

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.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Minnesota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4504

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today in support of the Freedom to Travel for Health Care Act—something that Senator CORTEZ MASTO, our colleague from Nevada, is leading.

I do want to take a moment, however, to note that there are many things we need to do to reduce costs. I appreciated the words of my colleague from the neighboring State of South Dakota, and I think he is well aware that pharmaceutical prices are No. 1 on the minds of people in many of our States. I ask Republicans to join us in pushing Medicare to finally negotiate lifting the ban so we can negotiate less expensive drugs under Medicare Part D—something that every Democrat is committed to in our caucus and we hope to get done in the next month.

I also note that the President recently came out for E15—something Senator THUNE and I have worked together on for years, and that is now in place as one competitive fuel that should help—not alleviate everything but be a major help—and the release of the oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and so many other areas where we are working together.

I don't think anyone thought we could emerge from a 2-year pandemic and everything was going to be the same. Obviously, there is work left together for the country to bring down costs, and that is on all of our minds.

Madam President, also on our minds is what has recently happened with the Supreme Court and the decision in the Dobbs case. Twenty days ago—only 20 days ago, and you can see everything that has happened since that time—the Supreme Court issued a ruling shredding nearly five decades of precedent protecting a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. Now women are at the mercy of a patchwork of State laws governing their ability to access reproductive care, leaving them with fewer rights than their moms and their grandmas.

In just 20 days, over 20 States have laws in place that could be used to restrict access to abortion. Twenty-five States in total are expected to ban abortion in the days and the weeks ahead. But, colleagues, I am afraid the worst is yet to come.

Legislation was introduced in Missouri to allow private citizens to act as vigilantes and sue people who help women cross State lines for reproductive care—vigilantes, just like we saw in Texas. In Texas, legislators are working on a bill to criminalize businesses that provide resources simply to help their workers obtain abortion services in other States.

These proposals don't just hurt those in need of care; they are also creating an uncertain environment for doctors and straining resources at clinics in States like Minnesota where reproductive rights are protected, two major States in the Midwest—that is it—Illinois and Minnesota.

I spoke on the phone with the head of the Red River Women's Clinic out of Fargo, ND, who had to resort to a GoFundMe page to get the money she needs to move her clinic across the river to Minnesota to a safe place.

Planned Parenthood in Moorhead, MN—I met with them only a week ago about the services and the work they are doing right now.

In Montana, clinics have already begun requiring proof of residency from women seeking abortion pills because they are afraid they might be pursued by out-of-State prosecutors.

Of course, we should never settle for a situation where women in Minnesota have different rights than women in Missouri or where women in Illinois have different rights than women in Texas, but with so many extreme Republicans racing to State capitals to be the first to take away women's rights, it is clear we must explicitly protect the right to travel to other States to access reproductive care. We don't have to imagine why this might matter. We don't need to conjure up hypotheticals. We already know what has happened.

Think about the heartbreaking, enraging story about the 10-year-old girl in Ohio who had to go to Indiana to get an abortion after she was impregnated by her rapist. When that story came out last week, some people doubted it. Now, in clear print in the criminal complaint out of the State of Ohio, we saw yesterday that, yes, this happened. This man raped a 10-year-old girl, and she got pregnant, and then she couldn't even get the care she needed—at age 10—to get an abortion. She had to go across State lines to the State of Indiana just to get her care.

Should the next little 10-year-old's right or 12-year-old's right or 14-year-old's right to get the care that she desperately needs be put in jeopardy? What about her mom? What about her doctor? Where will this end?

That is why we must not just codify Roe v. Wade into law with the bill that we voted on just last month, but we must also pass the Freedom to Travel for Health Care Act by unanimous consent right now. That is a bill that our great colleague Senator CORTEZ MASTO is leading.

Our bill protects women and girls from being punished for traveling to another State to access abortion services. It also ensures doctors won't be punished for providing reproductive care outside their home States. As clinics across the country struggle to navigate this post-Roe nightmare landscape, they should not have to add to their list of worries whether they will be criminally prosecuted for serving patients in a nearby State. This is an issue, as I noted, that hits close to home because of Minnesota being in the neighborhood that includes the States of North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, all of which have various issues with reproductive healthcare.

The freedom to travel cannot be an empty promise. That is why the bill

gives the Department of Justice, as well as women and doctors, the power to sue people who infringe on the right to travel for healthcare. Women in States with abortion bans already face enough obstacles to care. We can't wait to see what anti-choice State legislators criminalize next. We have to act now.

All of this comes down to one question: Who should get to make the personal decisions for a woman or for a 10-year-old girl? Should it be her family? Should it be a woman herself? Or should it be politicians, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle who supported these Justices, put them in place in the Supreme Court, and got us to where we are right now? I think the answer is clear.

Today, each and every one of my colleagues has the opportunity to show where they stand. Will we come together to protect this essential right to seek healthcare across State lines for the sake of the women and, yes, the young girls across this country? I hope we do.

I thank Senator CORTEZ MASTO for her leadership.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I thank the senior Senator from Minnesota for her remarks and for what brings us to the floor today.

This is the first time in American history that a fundamental constitutional right has been stripped away from the American people—and especially American women—by the Supreme Court of the United States.

In Dobbs, the U.S. Supreme Court demolished 50 years of precedent—half a century of Democratic- and Republican-appointed Justices upholding a constitutional right to privacy that has now been obliterated by the U.S. Supreme Court, a fundamental right that has been upheld over and over again by Justices appointed, as I said, by Presidents of both sides of the aisle.

Madam President, if you had said to me when I was in law school in the early nineties that this day would ever come, that the U.S. Supreme Court, using a radical—a radical—method of constitutional interpretation called originalism that was invented basically when I was in law school—if you had told me that there would be a President of the United States who would appoint a majority of the Supreme Court with that radical interpretation, I would never have believed it. I would never have believed it. And that is what happened because of the Justices Donald Trump put on the Supreme Court.

I want people to hear me who are Republicans in this country and this Chamber. Look it up. I know it is called originalism, but it started in the 1980s and started in the 1990s. It is not the way our Constitution has been interpreted all these years.

This is radical. It is not conservative. In no sense is this a conservative decision. And it has happened, and now