

compiled by the city of Louisville last year found that morale—morale—among our officers is alarmingly low. A full 75 percent would leave for another police department. Not surprisingly, this has led to a severe staffing shortage on the force. Our police chief even took out billboard ads in Atlanta—in Atlanta—to try to recruit officers from other cities.

Now more than ever, we need to fund law enforcement, support police officers, and back the blue, but too many Democrats are apparently bent on doing just the opposite. The far left's call to defund the police has taken root at every level of government. Elected officials—sworn to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution—have chosen instead to amplify distrust of the men and women who work every day to enforce our laws.

So let's just consider whom the Biden administration has prioritized for confirmation to top jobs in the Justice Department.

There is the new U.S. attorney with a reputation for pushing to cancel entire categories of the Criminal Code and the assistant attorneys general who have advocated for efforts to "decrease police budgets" and "invest less in police."

There is the newly minted Supreme Court Justice who advocated in her last job that the COVID pandemic was an appropriate reason to let inmates out of jail right here in Washington.

Just last week, our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee considered a nominee to the circuit court with an unapologetic record of hostility toward law enforcement. Without any basis in fact, Nusrat Choudhury suggested that police murdering unarmed Black men "happens every day." Happens every day?

When our colleague the junior Senator from Louisiana called her out on it, the nominee tried to claim that she had only made the statement as an act of "rhetorical advocacy"—"rhetorical advocacy"—on behalf of a client.

Unsurprisingly, that answer hasn't done much to ease the concerns of America's law enforcement community. Major organizations representing officers—from the Sergeants Benevolent Association to the National Sheriffs' Association, to the Fraternal Order of Police—have voiced strong, strong opposition and called on President Biden to "take a stand against this dangerous and absurdly—absurdly—"divisive rhetoric."

Well, needless to say, the President and his administration need to do a lot more than that to prove to the men and women of law enforcement that they have their backs.

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Now, Mr. President, on another matter, last week, President Biden offered a particularly candid look at his view of education in America. In speaking at an awards ceremony for public school teachers, he remarked:

They're not somebody else's children. They're like yours when they're in the classroom.

Unfortunately, this wasn't a mistake. It was actually a rather accurate summary of the increasingly radical way he and his party think of children in America.

When it comes to the respective roles of parents and teachers, Democrats have used the past 2 years of the pandemic disruptions to show their true colors. They have shoveled money into woke training, like the North Carolina program to help preschool teachers "deconstruct whiteness"—"deconstruct whiteness." They have torn up time-tested procedures as in one California district's move to institute an equity lottery for admissions. Last fall, the former chair of the Democratic National Committee ran a gubernatorial campaign, saying:

I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach. Suffice it to say, parents in Virginia saw things differently.

Across America, parents have rejected the radical liberal campaign to make education a "one size fits all government knows best" proposition. From coast to coast—even in deep-blue bastions like San Francisco—they have sent rogue local administrators packing and asserted their rights and responsibilities as the first and most important teachers of their children.

Yesterday, Senate Republicans made clear once again that we stand with the parents of America. A bipartisan majority adopted Senator THUNE's resolution of disapproval on one of the Biden administration's most egregious violations of parents' rights and kids' well-being.

Masking children as young as 2 in Head Start Programs across the country, including outside on the playground—including outside on the playground—flies in the face of what even the World Health Organization considers settled science. And it has seriously damaged parents' confidence in the systems to which they entrust their children for hours every day.

So I was proud to join a majority of my colleagues last night to express the Senate's opposition to this unconscionable policy. Ah, but make no mistake: This is not the last we will hear about the far left's efforts to grab more control over how America raises its kids.

As we speak, Senate Democrats are trying to resurrect portions of the failed reckless taxing-and-spending spree they spent most of last year trying to ram through on party lines. That proposal includes the Toddler Takeover that would stick American families with dramatically higher costs and dramatically less choice in the market for childcare.

More redtape for independent providers, special subsidies for bureaucracies' preferred one-size-fits-all systems, outright hostility toward the faith-based options that are preferred by a majority of families who use out-

side-the-home childcare, and nothing—nothing at all—for families who choose to have a full-time parent or another family member look after their kids; just the latest example of a massive overreach the American people never asked for.

The Biden administration is having a hard enough time with basic governing responsibilities like national security, energy independence, and controlling inflation. American families, and especially children, will be a whole lot better off the sooner the Democrats stop looking for even more ways to fail them.

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. CARDIN. 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.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I have taken this time to talk about National Small Business Week, but because of the events of the last 48 hours, I need to comment on the Justice Alito draft opinion that, if it were adopted by the Supreme Court, would overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

I find this draft opinion to be outrageous. It puts the health, well-being, and constitutional rights of women across the Nation in great jeopardy, particularly those low-income women.

Thirty-six million women of reproductive age would be at risk if the Alito opinion became the ruling of the Supreme Court.

We look to our courts to protect and expand our constitutional protections, not to contract and weaken the constitutional protections, reversing nearly 50 years of legal precedent of *Roe v. Wade*.

What we need to do is to make sure that this body does everything we can to protect women's rights and to protect their healthcare right to make their own decision.

I am pleased that 16 States, including the District of Columbia, have taken action to protect women's rights, including my own State of Maryland, but we need to do more. We need to pass the Women's Health Protection Act. I am a cosponsor of that—proud to be a cosponsor of it—which would codify *Roe v. Wade* to protect reproductive rights for women. I hope we will have the opportunity to do that. I think we all recognize that we have a responsibility to act before the Supreme Court makes its ruling that could jeopardize the constitutional rights.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Now, Mr. President, I do want to speak about National Small Business Week, which is this week, May 1 through 7.

I have the honor of chairing the Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Committee here in the U.S. Senate, and I have the opportunity as chair to talk about small businesses 52 weeks a year and to brag about what small businesses are doing.

This week gives us the opportunity to highlight for every American the incredible contributions small businesses make to our economy.

National Small Business Week is an annual reminder of how important small businesses are to the success of America. Small businesses are the lifeblood of our national economy and our local communities. There are more than 32 million small businesses across the Nation, and they support more than 61 million jobs.

As Congress works to address the myriad of challenges facing our country from climate change to foreign conflicts, the issues facing small business owners can be drowned out. That is why I asked to be a member of the Small Business Committee when I first entered the U.S. Senate in 2007.

The committee is one of the smaller committees in terms of resources and staff, but I know that it was going to be a place where I could support entrepreneurs, those in my home State of Maryland and nationwide, who are focused on creating the companies, products, services, and technologies of the future.

That is where job growth will take place in this country. More jobs are created through small business than through larger companies. That is where innovation takes place in this country, where we find ways to deal with challenges, as we saw during COVID-19. But it is also where small businesses do not have the same resiliency to deal with downturns in our economy. That is why it was so important for us to act in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two years ago, as our Nation faced a threat of a once-in-a-century global pandemic, supporting our small business owners was one of my top priorities. I will always be proud of the swift, bipartisan action this body took to ensure that our vibrant small business sector would not be a casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Congress has created several new programs to support small businesses, including the Paycheck Protection Program that was there to protect the workforce in small business; the EIDL Advance Grant Program, which provided some capital for small businesses during the pandemic and provided, through its loan program, the longer term capital that was needed during this period of time; the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program that dealt with businesses that were basically ordered to close during the pandemic because of the public health risk; the Restaurant Revitalization Fund that was aimed at an industry that was so badly devastated as a result of COVID-19 when people would not go out to restaurants; and several

other initiatives that we passed during that period of time.

We have appropriated more than \$1 trillion to the Small Business Administration to fund these initiatives and others, and it has been critical to the survival of small businesses and now to our own economic recovery.

Several independent studies have confirmed that the SBA's implementation of these programs was largely successful and improved over time, especially in terms of equity reaching the underserved communities. The improvement is the result of thoughtful policies Congress has implemented, as well as the Biden administration's efforts to invest in underserved entrepreneurs.

Americans registered a record-setting 5.4 million new small businesses this last year, which was a 1-million increase over the prior record of 4.4 million. So we are responding. The small business community is vibrant. Even better, this increase is occurring in some of our most underserved communities with minorities—specifically minority women—driving the entrepreneurial surge.

So this year's theme for National Small Business Week, "Building a Better America Through Entrepreneurship," could not be more fitting, and it should serve as a clarion call for every Member of Congress.

We simply cannot let this opportunity pass us by. Instead, we in Congress must tap into and bolster the entrepreneurial spirit that is sweeping our Nation to build a fairer and more just economy for all.

The good news: We already know how we can do this because that is what we did during the pandemic. Several independent studies have confirmed that small business relief programs we created over the past 2 years improved over time. The improvement was the result of policies, many of which were bipartisan, that directly addressed the structural barriers that make it more difficult for women, minorities, and other underserved entrepreneurs to start and grow successful businesses.

In the years ahead, Congress must leverage the inroads that the SBA has made into these previously underserved communities so that critical services and business loan products can better reach entrepreneurs who need them the most.

The most immediate action we can take is to replenish the Restaurant Revitalization Fund. This is a matter of basic fairness. There are still more than 177,000 outstanding applications for the Restaurant Revitalization Fund. These are restaurants that qualified for the relief but, because there were not enough funds in the program appropriated by Congress and because of the original confusion on application priorities, they were not able to get the funds even though they were eligible and they needed the funds. In some States, as many as 6 in 10 requests for grants remain unmet.

So Congress cannot mistake the hopeful indicators of recovery for a sign that restaurants and bars are back to where they were prior to the pandemic. They are not. Many bars and restaurants are still months behind on rent and other bills, and they also must deal with increased supply costs as a result of supply chain issues and labor costs. They still need our support. The need is still there, and fairness requires us to act.

I want to thank Senator WICKER for working with me to introduce bipartisan legislation that will replenish this critical program and provide support to other hard-hit industries.

In the longer term, there are three policies that Congress should enact to better support the surge of interest in entrepreneurship and make our economy more diverse and resilient in the future.

First, Congress should create a direct lending program at the SBA that will allow for another avenue for access to capital, filling the current gaps in our financial ecosystem. A reimagined direct lending program would allow entrepreneurs to apply directly to the SBA or through community lenders for small Federal loans.

We know that many underserved entrepreneurs are discouraged even from applying for a business loan because of the high rates of rejection. Commercial banks tend to deal with their existing customers. They also tend to want larger loans or the larger of the small businesses, not the smaller, the startups of the small businesses. A direct lending program from the SBA could help.

Second, Congress should codify the Community Advantage loan program. The loan program is particularly successful in getting capital to underserved entrepreneurs. We have a track record under the Community Advantage Program. It works. It reaches those communities that have been left out in the past.

I am grateful for the Biden administration's recent announcement that it will extend the program for 2 years and implement changes to make the program more helpful to underserved small businesses. For example, the administration will increase the maximum loan size and expand the number of lenders in the program to provide loans to more underserved entrepreneurs.

Third, Congress should give SBA the tools and resources to nurture the next generation of entrepreneurs by creating a network of incubators and accelerators on the campuses of our Nation's historically Black colleges and universities, minority-serving institutions, and community colleges.

In Maryland, our State HBCUs and community colleges play a key role in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. They are resource partners for the SBA. They host business incubators and accelerators, and they leverage their relationship with the underserved communities to lift up the entrepreneurs in

those communities. We need to do the same on a national scale and support our resource partners.

These are commonsense policies that will unlock the growth potential of our Nation's entrepreneurs and help us to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in a stronger, fairer way.

As we celebrate National Small Business Week, let us also double down on the investments we have made in our entrepreneurs over the past 2 years. Let us once again put partisanship aside and pass thoughtful legislation that addresses the root causes of the issues that our Nation's entrepreneurs face on a daily basis.

We can do this. During this week, let us rededicate ourselves to help America's small businesses, help fairness and opportunity in this country, and help our economy grow even stronger.

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. THUNE. 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.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Monday's leak of a draft opinion in the Dobbs Supreme Court case was an unprecedented and deeply disturbing breach of confidentiality that almost always surrounds Supreme Court deliberations. It is difficult to think this was anything but an escalation in the radical left's campaign to bully the Supreme Court into delivering decisions in line with the priorities of the Democratic Party. From Court-packing threats to threats from the Democratic leader himself that were directed to specific Justices, attempting to intimidate the Supreme Court has become par for the course for liberals, but Monday's leak represents a new low.

Almost as disturbing as the leak has been the reaction from my Democratic colleagues. Their hysterical comments have been focused almost entirely on the prospect of their getting an outcome they don't want in the Dobbs case. I have seen almost no concern about how the leak will affect the integrity of the Supreme Court as an institution, and their activist base has gone out of its way to praise the leaker.

More than one Democrat has actually called for undermining the integrity of the Supreme Court by packing the Court with additional Justices. Yes, that is the result of what happened yesterday among Democrats. More than one Democratic Senator believes that the proper response to a Supreme Court decision you don't like is to add additional Justices to the Court until you can be confident that you will get the outcomes you want.

Other Democratic Senators have proposed undermining the integrity of the

U.S. Senate by abolishing the Senate filibuster rule—again, in order to be sure that they can get the legislative outcome they want in response to this possible decision in the Dobbs case.

Mr. President, regardless of what side you are on in this debate, you should be willing to stand up for the rule of law and the integrity of our institutions. That shouldn't be a partisan issue. Our system of government depends upon the rule of law, which is based upon an independent judiciary, free of political pressure or partisan influence.

Do Democrats really want a future in which Supreme Court decisions are made based on political pressure or bullying rather than on the Justices' impartial application of the law and the Constitution to the case before them? Maybe they do. But if they continue to push in that direction, they will end up sacrificing our system of government in the process.

Mr. President, I have strong beliefs in any number of issues, including abortion, but above all, I believe in our system of government and in the rule of law. While I will fight passionately in support of the causes I believe in, I will not sacrifice the integrity of our institutions for what would ultimately be nothing but temporary political gain. It is starting to seem like most of my Democratic colleagues disagree with that position. That may possibly be a recipe for political success, but it is also a recipe for destroying free government.

I am glad that Chief Justice Roberts has taken steps to investigate this unprecedented breach of trust at the Court, and I hope that he will receive the full support of the Department of Justice should this turn out to be a criminal matter. It is difficult to overstate how much this breach could erode trust among Justices and Supreme Court staff, and I hope the damage is minimized by a quick identification of the party responsible. I hope every one of the Justices will continue to feel free to do their jobs and follow the facts, the law, and the Constitution.

At least one Democrat has suggested Republicans are spending more time commenting on the leak than on the content of Justice Alito's draft because we are somehow scared to talk about our pro-life decision. Let me be perfectly clear: We are not. I am proud to defend the right to life, and I know my colleagues are as well.

I think most of us have refrained from commenting because we don't yet truly know the outcome. But I will say this. I hope Justice Alito's opinion ends up being the majority opinion. As I have long believed, *Roe v. Wade* was a terrible decision by an activist Court that reached far beyond the Constitution and the Court's interpretive role to impose a new abortion regime on the entire country. I hope the Supreme Court overturns *Roe* and returns the question of abortion to the American people and their elected representatives, where it belongs.

The fight to defend life is in keeping with our highest ideals, our passion for justice, our dedication to human rights, and our compassion for the innocent and the vulnerable. I am grateful for all the Americans who have fought to make sure the right to life of vulnerable human beings is protected and have spent their time and their resources helping moms in need. I look forward to a day, which I hope is soon approaching, when innocent, unborn Americans will enjoy the full protection of the law.

I yield the floor.

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. BARRASSO. 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.

ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the need that we have here in this country for more energy—and specifically, more American energy.

On Thursday, Leader SCHUMER and NANCY PELOSI held a press conference, and they announced they had finally come up with an energy plan. After nearly a year—a year of Joe Biden's energy crisis where he killed the Keystone XL Pipeline, struck down leasing—it is good to see they finally have a plan.

It turns out this official Democrat energy plan is not going to create one more drop of American energy. So what will the plan do? Well, if you look at it, you will see it sends bureaucrats—unelected, unaccountable, heavy-handed bureaucrats—to shake down energy companies. Instead of producing more American energy, they want more Federal investigations into American energy.

It won't lower the price of energy—no, not by a single penny. If anything, it might actually increase energy costs across our country. People in Wyoming this past weekend were paying \$4 a gallon for gasoline. It doesn't take a Federal investigation to figure out what is wrong here with energy in America. We know why prices are up: supply and demand. Very simple. Demand for energy is up, and supply is not. Supply is actually down.

Yet, after a year of high prices, Democrats still refuse to admit it, ignoring inflation, not facing the facts that we have the American energy in the ground here and they won't let us get it out.

But now the Democrats are coming up with election-year conspiracy theories. They say high prices aren't happening because of the law of economics. They are saying it is happening because of secret backroom deals. Democrats claim it is an international conspiracy rigged by a global oil market.