

politicians who effectively appointed themselves as the decision-makers over the bodies, lives, and futures [of women].

Dr. McNicholas informed us that the demand for care at her facility in Illinois has tripled since the *Roe v. Wade* decision was overturned by the Supreme Court. She said:

The Supreme Court's decision has already pushed people—the people each one of you represent—into extreme, and sometimes dangerous, circumstances in order to access one of the safest and most common healthcare procedures.

The radical, far-right majority on the Alito Supreme Court has put lives at risk by revoking a constitutional right, which was on the books for almost 50 years. Now, Members of this Senate must act to protect another constitutional right related to this debate: the right to travel across State lines to access healthcare, in this case, reproductive care.

That is why I am joining my colleagues Senators CORTEZ MASTO, PATTY MURRAY, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, and KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND in cosponsoring the Freedom To Travel Healthcare Act of 2022.

Women and their health providers are counting on us to pass this bill. They find it hard to imagine that State legislators, and even some Federal officials, would try to restrict the right to cross a State boundary for medical care because the anti-choice legislators who have already outlawed abortion in their State are not content with what they have done already. In fact, right now, they are proposing legislation that would turn many State borders into Checkpoint Charlie in America. These lawmakers are hell-bent on denying women fundamental freedoms, no matter how many constitutional rights they infringe upon.

The question is, How far are we willing to let them go? Will we allow them to penalize and prosecute healthcare professionals who provide essential care to their patients in States where abortion remains legal? Are we going to allow these lawmakers to hold American citizens hostage in their own States, forcing them to give birth? Does that sound like the America that we know? No, it doesn't. And we need to draw the line here and now by passing the Freedom To Travel for Healthcare Act of 2022.

2022 NATO SUMMIT

Madam President, during the first part of the July recess, I traveled with several of my Senate colleagues to the historic NATO summit in Madrid, Spain.

On Tuesday, several members of our bipartisan group—Senators SHAHEEN, TILLIS, COONS, ERNST, and BLUNT—spoke on the floor about the trip. Senator FISCHER was also with us at that summit meeting.

I think Senator TILLIS of North Carolina said it best, that despite policy differences within our group of Senators, there was no daylight between us on two profoundly important matters: We

agree, Finland and Sweden should be welcomed into NATO. And we also agree that the illegal, barbaric war on Ukraine by Russian dictator Vladimir Putin must not succeed.

At the summit, we met with leaders from a number of our allies, including, for the first time, leaders from the Indo-Pacific region who joined the NATO summit.

Japanese Prime Minister Kishida was clear when he told us:

The security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific are inseparable.

And German Chancellor Scholz expressed an unwavering commitment to take as long as needed to make sure Ukraine retains its sovereignty against Russia's barbaric aggression.

But perhaps what was most notable was the overwhelming sense of unity and defense of common values found among our NATO allies in the face of Russian aggression. For that, I want to give President Biden credit. He spent an hour or more with our bipartisan delegation at the summit meeting. He and his able team, Secretary of State Blinken, Secretary of Defense Austin, and others, met with us and discussed in detail what was being debated at the summit.

I have been traveling to Eastern Europe and meeting with allies for many years. I can tell you, I have never felt such a shared sense of purpose and determination to stop the Russian threat.

As Senator TILLIS noted on Tuesday, our safety at home is inextricably linked to the security of Europe. Our bipartisan delegation understood this. The world leaders at the NATO summit understood it, and President Biden certainly understands it. Vladimir Putin would serve his people well by understanding it as well.

In the Senate, we can help Putin understand the unbreakable unity and resolve of the world's democracies by being one of the first NATO members of nations to approve Finland and Sweden's membership. We should do that without delay.

SWEDEN

Madam President, before arriving at the NATO summit in Spain, I joined my colleagues in visiting one of the prospective new NATO aspirants: Sweden.

Sweden has long been a security ally. For nearly 200 years, it has tried to maintain the semblance of nonalignment. That changed swiftly with Vladimir Putin's aggression. It triggered an overwhelming Swedish support to join NATO, and Sweden began shipping weapons to Ukraine to help in the war effort, something it hadn't done since helping Finland resist Nazi aggression in 1939.

Swedish leaders recognize Russia's aggression today as the same kind of behavior seen in Europe in World War II. They know that the collective NATO security arrangement is critical to stopping Russia. I agree completely and look forward to their NATO membership.

Putin thought he could fracture NATO by invading Ukraine. Look what he did. He stoked petty grievances against NATO, and in the end, we are picking up two valuable, important allies.

And, incidentally, Vladimir Putin, you are now going to have 800 miles of new NATO territory on your border.

LITHUANIA AND BELARUS

Madam President, I was unable to join my colleagues who visited Finland as their first stop, as I was in Lithuania, a Baltic State with long memories of Russian tyranny.

In no place is the value of the collective NATO defense more stark than in the Baltic States, which Putin, no doubt, would like to forcibly return to Soviet dystopia.

Lithuanian leaders, including President Nausėda, the Speaker of Parliament Cėmylytė-Nielsen, are keenly aware of the Russian threat. But Lithuania is undeterred in helping its neighbors in Ukraine and Belarus stand up to Russian aggression, and they are unafraid to stand up to the Chinese bullies as well.

I was glad again to spend time with Valdas Adamkus, a highly successful Lithuanian immigrant to Chicago who returned back to his homeland of Lithuania and successfully ran for President. He was there shortly after Lithuania gained its independence from the Soviet Union.

President Adamkus' historic leadership and foresight helped bring Lithuania not only into the European Union, but equally important, into NATO. And for that, the Lithuanian Parliament recently honored his achievements. Quite simply, Lithuania is safer today because of his vision.

The awe and esteem Lithuanians feel for this historic leader was clear from the reverence shown by the Lithuanian people.

I also want to mention the tireless work of Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya, who lives in Lithuania after fleeing from Belarus from the henchmen of the strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko. You see, 2 years ago, her husband, Sergei, ran for President against Lukashenko. We know from history that anybody who was courageous enough to run against Lukashenko is going to end up in prison after the sham elections which he stages with regularity.

Lukashenko, worried that he couldn't win a fair election, jailed Sergei, her husband. Rather than back down in fear, Svetlana, the wife, ran in his place. She probably won the rigged election but had to flee with her family, leaving Sergei to face an outrageous 18-year prison sentence.

This is a picture of Sergei Tsikhanouskaya facing an 18-year sentence in Belarusian prison because he had the temerity to challenge Lukashenko. Now his wife, a courageous woman if I ever met one, is trying to plead his cause and is safely with her children in Lithuania.

Thousands upon thousands of Belarusians protested the stolen election. Twelve hundred were jailed as a result of it, including Sergei. Putin helped Lukashenko at that moment of crisis, and Lukashenko is now repaying Putin by using Belarus as a staging ground to attack and kill Ukrainians.

Many brave Belarusians still resist, sabotaging Russian supply lines, fighting alongside their Ukrainian brothers and sisters. They understand the fate of Ukraine is tied to their own fate and that Putin must not prevail.

Yesterday, I introduced a resolution with Senators TILLIS, SHAHEEN, VAN HOLLEN, MARKEY, FISCHER, CARDIN, and RUBIO recognizing the second adversary of this stolen election, the historic peaceful protest, the continued heroic efforts of the Belarusian people, and those still languishing in their nation's jails. They and their fight for freedom and democracy cannot be forgotten. And I urge the administration to continue its support for their effort by appointing a new special envoy for Belarus without delay.

Let me conclude with a note of thanks to the many fine members of our State Department Foreign Service who worked tirelessly to represent our diplomatic interests overseas and also make these congressional visits possible. They, along with our military servicemembers serving around the world, are national treasures. I thank them for their service.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

INFLATION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, yesterday morning, June inflation numbers were released. And, as usual with this administration, the news was not good.

Inflation rose once again in June to 9.1 percent—the highest inflation since November of 1981. November of 1981. I was in college the last time inflation was this bad.

Americans are suffering. Everywhere Americans turn, they are being asked to pay more—more for cleaning supplies, more for gas, more for health insurance, more for groceries.

A new analysis yesterday from the Joint Economic Committee found that inflation will cost the average American household a staggering \$718 a month over the next year—\$718 per month. That will happen even if prices stop going up tomorrow—\$718 per month, more than \$8,600 for the year. No working family can afford that.

A major reason that we are in this crisis is because of Democrats' decision to flood the economy with unnecessary government money with their so-called American Rescue Plan Act. And, unfortunately, there is no easy solution to the crisis they helped create. But the first thing—the first thing—should be to do no more harm.

Incredibly, however, Democrats are currently attempting to double down on the strategy that helped create this

crisis in the first place by passing a version of the Build Back Better tax-and-spending spree they tried to force through last year.

Apparently, Democrats think more government spending—like the government spending that helped get us into this mess—plus new taxes are a good solution for an inflation crisis and an economy teetering on the brink of recession.

Madam President, if Democrats want to help our country get out of this inflation crisis, more unnecessary government spending and new taxes are the exact wrong way to go about it. In fact, the biggest thing the Democrats can do to avoid making this crisis worse is by flooding the economy with more unnecessary government money.

After that, the biggest thing Democrats and the administration in particular can do to help alleviate this crisis is to unleash American energy production. I don't need to tell anyone that energy prices have been a major contributor to our inflation crisis. Gas prices are up nearly 60 percent—60 percent. The current cost of a gallon of regular gas is \$4.60—almost double what it was when President Biden took office just 18 months ago—and the price of diesel is even worse, which is a big concern for farmers and ranchers back home in South Dakota and around the country, not to mention all of our truckers. Electricity—that is up 13 percent. Utility gas service is up 38 percent. Americans everywhere are feeling the pinch.

Of course, high gas prices and utility prices don't just cause direct pain at the pump; they also contribute to higher prices across the economy, which means that lowering energy prices is one of the most important things we can do to help ease high prices on a variety of goods. The way to lower energy prices is to unleash American energy production, including and especially conventional energy production. Unfortunately, the President has shown and continues to show a clear hostility to conventional energy production despite the fact that our economy cannot function without conventional energy.

Now, I am a longtime supporter of alternative energy, from wind to biofuels, and I come from a State that derives a substantial portion of its electricity generation from wind. In fact, in 2021, over 50 percent of our State's power generation came from wind and 30 percent came from hydroelectric power on the Missouri River. But if it weren't for traditional fossil fuels backing up that generation, we would be left in the dark.

The fact is, no matter how much Democrats might wish it were otherwise, alternative energy technology has simply not advanced to the point where our country can rely exclusively on alternative energy. That means that, unless we want Americans to be permanently buried under the pain of high gas prices, we need to invest in responsible production of oil and natural gas.

We have tremendous natural resources here at home, and the ability to extract those resources is a far more environmentally responsible way than frequently happens in other countries. But unleashing American production is going to require action from the President, who, despite the current energy price crisis, continues to display hostility to domestic production. He touts the number of leases oil and gas companies have available, but he fails to mention that just 3 months ago his administration made it harder for oil and gas companies to actually make use of the leases in question by increasing the regulatory burden for environmental reviews. On top of this, thousands of drilling permits, which are required to actually begin drilling on oil and gas leases, are currently stuck in the approval process at the Department of the Interior.

At the beginning of this month, the administration released a new offshore drilling plan which includes an option to offer, at most, a paltry 11 new leases over the next 5 years. It also leaves the door open for zero new leases—zero. If this proposed 5-year plan doesn't make it clear that the President isn't interested in increasing our domestic energy production, I don't know what does.

Madam President, I could go on. I could mention the administration's proposed SEC climate-disclosure rules that are designed to discourage investment in conventional energy or the President's quest to increase taxes on domestic oil and gas production or Democrats' efforts to impose a new fee—or tax—on methane that could cost consumers an additional \$35 billion to \$69 billion annually, but I will leave it there.

Madam President, I hope—I really hope—that the President and his administration will take a good, hard look at their hostility to conventional energy production. Inflation is at 9.1 percent—9.1 percent. American families are paying nearly twice what they were paying in gas prices just 18 months ago, and utility gas prices have increased sharply.

Unless Democrats want Americans to be facing staggering prices at the pump and on store shelves for the long term, the administration needs to start encouraging domestic production of conventional energy. That means not just approving leases but making it easier for oil and gas companies to actually develop those leases and produce oil and natural gas. It means encouraging, not discouraging, investment in responsible conventional production and infrastructure like natural gas pipelines. It means giving up attempts to discourage domestic energy production with new and higher taxes or burdensome ESG regulations.

American families are struggling, Madam President. The President can actually do something to help them, and I sincerely hope that he will.

I yield the floor.