

With Finland and Sweden at the table, I look forward to important deliberations about the capabilities we need as an alliance and the steps we must urgently take to defend ourselves against growing threats from Russia, China, and other adversaries.

Mr. President, I know from my visits with our Swedish and Finnish friends that they hope for rapid accession to NATO. They are ready to get to work alongside us as allies. With war raging on the European continent, I share their sense of urgency, and I urge the Democratic leader to call up the necessary Senate votes without further delay.

But that can't be the Senate's last word on how America and our allies face down a dangerous world. We also need to take urgent action on the National Defense Authorization Act. Russia is laying siege to a sovereign neighbor. China is flexing a rapidly modernizing military. Reckless pariah states like Iran and North Korea are doubling down on developing dangerous weapons. It is past time—past time—to take America's own defense requirements more seriously.

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. SCHUMER. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to say something about the House-passed Respect for Marriage Act, which would enshrine marriage equality into Federal law, which I fully and strongly support.

This legislation is so important. I was really impressed by how much bipartisan support it got in the House. It passed 267 to 157. Forty-seven Republicans—about a quarter, a little less than a quarter of their caucus; maybe a fifth—voted for the bill. The legislation is so important.

I spoke to Senator BALDWIN, who is one of the leaders of this legislation in the Senate, this morning, and she is talking to Republicans to see where the support is. I want to bring this bill to the floor, and we are working to get the necessary Senate Republican support to ensure it would pass.

CHIPS ACT

Madam President, now on the chips bill, last night, the Senate passed a critical threshold on our way to passing major legislation to lower costs, increase manufacturing, strengthen supply chains, and preserve American competitiveness in the 21st century.

I want everyone to note the final margin of last night's vote: 64 to 34. That is a clear signal that after a lot of hard work and after a lot of compromise from both sides, the path is clear for this chips-plus bill to reach

final passage. This has been bipartisan work in the Senate at its best, just as we saw previously with bills ranging from gun safety to hate crimes, to infrastructure, to VAWA and so much more.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for voting in favor of moving forward on this critical bill.

For the information of all, today I plan to file cloture on this legislation, which after last night's vote includes incentives for domestic microchip production, including ITC; support for our wireless communication supply chain, ORAN; and the science package, which includes many of the provisions I authored in the Endless Frontier Act in partnership with Senator YOUNG 2 years ago. It has been a long struggle to get these vital pieces of legislation moving forward, and now they are.

I hope we can get this legislation approved as soon as possible because now it is clear it has enough support to pass this Chamber.

For all the many good things the bill does, the most important is that this legislation will help our country fight inflation in the long run. People are asking about inflation, as they should. This bill will help. America's chip shortage, exacerbated by the pandemic, has sent tremors across the entire economy and caused prices for all sorts of electronic goods to go up and up and up, and not only for electronic goods—cars, appliances, phones. But with this bill, we can make America a major chip producer once again, which will help ease pressures on our supply chains, strengthen our national security, and generate another wave of American economic activity for years to come.

Thanks to last night's robust vote, we will also move forward on the science provisions that many of us have worked on very hard to pass into law. We will increase funding for the National Science Foundation and invest billions to develop new tech hubs around the country in areas that haven't had the benefit of new tech employment. This will all help America lead the way in developing technologies of tomorrow. Many more dollars than ever before are going into the cutting-edge technologies—AI, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, quantum computing, cyber security, 5G, and so much more. When we invest in the science here, we create millions of new, good-paying jobs and ensure that America will be the leader in these cutting-edge issues, which will dominate the 21st-century economy.

For the sake of lowering costs, for the sake of American jobs, and for the sake of our national security interests, let's pass this bill as soon as we can. And that is my intention.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Madam President, now on prescription drugs and healthcare, from one corner to the other, another issue of inflation is the high cost of drugs. At every pharmacy counter and doctor's

office, grocery store, and kitchen table, the issue that remains front of mind for American families is the cost of living. While finally we are beginning to see relief as some gas prices are falling, inflation undeniably continues to strain families not just in America but around the world.

In one crucial area of life, high costs are simply unsustainable: the cost of healthcare and prescription drugs. The nexus of the high cost and the necessity of these drugs to keep us healthy and keep us living is a pincer that pinches so many Americans in a very harmful way.

But this week, the Senate will formally present our case to the Parliamentarian on a number of long-sought reforms to our Nation's healthcare system that will lower costs for tens of millions of Americans.

Under our proposals, for the first time ever, we will empower Medicare to negotiate the prices of prescription drugs in Parts B and D. We will cap out-of-pocket expenses for Part D precision drugs at \$2,000 a year, giving millions of Americans—many of whom have serious health problems and need these drugs—the support they desperately need so they can afford these drugs. Two thousand a year—that is it. The days of seniors paying tens of thousands of dollars per year or forgoing medicine altogether will soon be over. And we will prevent healthcare premiums from spiking for tens of millions of people.

In addition, there is an inflation rider, so that once the company announces the price of a new drug, they can't just double it and double it and double it year after year, even after they have recouped their investment in the bill.

Lowering costs of prescription drugs, capping out-of-pocket expenses, keeping premiums low—these are the top priorities for the American people. Ask any American on the street, and it is a near guarantee they will agree that rising drug costs is a serious problem. So we have to address the issue head-on.

Now, of course, Democrats will keep working on other major challenges that face our Nation. Our work on climate change is not done. We are going to work with President Biden's administration to fight climate change and protect our planet for the next generation. This is an existential threat to the globe, and we are going to keep fighting.

So, in the coming weeks, our caucus is going to be exceedingly busy as we finalize a reconciliation bill that can pass with the full support of our caucus. We still have a lot of work to do. Nobody says it is going to be simple or easy, but lowering the costs of healthcare and prescription drugs will make an enormous difference in the lives of the American people. Let's get it done and give Americans a much needed and long-awaited break.

TUCKER CARLSON

Mr. President, finally, on Tucker Carlson, FOX News. Last night, FOX

News host Tucker Carlson began his prime time show with another deranged rant on the conspiracy theory known as the “great replacement.” This racist theory, which asserts that a conspiracy exists to replace White Americans with immigrants and people of color, motivated a White supremacist to gun down 10 Black Americans in a grocery store in my home State of New York, in Buffalo, just over 2 months ago.

Here is what Mr. CARLSON said last night, among many deranged things. These are his words:

Sometime around 1965, our leaders stopped trying to make the United States a hospitable place for American citizens, their constituents, to have their own families. . . . They just imported new people. That’s literally what happened.

Can you believe someone said that on a national network and the network does nothing about it?

There is only one way to describe what Mr. CARLSON is doing: He is stoking racial resentment among his viewers. It is deranged. It is dangerous. It is racist.

Not long ago, views like “replacement theory” were only found in the darkest places in disturbed minds. Now someone as prominent as Carlson is spreading night after night to an audience that often tops 3 million viewers. And it is not an isolated incident. According to one measure by the New York Times, Mr. CARLSON has spewed rhetoric that echoes “replacement theory” at least 400 times on his show since 2016—400 times. This is not a one-off, what he just did last night.

The more that MAGA radicals like Carlson spread “replacement theory,” it is not out of the question that racially motivated violence will further ignite the country. FOX News should be ashamed that they are enabling these racist views and giving them an enormous platform on their network. It is dangerous and un-American for one of the biggest news networks in the world to amplify conspiracy theories that are eerily similar to those cited by the Buffalo shooter.

I urge Carlson to stop spreading “replacement theory” or else risk seeing more tragedies like the one we saw in Buffalo last month.

I yield the floor.

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.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, one of the most important bills that we take up every year is the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, legislation authorizing funding for our military men and women and the defense of our country.

The Senate Armed Services Committee passed this year’s bipartisan bill a month ago, and we have less than 2 months of floor time left in the fiscal year.

The Senate Democrats’ focus this month is on a last-ditch effort to pass some version of their Build Back Better tax-and-spending spree in hopes, I have to assume, of eking out a few more votes in November. Apparently, the National Defense Authorization Act will just have to wait.

As it does every year, this year’s NDAA authorizes funding for critical military priorities. The fiscal year 2023 NDAA continues the modernization efforts begun several years ago in the wake of the 2018 National Defense Strategy Commission report, which warned that our Nation’s readiness had eroded to the point where we might struggle to win a war against a major power like Russia or China.

It authorizes funding to improve quality of life for our military members and their families, which is not only something we owe these men and women who sacrifice so much for us but is also essential for recruiting and retaining members of our all-volunteer force. It authorizes funding to enhance our nuclear deterrence, a key priority with continued nuclear threats from traditional powers like Russia and rogue states like Iran and North Korea.

And it continues our strong support for Ukraine. Ukraine no longer dominates every front page, but for 5 months now, Ukraine has been fighting a heroic war against Russian aggression. Thanks to support from allies in Europe and from our own country, Ukraine is still holding out. In a war that many experts thought could see Kyiv fall within a matter of days, Ukraine is approaching day 150 of resisting Vladimir Putin’s Soviet-style aggression. In fact, Ukraine continues to strike painful blows against the Russian military, which has now turned to Iran for military support.

Later today, Olena Zelenska, wife of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, will be addressing Congress. She and her husband have been a beacon for Ukrainians during this brutal war; and President Zelenskyy’s iron determination, his tireless leadership, and his unflagging commitment to his people inspire all those who love freedom.

Ukraine is, in many ways, standing up for the whole free world right now, sending the message that Russia’s unprovoked aggression will not be allowed to stand. And the least we and other free nations can do is ensure they have the resources they need to carry out their fight. Russia’s war against Ukraine reminds us that nations that value freedom and security must stand together.

Finland and Sweden are looking to stand with other free nations by joining the NATO alliance. Vladimir Putin has turned the historic positions of neutrality in Finland and Sweden into robust public support to join the alli-

ance, and both of these countries will strengthen the capabilities and geostrategic position of NATO.

Yesterday, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reported the treaty concerning their accession to NATO, and I hope the Senate and administration will soon complete their respective roles and approve Finland and Sweden’s membership.

One priority for me in every National Defense Authorization Act is ensuring that the men and women of Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota have everything they need to successfully carry out their mission. Right now, my priority is ensuring Ellsworth remains a responsive and lethal component of global strike command, with the B-1 bomber leveraging the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile and its Long Range Anti-Ship Missile derivative.

As we look to the future, I am working to ensure the base continues to receive full funding for the many equipment and support facilities that will be needed for the B-21 Raider mission at Ellsworth. I worked to ensure full funding for the first of these facilities in last year’s NDAA, including a low-observable coating restoration facility, a wash rack and maintenance hangar, an expanded flight simulator facility, and more.

This year’s NDAA continues that work with additional funding for the low-observable coating restoration facility, as well as funding for two additional construction projects—a weapons generation facility and a radio frequency facility—that will be needed to ensure Ellsworth is fully able to conduct the nuclear and stealth B-21 missions.

I have had the privilege of visiting the B-21 production site in Palmdale, CA. And while the program remains heavily classified, I can say the six planes under production are impressive feats of American engineering and that we are honored that South Dakota will be the first State to host the mission.

But it is not just about the hardware and cutting-edge systems. Our greatest asset is our people, including the pilots, the maintainers, and all of the men and women who have answered the call to serve. That is why I am focused on ensuring our men and women in uniform have not just the military support they need but the support they need for their families.

More military families will be moving into the Ellsworth area with the arrival of the B-21 mission—as many as 250 people per year, including 100 dependents. I am committed to ensuring that the infrastructure is in place to provide ample facilities for these families.

To that end, I worked to include in this year’s NDAA an extension of an authority for the Secretary of Defense to adjust basic allowance for housing rates if an installation is experiencing a sudden increase in the number of servicemembers assigned there. This will ensure that families at Ellsworth