



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2022

No. 114

## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

We acknowledge today, O Lord, Your power, mercy, and grace. We need Your power, for the challenges we face require more than human wisdom and strength. We need Your mercy, for we transgress Your law and fall short of Your glory. We need Your grace, for we cannot offer anything to merit Your favor or gain Your love.

Lord, empower our Senators for today's journey. Give them confidence to draw near to You that they may find grace to help them in this time of need. May they pass their days in the companionship of Your eternal presence. Enable them to learn the stewardship of time, energy, and abundance. And Lord, we continue to pray for Ukraine.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, July 12, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ashish S. Vazirani, of Maryland, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

### THE ECONOMY

Mr. McCONNELL. We all know inflation and the economy are the biggest problems facing Americans today. The New York Times released a poll just yesterday showing a full 93 percent of

working-age Americans are dissatisfied with the state of our economy. We are a big and a diverse country. Ninety-three percent of Americans hardly ever agree on anything, but Democrats are unifying the country in unhappiness at the dark path down which they have taken our economy.

Monmouth University released some data explaining why Americans are feeling so sour. Forty-two percent of Americans are struggling to stay afloat financially at the highest rate ever—ever—in this poll's entire history, even higher than the darkest days, the days of the COVID pandemic.

Sixty-three percent of Americans named economic issues as their chief concern. And they know who to blame for their misfortune: President Biden and congressional Democrats, who plowed \$2 trillion into our economy last year and created the highest inflation in four decades.

I am sure many of my colleagues heard heart-wrenching stories from constituents struggling with inflation during the past 2 weeks' State work period. I certainly did in Kentucky, where the average household now spends more than \$500 more a month than they did before President Biden took office.

At a meeting with homebuilders in Northern Kentucky, local employers told me their businesses were poised to slow down dramatically. For 2 years, they struggled as Washington Democrats' exacerbated supply chain hiccups and worker shortages with free-wheeling spending policies. Now, as the Fed tries to rein in inflation by hiking interest rates, home buyers have to contend with the most expensive borrowing environment in over a decade. Homebuilders foresee their industry literally stalling out.

In Paducah, I sat down with some of Western Kentucky's barge operators. Like the homebuilders, they are concerned with ongoing worker shortages, inflation, and of course spiraling fuel

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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costs. They also rightly worry that power outages could hit the Commonwealth in the coming months.

Washington Democrats pursued environmental goals crafted by activists with no sense of how the real economy functions. They sidelined powerplants that use cheap, reliable energy sources without acknowledging that shortages would occur when the wind doesn't blow or the Sun doesn't shine. Independent electricity reliability experts have been sounding the alarm that two-thirds—two-thirds—of the United States could endure electricity blackouts this summer.

Then, Kentucky's ongoing labor shortage hit home during a meeting with bourbon distillers in our famous Bluegrass region. As the distillers explained to me, the programs implemented by Washington Democrats in their \$2 trillion spending package last year encouraged workers to exit the workforce and stay on the sidelines. The Commonwealth still has 20,000 fewer workers—20,000 fewer workers—than we did before the pandemic. So hamstrung by a lack of employees, these Kentucky businessowners are watching apprehensively as Washington Democrats debate another dose of bad policies.

This time, our colleagues are reportedly cooking up a trillion dollars in massive tax hikes on things like small businesses and domestic energy. When you tax something, you get less of it. That is the way it works. I don't know many Kentuckians who think America needs fewer small business jobs or less American energy. I am not certain about the good people of West Virginia either.

One estimate has found that almost half of all the jobs in all of West Virginia are tied to small businesses, the vast majority of which are passthroughs. Half of all the jobs in the entire State are provided by passthroughs.

I can't imagine the people of Pennsylvania or Ohio or a number of other States are especially keen to have fewer small business jobs, higher prices passed on to consumers or less American energy either. Yet each of these States and many others have a Senator apparently keen—to champion these bad ideas.

The nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation has proven that the policies that Democrats are floating would completely break President Biden's promise not to raise taxes on the middle class below \$400,000. The JCT says their bad ideas would create a tax hike for more than a quarter of all Americans who earn between \$75,000 and \$100,000 and more than half of the people earning between \$100,000 and \$200,000. They are taking President Biden's promise not to raise taxes on anybody below \$400,000 and putting it through the shredder—putting it through the shredder.

This all-Democratic government has already spent America into runaway

inflation, and now—now—they want to tax us into a recession.

#### U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. President, now on a different matter, yesterday, I discussed the Supreme Court's historic, courageous, and correct decision in *Dobbs*, but that landmark case was only part of the most consequential Supreme Court term in almost 70 years, since *Brown* overturned *Plessy* in 1954.

For example, in the space of 1 week, the Court took two huge leaps forward for religious liberty. Two big steps to restore and strengthen Americans' First Amendment right to pray and worship how they choose and raise their kids accordingly.

Time and again, we have seen opponents of religious diversity argue that government ought to discriminate against faith-based undertakings and organizations. These efforts have spanned from the anti-Catholic Blaine amendments of the 1800s to today's efforts by the secular left to chase religion out of the public square. We have had Democratic politicians try to force nuns to pay for birth control against their will. Forty-nine of fifty Democrats just voted for a radical bill that would have forced faith-based hospitals—listen to this—forced faith-based hospitals to perform abortions against their principles.

Last year, Washington Democrats tried to pass a sweeping toddler takeover that was written to squeeze out faith-based childcare providers and secularize early childhood care in this country. For goodness' sake—for goodness' sake—5 years ago, a Lutheran preschool in Missouri had to argue all the way to the Supreme Court that it deserved equal access to widely available funding for updating an outdoor playground. Textbook anti-religious discrimination. Fortunately, they won easily 7 to 2. This is indeed a new Supreme Court.

Last month, the Court took another landmark step. The case of *Carson v. Makin* arose because the State of Maine had established a school voucher program that tried to uniquely discriminate against faith-based schools. In effect, the government was using taxpayer money to nudge families away from faith-based education and toward secular private schools instead.

The Court rightly struck down that law. Chief Justice Roberts explained that Maine could not exclude accredited and otherwise eligible schools purely because they are religious. That is not the government's choice to make. It is up to the parents.

A few days later, the Court issued another important and commonsense ruling. Joseph Kennedy, a high school football coach from Washington State, was fired—listen to this—simply because he quickly and quietly offered a simple prayer on the field after the game. He got fired for that. The man was fired by government bureaucrats for praying in our country.

The Court ruled for Coach Kennedy under both the free speech and free ex-

ercise clauses of the First Amendment. Thank goodness. In the process, Justice Gorsuch and his colleagues cleared away many years of phony, made-up legal tests that made our laws needlessly hostile to religion and turned back to what the Constitution actually says.

So the Court's term was an exciting one for Americans of faith who simply want to be allowed to live out their faiths and raise their kids. But this was a win for the entire country. Americans of any faith and no faith at all can celebrate that we have a brilliant majority of originalist, textualist Justices who will defend all of our constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and apply what the Bill of Rights actually says.

In a better world, neither of these commonsense rulings would have been close calls or breaking news, but since they were, they were very good news indeed.

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, on June 24, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, returning the question of abortion to the States and to the people and their elected representatives.

The Supreme Court's decision was an affirmation of democracy, which had been set aside by *Roe* in favor of a national abortion regime imposed upon the entire country by a handful of activist Justices. *Roe* took legislative power out of the hands of the people and put it in the hands of unelected Justices on nonexistent constitutional grounds. The Supreme Court's decision puts the question of abortion back in the hands of the States and the people and their elected representatives, where it should always have been.

I am profoundly grateful for this decision, most especially because of what is at stake here, because the *Roe* decision was not a failure of constitutional jurisprudence on some arcane point; it was a failure that infringed on our most fundamental rights as human beings—in fact, on the fundamental right: the right to life.

*Roe* not only allowed for but imposed a regime that forced States to legalize the killing of unborn human beings. So the decision to overturn *Roe* not only affirms democracy and repairs a constitutional wrong, it allows for the righting of a profound moral wrong: the legal killing of unborn Americans.

The Supreme Court's decision does not, of course, make abortion illegal, but it will finally—finally—allow those States to choose to put in place protections for unborn children.