

And I have subscribed to the wisdom of the 80-20 rule. From what I have seen, I believe the Presiding Officer agrees with that as well.

So instead of just focusing on the things we can't agree on and perhaps will never agree on, because we have different visions for the role of the Federal Government in our lives—that is OK. Those are the debates we have been having since the founding of this country, and we will have forever, as long as this great Nation lasts.

But let's not just focus on the 20 percent we can't do, which seems to be the obsession of the news media and others. Let's think more about the 80 percent we can do. Rather than waste floor time, which is coin of the realm here—I mean, if it can't come to the floor because there is no floor time, it is not going to happen. So rather than waste time on partisan bills that will ultimately go nowhere, let's find common ground and work on our shared priorities.

I have got one idea. How do we help families struggling to keep up with the highest inflation in nearly four decades? I have lived long enough to know when interest rates were close to 20 percent and we had double-digit inflation. It was a miserable time in this country because people's paychecks were eaten up by inflation and they couldn't afford to buy things, like houses, that they ordinarily might buy to increase their standard of living because interest rates were so high on mortgage loans.

Or let's work on supply chains that have been unable to keep up with demand. The vulnerabilities have been exposed by COVID-19. Again, the definition of intelligence, as my dad used to say, what he called the hallmark of intelligence, is learning from your mistakes, not doing the same thing over and over again, like Albert Einstein said, and expecting different results.

There is also a humanitarian crisis on the border that has led to the highest number of annual apprehensions on record.

I am not confident our colleagues on the other side actually believe in enforcing our immigration laws, but maybe I am wrong. Maybe there are some areas that we could work on. The Senator from Arizona, Senator SINEMA, and I, and HENRY CUELLAR, a Democrat from Laredo, and TONY GONZALES, a Republican from Texas, we have worked on the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act, and we would love to be able to work with our colleagues across the aisle to find some way to address the uncontrolled access that people who have no reasonable grounds for asylum are getting and coming into our country and then fading into the great American landscape.

There are other things I would like to do in the immigration space, things like the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Ten years ago, President Obama issued an Executive memorandum saying that if you were

brought here as a child, under certain criteria, you will be able to stay and you will be able to get work permits. But it has been in litigation for the last 10 years. The last decision by a Federal district judge in Houston, TX, Judge Hanen, said that basically the DACA and DAPA—in this case, the DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—memorandum is unconstitutional and that only Congress can address this.

And I suggest we should. I have asked the chairman of the Judiciary Committee to put a bill on the floor in the Judiciary Committee that provides some certainty in the future for these young people, who are now young adults, living in uncertainty. Give them some certainty and some comfort knowing that they don't need to fear deportation or some other negative consequence, because I believe there is a broad consensus that we ought to give them some relief.

In America you don't hold children responsible for the mistakes parents make, and I believe that we could find a bipartisan solution to at least that part. And do you know what? Maybe—just maybe—by doing some things together, we can increase confidence among ourselves.

Yeah, we really can. We can work together. We can find bipartisan solutions. We don't have to just fight and emphasize the 20 percent we can't agree on. We can work on that 80 percent and make real progress.

I believe these are the types of issues that the American people sent us here to solve. Forget legislation that hands tax breaks to the wealthy or federalizes America's elections, notwithstanding the provisions of our Constitution. Let's work together to solve real problems where there is an opportunity for us to find that 80-percent solution.

So, as we welcome the start of a new year, I hope the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, and our colleagues across the aisle will look at the 50-50 Senate with a fresh perspective. We do have an opportunity to deliver big wins to the American people this year, and I hope the Senate majority leader, who sets the agenda on the floor, will allow that to happen.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING JOHNNY ISAKSON

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to express my deep sorrow at the death of former Senator Johnny Isakson. I served with Johnny for a long time, not just here in the Senate, where we came in together as freshman Members in 2005, but also in

the House of Representatives, and I was honored to call him my friend.

Johnny was a tremendously effective legislator and, in particular, a champion for veterans and a model of decency and graciousness. When I came down to the floor to discuss his retirement 2 years ago, I read a quote from a politics professor in Georgia that I thought really captured Johnny. I think so still. Here is what that professor had to say:

As a political science professor and an administrator, I'm often asked by students if good people can serve in government and keep their integrity. Johnny Isakson is always the first example I come to. It's very often a shocking revelation to most people—that good people can, and often do, serve in government for long periods, fight hard for what they believe in, and remain true to themselves and their principles. And they don't have to sell their souls to do it. It's a great lesson, really.

Mr. President, that was Johnny—a good man, one of the best I have ever known. He came to Washington to serve his State and his country and served them faithfully throughout his life.

My thoughts and prayers are with Johnny's wife Dianne and with his children and grandchildren.

REMEMBERING HARRY REID

Mr. President, I also want to mention the loss of former Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid, who also passed away this Christmas, and also extend my thoughts and prayers to his wife Landra and his family.

2021

Mr. President, the end of 2021 marks the end of a year of Democratic governance, and the picture is sobering. If we were issuing a report card for 2021, I am afraid Democrats would earn a "D" for "dreadful" or "disaster" or an "F" for "failure" because 2021 was filled with one Democratic-led crisis after another.

Take our current inflation crisis. When Democrats took office last January, inflation was well within an acceptable range or what is known as the target inflation rate. It might have stayed there had Democrats not decided they needed to pass a massive government spending spree under the guise of COVID relief mere weeks after Congress had already passed a major COVID bill.

That is right. In December of 2020, Congress passed its fifth bipartisan COVID relief bill, a nearly \$1 trillion piece of legislation that met essentially all current, pressing COVID needs. But the ink was barely dry on the page before Democrats decided that they needed to take advantage of the COVID situation to pass another bill—this time, a hyperpartisan \$1.9 trillion piece of legislation packed with unnecessary government spending and pay-offs to Democratic interest groups. That unnecessary government spending, of course, had serious consequences.

The definition of "inflation" is too many dollars chasing too few goods and

services, and that is exactly the situation Democrats created. They sent too many Federal dollars into the economy, and the economy overheated as a result.

Since Democrats passed their so-called American Rescue Plan, inflation has gone up and up again. In November, inflation hit its highest level in nearly 40 years—40 years—and American families are dealing with the consequences: spikes in food prices, rent prices, utility prices, used car and truck prices, propane, kerosene, and firewood prices, and the list goes on. Inflation is so bad that despite wage growth in 2021, Americans saw a de facto pay cut.

You would think that the economic pain Americans are experiencing would be giving Democrats pause, but in fact, despite massive inflation, Democrats have been trying to double down on the reckless spending strategy that helped cause so much inflation in the first place. Fortunately, they have so far been unable to summon a majority in the Senate to support their latest reckless spending plan, but their unconcern with the dangerous economic consequences of their proposed new spending spree is deeply troubling.

I wish I could say that our inflation crisis was the only Democratic disaster to come out of 2021, but that wouldn't be true. Democrats have also presided over a massive crisis at our southern border—a crisis that Democrats are apparently completely content to ignore. The illegal migration across our southern border picked up in the wake of the President's inauguration and reached stratospheric levels in 2021.

The crisis shows no signs of abating. In November, the latest month for which we have statistics, Customs and Border Protection encountered 173,620 people attempting to cross our southern border illegally. That is well over double the number who tried to cross illegally in November of 2020 and more than four times the number who attempted to cross in November of 2019. But you would never know it from listening to the President or congressional Democrats. It has become very clear that the President doesn't care about what is happening at our southern border despite the very real security and humanitarian crisis that this massive wave of illegal immigration represents.

But our ongoing inflation and border disasters still don't represent the total of Democrats' 2021 failures. There was also the President's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The President's arbitrary, chaotic withdrawal was a real low point for our country. Thirteen of our military men and women died in a terrorist attack during the evacuation of Kabul. We abandoned thousands of individuals who had worked with us in Afghanistan and whom we had promised to protect. They are bracing for life under the brutal control of the Taliban, if they haven't been forced into hiding or met

an even more grim fate. The President also left behind hundreds of American citizens, and the latest report suggests that some of them may still be trying to find a way out of the country.

Meanwhile, the President, who was supposed to restore our standing on the world stage, left our allies wondering if our word could be relied on.

Most of all, the President's disastrous withdrawal has left our country in a more precarious national security position. Afghanistan is well on its way to once again becoming a terrorist haven. But, as with our border crisis, the dangers of our current Afghanistan situation barely seem to register on the President's radar.

I could go on and talk about how the President, who promised to be a President for all Americans, has instead been a President for the far-left wing of the Democratic Party. I could talk about how congressional Democrats, despite holding a razor-thin majority in Congress, have governed in a relentlessly partisan and extreme manner, attempting to force through far-left legislation, including a Federal takeover of election law and perhaps the most radical abortion legislation ever considered in Congress. I could talk about how Democrats are even now plotting to overturn a decades-old Senate rule in an attempt to force their partisan priorities through the Senate. But I will stop this discussion here.

Thanks to Democrats' disasters, 2021 was a very rough year for the country. I would love to think that Democratic governance in 2022 would be better, that Democrats would get serious about inflation, abandon their plans for another reckless spending spree, address our border crisis, and commit to bipartisanship, but given the way things have been going, I am not getting my hopes up.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, before I close, I want to take a moment to comment on the situation in Ukraine.

Tensions remain dangerously high as Russia has amassed a reported 100,000 troops on Ukraine's border. This, of course, is just the latest aggressive move by Russia, which already illegally annexed Crimea in 2014 and has been supporting separatist forces in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

It may have been overlooked during the busy holiday season, but I would like to note for the record a bipartisan, bicameral virtual meeting that occurred on the morning of Christmas Eve with Ukrainian President Zelensky. I participated in this meeting, which enabled us to discuss the current security situation directly with President Zelensky.

We discussed the importance of the more than \$2½ billion in security assistance the United States has provided since 2014, including \$300 million in the latest National Defense Authorization Act. But given the urgency of the situation, the Biden administration must consider additional emergency assist-

ance at this critical time, and security assistance must also be backed by strong sanctions to deter any further Russian advances.

Unfortunately, President Biden has already given Russia a pass on one of Vladimir Putin's top priorities: the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. I have spoken before about the European security risk and economic harm to Ukraine that will be caused by Nord Stream 2. Yet President Biden has not enforced sanctions related to the pipeline—mandatory sanctions, I might add—that are required by law.

Per an agreement made prior to the Christmas break, the Senate will soon have a vote on these sanctions, and the message to Russia and President Putin must be clear: Don't interfere with the aspirations of Ukraine, and let Ukraine determine its future by the will of its people.

This is not a case of the United States and NATO looking to push east; this is a former Soviet state seeking to cast off Russia's grip, assert its sovereignty, and, of its own accord, align itself with the ideals of freedom and embrace peace and prosperity as a free and independent nation.

The United States should stand with Ukraine and against Russia's aggression.

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

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

RECESS

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 11:58 a.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BLUMENTHAL).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

ANNIVERSARY OF JANUARY 6

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, a year ago, there was an attempted overthrow of American democracy right here in this building. You know, we spend so much time here arguing about things that are unknowable—about the future, about our ideology, about opinions—that we have become accustomed to treating floor speeches in the Senate as not primarily about facts.

But I was here. And by "I was here," I don't mean I was here in the Capitol. I mean, I was right here at this desk. And so no one needs to characterize it