

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, if a budget is a set of priorities, here are the President's: an expanded Federal Government, a diminished national defense, higher gas prices, and an open border. Those are the priorities reflected in the budget the President released last week, which contained pretty much what you would expect—more taxes, more spending, more borrowing, and, in all likelihood, more inflation as a result.

Big taxes and big spending have been the agenda for President Biden since he took office. After signing a \$1.9 trillion spending spree in March of 2021 that helped create the worst inflation in 40 years, President Biden spent much of last year pushing for still more spending to fund his vision of an expanded Federal Government.

In his 2023 budget, it is just more of the same. The President's budget would increase average yearly spending by 66 percent as compared to the average of the last 10 years. Sixty-six percent—that is a staggering spending increase. Yearly Federal spending under the Biden budget would average \$7.3 trillion. To put that in perspective, the total average spending in 2019 was \$4.4 trillion.

How is the President going to pay for this, if he even can? Taxes, a lot of taxes—"the biggest tax increase in history in dollar terms," according to Bloomberg.

The President, of course, attempts to sell the tax hikes he is proposing as something that won't affect ordinary Americans. That couldn't be more wrong.

That corporate tax hike that he keeps pushing—one study estimates that 31 percent of the corporate tax is borne by consumers. Another big portion of it is borne by labor, otherwise known as ordinary, hard-working Americans.

Higher prices, fewer jobs, lower salaries—we can expect to see all that and more if the President hikes taxes on companies. And I haven't even mentioned the fact that a corporate tax hike may end up hurting private pensions in the value of American's 401(k)s.

Then there are the tax hikes on conventional energy companies, the companies that produce the oil and gas that Americans use to heat their homes and to drive their cars. Increasing taxes on fossil fuel companies to the tune of tens of billions of dollars is pretty much guaranteed to discourage the additional energy production we need to drive down gas prices. Ironically, the proposals to go after traditional American energy production come from the same administration that is releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to deal with high gas prices. You can't make this up.

Then there is inflation. Democrats helped create our current inflation cri-

sis by sending a lot of unnecessary government money into the economy via the so-called American Rescue Plan. The President's budget would essentially do the same thing, which means our already serious inflation crisis could get even worse.

I mentioned the big spending increases in the President's budget. But what I actually meant are the big non-defense spending increases because, while on paper it may look like the President is hiking defense spending, his supposed funding increase would be effectively canceled out by inflation.

When you take into account Democrats' historic inflation, it turns out President Biden's supposed defense spending increase could actually turn out to be a spending cut. Even in the best-case scenario, his budget would leave defense spending essentially flat, which would leave our military dangerously underfunded. That is a big problem.

In a rapidly evolving threat environment, the last thing we can afford is a self-inflicted defeat from underfunding our military. Given Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and threats to NATO, an increasingly aggressive China, Iran's nuclear ambitions, North Korea's uptick in missile tests, and the Taliban taking over in Afghanistan, among other things, President Biden should be taking national defense spending at least as seriously as domestic spending, but he is not.

The Biden budget proposal would leave the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Space Force under-equipped and undermanned and put our defense planning on a dangerously insufficient trajectory.

The President's budget also fails to adequately address border security and immigration enforcement.

Almost since the day the President took office, we have been experiencing an unprecedented flood of illegal immigration across our southern border. In fiscal year 2021, the Border Patrol encountered more than 1.7 million individuals attempting to cross our southern border, the highest number ever recorded. We have had 12 straight months of border encounters in excess of 150,000, and the surge is likely to even get worse now that the President has rescinded the title 42 border policy to immediately deport individuals illegally attempting to cross the border.

What is the President's answer?

Well, \$150-million cut to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement next year. That is right. We are experiencing an unprecedented surge of illegal immigration, and the President's budget would cut funding to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Perhaps the most outrageous thing about the President's budget is the way he misrepresents it. He is now trying to portray himself as somewhat fiscally responsible, as if a 66 percent higher yearly average spending than the last 10 years could be considered fiscally responsible. The President is

talking a lot about deficit reduction—both the deficit reduction he has supposedly created and the deficit reduction his budget will supposedly produce.

But the actual numbers will, again, tell a very different story. The deficit reduction the President would like to take credit for is partly the result of the end of temporary COVID spending measures, which were scheduled to end whether the President lifted a finger or not. Our current deficit would have been a lot lower if the President hadn't decided that we needed a partisan \$1.9 trillion spending spree last year, a spending spree entirely—entirely—made up of deficit spending.

When it comes to the President's 2023 budget, the administration claims "deficits under the budget policies would fall to less than one-third of the 2020 level the President inherited."

The key phrase there is "the 2020 level the President inherited." And 2020 saw a huge but temporary surge in government spending to deal with the onset of the COVID crisis.

As a result, it is grossly deceptive to take the 2020 deficit as a baseline. A more honest assessment of the prospects for deficit reduction under the President's budget would look at pre-COVID deficits as a baseline and compare the President's future deficits to those, but that wouldn't suit the President's purposes.

Now that it has become apparent that the American people are not, in fact, thrilled by far-left Democratic governance, the President is eager to portray himself as a moderate—hence his inflated claims of deficit reduction.

It is the same reason the President is touting his supposed spending hike on national defense while conveniently omitting the fact that when you figure in real inflation, the spending hike may actually be a spending cut.

No matter how the President tries to dress it up, his fiscal year 2023 budget is more of the same far-left priorities—more taxes, more unnecessary spending, and more economic pain for the American people.

And I hope, I hope my Democratic colleagues will think twice before foisting this budget onto hard-working Americans.

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.

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

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

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I rise to speak in support of the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve as an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. When confirmed, Judge Jackson, who currently serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the

District of Columbia Circuit, will take the seat on the Supreme Court that Justice Stephen Breyer has held for almost three decades, so I would like to first offer a few words about Justice Breyer as he prepares to step down from the Bench.

Justice Breyer has served the Court and the Nation with grace, expertise, humility, brilliance, and an unwavering dedication to justice. He has worked tirelessly to build consensus among his colleagues, and he has always kept in mind the real-world impacts of the Court's decisions on the American people.

Justice Breyer knew that "justice for some" was a failure of the Court. From his opinions on voting rights to reproductive rights, to the Affordable Care Act, he has been a key voice in many historic decisions that have affected so many Americans. We owe him a great debt of gratitude. And I am honored and privileged to call Justice Breyer a dear friend, and I wish him the best in his retirement.

Now, in looking for Justice Breyer's successor, President Biden said that he wanted to nominate a "persuasive" Justice, someone in the mold of Justice Breyer, and with Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, President Biden has found that person.

I am confident that Judge Jackson—who clerked for Justice Breyer on the Supreme Court—will follow in his footsteps as a Justice who will make a lasting contribution on the Court through her pragmatism, evenhandedness, and deep understanding of the Constitution and the impact that the Court's decisions have on all Americans.

And as the first African-American woman Justice on the Bench, Judge Jackson's historic nomination is an important and long overdue step toward making the Supreme Court better reflect the Nation whose people the Court serves.

Fifty-four years ago yesterday, our Nation, our world, lost the guiding light of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to assassination. That loss was incalculable. We can only imagine the society we would live in if Dr. King were still with us, preaching, marching, teaching, and I have no doubt that Dr. King would be on the steps of the Capitol as the loudest and proudest voice in support of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to be our next Supreme Court Justice and the first Black woman to serve on our highest Court.

He would know that with the appointment and confirmation of Judge Jackson, we would take the long overdue step to make the Nation's top Court look more like and better represent all of the American people.

The legacy of the more just, more equal society that Dr. King pushed us to create is alive and it is well in this confirmation and on the floor and hearing rooms of the U.S. Senate this week.

The Judiciary Committee held 4 days of hearings on Judge Jackson's nomination, including 2 days of testimony

from the judge herself. As we all saw, some of the questioning of Judge Jackson from some of my Republican colleagues was nothing short of offensive, distorting her record, and tinged with racism and sexism. But Judge Jackson responded with poise. She responded with brilliance. She calmly addressed and corrected her questioners' false and misleading premises.

And she did so while demonstrating deep knowledge of the law and the Constitution, respect for precedents, and displaying precisely the kind of temperament we expect of someone sitting on the Nation's highest Court.

The hearings showed the Nation that Judge Jackson possesses all of the essential qualities of a jurist committed to the words engraved above the entrance to the Supreme Court itself "Equal Justice Under Law."

Of course, to anyone who knew Judge Jackson before her introduction to the Nation as a Supreme Court nominee, none of this was surprising. Judge Jackson's qualifications to serve on the Supreme Court are second to none. She holds broad experience across the legal profession—as a Supreme Court clerk, as a Federal public defender, as an attorney in private practice, and as a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, as a Federal district court judge, and as a Federal appellate judge.

It was, therefore, surprising to no one that she earned a unanimous "well qualified" rating from the American Bar Association. Let me speak for a moment about one aspect of Judge Jackson's background that stands out, and that is her experience as a public defender.

When confirmed, Judge Jackson will become the first-ever Justice with background as a public defender and the first Justice with significant criminal defense experience since the service of Justice Thurgood Marshall, who retired in 1991. That work as a Federal public defender has unjustly come under attack from my colleagues across the aisle who suggest that being a public defender means that she is soft on crime.

But my Republican colleagues—who far too often focus singularly on the constitutional right to bear arms—would do well to remember that among the Constitution's other enshrined rights is the Sixth Amendment's right to counsel in criminal cases. Without that right, criminal defendants who cannot afford an attorney would find it difficult or impossible to navigate the Court system with their rights protected, including the fundamental right to a speedy and fair trial.

My Republican friends may also want to consider that Judge Jackson comes from a law enforcement family, with a brother and uncle serving as police officers, and that she has won the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police, the Nation's largest police union.

Now, let me remind my colleagues that public defenders do not select

their client. They take on every assigned case because they are committed to preserving and defending constitutional rights for everyone. As a Federal public defender, Judge Jackson represented the most vulnerable among us. She represented the clients other lawyers avoided, and in doing so, she followed a long and honorable tradition in the American legal profession that began with John Adams stepping forward in 1770 to represent the British soldiers who committed the Boston Massacre because he feared that they would not receive a fair trial without adequate representation.

By confirming Judge Jackson, we will affirm that the rights of those who cannot afford a lawyer are just as important as the rights of those who can pay lawyers charging \$1,000 an hour; that the rights of the indigent and powerless are just as important as those of the rich and the powerful.

Public defenders also experience firsthand and, therefore, understand better than other lawyers just how our justice system treats the accused, how it treats people of color, how it treats low-income people. Every day, public defenders see the systemic biases and prejudices that permeate our criminal justice system.

At a time when the United States holds more people behind bars than any other Nation on Earth—including authoritarian regimes like North Korea and China—the highest Court in the land would greatly benefit from a Justice with a public defender background. Public defenders serve as a unique bulwark of liberty and racial justice. So we should welcome a public defender on the Supreme Court, especially one as well qualified as Judge Jackson. Her singular perspective and voice are sorely needed.

Judge Jackson's service as a trial judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia is also of particular note in this nomination. Only one of the current Supreme Court Justices—Justice Sotomayor—has ever served on a trial court. And as a trial court judge, Judge Jackson worked to ensure the parties before her understood her approach to deciding cases.

Judge Jackson has explained that, as a trial judge, she emphasized speaking directly to the individuals who appeared before her, not just to their lawyers. She used the parties' names and treated them with respect. She sought to ensure that those whom her rulings would directly impact clearly understood the proceedings in which they were involved, what was happening, and why it was happening.

This approach speaks to a judge who understands the importance of accessibility to the law, to a judicial process that isn't shrouded in mystery, and to a system that fulfills its promise of equal justice under the law to everyone. We will be fortunate to have such a Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States.

I have had the opportunity to meet with Judge Jackson one-on-one. I came

away deeply impressed and convinced that President Biden has made a great choice. The Senate has already confirmed Judge Jackson three times on a bipartisan basis—most recently in June of 2021, when she was confirmed to the D.C. Circuit. The Senate should again confirm her with bipartisan support.

And when Judge Jackson is confirmed and becomes Justice Jackson, the first African-American woman ever to take a seat on the High Court, she will be an inspiration to so many across our country and around the globe. She will especially be a role model for young Black girls everywhere, showing them that in the United States of America, nothing is beyond their reach.

Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall once said:

Sometimes history takes things into its own hands.

History says it is time for Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, and I am honored to help her and the Court and our country make history with her confirmation.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote to confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

WOMEN VETERANS' HEALTHCARE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the significant legislative victories the Senate recently delivered for women veterans with the passage of two pieces of legislation to modernize breast cancer screening policies and the delivery of lifesaving care for women veterans.

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer for women. For women veterans and servicemembers, the incidence of breast cancer is estimated to be up to 40 percent higher than the general population.

Given the dangerous environments in which military members serve and additional risk factors associated with these locations, it is long overdue for the Department of Veterans Affairs to update its policies for administering mammograms.

We know early detection is crucial to preventing and treating breast cancer, so making sure those who are more vulnerable receive screenings at a younger age is not only reasonable but critical.

This would have helped Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas, a Marine veteran, who was unaware of her increased risk for breast cancer. She shared her memories of deployment to Fallujah in 2005 with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee last year.

She understood the risk associated with IEDs, and she remembers the burn pits—so commonplace, they were largely ignored—but she wasn't concerned with the impact of what she called "the flaming poison" surrounding her would have on her own health.

In a routine medical appointment with her VHA health provider in 2018, Kate thought it was odd she was recommended to undergo a mammogram. That exam subsequently led to her diagnosis of stage IV breast cancer. She was 38 years old.

That is devastating news for anyone to face, and I know the entire Senate joins me in praying for Kate as she continues her fight against cancer.

Nobody would blame her for focusing on her own health battle, but she knows her story wouldn't be the last if something didn't change.

That is why Kate is being an advocate for modernizing VA policies so other veterans don't experience the same struggles she is living with.

We honored her activism by crafting and passing the Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas Supporting Expanded Review for Veterans in Combat Environments Act. It will broaden veteran access to mammograms and also require the VA to compile data regarding the rates of breast cancer among members of the veteran and civilian population so we can continue improving procedures to better treat breast cancer patients.

The Senate also unanimously passed the MAMMO for Veterans Act to expand access to high-quality breast cancer screenings, improving imaging services in rural areas, and clinical trials through partnerships with the National Cancer Institute.

The VA is uniquely positioned to be a leader in the prevention and treatment of breast cancer. Taking full advantage of the Department's unique capabilities, resources, and outreach will help deliver the lifesaving care that veterans deserve.

Passage of the Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act and the MAMMO for Veterans Act reflects the bipartisan support for improving veteran services and benefits. I appreciate Senator WYDEN's support and the leadership in the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and the leadership of Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman TESTER, who has been my reliable partner in advancing policies to improve the VA's care and services for women.

The VA estimates women make up 10 percent of our Nation's veteran population and continues to be the fastest growing population.

Last Congress, we made significant progress to expand VA's care and services for women with the passage of the landmark Deborah Sampson Act.

This was an important first step, and the legislation we passed last month continues to build on this foundation so we can fulfill the promise made to women who served in our Nation's uniform.

I am pleased the Senate has approved these policies, and I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to follow our example and quickly approve the Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act and the MAMMO for Veterans Act so that they can be signed into law.

The women who have served our country in uniform need to know we are taking every step available to protect their health. These bills are an important downpayment in that mission. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

REMEMBERING THOMAS HORACE PORTER

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I come to the floor today to mourn the passing and celebrate the life of Thomas Horace Porter, my good friend and a man who could put a smile on my face even in the toughest times, on one of the most painful days of my life, while I was recovering at Walter Reed.

Among the peer visitors at Walter Reed Hospital, two of the most beloved were Tom and his wife Eleanor.

Tom was a gentle giant—a tall, smiling, then-74-year-old veteran who showed up at my bedside while I was still sedated to talk with my husband and mother and who came to visit again soon after I regained consciousness.

As a young Army lieutenant in the Korean war, Tom had lost both his legs in a landmine explosion. His heroic actions saving his men on that day earned Tom both the Silver Star in addition to the Purple Heart for his combat injuries.

During his months of recuperation back in the States, Eleanor—or El, as we all know her—an Army second lieutenant herself, had been one of his physical therapists.

The couple ended up married for more than 50 years. Tom continued to serve our Nation—this time as a civil servant, achieving the rank of Senior Executive Service in the Department of Agriculture. When Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom began and the wounded began flooding the wards at Walter Reed, Tom and El decided that they needed to help. They became peer visitors, and for the next 7 years, during twice weekly visits, they changed the lives of countless veterans who passed through that hospital, my own included.

When I was at Walter Reed, Tom made it his mission to talk with injured troops about the full lives they will lead after their devastating injuries.

A lot of the wounded warriors around me were really young, just 19 to 24 years old, lying in their hospital beds with limbs missing, burns to their faces and bodies, skulls crushed and encased in protective metal cages or helmets. They were all facing a future none of them had planned for. Like them, I had always assumed I would either die in combat or come home. The third option of coming home severely injured was never something that occurred to the majority of us.

Tom would walk in with that big smile of his and say: Hey, I was like you. Lost my legs at 22. But I recovered and I have had a full and regular life. I courted El after I lost my legs, and she and I have been married for 50 years and have wonderful kids and grandkids.