

is quickly spiraling into an all-around economic crisis. If the Democrats continue on this path, it is going to get a lot worse soon.

Inflation for producers is even higher than inflation for consumers. In fact, inflation for producers has been the highest on record. Wholesale prices for producers went up 11 percent in the last year. That means higher prices for the people who grow our food, who build our buildings, and who keep the lights on. Inflation for producers today means inflation for consumers tomorrow.

After 13 months of this inflation crisis—a crisis that the administration kept ignoring, kept denying, kept refusing to admit was here, kept saying wasn't coming—the Secretary of the Treasury said: Well, if it comes, and there is a small chance it comes, it will be manageable.

There is no light at the end of the tunnel. If there is any light at the end of the tunnel, it is because the freight train marked “recession” is about to hit America. Inflation is so bad that the Democrats can't even deny it anymore. So they create it; they ignore it; they deny it; they blame inflation on everybody else.

Yesterday, in the Finance Committee, the Secretary of the Treasury said: No, no. It wasn't them.

The Democrats denied it. They said: No, no. It was Putin. It was the pandemic.

But now the Democrats want to make it worse.

Well, it took about 14 months, but Janet Yellen admitted earlier this week in a CNN interview that she had been wrong about inflation. When she said there was a slight risk, she was mistaken. When she said it was manageable, she was mistaken.

She said: Now, I was wrong about the path inflation would take. This is the Secretary of the Treasury for Joe Biden, his handpicked person to run the economy. She also admitted that inflation was a matter of supply and demand and that the spending in the American Rescue Plan did feed the demand. I think she is talking about the \$2 trillion that every Democrat voted for and that every Republican voted against; the \$2 trillion to which even the Democratic economists said: Don't do that. It is going to make us have bad inflation. And we had bad inflation. But Joe Biden and the Secretary of the Treasury and every Democrat in the House and Senate voted in favor of pouring fuel on the fire that turned into the inflation we are facing today.

This was an enormous mistake on the part of the Democrats and the President—CHUCK SCHUMER and every Democrat in this Senate, all the Democrats in the House and Speaker NANCY PELOSI. It is costing the average American family today \$5,000 more this year than last year just to stay even—not to get ahead, just to stay even.

Democrats were warned. They were warned by Republicans. They were

warned by their own experts, and they ignored it; simply, flatly ignored the warnings, passed the largest spending bill in American history. And ever since that day, inflation has spiraled out of control. More than a year later, Democrats still don't have anything to offer beyond blame and excuses.

Last week, the Secretary of Commerce was asked:

Is there one specific category [of high prices] where you think you can actually make a difference?

This is her answer. She said:

I wish.

That is what Democrats are left with: wishes, wishes—no plan to fix the crisis that they have created.

Joe Biden's so-called energy inflation plan made so many false promises. And he talked about this. He wrote an editorial in the Wall Street Journal. You would think that maybe somebody at the White House who wrote it would have been vetted before they gave it to the President, before he put his name on it. It got Four Pinocchios from the Washington Post which talked about what the President had to say about energy as just being a lie.

We know what we need to do. We need to stop the reckless spending. We need to unleash American energy. Instead of canceling lease sales, Joe Biden needs to open up Federal lands to American energy production instead. Instead of canceling pipelines, Joe Biden should speed up the pipeline permitting process. Instead of begging other countries to sell us oil, we should get it out of the ground right here in America.

Oh, we have the American energy skills and skilled workers to see us through this crisis. The President just needs to let them go to work.

Working families have already been pushed to the breaking point. People are spending their savings, seeing it melting away. They have run up credit cards just to get by, and now recession is heading toward us. We need to change course. The administration needs to change course because the Joe Biden economic hurricane is about to hit America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, yesterday, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I had the honor of welcoming a group of important guests to Washington.

The committee was joined by the families of some of the victims in last month's mass shooting in Buffalo, NY, when a White supremacist marched into the Tops Grocery store with an assault rifle and massacred 10 Black Americans in cold blood and wounded three others. Just weeks after laying their loved ones to rest, these families flew to Washington to deliver one very simple, straightforward message to Congress: Do something. Do something

to prevent the next mass shooting, to combat the lethal threat posed by violent White supremacists, to honor the memory of those who were slain in this horrifying act of racist violence.

One of the family members who attended yesterday was Garnell Whitfield, Jr., and his brother Raymond. Their mother Ruth Whitfield was the eldest victim in this Buffalo shooting. She was 86 years old.

In the hours before her murder, Mrs. Whitfield just finished her regular daily ritual, visiting her husband, Mr. Whitfield's father, at his nursing home. The two had been married for 68 years, and in an instant, she was gone. Her family is shattered.

During yesterday's hearing, Mr. Whitfield courageously voiced what millions of Americans feel about the devastating run of mass shootings in America: outrage. He asked me and the fellow committee members there a really important question:

What are you doing? You were elected to protect us. Is there nothing that you [can] personally [be] willing to do to stop the cancer of White supremacy and the domestic terrorism it inspires?

Mr. Whitfield concluded his testimony with the following words I hope every Member of the Senate will hear. He said:

Mrs. Ruth Whitfield's life mattered. Your actions here will tell us if and how much it mattered to you.

We heard the same sentiment from across the country—from Uvalde, TX, to Chicago, IL. It is impossible to keep track of these mass shootings. They have claimed so many innocent lives.

During this past weekend alone, our Nation was hit with at least 10 of them—10. Think about it: In this country, 10 in one weekend. In many countries—most countries around the world—there are none. No other developed Nation on Earth experiences this degree of bloody carnage every day, every week. And if we want to prove to Americans like Garnell Whitfield that the lives of their loved ones who were lost really do matter to us, we have to do something in the Senate.

The first thing is simple: close the loopholes on the purchase of guns. Currently, there is a bipartisan group of Senators working on this issue. I commend this group, especially Senators MURPHY and CORNYN—Democrat and Republican—who are leading this effort.

We are also going to hold a hearing next week in the Judiciary Committee over a phenomena which is equally embarrassing. Gunfire is now the leading cause of death for kids in America. Did you hear that? Gunfire, the leading cause of death of children in America.

We talk about protecting our kids, our highest priority. Well, the guns are killing our kids more than automobiles, more than poison, more than accidents in the home.

DOMESTIC TERRORISM

Madam President, that brings me to our second obligation to families like

the Whitfields. It was the focus of our hearing yesterday. We have got to condemn and combat the hateful ideology that has inspired attacks like the mass shooting in Buffalo.

During the previous administration, officials within the FBI and Department of Homeland Security shared a sobering assessment—this was under the previous President, Trump. They found that since 2000, the year 2000, White supremacists have been “responsible for . . . more [homicides] than any other domestic extremist movement.”

Right now, in the words of FBI Director Wray, the threat of domestic terrorism is “metastasizing across [America],” and we have seen evidence of it time and again.

In the past decade alone, White supremacists have committed mass shootings in a church, at a Sikh gurdwara in the State of Wisconsin, synagogues, not to mention a Walmart, and a grocery store.

We have seen other acts of domestic terrorism. This past weekend, in Wisconsin, Madam President, a violent extremist broke into the home of a former judge and shot him to death. The murderer was found with a list of names that included that judge and other officials, including the Governor of your State.

It is no coincidence that the threat of White supremacy is growing worse at a time when racist rhetoric is being dragged into the mainstream of our discourse.

The fact is, in 2022, hate has a formidable platform on FOX News. Media figures like Tucker Carlson are amplifying false racist conspiracy theories like the so-called “great replacement theory” to millions of vulnerable Americans.

Night after night, Tucker Carlson legitimizes the fiction that his political opponents are scheming to deliberately change the demographics of America. It is the same racist dogma that inspired the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan 100 years ago. They just took off the white robes on this gang.

Tucker Carlson, and pundits like him, traffic in fear and hate. They are radicalizing their viewers by preying on paranoia and winking to the far-right extremists who look to them for leadership.

Tragically, we have seen the growing use of political violence against elected officials, against flight attendants, against election workers, school board members, and other public servants. To make it clear, our condemnation of violence applies on the right and on the left.

Just this morning, news broke that a man was arrested near the home of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. Carrying at least one weapon, and with burglary equipment, he told police he was planning on killing the Justice.

Let me be clear: We have to stand united—Democrats, Republicans, Independents, left and right, voters and

nonvoters alike—in condemning violence wherever its source, right or left.

Whether violence is being threatened against a sitting Supreme Court Justice or the Capitol Hill police officers on January 6 who wanted to defend this building from the insurrectionist mob, it is unacceptable and inexcusable.

As the threat of domestic terrorism looms over the country, we must ensure that members of law enforcement have resources, training, and our support in their legitimate exercise of their duty. That is why we need to pass the Domestic Terrorism Protection Act.

I put this bill on the floor in 2017. It ensures that the Federal Government will keep track of the crimes and the nature of them. That is it. It doesn’t give any new powers of investigation, surveillance, or arrest—simply counts the number of attacks and where they come from.

It was the decision of the Trump administration to remove White supremacy as one of the motives for this domestic terrorism at a time when the head of the FBI tells us that threat is metastasizing across America. President Trump was wrong. The FBI should be keeping track of these crimes so that we know the source of this violence.

That is why this legislation is needed not just to pass through the Senate but to say to the Whitfield family in Buffalo, NY: We hear you. We are going to start by doing something very basic.

As we watch one community after another torn apart by sickening acts of violence, the Members of this Senate have to go beyond thoughts and prayers. If anyone in this body is unwilling to take even the most basic steps to save lives, I would encourage them to follow the advice that Mr. Garnell Whitfield offered yesterday. If you don’t want to take any action, “yield your positions of authority and influence to others that are willing to lead.”

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I want to thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee for his remarks just now. I, too, sit on the Judiciary Committee, and I listened to Garnell Whitfield talk about his 86-year-old mother, who was murdered, and his charge to us to do something, because basically he said: If you are not going to do something in the face of all this gun carnage in our country, what are you doing here?

I think that is a question that each of us should ask: What the heck are we doing here if not to protect America’s citizens?

One of the questions that I asked of the panel, which consisted of two invitees from the Republican side and three panel members of Democratic invitees—I asked them: Is the easy access to guns in our country a major part of the gun violence and the mas-

sacres and the killings in our country? And they each said yes. They acknowledged that the easy access to guns, regardless of ideology, is what makes our country the outlier country among all developed nations. What that says to me is that we need to be very, very committed and very serious about the need to enact sensible gun safety legislation.

As I listened to one of my other colleagues a little bit earlier talking about inflation, yes, inflation is a problem, but certainly it is not the answer to just blame the Democrats. I would like my Republican colleagues to make a commitment to do what we need to do and at least get a start in ending the gun violence in our country. As I said at yesterday’s hearing, Hawaii has among the strongest gun safety legislation in the country. We have the lowest gun violence in the country. There is a cause and effect here.

As Mr. Whitfield charged us with yesterday, do something. That is our responsibility.

HONORING OUR PACT ACT OF 2021

Madam President, turning to another subject, over decades of conflict, millions of American servicemembers have been exposed to burn pits and other toxic materials. These men and women risked their lives in service to our country, and we have a duty to ensure they get care for conditions caused by these toxic exposures.

For months, my colleagues and I on the Veterans’ Affairs Committee have worked to craft a bill that meets our responsibility, our duty to our veterans, and now we have the responsibility to pass this legislation here in the Senate and deliver for our veterans.

This legislation is a bill named for SFC Heath Robinson from Ohio, who served tours of duty in Kosovo and Iraq, where he was exposed to toxic burn pits. A decade after returning home, Sergeant Robinson developed a rare form of lung cancer caused by his toxic exposure. Tragically, he passed away in 2020.

The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act is historic, comprehensive legislation that provides the care toxic-exposed veterans like Sergeant Robinson deserve. This bipartisan legislation extends VA healthcare eligibility to millions of post-9/11 veterans, including nearly 3.5 million who were toxic-exposed. It also adds nearly two dozen conditions to the VA’s list of service presumptions and strengthens the VA’s ability to provide the high-quality care and benefits these veterans need in a timely manner. Altogether, this bill delivers the historic investment in caring for our Nation’s veterans.

The Honoring Our PACT Act is the latest step we are taking to support our veterans in Hawaii and across our country. Just yesterday, President Biden signed legislation to name the state-of-the-art VA clinic under construction on Oahu after the late Senator Daniel Akaka. He also signed our