

The president was wrong—

He is talking about Joe Biden.

He said:

The president was wrong to blame this month's [inflation] number on [the war in] Ukraine.

Larry Summers went on to say:

[Everyone] had been expecting, from the time before Putin launched the invasion, that inflation was going to accelerate.

He went on to say:

This is a consequence, fundamentally, of an overheated economy.

He said:

And we are not going to have a full solution until we do something about that overheated economy.

A full year has passed—one year in office, a 40-year high of inflation, and a year full of excuses by a President whose excuses do not add up. What adds up is the fundamental fact that American families spent \$1,000 more on energy during Joe Biden's first year as President than they did the previous year. And it is going to be worse this year.

The time for excuses is over. There is no excuse for restricting American energy production. Democratic Senators spent 10 months denying that there even was inflation and doing nothing about it. Yet now some Democrats in this body are talking about making it even worse. They have introduced multiple bills to raise taxes. Astonishingly, one of the bills they have introduced is to raise taxes on American energy.

They already tried that last year with their reckless tax-and-spending spree. Now, it seems like some of them want to do it again. If we put more taxes on American energy, what is that going to do? It is going to raise the price even higher. Higher costs on producers are going to become higher costs on the customers.

People don't want us to raise costs; they want us to reduce costs. That is what they are complaining about. That is what we have gotten as a result of the Biden policies. We need to break this choke hold that the Democrats and the Biden administration have on American energy.

So how do we do that? Well, 2 weeks ago, I led a letter with every Republican on the Senate Energy Committee, and we sent it to President Biden on the morning after the State of the Union Address. We gave him a list of 10 specific actions that he could take today to produce more American energy and bring down the costs for American families.

Step one would be to end his Executive order on oil and gas leases on Federal lands. Half of my home State of Wyoming is Federal lands. There is an abundance of energy there. The American people need it. It will help reduce costs for families. It will actually bring tax revenue into the government, both the State as well as the Federal Government. Yet Joe Biden is not interested.

Joe Biden's Executive order has no basis in science, no basis in law. It

needs to be rescinded today. The fact that some people have leases to explore for energy—a small number—is no excuse for the President's actions. Over 4,000 leases are awaiting permission to drill right now. They have a lease, but they are tied up in redtape and cannot get permission to drill from the government. So even if you have a lease, you need to then get permission from the government to use the lease. They ought to approve those leases today.

But we need to go further. We need a long-term commitment from the Government of the United States to produce American energy to help American families. Leases take years to explore and to develop. We need a commitment that is going to last long term. No one is going to make those kinds of investments if they think Joe Biden is going to shut them down again the next day.

Now, American energy companies have a lot of good reasons not to trust Joe Biden, not to trust those whom he has—the anointed ones whom he has appointed to high positions in the government.

If you just take a look at Joe Biden's nominees, they are a murderer's row of climate elitists and climate alarmists, and those are the ones that call the tune for this President.

If you took a year of Joe Biden's energy policies and take a look at what has happened over the past year that got us here today and you explain that to the American public and you say: What do you think about this? as they are filling up their tank, two-thirds of them would say: Under these Biden policies—two-thirds would say—the country is heading in the wrong direction.

That may be every Republican. It is also a lot of Independents, and it is also some Democrats as well who have buyer's remorse at what they have gotten from this President. It is going to take time to repair the damage. We need to start today. The time for excuses and blame from this administration needs to be over. The American public is demanding American energy, and we need it now.

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.

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

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

IDITAROD

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I am here on the floor today to make what I consider to be a supercool announcement. I think my colleagues know well that I am a fan of the "Last Great Race," the Iditarod. I am shameless in my promotion of not only the exceptional athleticism of the mushers themselves but the canine athletes.

I say to the Presiding Officer—and as an athlete yourself—I think you can

appreciate the endurance training that it takes to be a qualified and truly an exceptional athlete, and today we are able to celebrate an extraordinary musher and an extraordinary team.

It was just a little over a week ago, last Sunday morning—well, actually it was Saturday—that I was in Anchorage for the ceremonial start of the Iditarod. It takes place downtown in Anchorage. We have to truck snow in. We close off all the downtown streets. Not too many cities actually bring the snow in, but we brought the snow in, dumped it around the streets, and closed the streets.

Mushers come to town from all over the State, 49 mushers this year. They bring their sled dogs in.

Along the sides of the chutes are thousands of Alaskans and thousands of visitors. The people come from around the country and around the world to launch these extraordinary teams down the street. Everybody is all bundled up.

It was one of those days that was just picture perfect for the start of an Iditarod. There were big, huge snowflakes coming down, making everything white.

The dogs were jumping in their traces, just straight up, just bouncing up with excitement, and the yipping and the howling was just—it was excitement that was contagious. And to be out there in the chutes, wishing the racers luck, cheering them on before they embark on their 1,000-mile journey to the north, it is an experience that I would encourage for anyone, whether you are a canine lover or not—those of you who understand the value of working dogs and what they mean, and how they love to do what they do.

The Iditarod is an experience like none other. This was the 50th anniversary. For 50 years now, the Iditarod has been going from South Central in the Willow area all the way up to Nome. Again, 49 teams entered.

These mushers faced some pretty challenging conditions. You are going over terrain that is mountain range and down into gorges. You are on flat glare ice going across Norton Sound, howling winds, driving snow. It is a mental task. It is a physical task and, truly, one of endurance.

Keep in mind that most are thinking: Wait. This is Alaska in the wintertime. It is cold.

But, in fairness, the teams actually prefer to be running at night, when the temperatures are cool. So they are running truly based on the dogs' schedule, the endurance, but not necessarily in the tamest of conditions.

This is not only a race where we celebrate the musher and their team, but we also celebrate the volunteer spirit that comes with this. This is an extraordinary race of over 1,000 miles going through some of the most extreme wilderness that you will encounter.

Then, occasionally, along the way, there are small villages that are used

as checkpoints or opportunities for the many volunteers to basically gather. There is about 1,500 people who volunteer to put this race on. So for those who set the trail markers, who set out there with their snow machines to mark that trail, it is nothing more than like wood markers that you would get at Home Depot or Lowe's, with a little painted orange on it. That is the sophistication of this. This is what guides the team in a blizzard.

The veterinarians are there. Four to five vets cycle through each checkpoint, because each dog needs to be checked every time they go through their checkpoint.

All of these folks come from all around the country to volunteer. They pay for their flights up. They take a week off work, and they are there. They are there to support not only the race, but they are there to support gold-standard canine care.

And so it is also a celebration about the volunteers. This is such a great part of our State's heritage, our culture. Again, you can tell I get a little enthusiastic about it. Even my necklace is a dog sled with a musher on it. So this is the time of year that I like to celebrate it.

So this morning at 5:39 a.m., Alaska standard time—so about 9:30 here in DC—8 days, 14 hours, 38 minutes since beginning a roughly 1,000-mile race, Brent Sass and his team of 11 dogs crossed the finish line.

So here is Brent with his two dogs, yellow roses flown in from—I don't know where those yellow roses came from, but they certainly weren't from Nome, AK.

But that man has traveled with his team for 8 days now, 14 hours, 38 minutes to win the 50th Iditarod.

I had a chance to talk to Brent by phone just about an hour after he went in to Nome. He sounded pretty vibrant, pretty excited, pretty happy.

I had talked to him in the starting gate on Saturday, and I said: Brent, I think this is your time. I think this is your time because you have proved yourself year over year in the Iditarod and certainly in the Yukon Quest.

Brent lives in Eureka, AK, on a homestead that was established back in the 1970s. He is a pretty seasoned musher. He took part in his first Iditarod back in 2012. He got "Rookie of the Year" that year. He is a three-time 1,000-mile Yukon Quest champion.

So the Yukon Quest runs a different race, from Canada into Alaska. It is also a 1000-mile race. It is equally arduous and extraordinarily difficult. He took first place in the Yukon Quest in 2015, 2019, 2020, and also first in this year's abbreviated 350-mile Yukon Quest.

So a couple little quick stories here, because I know I don't have much time, but this guy is pretty exceptional. He is not only a strong competitor, but the care that he provides his dogs is amazing.

One story from 2016: Brent was getting ready to leave the White Mountain

checkpoint. It is about 77 miles from the finish line in Nome. He was teed up here to win third place, and depending on where you are in the rank is how much of the purse you will take home. And if he was going to make third, it was going to be about \$44,000 in prize money. But he is getting ready to leave the checkpoint and his dogs said: Nope, we are not moving.

So think about it. You are that close to \$44,000. You are 77 miles from the finish, and your dogs have said: This has been a long trek, and this is where we are stopping to just rest.

So Brent Sass didn't push those dogs. He waited as they rested, and when they were ready, he took it slow, he took it steady, he brought them to the finish line, and he ended up placing 20th instead of 3rd. And he did that for his team.

And for that, he was recognized twice with the Vet's Choice Award for the care that he shows his dogs.

But it is not just his team that Brent is known for taking care of. He is also known for taking care of his competitors along the trail.

There was a headline a few years back that said "Sass to the Rescue . . . Again."

And time after time, Brent has been highlighted for acts of heroism on the trail. In vicious storms, he has helped mushers and their dog teams reunite after becoming separated on the trail. And keep in mind, there is no rescue team out there. It is you, and if you are lucky enough to have somebody else come upon you—fortunate.

But during one race, a fellow musher was at risk for scratching the race, and instead of leaving him behind, as many competitors might have done, Brent helped him scale Eagle Summit so he could stay in the race.

But one of the most notable rescues took place in 2011 on the trail of the Yukon Quest. Hans Gatt, a four-time champion, was stalled out. He wasn't able to clear the summit. The weather conditions were awful. So Hans did the only thing that he could do, which is to hunker down into a sleeping bag in these horrible winds, the driving cold snow.

Brent's sled comes upon Hans, sees that he is on the verge of hypothermia. He hooks his sled to the back of his own, and he hauls both teams up over the summit. And Brent credits his then-lead dog Silver for guiding them to safety in these awful and harsh conditions. As a result of their teamwork and heroism, the Quest created the Silver Legacy Award in Silver's honor. Brent claims that to be one of the proudest moments of his life.

I wish that I could have been there this morning at 5:39 in Nome to watch Brent cross the finish line as a first-time Iditarod champ with his team. But even from afar, we can hear the Alaskans celebrating Brent for his incredible feat.

So to Brent Sass, we celebrate you. We thank you for the care that you

show your dog team, your character, how you show what it means to be a true competitor and for representing the great State of Alaska so well.

And to all the others that are still on the trail, we wish you well and safety and Godspeed.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF SHALANDA D. YOUNG

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to support the historic nomination of Shalanda Young to be the next Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Ms. Young brings deep experience with the Federal budget process to her role at OMB, having served as staff director of the House Committee on Appropriations. She has been serving as Acting Director of OMB for the past year, and her top-notch performance in that role leaves no doubt that she is eminently qualified to be confirmed as OMB Director.

Ms. Young came into OMB in March 2021, the same month that Congress passed the American Rescue Plan. This was a time when the Nation faced an uncertain future, with coronavirus vaccines just starting to go out and unemployment remaining stubbornly high at 6 percent. Under Ms. Young's leadership, OMB played a key role to implement the American Rescue Plan to fight the pandemic and move our economy forward. The results have been widespread vaccinations, millions of new jobs, unemployment falling to 3.8 percent, and the fastest economic growth in nearly 40 years.

We have achieved a great deal during the first year of the Biden administration, but we must recognize that there is still so much left to accomplish. Shalanda Young is the right person to have at the helm of OMB to craft responsible budgets and turn the policies we craft into actions that make a real difference for the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 2 minutes.

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise in support of Shalanda Young's nomination to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Ms. Young has done an exemplary job serving as OMB's Acting Director for the past year. She is a dedicated public servant and a proven leader.

She has played a key role in the administration's efforts to help the Nation recover from the pandemic. She has worked closely with Congress to pass the historic bipartisan infrastructure package, and she is truly committed to making the Federal Government work better for the American people.

I have absolutely no doubt that Ms. Young is the right choice to lead the OMB going forward. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm Shalanda Young to be the Director of OMB.