

bodies. This is an attack on their freedom, a denial of Americans' right to privacy.

Criminalizing abortion is wrong, plain and simple. And you have to ask and certainly people from one end of the country to another tonight are going to ask, how can this be allowed to stand?

Tonight is not the end of this battle. The Senate has taken one vote. Now Americans must cast their vote and make it clear whether they want to be part of MITCH MCCONNELL's new reality.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

INFLATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about America's inflation crisis. And it is a crisis.

Today, Americans woke up to basically two gut punches: One, they found that gas prices are the highest they have ever been—ever—in the history of this country and, the second, that the inflation number is still incredibly high and actually higher than was anticipated by the government's so-called specialists.

Well, last week, the senior Senator from Illinois came to this floor, and he said Republicans want the midterm elections to be about inflation and the border. I think the Senator intended his comments to be a criticism of Republicans, but I would point out to the Senator from Illinois, that is exactly what the American people say this election ought to be about: inflation and the border. It is not Republicans who are making that the election issue for 2022. No, it is what the American people say they want to vote on.

Frankly, it is also the Democrats because they created both of these crises. So this is going to be an up-or-down vote on how well the Democrats have done with the border and with our economy and the inflation that is crushing so many families at home all across the country.

Nobody forced the Democrats to vote to cram a \$2 trillion spending bill through Congress last March. Oh, no. Party-line vote—the Democrats in this body, NANCY PELOSI and the Democrats in the House, and Joe Biden only 2 months into his Presidency. Democrats said: Oh, no, no. It is coronavirus.

That is what they said it was for, but when you take a look at that bill, only \$1 out of every \$11 actually went for medical care. The rest went to a big Democrat wish list that includes government checks to illegal immigrants. These are criminals behind bars who received checks from the government

in the name of coronavirus relief. Nobody forced the Democrats to open the southern border. So the crisis that we have of inflation and the crisis that we have on the border are both crises of choice by the Democrats.

Now, here we are, 15 months into the Democrats' administration. The No. 1 issue in America today is inflation—40-year-high inflation numbers. Nine out of 10 Americans—Mr. President, I would just point out 9 out of 10 Americans hardly ever agree on anything, but 9 out of 10 Americans are concerned and upset about inflation. It is really not hard to see why.

This week, just like last week, terrible economic news for working families: gas prices, again, at an alltime high. The price of a gallon of gasoline today is \$2 higher for each and every gallon when people go to fill up than the day Joe Biden became President. This morning, a new alltime high. Yesterday an alltime high. Higher yet this morning for gasoline. Inflation, a 40-year high.

The prices are going up much faster than wages. In fact, this gap between prices and wages continues to grow. People are falling further and further behind. The average family is poorer today than they were the day Joe Biden took office in terms of their ability to buy goods and services in our economy from the dollars they have in their pockets. This is even for people who have gotten raises.

People can't afford necessities like baby formula, if they can find baby formula—a hard time finding that all across the country. It finally made the national news last night, but I have been hearing about it in Wyoming now for a number of weeks.

Credit card debt is also near an alltime high. Why? Because people in the Biden economy are having to borrow more and more money just to get by. And the interest rates on these credit cards are also at an alltime high. So people are being punished again and again and again in so many ways that they turn in the Biden economy. People are paying more and more and getting less and less, and people are not happy.

People have been pushed to the breaking point, and they are angry. And they are angry at the Democrats, who put us, as a Nation, into this mess. Americans haven't been this pessimistic about the economy since the great recession. When they look at Washington, DC, they see a Senate with CHUCK SCHUMER claiming to be in charge, a majority in the Senate; they look at NANCY PELOSI claiming to be in charge of the House and Joe Biden in the White House saying he is in charge there.

Yet the President spoke yesterday and spoke today, and for the people in charge, he wants no responsibility for what is happening in this country with this economy. He said it yesterday. He said it again today. He was full of blame, full of excuses, full of not tell-

ing the truth to the American people. He blamed somebody else.

It took him just 30 minutes in his speech. Joe Biden blamed—let me go through this whole list of the folks he blamed in just 30 minutes. He blamed coronavirus. He blamed Russia. He blamed meatpacking. He blamed shipping. He blamed Republicans. He blamed oil companies. He blamed everybody but himself.

At the same time, he actually admitted in the speech that Democrats are in power. They don't have power to do anything other than blame other people. He admitted that Democrats control the White House and the House and the Senate.

We do not have a Harry Truman moment here, who said, "The buck stops here." Oh, no, no. Joe Biden keeps trying to pass the buck. He has been finger-pointing at Republicans, and in doing so, he earned three Pinocchios from the Washington Post. Those are the people who look into this and say, Is the President really telling the truth? No, no, no. Three Pinocchios.

Yet Joe Biden, after receiving that grade, the failing grade from the Washington Post, he repeated the same lie yesterday, finger-pointing again and again. He is telling people that he cut spending. He hasn't. In fact, Joe Biden has been the most economically reckless President in the history of this country—reckless.

The American people remember that Joe Biden took \$2 trillion on the credit card with a bill that he had passed by the House and the Senate and signed in March. He was gleeful at the signing ceremony. He signed the single most expensive spending bill in the history of the country.

Inflation started soon thereafter. The crisis mounted month after month after he had signed the bill. Oh, you remember when the President said: Oh, it is transitory. Forget about it. Don't look over there. Go away quickly.

Month after month after month, the President dismissed it, ignored it, denied it. The American people remember that, just 6 months later, Joe Biden tried to pass another massive spending bill. Joe Biden has never cut a dime of spending in his life, but he has added trillions of dollars to our debt.

What did he get us? The worst inflation in 40 years and a stagnant economy. There are still a million fewer Americans working today than there were before the pandemic struck.

Under Joe Biden, we have created a lot fewer jobs than the economists expected. The economists have gotten it wrong again and again. They got it wrong in terms of how many jobs they expected to be made, and they got it wrong today when they thought what the inflation rate would be. And, in both cases, their projections were more optimistic than the actual results turned out to be.

Last year, we created fewer jobs in America than were projected without the spending bill, and he said the

spending bill was going to get us more jobs.

Economists' projections of our economy just keep going lower and lower and lower. Now the experts are predicting a recession. A recession is when the economy shrinks for 6 months. We are already halfway there. In the first 3 months of this year, the economy did shrink. Why? Well, because of inflation.

As former Obama economic adviser Austan Goolsbee said on Friday, it is an awful situation. Oh, yes, it is. High inflation is going to lead to higher interest rates, which will slow down our economy even more.

Last week, the Federal Reserve issued the biggest hike in interest rates in 22 years. The Fed also indicated that it is just the beginning; we are going to have more rate hikes coming. This will slow down the economy even further.

And on top of all this, this may be too little, too late by an administration that is very slow on the trigger. The damage of inflation has been done. The average American family today is paying \$100 a week more just to buy the same things that they bought last year. That is \$5,200 a year more this year than last year because of the way Joe Biden has mishandled and mismanaged our American economy.

Prices are going up. Interest rates are going up. The economy is slowing down. What is Joe Biden going to do? Regrettably, he is trying to double down.

So to the senior Senator from Illinois, the midterm elections, as he said, will be about inflation and will be about the crisis and the chaos at the southern border, whether the Senator likes it or not.

The American people are suffering. They feel stuck. They feel stressed. They feel squeezed. They are begging and pleading with Democrats in Washington: Stop the reckless spending. Unleash American energy. We have plenty of it in the ground. Let us get it out and bring this Democrat inflation nightmare to an end.

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. TOOMEY. 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 JULIA RUTH GORDON

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the nomination of Julia Gordon to serve as HUD Assistant Secretary and Commissioner of the Federal Housing Administration, or FHA.

First, some context. Under President Biden, inflation has risen to an astounding 40-year high, as we all know and as we are reminded every day by prices all around us. But inflation isn't

the only thing rising under President Biden's watch; so is violent crime. Many cities across the country saw a rise in murders last year, continuing a surge in the national homicide rate to its highest level in over two decades.

We are facing a crimewave, and how have our local Democratic leaders responded? Well, often, we have radical prosecutors who recommended lenient sentences for violent felons. Some are even declining to prosecute whole categories of offenses. Some States have adopted so-called bail reform that is designed to keep offenders from jail entirely. And we can't forget the Democrat efforts to defund the police.

Police have been vilified for easily 2 years now, and what has been the result? Shootings, assaults, and killings of police officers have been on the rise since 2020. Budget cuts have forced veteran police officers into retirement. Municipalities are having real trouble finding new police recruits and, in many cases, keeping the police they currently have on their force.

We should be doing everything we can to support the police who risk their lives to keep us safe.

Despite these terrible developments, the administration has repeatedly nominated individuals with these strong anti-police views. Consider some examples. There is Federal district court judge Nusrat Choudhury, an ACLU lawyer who falsely claimed that "cops kill unarmed Black men in America every single day." When Senator KENNEDY confronted her 2 weeks ago about this demonstrably false anti-police statement, she defended it as "rhetorical advocacy." In addition, multiple Biden administration nominees have expressed support for defunding the police, including HUD nominee Solomon Greene and Kristen Clarke and Vanita Gupta.

With National Police Week starting this Sunday, what a terrible message the Senate is sending to law enforcement by having voted yesterday to confirm Lisa Cook for the Federal Reserve. Professor Cook publicly called for the firing of a professor—a colleague of hers—because he dared to criticize the "defund the police" movement. She actually encouraged donations to the very bail funds that were helping criminals get out of jail during the riots after George Floyd was killed. She also insulted U.S. police officers by comparing their actions to the "heavy-handed tactics" of the Russian police.

Now, to make matters worse, the Senate is being asked to confirm Julia Gordon for FHA Commissioner. Ms. Gordon has a history of very troubling statements denigrating the police. Among other things, she retweeted an inflammatory post that described police officers as "the people killing us." That is how she describes the police.

She also suggested in a letter that she wrote—not a tweet or retweet, a letter she wrote—that cases of police violence are not just outliers but "stem from flawed and biased systems

that require structural change." Ms. Gordon's insinuation that the institution of policing itself requires structural change because police officers are racist—that idea is offensive and, in my view, should disqualify her from holding a senior position in the Federal Government, and that view is shared by the National Sheriffs' Association, a leading law enforcement group which has publicly opposed her nomination.

Ms. Gordon has also spread caustic rhetoric about her fellow Americans residing in Southern States. She retweeted an article that asserted that the South "has rejected nearly everything that's good about this country and has become one big nuclear waste site of choleric, and extremely racialized, resentment."

She has repeatedly disparaged elected Republican officials, including our colleagues Senator GRAHAM and Senator PAUL and former Vice President Pence. Having spread such partisan views, it is hard to imagine her working cooperatively with both parties in Congress to help all American households.

Unfortunately, we don't know the full extent of Ms. Gordon's public statements because she deleted some of her previously public tweets before being nominated. I asked her to try to recover her deleted tweets from Twitter because that is possible, but she refused to comply with this very reasonable request. It kind of makes you wonder, what does she have to hide?

During the nomination process, Ms. Gordon has tried to walk back her past statements, but I think we should focus on what she said before she was nominated and needed the Senate's approval.

I am reminded of something that the poet Maya Angelou said:

When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.

That is good advice when it comes to nominees, especially Ms. Gordon.

If Ms. Gordon's anti-police views and hostility toward one of our two political parties are not sufficient for some of my colleagues to oppose her, I urge them to look at her record on housing policy.

Despite record home and rental prices, Ms. Gordon advocates for throwing more taxpayer money at the housing market despite the fact that it is government intervention that has caused the massive inflation we have seen or a large part of the massive inflation we have seen in the housing market.

As we prepare to start National Police Week this Sunday, I urge my colleagues: Stand up for law enforcement by opposing Julia Gordon.

I ask President Biden to nominate a less radical nominee, someone who supports the police, someone who can garner bipartisan support and who won't exacerbate rising housing costs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.