

what we plan to do about inflation, energy costs, supply chains, crime, drugs, and the open border.

Jackson Mayor Scott Conger recently described for me the nightmare that is planning for the future of a midsize city in Joe Biden's America. Healthcare costs for police and firefighters are up half a million dollars. Between public works and public safety, fuel costs alone are projected to beat last year's total by \$450,000. And utility and sanitation costs are already 10 percent over budget.

Now, Jackson and other cities in Tennessee don't operate like Washington. They are very conservative with how they spend the taxpayers' money, and they budget for the worst-case scenario. But even when they do have money to spend, Joe Biden's supply chain crisis gets in the way.

In Jackson, delays on new orders of police cars, trucks, construction supplies have put growth on hold. They even have had to delay and scale back plans for a new homeless shelter. City officials in Dayton told me that the cost of a foot of pipe has gone up \$10 in a year, from \$4 to \$14 a foot. I would ask my Democratic colleagues how they expect local government to handle a 200-percent increase in something as basic as pipe. We know that is a trick question because there is no planning for instances like that. Covington Mayor Justin Hanson also had a message he wanted me to pass on for the record. Here is what he said:

The rising cost of goods and services is really hitting municipal pocketbooks, especially at the gas pump. The rapid inflation combined with supply chain issues are really hurting cities like Covington. Parts, chemicals, fleet vehicles . . . the list goes on. Some items ordered over a year ago still aren't in our inventory.

But I think the most shocking example of how localities have suffered under these reckless policies is happening right now in McNairy County. Now, McNairy County is a rural county, and it has fewer than 30,000 people. But the county still had to pad their budget by \$700,000 to cover fuel for the sheriff and other county-owned vehicles. That is almost a million dollars just to keep the police on patrol and the potholes filled.

We used to have such bright prospects. When Joe Biden and the Democrats took power, the economy was recovering. We were energy independent. And there was a plan to protect our supply chains. Now, instead of planning for the future, local leaders are working overtime just to keep their budgets from imploding.

Just a few short years ago, these same Tennessee leaders were focused on innovation and growth. Now, they are focused on survival. They know that the only way we will pull this country back on track is to halt inflationary spending, prioritize supply chains, and ramp up an Operation Warp Speed for energy independence.

But Joe Biden has taken us backwards. So, yes, the people are fearful of

what this administration will do next. But they continue to say they will not be frightened into submission.

I would urge my Democratic colleagues to remember that.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF NINA NIN-YUEN WANG

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I wanted to share a few words about Nina Wang, President Biden's nominee for the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

Judge Wang comes to this floor with a commitment to the law rooted in her earliest moments as a child, her earliest memories as a child. Nina's family emigrated from Taiwan to Kansas City when she was just 2 years old. Like my grandparents who emigrated from Poland, Nina's parents had very strong accents. They knew English, but people in their Kansas suburb couldn't always understand what they were saying. Some of Nina's first memories were ordering pizza for the family or speaking to store clerks on behalf of her parents.

Her family applied to become permanent residents, but the INS lost their application. Then, once they resolved that issue, the law had changed, and their pathway to legalization was gone. Their family spent years in legal limbo, ricocheting from one court to another. And if not for an intervention by late Senator Robert Dole, Nina's family would have fallen through the cracks.

At the time, Nina made a promise: If I can stay in America, I am going to give back to America. This experience gave Nina firsthand knowledge of the legal system's power to change lives because it changed her own. It made her cherish America's legal system, where even noncitizens have their day in court, and it inspired her to pursue a career in law.

She graduated from Washington University summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. She earned a J.D. from Harvard Law School and served as editor-in-chief of the Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review. After graduating, Nina worked as an associate at an international law firm and clerked in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Colorado recognized Nina's talents and hired her as an AUSA in the Civil Division, where she managed Federal cases ranging from employment discrimination to bankruptcy, to civil rights.

Nina then went into the private sector, where, over the next decade, she rose from associate to partner at Faegre Drinker, a top firm in Denver.

In 2015, Nina began serving as a magistrate judge for the U.S. district court in Colorado.

Judge Wang now comes to the committee and this floor with 25 years of legal experience and exposure to virtually every issue that might come before the court. She also comes with a reputation for fairness and impartiality. Her colleagues tell me she doesn't grandstand. She takes the time to listen to every litigant, whether they have representation or not.

She has remained committed to the American ideal that everyone deserves their day in court, just like her parents. And I, for one, am deeply grateful that she has devoted her talent to realizing that ideal in our legal system.

Judge Wang is an exceptional nominee, with unimpeachable character, intellect, and experience. Our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee appreciated that about her. That is why they sent her to this floor with a strong bipartisan vote of 14 to 8.

I enthusiastically endorse her nomination and urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to confirm this outstanding Colorado nominee for our district court.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 1035, Nina Nin-Yuen Wang, of Colorado, to be United States District Judge for the District of Colorado.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Tammy Baldwin, Tina Smith, Jeanne Shaheen, Chris Van Hollen, Elizabeth Warren, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tim Kaine, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher Murphy, Maria Cantwell, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Gary C. Peters, Tammy Duckworth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Nina Nin-Yuen Wang, of Colorado, to be United States District Judge for the District of Colorado, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), and the Senator

from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay".

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 256 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Blunt	Kaine	Schumer
Booker	Kelly	Shaheen
Burr	King	Sinema
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Tillis
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Ossoff	Warren
Feinstein	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Grassley	Portman	
Hassan	Reed	

NAYS—33

Blackburn	Ernst	Paul
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cassidy	Inhofe	Sasse
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Wicker
Daines	McConnell	Young

NOT VOTING—15

Barrasso	Hoeben	Murray
Brown	Kennedy	Schatz
Cardin	Leahy	Shelby
Fischer	Merkley	Toomey
Graham	Moran	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 33.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Florida.

CUBA

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, on July 11, 2021, in an act of incredible bravery, thousands of freedom-loving people in Cuba collectively stood together to demand freedom from the oppressive Cuban dictatorship.

They stood outside the headquarters of the Cuban Communist Party demanding liberty. They shouted "Patria y Vida," which means homeland and life.

In cities across the island, Cubans young and old showed they are not afraid of the regime. It was a sign that freedom, liberty, and human rights are not merely American ideals but universal rights given to all by God, not any government.

In response to the peaceful protest, the Cuban Communist Party, an ille-

gitimate and brutally oppressive regime deployed a wave of terror throughout Cuba by unleashing its secret police and military forces on peaceful protesters and democracy leaders.

The regime's thugs and security forces unlawfully detained more than 1,400 demonstrators, including leaders from Cuban civil society groups such as UNPACU, the San Isidro Movement, the Ladies in White, and targeted religious and Afro-Cuban leaders.

In the aftermath of the demonstrations and the government crackdown, crowds of Cubans and supporters of the Cuban people gathered here in Washington urging Joe Biden to act.

They gathered in front of the White House. They protested in front of the Cuban Embassy. I heard their cries asking the American Government to show its support. I joined them in front of the White House and in front of the Capitol.

We know Joe Biden has the power to join the Cuban people to call for the Cuban Communist Party to change. But aside from a couple statements he made last year, Joe Biden has not taken one action to support the Cuban people and their fight for freedom.

He has done nothing to provide them with internet connections or to support the democracy movement on the island.

I want to be clear: The President of the United States is known both here and around the globe as the leader of the free world. Our President, regardless of who it is, has immense power to rally our democratic allies and the freedom-loving people of the world to put pressure on oppressive regimes like the one occupying Havana and throw the full support of the global community behind the Cuban people's movement for freedom.

Anyone who denies this is ignoring history. But Joe Biden hasn't done any of that. He hasn't even tried. Instead, he and his administration have bowed to the demands of Cuba's murderous Castro and Diaz-Canel regimes and chosen not to stand for democracy and human rights.

And just weeks ago, he chose to prop up the oppressive regime with pathetic appeasement policies and sanctions relief. These actions bring shame to the United States. They do nothing to help the people only help line the pockets of the regime, its thugs, and its evil partners in Russia, Iran, and communist China.

This failed President has done more to unite America's enemies than bringing together the world's democracies for a common cause. Biden's appeasement is horrible for U.S. national security, a threat to stability in Latin America, and a danger to the power of democracy across the world.

Six months after the demonstrations started, the Senate unanimously passed my resolution that supported Cuban democracy activists like Jose Daniel Ferrer, and condemned the bru-

tal torture, unjust imprisonment, and severe oppression that the illegitimate communist Cuban regime is subjecting innocent Cubans to every day.

Last week, we honored the 1-year anniversary of the action of the brave Cuban people, and we remembered the horrific images of violence and oppression we saw as the illegitimate communist Cuban regime, terrified of the freedom movement, viciously cracked down on the people with mass jailings, beatings, and even murder.

Well, most of us remember. Joe Biden could not be bothered to even make a statement. His silence on this issue shows he doesn't care about the consequences of his actions. He doesn't care that he is playing into the plans of Castro and Diaz-Canel.

Meanwhile, the Cuban people get nothing in return, and the security situation in the region worsens. When Biden doesn't stand up to Castro and Diaz-Canel, we are left with a destabilized hemisphere that is less peaceful and puts our homeland security at greater risk.

They are murderous, illegitimate dictators. Appeasement is the worst move imaginable. And you better believe that Iran, Russia, and communist China love it when Biden is nice to their friends in Latin America.

So in the midst of this 1-year anniversary of the July 11 historic and peaceful demonstrations, I am asking Joe Biden to call for the immediate release of the hundreds of pro-democracy activists, including children whom the regime is unjustly detaining and subjecting to physical and psychological torture.

I hope someone in the White House is paying attention. Unfortunately, we know Joe Biden isn't. Children are locked away in jail, kept away from their families. These are kids. Some are just 14 years old. What is it going to take for Joe Biden to grow a backbone and do something?

Now, I am sure the administration will say that they have spoken out. Sure, we have seen statements and tweets, but that is not enough. Where is Joe Biden?

The White House can try to hide behind the words of the State Department and claim false leadership, but statements from bureaucrats and tweets from an embassy that shouldn't even exist will never be enough.

Sadly, that is all we can expect from this weak and incompetent President. It is essential to the national security of the United States as well as our efforts to support freedom, democracy, and human rights that Joe Biden reverse the foolish actions he has taken and not allow totalitarian dictators in our hemisphere to go unchecked.

I am also calling on Joe Biden to support the DEMOCRACIA Act, legislation I introduced last year with Congressman BYRON DONALDS. Our bill would hold the illegitimate communist Cuban regime accountable through severe sanctions, actions, and unprecedented

financial pressure, and put safeguards in place to ensure those sanctions are not wrongfully lifted.

It would also require the President to establish a task force to develop long-term solutions for providing reliable internet service to the people of Cuba that is not censored or blocked by the Cuban regime.

As the Cuban people's fight for freedom from the oppressive and illegitimate communist Cuban regime continues, the United States must stand for the Cuban democracy.

We can never bow to dictators—never. It is time for Biden to lead and to oppose those genocidal dictators and support human rights.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO KEITH LAWRENCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, after more than 50 years as a pillar of Owensboro, KY, news media, Keith Lawrence is retiring. As the Messenger-Inquirer's longest tenured reporter, Keith was his community's ever-present voice, covering stories that ranged from local businesses to U.S. Presidents. As the city's mayor put so well, Keith "will be hard to replace." Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Keith in his retirement.

Keith has written for one newspaper or another since September 1963, when he first discovered his passion for journalism in high school. He cut his teeth during his undergraduate years at Murray State University writing for the Murray State News. After graduating, Keith entered the military, stationing in Fort Hood, TX. Loathe to give up any opportunity to write, he helped publish newsletters on base and worked at the post's newspaper.

Following his military service and some short stints at a series of weeklies, Keith and his wife Sandy made their way to Owensboro, where he began his extensive career at the Messenger-Inquirer in 1972. Though he has covered local, State, and national stories, community journalism always remained his top priority. Keith felt he needed to be the "eyes and ears" of his readers.

Keith's journalistic gifts have earned him fans both in Owensboro and across the wider Commonwealth. He recently received the Mayor's Award for Excel-

lence for his commitment to community coverage and joined the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame.

Throughout my time in office, Keith has been a constant at any of the events I held in Owensboro. He asked insightful questions, squarely focused on how my work in the Senate affected his city.

Though he is taking a step back from his position at the Messenger-Inquirer, Keith plans to continue his column and write news stories as a freelancer. Anyone who knows Keith shouldn't be surprised. He will always live and breathe community journalism. For Keith, his work with the Messenger-Inquirer was more than just a job; it gave him a home in which his family flourished and provided a deep bond to his city.

In honor of Keith's retirement, I would like to thank him for his service to the Commonwealth and persistent loyalty to strong local journalism. He has delivered an invaluable service to Owensboro residents for more than 50 years.

The Messenger-Inquirer paid tribute to Keith's career in a recent article. I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Messenger-Inquirer, July 8, 2022]

"LAWRENCE RETIRING AFTER 50 YEARS"

Keith Lawrence, the Messenger-Inquirer's longest-tenured reporter, is retiring after more than 50 years with the newspaper.

Lawrence, 75, is a Ballard County native who found a journalism career and home in Owensboro.

He joined the staff in January 1972. Since then, he's covered everything from mom-and-pop businesses to U.S. presidents.

According to Lawrence, being a journalist is all he ever wanted to do since discovering it in high school.

"When I was a freshman, my English teacher asked us to write poetry . . . and whatever I wrote she took across the hall to the journalism teacher and asked her to run it in the (school) newspaper—and they did," Lawrence said. "She told me I should take journalism next year. I didn't think I could do any of that stuff, but I did it and fell in love with it.

"I've been writing for some kind of newspaper since September 1963."

While in that journalism class, he met his wife, Sandy, whom he married a year after graduating from high school.

Sandy Lawrence said it was journalism that brought her husband out of his shell.

"Keith is really a shy person," she said. "But it was being a reporter that allowed him to talk to anyone."

Lawrence pursued his newfound passion at Murray State University, where he would write for the Murray State News and eventually earn his bachelor's degree in journalism and master's degree in communications.

In February 1970, Lawrence received his draft notice for the Vietnam War, but he was allowed to graduate from college before entering the military.

Lawrence was sent to Fort Hood, Texas, where he furthered his journalism talents by working on the post's newspaper.

Although he did spend time writing newsletters, Lawrence said he took on heavier stories that would help him later in civilian life.

"We did a lot of things that weren't fluff pieces," he said. "We investigated off-post housing. People would buy up an old army barracks and turn it into eight apartments. These were World War II army barracks, and people were being charged outrageous rents."

Lawrence was honorably discharged after less than two years and began looking for a journalism job.

His first attempt was working for a start-up shopper—a free weekly community paper—in Erin, Tennessee.

"It lasted about two months and we quit," Lawrence said. "We were working about 80 hours a week. We were salary and didn't get any overtime."

That's when Lawrence reached out to Murray to see if anyone there was aware of any newspaper openings.

Lawrence said there was a weekly in Benton and a daily in Owensboro that were hiring.

"I had enough of weekly newspapers so I applied up here," he said.

Prior to his starting at the Messenger-Inquirer on Jan. 24, 1972, Lawrence had only made two brief visits to Owensboro—once in high school and during a plane layover from basic training.

And when he and his wife, Sandy, moved to the city, Lawrence said he didn't think it would be permanent.

"I thought two years and I'd go look for something else," he said.

Five decades later, Lawrence has written countless stories and planted roots in Owensboro. The Lawrences have one son—Christopher—who's a writer for the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

In his time with the Messenger-Inquirer, Lawrence not only covered local and state stories but also national ones.

Among them were the 1988 Republican and Democratic conventions and the first inauguration of U.S. President Bill Clinton in 1993. He also spent a week with U.S. Sen. Wendell Ford in Washington, D.C., before he retired.

But for Lawrence, it has been community journalism that mattered most; knowing he was supposed to be the "eyes and ears" of the readers was something he took seriously.

"I always wanted to know why somebody was the way they were," he said.

On Thursday, Mayor Tom Watson presented the Mayor's Award for Excellence to Lawrence in appreciation for his coverage of community issues.

"He always treated the city and all of us fair," Watson said. ". . . Keith will be hard to replace. The stories he tells are accurate, and you don't have to worry about him editorializing your comments."

It was last year that Lawrence's dedication to his craft was recognized by his being inducted into the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame.

For Lawrence, it was an accolade that capped off his career.

"It's definitely the pinnacle," he said.

As a journalist, Lawrence has a unique writing style that is concise but still manages to convey all the pertinent information, said Matt Francis, Messenger-Inquirer executive editor.

He also has a work ethic that is unmatched, having never taken a sick day in 50-plus years at the paper, and the ability to cover multiple areas from business to government to entertainment, Francis said.

"But what truly sets Keith apart is his ability to keenly understand this community and the readers of this newspaper," Francis said. "They feel a connection with him, as he does with them, and I think he always understood what a privilege it is to be a part of informing and entertaining a community