

With each passing year, the technology competition with China is only intensifying. It is, therefore, imperative that the U.S.-Japan alliance and the Quad increase coordination and innovation in response to technological competition.

The fifth opportunity is in economic leadership in the Indo-Pacific. When President Biden visits the region, I expect him to speak more about the Indo-Pacific economic framework. It is clear that many of our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific are eager to see more U.S. economic leadership.

As a next step, the United States should take the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework's data provisions and turn them into a stand-alone, sector-specific free-trade agreement.

The executive branch should look closely at the U.S.-Japan Digital Trade Agreement of 2019 as a good starting point. This is the most comprehensive and high-standards agreement addressing digital trade barriers.

I was proud to help then-U.S. Trade Representative Bob Lighthizer negotiate this and other bilateral agreements with Japan. Our efforts brought about a more fair and reciprocal trading relationship between our two nations, helping not only our economies but also our workers.

The Biden administration has rightly maintained the Trump administration's tariffs on China as important leverage to uphold fair and reciprocal trade. This is a critical tool in our arsenal, and I hope the current administration continues to use it.

There certainly are other areas where the administration must hold the line against China. The administration could do more to hold communist China accountable for unleashing the COVID-19 pandemic upon the world. It also needs to press Beijing to stop the deadly flow of Chinese-origin fentanyl and fentanyl precursors from flowing across our southern border and killing more than 100,000 Americans a year through overdoses.

And we also know what is at stake when it comes to China's growing military threats against Taiwan. The last administration set a high standard on countering China, and I hope the current administration builds on that success.

I believe there is strong bipartisan consensus in Congress when it comes to the Indo-Pacific and when it comes to the rising opportunities that we see before us to further strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance and the Quad. So I urge President Biden to seize these growing opportunities that I have outlined when he travels to the Indo-Pacific. As the only former American Ambassador serving in this body and as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I stand ready to work with him as he does.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from Maryland.

#### SMALL BUSINESS COVID RELIEF ACT OF 2022

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I take this time to review with my colleagues S. 4008, the Small Business COVID Relief Act of 2022—legislation that Senator SCHUMER has set up for action tomorrow.

I want to start by saying that this bill—and the underlining bill that it deals with, the Restaurant Revitalization Fund—was a bipartisan product in which Democrats and Republicans worked together to help an industry that was in desperate need, the restaurant industry. It provided relief for their revenue losses, and we were proud that we were able to get that passed.

The challenge was that after it was enacted, we provided \$28 billion for the restaurants under the Restaurant Revitalization Fund. In reality, that was not enough money to cover the demand, and we found that where close to 100,000 restaurants were able to qualify and receive funds under that program, 170,000 were shut down through no fault of their own.

So we went to work, Democrats and Republicans, in an effort to rectify that inequity and help an industry that was in desperate need.

We filed legislation in August of last year. And I am proud that it was bipartisan, joined by many of my Democratic colleagues and Republican colleagues. I want to single out Senator ROGER WICKER, who has been the real champion on making sure that we worked in a bipartisan manner. We were joined on the Republican side by Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator ERNST, Senator CASSIDY, Senator HYDE-SMITH, Senator COLLINS, and Senator BLUNT. And others have joined us during the process.

But I want to take you back a little bit before we filed that bill in August of last year. There was legislation filed that would replenish the funds at \$60 billion because we thought \$60 billion was going to be needed in order to complete the funding. I think Senator SINEMA led the effort in filing that legislation.

The difference between the bill that was filed for \$60 billion and the bill that we are going to be considering tomorrow is the bill tomorrow is \$48 billion less. We were able to reduce the amount of dollars that were needed in order to carry this out. Some restaurants have closed. We have tightened up the rules.

And we can not only do that for \$12 billion less than it was initially thought was going to be possible when we had bipartisan support last summer, but we are now able to expand it to other related industries—all of which have had bipartisan legislation in this body—to provide relief. These are industries that were shut down as a result of COVID-19. They had tremendous revenue losses and incurred tremendous debt in order to stay in business.

So we provided in this bill—for the same \$48 billion, we include help for our gyms. We include help for Minor

League Baseball, professional leagues. We provide money for music venues. We provide money for border businesses. We provide money for the bus industry. We were able to do all that, and we are still less money than the original bill that was filed last summer.

We did a couple more things in order to make sure this was done in a very fiscally conservative way. We were able to find some offsets. There were no offsets in those other bills. We found about \$5 billion of offsets that we put in this bill.

We did something else that was not in the original act. We required the SBA to bring in all the applications before they allocate any money. Now, we had them already in the restaurants. These are ones that qualified before. But in the other areas they will receive all the applications, and before they issue any checks, they have to make sure they have adequate resources. If they don't, there is a pro rata reduction so there is no further need for us to be concerned about replenishing the funds.

All those are improvements that were made on the original bipartisan legislation that was filed that is more considerate of the needs, less costly, and more efficient.

Now, we have other protections that are built into this legislation. A restaurant cannot double dip. They have to subtract the moneys that they received under the Paycheck Protection Program, either first or second round of funds, from what they would otherwise be qualified to receive. They have to have a revenue loss that they can document. So there are protections in the bill.

But I want to go to what is the major issue why we really need to make sure we get this done. Because of the way that this was administered, partly as a result of a court action, you had two restaurants side by side, identical in their needs, filing their applications on the same day. One was funded; one was not. The restaurant that was not funded, if it is still in business today, it is very likely that that restaurant owner is taking out loans in order to stay in business and is still trying to be competitive to that restaurant that is next door.

It is very possible that restaurant is having trouble getting help, as all restaurants are having trouble getting help, but cannot compete in salary with that restaurant that got the help and now has to compete and try to get workers, even though they didn't get the same financial assistance. So it is a matter of basic fairness.

I want to go one step further. We in the Congress tried to prioritize those restaurants in underserved communities and traditionally underserved small business owners. We set up a priority line for them to be able to get their help under the Restaurant Revitalization Fund. The court blocked

that line, and we now have small business owners who are literally discriminated against because they were veterans or in underserved communities.

So as a matter of fairness, we really need to get this done. The need is there. We all know how restaurants are operating at less than full capacity today. They are still hurting as a result of COVID-19. This is going back and helping them in regard to their first year of losses—something we should have done a long time ago but something that is desperately needed to get done. So I just really wanted to explain that to our colleagues, why we need to get this done. We finally have an opportunity.

Now, what are we going to be doing? We are going to be working on the motion to proceed. Now, this is not unprecedented. Let me remind my colleagues that the original bill that funded the restaurant fund was emergency funding. So it patterned itself after the relief we gave to the general small business community under the Paycheck Protection Program, which was also emergency funding.

The original bill, under the Paycheck Protection Program, was also underestimated by hundreds of billions of dollars. And we came back—Democrats and Republicans—in a bipartisan way and replenished that fund literally overnight—hundreds of billions of dollars—as emergency funding without offsets.

And now we are trying to finish what we started in regards to the restaurants. It should be—no question about it—emergency funding; but we are, again, trying to be as careful as possible, so we have even found some offsets in order to make this easier for our economy.

There are some who say they worry about what impact it is going to have on our economy. I think keeping small businesses open is pretty important for our economy. But we can tell you the Restaurant Association has informed us that a large part of these funds are going to be used to pay off debt that small business restaurants had to take out in order to stay afloat. So we are going to keep restaurants open. And they are going to be able to pay off their debt, and they are going to be able to add to our community. That is what is at stake here, and that is why we are so protective of making sure we try to get this done.

Now, this is a motion to proceed. I have listened to debate on this floor about how we have to have the Senate work. This is a bipartisan bill dealing with small business on a motion to proceed that will allow us to have the debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate. I don't understand any of my colleagues believing that this is appropriate to filibuster and not give us the 60 votes we need on a motion to proceed. There are a lot of my colleagues who are always talking about reforming the rules in this place. OK. I understand, when we are getting to an emotional issue, it

gets difficult for us to work together; but if we can't work together on a small business bill that was developed by bipartisan Members—Democrats and Republicans—that is consistent with what we have been doing in helping small businesses generally, and we now have an opportunity to bring it to the floor for a debate—it will be open to amendment. Those who say: Well, gee, are there other ways we can make this more affordable? Well, come forward.

We have been working on this for a year—close to a year. And, yes, that is why we have gotten good suggestions from Democrats and Republicans in order to try to make this work. But if you don't allow us to debate the bill on the floor of the U.S. Senate, I really don't understand that. If you profess that you want to see this place work and there is not a philosophical problem here of helping small businesses, why can't we move forward?

I don't even know why we need a cloture motion. We should be able to pass a motion to proceed on this bill and have a debate and go to amendments. And Senator WICKER and I have made it clear that we will act as traffic cops; we will try to figure out the best way to consider this bill in order to make it work for all.

Madam President, small businesses have a special way of filling our cities and towns that make them irreplaceable when they are gone. I think we all recognize that. They drive our local economies. They give our neighborhood character. They make us proud of where we come from and where we live. If we allow them to disappear through inaction, they will leave holes in our community that we cannot easily fill.

If we cannot pass one last round of aid, it will mean certain restaurant owners who have pending loans are going to close their doors forever. Those holes will exist in our community, and we will not be able to fill them.

I ask my colleagues—all of us understand the importance of small business. We understand they are the growth engines in our community and innovation engines in our community. We made a commitment to help them through COVID-19, and we have honored a large part of that commitment. This is the last chapter to complete that commitment, and I hope my colleagues will join us in allowing us to have this debate on the floor and support the help for our small businesses that are in desperate need.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UKRAINE

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise today to lay out exactly why I intend to vote for the aid package to provide our Ukrainian allies with the weapons and support they need to fight Vladimir Putin's invasion.

First, it is important to understand why—thanks in large part to President

Joe Biden—we are in this dangerous situation to begin with. What is maddening about Russia's invasion of Ukraine is that it was utterly preventable. This did not have to happen, and it was caused by two specific mistakes by Biden and his administration. The first mistake was Biden's catastrophic surrender and withdrawal in Afghanistan. The second mistake was Biden's weakness and appeasement on display and his capitulation to Putin on the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline.

Putin didn't just wake up yesterday and decide he wanted to invade Ukraine. In 2014, Putin previously invaded Ukraine, but he stopped short of invading the entirety of the country. Why is that? The reason is simple: Russia's principal source of revenue is oil and gas, which is transported via pipelines that go directly through Ukraine. Putin knew that when the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline was complete, he could invade Ukraine and not have to worry about potentially destroying Ukrainian energy infrastructure because he would have in place an alternative pipeline to get his gas to market.

Last spring, President Biden formally waived the sanctions that Congress had put in place on Nord Stream 2, sanctions that I authored, bipartisan sanctions that passed this body twice and that President Trump signed into law twice. Last summer, President Biden surrendered to Putin, lifted the sanctions, allowed Putin to build the pipeline, and announced a deal with Germany to allow the pipeline to be completed. When he announced that deal, that capitulation, the governments of both Ukraine and Poland put out a joint statement saying: Mr. President, if you do this, Vladimir Putin will invade Ukraine.

In August, Biden surrendered in Afghanistan. In September, Nord Stream 2 was physically completed, and then Putin began building up his forces on Ukraine's border. Even then, our Ukrainian allies pleaded with us: Sanction Nord Stream 2 now so that Putin will know he can't turn it on later. The President, the Prime Minister, Parliament, and civil society of Ukraine all said so again and again and again.

I authored a new set of sanctions mandating immediate sanctions, which the Ukrainian Government formally called on the Senate to take it up and pass it. The Biden administration fought tooth and nail against those sanctions in January. I remember standing right here and saying: Mr. President, if you do this, we will see Russian tanks rolling toward the streets of Kyiv.

Sadly, 44 Democrats voted with President Biden against sanctions on Russia, against sanctions on Putin; and the appeasement from the White House and 44 Democrats led, within days, to the invasion of Ukraine.

That being said now, the difficult question is what should we do now that this war is unfolding and, specifically, whether it is in America's vital national security interests for Ukraine to