend section 249 of title 18, United States Code, to specify lynching as a hate crime act.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 55) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I just want to go over what just happened.

After more than 200 failed attempts to outlaw lynching, Congress is finally succeeding in taking the long-overdue action by passing the Emmett Till Antilynching Act. Hallelujah. It is long overdue.

The first anti-lynching legislation was introduced a century ago, and after so long, the Senate has now finally addressed one of the most shameful elements of this Nation's past by making lynching a Federal crime. That it took so long is a stain—a bitter stain—on America.

While this will not erase the horrific injustices to which tens of thousands of African Americans have been subjected over the generations—nor fully heal the terror inflicted on countless others—it is an important step forward as we continue the work of confronting our Nation's past in pursuit of a brighter and more just future.

I want to applaud the work of the legislation's sponsors. Senator BOOKER has been relentless to get this done and deserves tremendous credit, as does his colleague on the Republican side of the aisle, Senator SCOTT, and, of course,