

While Democrats may wish it weren't so, the fact of the matter is that our country will still need oil and natural gas for years to come; and if Democrats and the President didn't want Americans to be paying sky-high prices to fill their cars, they need to focus on encouraging responsible oil and gas production here at home, which, I might add, puts Americans to work in good-paying jobs and develops these resources with fewer emissions than are produced in other countries. Forcing our country to increase our reliance on foreign energy sources will do nothing but drive up energy prices, not to mention jeopardizing national security. Boosting domestic production, on the other hand, would drive down energy prices while ensuring that we don't have to rely on dictators or unstable countries for energy.

In addition to our energy and inflation crises, we are also facing a massive crisis at the southern border. Almost from the day the President took office, we have seen a huge surge in the number of individuals attempting to illegally make their way across the southern border. In March alone, U.S. Customs and Border Protection encountered 221,303 individuals attempting to cross our southern border illegally. In the first quarter of 2022, more than half a million individuals were apprehended while trying to get across our southern border. And the influx shows no signs of stopping.

And what has the President done to address this crisis? Next to nothing. In fact, the truth is that this is a crisis largely of the President's own making. The series of actions that he has taken to weaken border security and immigration enforcement has encouraged a flood of illegal immigration across our southern border. In fact, the President's lawyers are over at the Supreme Court today arguing against a measure to discourage illegal immigration.

And now the President is on track to make our current border crisis much worse by lifting title 42 COVID-19 restrictions that have provided for the immediate deportation of individuals who have crossed the border illegally. Once these restrictions are lifted, the Department of Homeland Security expects as many as 18,000 migrants per day—18,000 per day—to attempt to cross our southern border.

I mentioned that we have seen more than half a million attempted illegal crossings in the first 3 months of this year. Without title 42 restrictions, we could be seeing more than half a million attempted crossings each month, and it is clear that the President has no substantive plan in place to deal with such a surge.

I was relieved—as I think a lot of Americans were and I think a lot of Democrats, honestly, here in the Senate—that yesterday a Federal judge issued an order temporarily preserving title 42. But this is not a permanent solution to the problem. Title 42 should not be lifted until the President has a

robust plan in place for discouraging illegal immigration, securing our border, preventing human trafficking and drug trafficking, and quickly deporting those who seek to illegally enter our country.

So here is where we are, Mr. President: We have an inflation crisis that is driving up costs for American families. We have an energy crisis, with sky-high gas prices fueling pain at the pump. And we have a security, humanitarian, and enforcement crisis at our southern border. That is what a year and a quarter of Democratic governance looks like.

And since Democrats show no signs of taking steps to address these crises, that is what Democratic governance is likely to look like for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, the American people will continue to pay the price.

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. CASSIDY. 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 JOHNNIE JONES

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, today my State and I think the entire country should both mourn the loss and celebrate the life of an American hero and dedicated civil rights leader—Johnnie Jones, who recently died at age 102 but in his 102 years fought for our country, fought for the free world, and also fought to bring civil rights to a better place.

During World War II, Johnnie Jones helped storm the beaches of Normandy as part of D-day, liberate France from Nazi occupation—along the way, being part of the Battle of the Bulge. He was injured during the D-day invasion when his ship hit a mine, and he suffered shrapnel wounds from German air attacks, but he never stopped fighting.

When he came back, he attended Southern Law School and then led civil rights efforts in Baton Rouge. He legally represented the organizers at the Baton Rouge bus boycott, which served as a forerunner or a template for the Montgomery bus boycott. Throughout his career, he took on several civil rights cases, advocating for equality under the law, and served a term in the Louisiana House of Representatives.

His commitment to service and his love of our country was not just admirable but inspiring.

Last year, I had the honor to present him with a Purple Heart for the wounds he received during the D-day invasion in 1944.

My grandson has been to the World War II Museum in New Orleans—a tremendous museum—and he is now very much into the heroism of our soldiers who were in both World War II and World War I. So I took my grandson to meet Mr. Jones because I wanted him to meet a real-life hero.

Here you see him at 102—so proud of his medals, saluting.

My grandson, just the other day, said: Papaw, remind me of that man we met. So his meeting Mr. Jones 2 years ago has inspired a 7-year-old to live his life a better way.

So, as Mr. Jones salutes us, shall we all be inspired, shall we always remember the heroism abroad and the heroism here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

EARTH DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as Lady Bird Johnson said, "The environment is where we all meet, where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share."

This quote from when she served as First Lady of the United States during President Lyndon Baines Johnson's time in office, from 1963 to 1969, still resonates with us today as we commemorate Earth Day 2022 and reflect on our relationship with nature and the world we share with each of us every day.

April 22, 1970, marked the first annual Earth Day, which led to the formation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—the Agency that is responsible for implementing environmental regulations and standards.

We have made great strides in protecting the environment and public health through the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act, but the data and science surrounding the harmful effects of climate change are alarming. Climate change is harming our ecosystems, waterways, forests, wildlife, and our general environment.

This year's sustainable development goals theme and call to action is "Invest in Our Planet." The question for climate action is no longer "if" or "when" but "how much?" if we want to have a healthy, habitable Earth.

Strong policies that protect our water resources, fisheries, and wildlife and address the challenges of climate change are a top priority of mine in my role as a member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

I applaud President Biden for setting forth ambitious but attainable climate-friendly goals, driven by science, to help preserve the health and safety of our planet and the public. I applaud President Biden's Executive actions in January of 2021 to reverse steps President Trump took that weakened Federal protections under the Endangered Species Act. I applaud President Biden's commitment to conserving 30 percent of America's lands and oceans by 2030, also known as the America the Beautiful Initiative.

With the understanding that we need to meet the moment on climate change and preserve our planet, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which President Biden signed into law last November. This

historic legislation serves as a significant downpayment on our future as we seek to strengthen resiliency and mitigation measures against flooding and sea level rise; shift towards greener, cleaner energy and technology; and form meaningful habits to clean up the world around us by recycling, composting, and disposing of waste products properly.

The threat of sea level rise and warming temperatures is already detrimental to our coastlines and ecosystems, especially along the Chesapeake Bay. With numerous and successful restoration efforts underway, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act authorizes an additional \$238 million to the Chesapeake Bay Program to make even bigger reductions in nutrient pollution to improve water quality in the surrounding tributaries.

In partnership with local jurisdictions, stakeholders, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the bipartisan infrastructure act will deliver \$37.5 million in Federal funding for the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Project. The purpose of the project is to rebuild the declining James and Barren Islands in Dorchester County and provide a substantial increase of habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species by repurposing dredged material from the shipping channels for the Port of Baltimore. This is beneficial use of dredged material to keep our channels at the necessary depth for commerce but do it in a way that restores our environment. Wetlands provide natural flood control solutions as climate change brings increasingly frequent and severe weather events.

We only have one planet, which is why every decision and every failure to act matters.

I would like to thank our Federal workforce this Earth Day for its efforts to maximize this window for action on climate and environmental justice. The Biden administration has directed each Federal Agency to take strong action when it comes to dealing with our climate and environmental justice. Many civil servants are working around the clock to promulgate rules, strategy documents, and much, much more. For example, White House officials this month announced equity action plans for more than 90 Federal Agencies designed to combat systemic barriers to opportunities in underserved communities.

Each day of COP26 U.N. Climate Change Conference in Glasgow explored a new topic. Our Senate delegation had an opportunity to attend on the day that was devoted toward Nature Day. I mention that because our nature depends upon us dealing with the climate agenda.

I would just call to my colleagues' attention the series that is hosted by former President Barack Obama, "Our Great National Parks." Take a look at how important it is in preserving our environment for the species around us,

which affects not only their ability to live but our ability to live.

The month of April represents the opportunity to celebrate other related environmental and nature-focused holidays, such as Arbor Day, which falls on April 29 this year. My home State commemorated Maryland Arbor Day at the beginning of the month, on April 9. This year, we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Arbor Day. The goal of Arbor Day is to celebrate nature within our communities by organizing tree planting or trash and litter cleanups. As President Franklin Delano Roosevelt remarked, "A nation that destroys its soil destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."

The bipartisan infrastructure law also provides \$275 million grant funding for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Post-Consumer Materials Management Infrastructure Grant Program, which the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act established. This program will help prevent plastic waste from entering our environment in the first place. The program will provide grants to States to improve local waste management systems, including municipal recycling programs, and to improve postconsumer materials management and infrastructure to reduce plastic waste in our waterways and oceans, ultimately protecting our planet.

I agree with Paul Hawken, who said this in a commencement address at the University of Portland in 2009:

At present, we are stealing the future, selling it in the present, and calling it gross domestic product. We can just as easily have an economy that is based on healing the future instead of stealing it. We can either create assets for the future or take the assets of the future. One is called restoration and the other [is called] exploitation. And whenever we exploit the earth we exploit people and cause untold suffering. Working for the earth is not a way to get rich, it is a way to be rich.

Protecting our planet is a collective and ongoing effort. While we still have much to do, I am encouraged by the legislative and administrative progress we have made so far. I urge my colleagues to take the next step and pass the Build Back Better Act—transformative legislation for a clean energy economy.

This Earth Day, let us heed Paul Hawken's comments: "Working for the earth is not a way to get rich, it is a way to be rich."

With that, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The clerk will call the roll. The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. 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 ALVARO M. BEDOYA

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, if the nanny state had a mascot, it would be the

Federal Trade Commission. In fact, back in the 1970s, the FTC earned the nickname the "National Nanny"—this, after it went on a rulemaking binge, one that triggered an unprecedented congressional response.

In response to that binge, Congress defunded the Agency for several days. In fact, it refused formally to reauthorize the Commission for some 14 years after that. Thankfully, the FTC changed approach by reining in its rulemaking initiatives. Congress, however, did not learn its lesson and has continued to grant the FTC broad powers over the years. These grants of power and the lack of congressional will have helped put the FTC on a trajectory that looks eerily similar to its "National Nanny" era.

Under the leadership of Lina Khan, the FTC has only accelerated into this trajectory and is now being transformed into a bigger and more invasive national nanny than ever could have been imagined in the 1970s. Her vision is to transform what is an enforcement Agency into a broader, largely independent regulatory Agency. This move would reduce the congressional oversight of key economic regulation and would also have serious negative implications for countless businesses across the Nation that could find themselves subject to the whims of an unelected, arbitrary, capricious, out-of-control Agency. The FTC is on course to take significant new powers so that it can use its already broad authorities under section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act and elsewhere to regulate huge swaths of the American economy.

We, accordingly, need to be very careful when considering nominees to the Commission.

As a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, I took seriously my consideration of Mr. Bedoya's nomination and spoke with him on multiple occasions regarding his nomination and regarding his vision for the Federal Trade Commission. During his nomination hearing, I took careful note of my questions to Mr. Bedoya and to his responses to ascertain his vision for the Commission and his view on the scope of the FTC's power. His answers did little to calm my concerns. In fact, they did much to add to my worries, not only about his nomination but about the future of the Commission at large.

During my questioning, Mr. Bedoya signaled that he would use section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act to conduct unfair methods of competition rulemaking. That, of course, would be a dangerous expansion of the FTC's rulemaking power, one that would occur without a congressional grant of authority.

He refused to share his views on the FTC's repeal of its vertical merger guidelines.

He didn't answer when I asked about his views on Lina Khan's use of zombie votes, or proxy votes, of ex-commissioners after they had left the Commission.