

Corporate America's profits were higher than ever.

Perhaps no sector has evoked more frustration and anger from the American people as the largest oil and gas companies and the prices they are charging.

Last year, the top 25 oil and gas companies reported \$205 billion in profits. Where has that money gone? To help American consumers? No way. To ease our energy troubles? Not at all.

According to one news source yesterday, 28 of the largest oil and gas companies gave out \$394 million in CEO compensation. And in the fourth quarter last year, stock buybacks among these companies rose by more than 2,000 percent—2,000 percent.

All this extra money they are making they put in the pockets of the CEOs and the wealthy shareholders who dominate in the oil company ownership. Just think about that. Americans are paying more and more at the pump and struggling to afford the basics, and oil companies, which are seeing their highest profits in years, prefer to reward executives and shareholders through corporate buybacks instead of American families.

Once we have an FTC with full membership, they will finally have the will, the means, and the power to look under the hood of America's energy sector and shine a much needed light on why Big Oil is pumping out record profits, even as consumers struggle.

So completing the membership of the FTC will be a priority, and we will work to finish the confirmation process of Mr. Bedoya as soon as we can.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, on Ukraine, later this week, President Biden is expected to send Congress another request for emergency funding to support the people of Ukraine in their fight against Russian aggression.

When the President makes his request, the Senate should be ready to work quickly to approve this funding. Every penny of American aid has been money well spent.

This fight, in a real sense, is about tyranny versus democracy itself. It is a Manichaean struggle.

It has been 2 months since Vladimir Putin began his immoral and savage war against the Ukrainian people. You see the pictures; it breaks your heart. It breaks your heart; savagery—savagery—of Mr. Putin killing women and children, innocent people.

So far, though, things have gone disastrously for Russian troops as hopes for a quick invasion have been all but dashed. The Ukrainian people, forced into a war not of their choosing and having suffered losses of inhumane proportions, have given Putin a much tougher fight than he ever bargained for, than he ever imagined. Out-numbered and out-equipped, the bravery and valiance of the Ukrainian people remain unbroken. Putin, meanwhile, is increasingly the most isolated leader in the world. Although, par-

enthetically, shame on the world leaders who are playing footsie with him, including China.

But the Ukrainian people still need our help. Sadly, this fight seems far from over, and losses from the Ukrainian people have been severe.

The United States has a moral obligation to help the Ukrainian people with the tools they need for as long as they need them. Again, this is about tyranny versus democracy itself.

In which direction will the world turn in this, the 21st century?

Once the President makes his request to Congress, approving additional aid for Ukraine will be a must. I expect both sides to work with swift, bipartisan cooperation to get it done.

I also expect the Senate to move quickly on the nomination of President Biden's choice for our Ambassador to Ukraine, Bridget Brink. Ms. Brink's nomination is terrific news that comes at a critical moment. She is deeply experienced. She has already won bipartisan support in this Chamber and is very much needed as the United States seeks to strengthen our diplomatic ties to the war-torn nation. Ms. Brink's nomination will be a top priority of the Senate once she comes before the Chamber.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, on COVID relief: finally, there is another issue in which Republicans must work with Democrats—passing another round of COVID relief.

COVID funding is not a matter of “nice to have if we can afford it.” COVID funding is a must-have. It is something our Nation cannot possibly afford to go without.

Yesterday, the White House made clear that other countries like Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam are already in front of us when it comes to purchasing new vaccines and treatments. American companies, with their ingenuity, come up with these vaccines and treatment; but because we are unwilling—our Republican colleagues so far have blocked financing this—other countries are going to buy from us.

We don't want to be in a position in the fall where we desperately need these medicines but our companies have signed contracts with other countries—other countries. That would be a huge mistake.

Given our Federal budget, it is a small amount to ask that we provide money for these therapeutics so that we can have them for our country, for our folks, as much as the rest of the world may need them, so that we have vaccines—the best vaccines—developed and ready to go and so we have enough testing and treatment.

But other countries are beating America to the punch because Republicans have blocked the Senate from approving new funding. The answer to avoiding another shutdown of our communities is very simple: Senate Republicans should work with us to quickly pass another round of COVID funding. It is not more complicated than that.

Let me say it again. If we want to keep life as close to normal down the line, if we want to keep schools and churches and businesses open if, God forbid, another aggressive variant arises, Republicans should work with us to approve more money for vaccines, testing, and lifesaving therapeutics.

The longer that Senate Republicans hold out on working with us to approve new funding, the higher the cost will be for our country down the line. And when we don't get back to normal, we can't stay at normal because of a new variant, people will know what happened.

God forbid that happens. We don't want it to happen. We want them to work with us; but, unfortunately, so far, we are not seeing that cooperation. From some we have, I must be clear. I had good discussions with several of our Republicans, but then it was blocked by the Republican leadership.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Biden administration's bad decisions have brought many crises upon our country. One of the worst is the collapse of law and order on our southern border.

Last month, Customs and Border Protection reported over 221,000 apprehensions. That is up 33 percent just since February. It is the highest monthly total in 22 years. We have already hit more than 1 million encounters in just the first half of this fiscal year. But, alas, this could still be just the beginning. The Department of Homeland Security is bracing for an even bigger surge in the weeks and months to come. Authorities are steeling for the possibility that we could see 18,000 new people showing up every single day.

In 2020, President-elect Biden said that “end[ing] up with two million people on our border” would be “the last thing we need,” but his own policies went on to produce exactly that outcome.

In 2021, on President Biden's watch, 2 million people from at least—listen to this—160 different countries were stopped along our southern border, and now immigration officials are anticipating totals that could more than triple—triple—last year's record.

Against this backdrop, with illegal immigrants and deadly fentanyl pouring into our country, any administration living in reality would be working overtime to actually secure the border. Instead, even now, President Biden is trying to throw away what little security still exists.

For 2 years, since the start of the pandemic, a legal authority called title 42 has empowered the government to simply turn around a large share of the people they catch and send them right back where they came from. Every

month, CBP uses this tool to keep tens of thousands of illegal immigrants out of the catch-and-release pipeline and send them back to their home countries, but now, unbelievably, President Biden has announced he is going to cancel these legal authorities. He wants to rip off the one remaining bandaid that has preserved at least some shred of law and order.

The Biden administration is claiming the pandemic is over and finished on our southern border. Now, they don't believe the pandemic is over, however, for American citizens—oh, no. Democrats actually want Congress to approve more funding specifically because COVID is not finished. The Biden administration's official position is that the pandemic is over for illegal immigrants but not for the American people.

Every day brings more confusing spin from President Biden and his staff. Their latest claim is that Congress needs to fix their problem for them—that if these title 42 authorities end after President Biden has announced he will end them, it will somehow be Congress's fault. That is absurd. The administration has the discretion. The legislative branch has already given them the tool. It is the same tool they have been using this whole time. They just need to have the courage to tell the radical left to take a hike and keep sending these folks back to their home countries. Apparently, that is asking too much.

The Biden administration is stumbling through this core governing responsibility with no vision, no plan, and backward priorities. Democrats would rather appease their radical base with functional open borders than conduct the bare minimum—bare minimum—in enforcement.

The administration's decision is so obviously crazy that even a number of our Senate Democratic colleagues who have been marching in lockstep with the President for more than a year are now scrambling to make it look like they are breaking ranks.

Well, I welcome our colleagues who are finally making angry noises about this border crisis. The problem is that their lockstep, Democratic votes for over a year have helped, actually, to produce it. For over a year, Senate Democrats have rubberstamped every single aspect of the Biden administration's failed border policy. Not a single Senate Democrat opposed the confirmations of the heads of DHS and HHS, who have presided over this crisis. Not a single Senate Democrat voted for commonsense Republican amendments to do things like preserve the "Remain in Mexico" policy and defund sanctuary cities, and the cost of their bad decisions gets worse every day.

Last week, a heroic American servicemember paid the ultimate price. Specialist Bishop E. Evans of the Texas National Guard had been assigned to help contend with the flow of immi-

grants across the Rio Grande. He lost his own life in trying to save people who had gotten into deadly trouble. And the White House's response? Their spokeswoman was asked yesterday about this tragic loss. She brushed it off. She said he was there on behalf of Texas, not the Federal Government. That unbelievably tone-deaf response perfectly captures the administration's failure to take responsibility.

Democrats have built this border crisis by letting the radical left run the show for more than a year. If my friends across the aisle really have experienced a conversion of heart and now believe in border security, they will have to do a lot more than issue indignant press releases and call it a day.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if I were to ask you "How did you start your day?" I would imagine you would have your own answer.

Most people would say: Oh, I made a cup of coffee. I took the dog out for a walk. I went for a run.

Another answer might come to mind: Oh, I took my vitamin tablet, my dietary supplement.

In fact, 77 percent of people in America take a dietary supplement, including me. I take a multivitamin tablet. I don't know if it does me any good. I figure it won't do me any harm. I believe in it. I believe Americans ought to be able to make that choice.

I also believe that Americans who take vitamins, minerals, and herbs for their health and well-being have a right to know what is in them—pretty basic.

Many people assume if that product is sold in the United States of America, somebody has inspected it, and it must be safe. Unfortunately, that is not always true.

The Food and Drug Administration has the authority to regulate dietary supplements and take dangerous products off the market, but it lacks information that it needs to use this authority effectively.

The Food and Drug Administration can't even tell us how many dietary supplements are sold in America. They give us a range: somewhere between 50,000 different dietary supplements and 80,000—50,000 and 80,000—a gap of 30,000 products? What is going on here? They don't even know how many products are being sold, let alone what they are or what is in them.

Let's go back to 1994. That was the year Congress passed a law and gave the FDA the authority to regulate sup-

plements. Now, we all know that the Food and Drug Administration has the most important responsibility when it comes to the drugs that we take to make sure they are two things: safe and effective—safe and effective.

But what about dietary supplements? Well, we passed something called DSHEA, the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act. The law made some progress, but there was a problem with it. Manufacturers of dietary supplements—get this now—manufacturers of those vitamins and minerals that are for sale in all those shops and all those drugstores are not required to tell the Food and Drug Administration what products they are selling in the United States, under what names. They are not required to disclose to the FDA what is in those products or where they are manufactured. And believe me, a lot of them are manufactured outside the United States. So when it comes to dietary supplements, the Food and Drug Administration and American consumers are pretty much flying blind.

Making matters worse, since 1994, this dietary supplement industry has grown dramatically. Listen to these figures. In 1994, there were 4,000 dietary supplements sold in the United States. Today, as I said earlier, the number is as high as 80,000. So in 27, 30 years, we have seen the number of dietary supplements for sale go from 4,000 to 80,000.

Now, in 1994, dietary supplements were a \$4 billion industry—today, over \$50 billion in annual revenue.

Let me give you an example of one ingredient sold in dietary supplements today in the United States. It is called tianeptine. It can produce opioid-like effects. It is a prescription anti-depressant in some countries, but it is not approved for any use in the United States of America. Yet it is inexpensive and easy to produce. Some have nicknamed it "gas station heroin" because you can buy it easily at gas stations across America. You can buy it online—one click, delivered to your door.

It is marketed as a safe supplement that can improve users' moods and enhance concentration. How many ads do you see on television—maybe I am paying closer attention to them these days—that say: Take this supplement, and your memory is better. You can concentrate more.

You are smiling, Mr. President, because we have all seen them. They are on television all the time.

It is marketed also as a way to fight substance use disorders, this tianeptine. So last year, Consumer Reports—and I respect this magazine very much—published the results of an investigation it conducted into this supplement. It told the story of a Michigan woman who had used heroin for 10 years and survived countless overdoses and arrests. After her sister overdosed and died, she decided it was time to get clean. She was frightened. She was desperate enough to try anything. She