

Rosen, Ron Wyden, Margaret Wood Hassan, Maria Cantwell.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, March 17, be waived and that following the 1:45 p.m. vote, the Senate resume legislative session.

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

The Senator from Wyoming.

INFLATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about America's inflation crisis. People in my home State are noticing it every day.

This morning, the majority leader came to the floor and expressed his shock that prices have gone up, but they have been going up for over a year now. Price increases last year on energy alone cost hard-working families over \$1,000 more last year—the first year that Joe Biden was President—compared to the previous year. This year, it is going to cost even more for energy—to drive, to heat, all of those things.

So I am glad that the Democrats now are—14 months into Joe Biden's Presidency—finally concerned about energy prices, but what we are seeing the Democrats offer are gimmicks.

Some Democrats want to call it a gas tax holiday. Of course, the gas tax is what is used to pay for our roads and bridges. So they want to defund—stop paying for roads and bridges but then put the gas tax back on right after the election. It is a cynical ploy.

Other Democrats say: No, no, let's not do that. Let's just send everybody more government checks.

Well, the Democrats have been doing that, and it is what has caused much of the inflation that we are facing today.

Still other Democrats say: No, no, no, let's clamp down on American energy even tighter.

These are nice sound bites. We are seeing them. We are hearing them. Those aren't solutions.

We know why prices are rising. Prices are rising because supply of American energy is down. We are actually 1.3 million barrels less energy producing now with oil in the United States than we were before the pandemic. So why is supply down? Well, the policies of the Democrats in the House and the Senate and the policies coming out of the White House. Democrats have been in charge of Washington now for a full year, and high prices are really the rotten fruit of Democrat rule.

As I said, we are at 1.3 million barrels of oil per day less than before the pandemic. People say: Well, what has caused it? Joe Biden was proud to talk about what has caused it. His first act as President was to stop oil and gas leases on Federal lands, kill the Keystone XL Pipeline, and it is one of his campaign promises. You can go back and look at the videos of Joe Biden as a campaigner saying: I promise you

there will be no new oil and gas in the United States. That is actually what the video says, and that is what he says. They are his own words, his own promises. Then he went back to try to clarify that and clean it up a little bit, and he said: Well, not on public lands.

This isn't a surprise that Biden has crushed U.S. production of oil and gas. This administration still has not held a single auction for oil and gas leases on Federal lands since the day he has taken office. How does that compare to other administrations? Well, under President Obama, there were more than 30 oil and gas lease sales on Federal lands that had been conducted in the auctions in this same period of time.

So has anybody said anything about it? Actually, yes. The courts have ruled. The courts said the President's executive office on Federal land leases is illegal. That is what the courts ruled. President Biden thumbed his nose at the Federal courts. The President has stubbornly refused to open up more Federal lands to American energy production, ignoring what the courts have said.

In Western States like Wyoming, where half of our land is owned by the Federal Government, and controlled, it is devastating. Half of Wyoming is Federal land. We are sitting on a treasure trove of American energy. We wouldn't have to be relying on Vladimir Putin or we wouldn't have to be relying on Iran or going hat in hand to Venezuela. We have it here in America, and we do it a lot cleaner than they do in any of these foreign countries run by dictators.

When we keep energy buried in the ground, American families get buried in costs.

The White House says we don't need to open up Federal lands, no. The White House says there are oil and gas leases that are not being used—another sound bite. In reality, most of the leases that aren't being used—it is because they are tied up in Democrat red-tape or Democrat-run lawsuits.

There are some that aren't being used because the companies that have the leases can't get the funding to go and do the exploration. Why can't they get the funding? It is the cancel culture of the Democratic Party. We have seen it. Joe Biden's recent nominee to the Federal Reserve wrote in the New York Times that banks, she said, shouldn't lend money to oil and gas companies—shouldn't do it, period. These are businesses that get loans to do business, and she said: Nope, none for you. A lot of banks listened to her because they thought she was going to be confirmed. Thankfully, that nomination has been withdrawn.

Less investment means less production. It results in higher prices.

This morning, the majority leader, standing at that podium over there, also said gas prices had gone up “at a time when families are already struggling.” Well, why do you think they

are already struggling? We know why they are struggling. It is because of the inflation caused by this administration and the policies that have been going on for a full year even though, month after month after month, the President of the United States said they would be transitory.

The price of gas has gone up. The price of heating in your home has gone up. The price of groceries has gone up. The price of nearly everything has gone up. Over the past year, prices have gone up 8 percent. We are at a 40-year high of inflation in this country. The average family's income cannot keep up with the price increases that we have been sustaining since the day Joe Biden took office. Just last month, some of the price increases were the biggest on record: chicken, lunch meat, baby food—things that people need to buy.

I am glad to hear that the Democrats are finally admitting the crisis is only going to get worse. Why do they say it is going to get worse? Because the cost of producing things has gone up. Energy prices are up; you use energy to produce things. The inflation cost for producing things now is actually higher based on—the price index for production is at 10 percent. So that says that prices are going to go up because if it costs more to produce things, the pricetag has to go up. Food costs continue to go up. Senator FISCHER, my colleague, the senior Senator from Nebraska, pointed out that fertilizer costs have tripled.

Now Democrats want to make it worse. Democrats in the House—not in the Senate but Democrats in the House—are asking Joe Biden to declare a climate emergency and tighten his choke hold on American energy production. It is going to make inflation even worse.

In yesterday's Washington Post, Larry Summers warned that we might face something, I say to the Presiding Officer, that you and I remember, something from the Jimmy Carter days called stagflation. That is where you have inflation and stagnation at the same time. It is a terrible thing to happen to an economy.

The crisis is only going to get worse. We need to change course. We need to do it now. Stop the reckless spending, and above all, unleash American energy. Don't be a country that not too long ago was asking Russia to produce more, asking OPEC to produce more, asking Iran to sell us energy, asking Venezuela. Produce it here. We have it here. Open up these Federal lands. Approve the drilling permits—the 4,600 drilling permits that are stuck in limbo by this administration.

American families cannot afford 3 more years of Joe Biden.

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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 677, Alison J. Nathan, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Brian Schatz, Jack Reed, Angus S. King, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Chris Van Hollen, Raphael G. Warnock, Jacky Rosen, Tim Kaine, Patty Murray, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tammy Duckworth, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Mazie Hirono, Christopher A. Coons, Patrick J. Leahy.

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 the nomination of Alison J. Nathan, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 96 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Baldwin	Hassan	Padilla
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Rosen
Brown	Kaine	Sanders
Cantwell	Kelly	Schatz
Cardin	Kennedy	Schumer
Carper	King	Sinema
Casey	Klobuchar	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lujan	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blackburn	Hagerty	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Shelby
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—5

Burr	Scott (SC)	Tillis
Manchin	Shaheen	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). On this vote, the yeas are 51 the nays 44.

The motion is agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session. The Senator from Illinois.

SENATOR PAUL SIMON WATER FOR THE WORLD ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was fortunate early in my political life to meet several people who became my heroes and mentors and led me to take up public service as my life's calling.

The first was a Senator from Illinois named Paul Douglas, and I met him when I was a college intern in his office. And he introduced me to a man named Paul Simon; Simon, who was a Lieutenant Governor in our State, State legislator, Congressman, and, ultimately, the Senator who preceded me in this Senate seat.

After Paul Simon passed away, I approached his family and talked about a tribute to him, and they basically said: Well, you remember Paul. He would have been the last person in the world who ever wanted a statue and really didn't care much about having anything with his name on it. That just wasn't his approach to politics.

But I thought to myself there were some things that he valued that maybe I can try to help in my own way in his memory. And one of them was in 2014, when I introduced a bill called the Paul Simon Water for the World Act.

Simon had written a book that didn't make the New York Times best seller list. It was entitled "Tapped Out." He had a theory many years ago that the issue with the 21st century was going to be water. And he made a pretty convincing case, and, frankly, the events and evidence since then have backed him up.

So this bill, the Paul Simon Water for the World Act, was designed to build on the success of an earlier effort called Paul Simon's Water for the Poor, which had passed 10 years before and sought to bring clean water and sanitation programs to the world's poorest communities.

Today, as we mark World Water Day, I want to recognize what we have accomplished with these two pieces of legislation. They have helped provide, for the first time, access to clean drinking water and sanitation for more than 60 million additional people around the globe.

Those successes have also improved global health, economic development, and educational attainment. And they have proven how far just a little Federal funding invested in the right area can go.

Both of those laws were passed on a bipartisan basis, and in recognizing the compounding benefits of clean water and sanitation, Congress has sustained the programs.

My staff has traveled to countries like Kenya, Ghana, Senegal to see

these programs in action. They have shared stories and photos with me about schools and villages that, for the very first time, have access to clean, drinkable water.

In Ghana, for example, these laws have helped fund something called the Digni-Loo Program. It has provided rural villages with clean, sustainable toilets and helped eliminate water-borne diseases in entire districts of the country.

This World Water Day, I hope we can reaffirm our commitment in this Senate to supporting legislation in the name of my friend and mentor, the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act, that will help bring global health for years to come.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. President, in just a few days, America's eyes will turn to the Senate Judiciary Committee as we begin the process of considering Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson for her nomination to the Supreme Court.

It is going to be a historic moment on Monday as Judge Jackson appears before the Committee, and gaveling the hearing to order as chair of the committee will rank as one of the highest honors of my career in Congress.

Next week, the American people will have a chance to meet Judge Jackson, learn about her, her professional record, and her life experience. But, for now, let me briefly share a few things that have impressed me the most.

By now, I am sure, many have heard about her experience. Judge Jackson has clerked at every level of the Federal judiciary. Most lawyers would consider a clerkship in any court as an achievement that they could brag about for years. She served as a clerk at every level of the Federal judiciary, including the Supreme Court.

She served in many roles in the courtroom as a public defender, a lawyer in private practice, and a district and circuit court judge at the Federal level.

She was confirmed by the Senate unanimously to serve on the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and she would be the first Justice since Thurgood Marshall with considerable defense experience.

Her qualifications are exceptional. In every role she has held, she has earned a reputation for thoughtfulness, evenhandedness, and collegiality.

Just as impressive as Judge Jackson's record is her character and temperament—humble, personable. She has dedicated herself to making our legal system more understandable and more accessible for everyone who came into her courtroom.

Finally, of course, there is the perspective that Judge Jackson will bring to the High Court. Over the course of its history, 115 Justices have served on the Supreme Court. If she is confirmed, Judge Jackson will be the 116th, but she would be the first Supreme Court Justice who is the daughter of parents who felt the crushing oppression of segregation and the first Justice who has