

There is only one way to describe what Mr. Carlson is doing: He is stoking racial resentment among his viewers with these vile and racist conspiracy theories. I urge FOX News to compel him to stop at once.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 8404

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 8404) to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

CHIPS ACT OF 2022—Continued

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, Washington Democrats' one-party government has actually performed an amazing feat. In 18 months, they have taken an economy that was ready to soar and completely derailed it with \$2 trillion in unnecessary borrowing, printing, and spending. Now, 9.1 percent inflation is pinching hard-working Americans every time they visit the gas pump or the grocery store.

The Biden administration has tried their hardest to find a silver lining amid the economic storm clouds they helped create. They have touted the strength of consumer spending to conclude our economy is strong. That is what they said. Well, of course, consumer spending has only gone up because the price of nearly everything has increased. A recent economic analysis shows the American people do spend more on gas, groceries, furniture, and clothes than we used to, but—listen to this—adjusted for inflation, they are actually consuming less—paying more, getting less.

Parents of school-age kids are some of the hardest hit. Four in ten say they

won't go back-to-school shopping before the upcoming school year. One young mother in Nevada says she will "pick out one or two shirts" for her daughter "and that's it." Inflation has made everything else too expensive.

Over in Arizona, inflation forces the average household to spend over \$9,600 more a year compared to when President Biden took office. Many families simply don't have that much wiggle room in their budgets and are resorting to desperate measures simply to stay afloat.

One Phoenix area food bank has seen a 78-percent increase in visitors compared with just last year—78 percent more families who simply can't afford to live in this Democrat-run economy. A woman in line at the food bank said she had never needed to visit one before but "the prices are way too high" right now to support four children on her husband's salary.

Colorado families are facing the highest inflation costs in the Nation, in the whole country: nearly \$10,900 in extra spending per year compared to the beginning of the Biden administration. Not surprisingly, Coloradans are falling behind on paying for daily necessities. One pawn shop owner in the State has noticed a marked increase in loan seekers at his business. For most of them, they just need "30 bucks, 40 bucks" to "pay small bills, get gas, put groceries on the table."

This is all happening in my home State of Kentucky as well. People are taking out loans, cutting back spending, and relying on charity just to cope with ever-increasing prices. But that hasn't stopped Washington Democrats from proposing new ways to wreck our economy. As we speak, they are battling around a new suite of tax hikes aimed squarely at the middle class. If Democrat-driven inflation hasn't pushed struggling families off the edge quite yet, the Democrat-driven recession certainly will finish the job.

So what is on the menu? New taxes on small businesses already struggling with inflation, new fees and regulations on American energy producers that will send prices even higher at the pump, new socialist price control schemes to stifle healthcare innovation.

Apparently, record inflation isn't enough to make Democrats realize their reckless economic agenda is a failure, an abject failure. Maybe tax-hike-induced stagflation will set them straight.

UKRAINE

Madam President, now on another matter, I had the honor, along with others, of greeting the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, who greeted us here in the Capitol. Like my colleagues in the room, I was moved by her blunt, plaintive remarks to Congress. As her country endures the fifth month of a brutal Russian siege, Ms. Zelenska was candid about the pain and suffering Russia's unprovoked war of aggression was causing her home-

land. She said: "Russia is destroying our people."

The First Lady conveyed the incredible determination of the Ukrainian people and echoed their simple request for the tools to fight their own fight—"Weapons," she said, "to protect one's home and the right to wake up alive in that home."

I hope the First Lady's visit helped steel our colleagues' resolve as friends of Ukraine. Russia's invasion has already reminded the West that revisionist aggressors cannot be appeased. And Ukraine's brave resistance, equipped with the arsenal of the free world, is a further reminder that this is a fight they intend to win.

The Senate should be proud of our work over the past several months to get more lethal capabilities into Ukrainian hands. But at every step of the way, the Biden administration has been a bit slow to green light the game-changing weapons Ukraine's frontline defenders actually need.

I urged the President for more than a year to take specific actions to deter Russian aggression against Ukraine—actually, before it escalated. Last June, I urged him to deliver lethal capabilities to Ukraine and other states in Vladimir Putin's crosshairs. Instead, the administration slow-walked security assistance for months.

In December, I called for U.S. military reinforcements along NATO's eastern flank, but the President waited until February to deploy forces—too late to deter Putin's aggression. And even after Russia had launched its unlawful invasion, the President has repeatedly deterred himself from providing Ukraine the capabilities it needs.

With nearly every weapons system requested by Ukraine, the cycle in Washington plays out like this: first, hesitation and concern; then, excuses that Ukraine couldn't effectively use the proposed weapons or objections that providing them would escalate the conflict; then—then—grudging willingness to transfer the weapons; and finally, with weapons in Ukrainian hands, self-congratulations from the Biden administration that they are having a positive impact on the battlefield. It is exhausting to watch this decision-making cycle repeat itself from Kentucky. It must be exacerbating to watch it from Kyiv.

The need for advanced, longer-range weapons to turn back Russia's aggression is painfully obvious. Air defense capabilities to combat Russia's continuing long-range strikes against civilian populations across Ukraine, anti-ship weapons to combat the Russia Black Sea blockade and the humanitarian food crisis it is causing worldwide, and more capable, longer-range artillery to pound Russian positions in occupied Ukraine from relative safety—this will help offset any numerical advantage Russia has achieved by pumping so much more combat power into its invasion force.

So here it is. Putin cannot be allowed to believe he can just wait for the West to become complacent. It would do a moral disservice to the brave Ukrainians fighting every single day for their country. But this is not just about Ukraine's security. If Russia achieves its objective in Ukraine, it will imperil our own security. And if we waiver—if we waiver—on Ukraine, it would certainly send an unmistakable signal of weakness to Beijing, which is watching the conflict in Ukraine very closely.

For their part, so are our friends and allies in China's backyard. As Japan's Prime Minister put it back in May: "Ukraine might be East Asia tomorrow."

Russia's brutal war has cost the people of Ukraine their homes, their safety, and their lives. But it has also reawakened the West to the reality of long-term deterrence and competition.

It has led modern partners like Sweden and Finland to cast their lot with the greatest military alliance in the history of the world. And it has prompted current treaty allies to shake off years of neglect for their own defense capabilities. All of this will result in greater burden-sharing, interoperability, military capability, and collective security for the NATO alliance.

The United States cannot afford to neglect this lesson ourselves. As the leader of the free world and the No. 1 target of revisionist adversaries like China and Russia, we have to take seriously our obligation to maintain America's military superiority.

We need to act quickly and pass a defense authorization bill that restores our readiness, grows our stockpiles of critical munitions, reinforces our position along NATO's eastern flank, and lays the foundations for a new era of credible deterrence in Asia by modernizing and equipping our military for real competition with China.

I hope the Democratic leader will let the Senate take action on this critical legislation without further delay.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

HIGHLAND PARK SHOOTING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, we have a great number of holidays each year in America. But is there a more perfect holiday than the Fourth of July? We celebrate the birth of our Nation. We gather with our families for picnics, a trip to the beach, backyard barbecues, take in a baseball game, and go to a parade. It is just the ultimate American celebration. We relax, pull out our American flags, gather our kids, and thank God that we are born in this great Nation and can call it home.

But this last Fourth of July became a different scene in one part of my home State of Illinois. It was the first time in years that the people of Highland Park were able to gather together publicly. So there was a special celebration as they gathered at 10 in the morning for the Fourth of July parade.

Oh, in addition to the usual suspects at these parades, political candidates, there were a lot of groups just there in pure celebration: high school bands, gatherings of veterans, all sorts of groups in a wonderful, wonderful suburban town in the Chicagoland area of Highland Park.

Yesterday, we held a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee about the day of the July Fourth parade in Highland Park. I wish we didn't have to hold that hearing. I would rather it would have been some other subject, some other place. But it was the 10th hearing during this Congress—the 10th time—that we had held a hearing in the Judiciary Committee on gun violence—gun violence, the No. 1 cause of death of children in America. Let me repeat that: gun violence, the No. 1 cause of death among children in America.

Yesterday, we focused on Highland Park and the Fourth of July parade, and we focused on the obvious mass shooting incident that took place. And we focused on military-style assault weapons.

The Fourth of July shooting in Highland Park, IL, was the 309th mass shooting in America this year. What is a mass shooting? When four people are either injured or killed—309 times it had happened before July the Fourth.

By the time of yesterday's hearing, 16 days after the Fourth of July, that number of 309 had grown by 47 mass shootings since the Fourth of July in America—16 days, 47 more mass shootings.

Where else on Earth is this taking place? Nowhere. Right here in the United States of America is the only place on Earth where mass shootings are happening on such a frequent basis.

In many of the deadliest shootings, the attacker used an assault weapon, a combat weapon—a gun specifically designed to kill the maximum number of people in just a few seconds; the same weapon we saw in Uvalde, TX, where the kids in their classrooms were killed; the same weapon we saw in the supermarket in Buffalo, NY, when early morning shoppers on a Saturday were killed; and, sadly, the same weapon that was used in Highland Park.

During the Fourth of July parade in Highland Park, a deranged gunman perched himself on a rooftop, using a Smith & Wesson assault rifle, killing seven people and wounding dozens more. He shot 83 rounds in less than a minute. Let me say that again: 83 rounds in less than a minute.

This is Aiden McCarthy. Aiden is 2 years old. His mom and dad, Kevin and Irina McCarthy, took him to the Fourth of July parade in Highland Park. I first heard about him just an hour or 2 after this terrible incident. I called my friend Nancy Rotering, who is the mayor of Highland Park, and asked her: Tell me, what can I do?

She said: I don't know. Things are happening so fast. We actually found a 2-year-old toddler who was wandering

on the street by himself. We don't know who he belongs to. His picture is being circulated in the community.

The conclusion was fairly obvious. Whoever brought him to that parade was not able to look for him and care for him. And the story eventually unfolded. Kevin and Irina McCarthy brought Aiden to the parade—his first parade. And then when the shooting started, they shielded him with their bodies. In a matter of minutes, Aiden lost both of his parents. Fortunately, a grandparent was located, and Aiden is in safe hands today.

But because of this assault weapon being fired on the crowd, he lost his mom and dad. That is the reality when a parent has to shield a child like this from a mass shooting.

Nancy Rotering, as I mentioned earlier, is mayor of Highland Park. She testified yesterday about the parade. She told us that when the shooting started, she thought the sound of bullets was actually a drum cadence from the local marching band. That is how fast the bullets were being fired.

When she realized there was an active shooter, she began evacuating the crowd. She said the adults she confronted stared back at her. They didn't understand what she was saying. But the children, the teenagers, they understood. This was a shooter; this wasn't a drill.

Did you hear that? The children and the teens at the Highland Park parade instinctively knew what was happening because they had been trained in their schools to deal with mass shootings. That is how common these mass shootings have become.

I grew up in a different era, Cold War era, where it was duck and cover under your desk for fear of a nuclear attack—an attack by the Soviet Union. These kids—our kids, our grandkids—are being schooled not just in the ABCs, but they are being schooled in survival, so that if a shooter shows up in a classroom, they know what to do to try to survive.

Mayor Rotering told the Judiciary Committee:

Our children are expected to return to school in [about] a month. . . . They are frightened to go back. . . . They are frightened to play outside. Many never want to go to . . . parade[s] again. For the rest of their lives, they will look over their shoulders, ready for another active shooter, thanks to the drills our society has normalized [in our classrooms].

She continued:

Playing outside is normal. Back to school is normal. Fear of a shooter is not normal; but now in Highland Park [Illinois] and so many other American communities, it is [the new normal].

It can't be said enough that mass shootings with assault weapons are a unique American phenomenon. They are devastating—so devastating.

I want to show you another picture with Aiden McCarthy. This is Cooper Roberts, 8 years old. Cooper and his twin brother Luke went to the parade with their mom and dad. And in the

course of the shooting, he was shot, taken to the hospital immediately. He has gone through at least seven or eight surgeries now, touch and go for many days as to whether he would live. And, sadly, in addition to the damage that was done to his body, his spinal cord was severed by this same bullet.

You see, when you fire an assault weapon at a human body, it hits that body at three times the ordinary velocity of any other firearm. It is so powerful that it was originally designed by the U.S. Army to achieve a single goal described to us in the committee yesterday. That goal was to be able to shoot one of these AR-15s and pierce a metal helmet worn by a soldier 500 yards away—five football fields—the AR-15. It is not another firearm. It is a killing weapon. And, unfortunately, Cooper Roberts was in the line of fire. We pray that he recovers.

His mom and dad have kept us posted, all of us posted, as to his progress. But if you think about the devastation that an AR-15 combat weapon assault rifle can do to a human body, imagine what it did to this poor little boy's body. That is the reality of the issue we are discussing.

Many gun manufacturers, like Smith & Wesson, Mossberg, Bushmaster, and Daniel Defense have launched ad campaigns marketing their assault weapons like they are fashion accessories.

Let me show you a few of them. This is from Mossberg:

Engineered to the specs of freedom and independence, stand and salute the tactical rifle. We are America's oldest family-owned firearms manufacturer, building dependable, hard-working rifles and shotguns since 1919. American built, American strong. Arm yourself with a Mossberg.

That is the type of weapon that shot Cooper Roberts, that killed the parents of Aiden McCarthy. How is it being marketed? A symbol of independence and freedom.

Some of these other ads—want proof of your manhood? “Consider your Man Card reissued,” says Bushmaster with their AR-15.

I want to make sure, as we said at the hearing yesterday, that these weapons are properly characterized. I will tell you how I characterize them. The manufacturers of these weapons should be ashamed of what is happening across America. To suggest that this typifies the values of this country is just plain wrong and offensive. It is time for us to name and shame these companies. It is time to hold them accountable for the devastation they made possible. How many AR-15s are there in America? We don't really know. The best estimate is 20 million—20 million.

I want to dispel a common talking point we hear from the other side of the aisle. We heard it yesterday. They claim our communities don't need new gun safety laws; all they need are good guys with guns. I wish it were that simple. It is not.

In one survey of 433 active shooter attacks, how many were stopped by a

good guy with a gun? Twenty-two out of four hundred and thirty-three—about 5 percent. Half of those 22 were security guards and trained law enforcement who were there present on the scene and off duty.

The sad reality is, when the police come on the scene and someone is holding a gun, they don't know if it is a perpetrator, a danger, or somebody on their side. In many instances, they shoot the wrong person, making a split-second decision in seeing a person holding a gun.

So this notion that we are going to come to the rescue of one another and stop mass shootings is not a reality. Five percent of active shooter attacks were stopped by a good guy with a gun—5 percent. Imagine buying a car and being told there is only a 5-percent chance that the airbag will go off if you need it in a crash? You wouldn't take that car out of the dealership, and for good reason.

We heard testimony yesterday from RAND Corporation firearms expert Dr. Kyleanne Hunter. She told us that assault weapons make mass shootings significantly more lethal.

The evidence is clear. It is time for us to have a national conversation about America and mass shooting.

Let me say that the manufacturers shouldn't get off the hook. They aren't just selling you a product.

Let me show you one other thing that is particularly outrageous. Sadly, this is in my home State of Illinois. It is a JR-15. It is designed to look like the AR-15, the combat weapon assault rifle. It is lighter, so it can be carried by a kid. Here are the symbols of this JR-15. They are skulls, skulls of children. Each one of them has a pacifier in his mouth. It isn't just on this poster, on this ad; it is emblazoned on the gun itself. This is a kid's assault weapon. Think about that for a second. In America, we have reached a point where that is even thought of in light of the killing that has taken place.

The hearing yesterday showed an outpouring of people from Highland Park in numbers I never expected. I believe there were 100 people there who, on their own dime, came out to Washington to make sure all of us in Congress knew what happened in Highland Park, how that village and their lives were changed on the Fourth of July. What are we going to do about it—shrug our shoulders and wait for tomorrow's mass shooting? Sadly, we can expect one to come.

I listen to the defenses, but, frankly, I can't understand people trying to defend the right to own an assault rifle in America.

One Senator argued: Well, it is just an inanimate object, you know. Don't blame the object for the results.

I wonder if he feels the same way about a grenade launcher. Should people have the right to own grenade launchers? I hope we can all agree that is an incredible thought. Why doesn't this weapon fall into a similar cat-

egory, a combat, Army assault weapon that is being used by individuals to kill so many innocent people in this country—kill them at a concert in Las Vegas, at schools in Connecticut, at schools in Texas, at Fourth of July parades in my home State.

Last month, we did come together—and I want to salute Senator MURPHY, who is on the floor—to pass a bill that was the most important gun safety law we considered in three decades. I voted for it. It didn't address this issue at all except in the background checks for those under 21. And I am glad it did, but it didn't address the issue of whether these guns should even be in America at this point, legal in America. That, I think, is the critical threshold issue.

Incidentally, this shooter, who seemed to have a pretty ill-fated life from the start, managed to buy high-capacity magazines so that he could clip in quickly 30 rounds here, 30 rounds there, and fire off 83 times. Why in the world does anyone need a high-capacity clip magazine? I don't understand it. It doesn't have any practical value for sport or hunting.

We need to address the widespread, serious problem of civilian access to military assault weapons, even for shooters as young as 18.

I thank the people from Highland Park for coming yesterday and all the brave law enforcement and first responders whom I saw gather that evening when I arrived at Highland Park. We owe them a lot. They are doing an amazing job, and we should pay tribute to them and what they did. But even they, being present and armed, could not stop this from happening. They were up against a mighty weapon—a weapon we trust for the military, we trust for the police; a weapon which has no place in the hands of people like the shooter in Highland Park on the Fourth of July.

Are we going to continue this American tradition of mass shootings? Sadly, we will unless this body, this Senate, decides that it is worth the fight, worth the political debate. After Highland Park, count me in. I want to be on the record saying it is time to put an end to these assault rifles, these weapons of war which have sadly taken so many innocent lives like poor Aiden McCarthy's parents and five others who died in Highland Park.

I hope for our children's sake that we don't run away from this problem. The people in Highland Park had to run away from the Fourth of July parade, and now they are counting on us to stand up and face it squarely.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Tennessee.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, America is facing a perfect storm of inflation, unsustainable energy costs, and supply chain chaos. Russia and Iran are circling the wagons.

Joe Biden is still finding new ways to put the American people last. In fact,

when it comes to getting gas prices under control, he has chosen to unleash a China-first policy rather than unleashing the power of American energy.

I have spent the past 18 months laying out in great detail how Joe Biden and the Democrats have damaged our credibility and enriched our adversaries. They undermined our economic recovery. They abandoned the border. They destroyed American energy independence. The list goes on and on, unfortunately. It appears that everything they have done makes life worse for "we the people."

Unfortunately, it is emboldening the axis of evil—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea. Under normal circumstances, Vladimir Putin's trip to Iran this week would be a cause for concern, but with the Biden administration in charge, it appears it could be just the tip of the iceberg because although Russia and Iran are competitors, especially in the energy sector, they are absolutely united in their hatred of the United States and in their desire to undermine Western interests.

When they look at the United States, they see a country whose President got a head start undermining those interests on day 1 of his administration, and you better believe they are ready to take advantage of this. They are ready for it. This week, look at what they have done. You had Gazprom, which is the Russian energy giant, and the National Iranian Oil Company come together and announce a \$40 billion agreement to work together on oil and gas development and pipeline construction. They are reading the writing on the wall, and what they see is hesitation from the U.S. President to move us back to energy independence, where we were on day 1 of his administration, so they are making plans as to how they will work together and dominate the energy sector.

Meanwhile, Joe Biden has also sold about a million barrels of oil from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve to the Chinese Communist Party. When I have spoken with Tennesseans about this, they are furious. They cannot understand why he would make a choice to do this. The left has done their best to provide cover for the President, claiming that a million barrels is really nothing to worry about, but you know it is something to worry about. Our SPR has about 750 million barrels in it. We are drawing it down at about a million barrels a day. Plus, the President is now selling to our adversaries—selling it.

We did a little bit of research into what China can get out of a barrel of oil, and here is what we found: That gives you 20 gallons of gasoline; 12½ gallons of distillate, which is what we use for diesel fuel; and about 3½ gallons of jet fuel. To Tennesseans, this makes a big difference.

I really agree with my fellow Tennesseans about this. When they look at this picture and they think about the

President's big sale to Hunter Biden's friends in Beijing, they don't see a gallon of gas here and there. What they see is 20 million full tanks of gas. They see diesel fuel that our farmers need. Right now, with the price of diesel doubling, we have farmers in Tennessee who cannot get crops planted. They chose not to plant crops because of the cost of diesel, fertilizer, chemicals, pesticides. They see sabotage of their hopes and their dreams and their plans—their plans—for their family, for their business, for their farm.

As I have been out and about around the State and talked to Tennesseans, they have a message for this President, this administration, my Democratic colleagues. This is more than just a political disagreement. In their minds, and I agree, this is a national security risk—a national security risk.

We are making ourselves vulnerable. Giving any aid or advantage to our adversaries is wrong, and this has got to end. Joe Biden and the Democrats must abandon this China-first energy policy and return to an America-first policy.

Restart the Keystone Pipeline. Approve more energy infrastructure. Hold more lease sales. Approve drilling permits that are waiting for approval.

Let's get the regulators out of the way. Stall some of these 42 regulations that the President has put on the oil and energy sector this year. Let's do this. Let's advantage ourselves with American energy before it is too late.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled vote. Senator MURPHY for up to 15 minutes; Senator CORNYN for up to 15 minutes; and Senator COONS for up to 3 minutes.

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

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about a piece of legislation that was introduced yesterday by 16 bipartisan Senators: the Electoral Count Reform and Presidential Transition Improvement Act.

I am proud of the effort between Republicans and Democrats to put aside our differences on other issues and to be able to put before this body a proposal that will assure that the votes that are cast all across this country for President in 2024 result in the winner of that election sitting in the Oval Office.

And I come to the floor today to underscore for my colleagues why this piece of legislation is so vitally necessary.

All across the country, we are seeing an epidemic of candidates being nominated for Governor, for secretary of state, for Congress, who don't believe Joe Biden won the 2020 election.

They instead believe these wild conspiracy theories about voting machines

that magically switched votes from one candidate to another, Sharpies that voted for Joe Biden illegally. All of it has been debunked, but the conspiracy theories and the support for this notion that Donald Trump actually won the election, according to the rules of the electoral college in 2020, continue to spread.

The Republican nominee for Governor in Pennsylvania, who appoints the State's chief election official, was right here at the Capitol, yards away from this Chamber on January 6, as individuals were storming the building trying to do harm to us. He took part in high-level meetings after the 2020 election, intended to overturn Biden's win in Pennsylvania.

He is perhaps mere months away from being the next Governor and chief elections officer of that State. Across the country, former President Trump is organizing what he calls an America First Secretary of State Coalition, and he is pretty unapologetic about what the design is. It is to install election officers all across the country whose chief loyalty is to Donald Trump, not the vote.

His endorsed candidate in Arizona, for instance, called for Biden's win in Arizona to be thrown out and for the Republican State legislature to appoint its own electors instead.

In Nevada, the endorsed Republican candidate for secretary of state, another Trump loyalist, says if he was in office in 2020, he would not have certified Joe Biden's win, leading to an immediate constitutional crisis.

What is happening all across the country right now is a complete, total rejection of democracy by Trump supporters and his endorsed candidates.

Now, they aren't representative of the entire Republican Party, but, unfortunately, they are winning primaries all across the country, and they are winning elections all across the country.

And these Trump loyalists, they are not interested in the winner of an election becoming President if that winner isn't Donald Trump. They effectively want Donald Trump installed as a monarch, and they are willing to just throw out democracy if that is what is necessary to keep their leader in power.

And as I mentioned, this isn't some fringe phenomenon any longer. I think we have a lot of Republicans in the Senate and the House who see this danger coming and want to take steps to prevent it. That is why we are introducing this legislation, but there are over 100 winners of Republican primaries for Congress and statewide office this year who believe—who have stated this belief publicly that the 2020 election was stolen and that Donald Trump should still be President.

There is just a very well-developed and well-organized movement, where Trump supporters are learning from his inability to overturn the election in 2020, and they are galvanizing themselves to leave nothing to chance in 2024.

The operation to install Trump in the White House in 2025, if he runs, will be more sophisticated and better organized than 2020. The threat that 2024 will be the last year of American democracy is real.

I know that sounds like hyperbole, but we came really close to losing our democracy in 2020. And if a President is installed in the White House who did not actually win the election, then I don't know how you claim that this experiment for 250 years is still ongoing.

So we need to act, as a body, across the aisle. Those of us who believe that our loyalty to country is more important than our loyalty to party need to act to make it as hard as possible for a group of traitors to install as President the loser of the 2024 Presidential election.

And so toward that end, we have introduced a piece of legislation that will seek to reform the way in which electors are sent to Congress and the way in which we count those electors to put up as many barriers as we can to these efforts to install the loser of the 2024 election as President of the United States.

So I am grateful to Senator COLLINS and Senator MANCHIN for leading this process. I am grateful to be a part of it, along with Senators PORTMAN, SINEMA, ROMNEY, SHAHEEN, MURKOWSKI, WARNER, TILLIS, CAPITO, CARDIN, YOUNG, COONS, SASSE, and GRAHAM.

And so let me tell you, in just a few minutes, what the most important elements—let me just tell you about some of the key elements of the Electoral Count Reform Act. It engages to make the selection and counting of fraudulent electors harder by both addressing efforts by Congress to overturn valid State results but also to make it harder for States to submit to Congress invalid State results.

Now, on January 6 of last year, we saw a handful of our colleagues attempt to throw out the valid elector slates from States like Pennsylvania and Arizona. And, luckily, in the end, those efforts only got a handful of votes here in the Senate, but the majority of Republicans voted to throw out those slates in the House of Representatives, which just tells you how mainstream these views have become.

And so, in two important ways, we make that attempt by Congress to throw out valid results from a State a little bit, but substantially, harder. Under our current law, it only takes one single Senator in order to throw this entire Senate into a debate over whether or not we should count or throw out certain electors.

In the end, there were, I think, 12 Republican Senators who suggested we should throw out ballots, but really all that was needed was 1. So what we do is we increase that threshold from 1 Senator to 20 percent of Senators, from 1 House Member to 20 percent of House Members to begin that debate. Ultimately, you still need a majority of the House and the Senate to throw out an

elector slate, but you can't even begin that debate now without having 20 percent of each body. That is a substantial and important change.

Second, we clarify the role of the Vice President. Now, some would argue that this isn't necessary; that the Vice President's role in this process is ceremonial, but that is not what Donald Trump thought. Donald Trump and his cadre of fringe lawyers believed, by reading a statute in a particular way, that Mike Pence had the ability by himself to refuse to count certain slates of electors.

Now, that is not how the 1887 Act reads, but just to be absolutely clear, our reform act clarifies the law to make 100 percent clear that the Vice President's role is just ceremonial.

And then, as I said, we also take steps to make it harder for States to send fraudulent results to Congress because that is the primary threat in 2024. I still think that there are the votes in the Senate, no matter what the elections look like in 2024, for the Senate to make sure that we don't throw out valid results that are sent to the Congress.

The bigger threat is that one candidate wins in a State like Arizona or—depending on what happens in the gubernatorial election in Pennsylvania—Pennsylvania and instead that State decides to send electors for the losing candidate to Congress, making some vague, broad claims of fraud that they can't substantiate.

So we make that exercise in fraud less likely through a number of means. First, there is a really ambiguous provision in the 1887 law which President Trump argued in the courts allowed for State legislatures to appoint their own electors if they judged that the election was incomplete. Now, what that was initially intended to mean was if an election didn't happen because of a natural disaster, but Trump's lawyers thought that that meant that these claims of fraud could satisfy that incomplete criteria.

Well, we removed that ambiguity in this underlying piece of legislation. No longer will anybody be able to claim that State legislatures can just step in after the fact and appoint different electors.

Second, we have a clear prohibition that State legislatures can't change the rules of how electors are chosen after the election itself. Now, it is up to State legislatures as to how they appoint electors.

Every State right now appoints them based upon who won the popular vote in their State, but the Constitution does give that power to the State legislature. It does not give them the power to change that process after the voters have cast their vote. We make that clear in this piece of legislation.

And then, most importantly, we clarify the process by which campaigns and candidates can contest a fraudulent certification or a fraudulent appointment of electors.

As we saw in the 2000 election, there is overlapping contesting jurisdictions between States and the Federal court system. It often takes very—a very long time for those processes to play out and unwind. We set up in this bill a new expedited process of review by a three-judge panel. We limit the cases that can be brought to that panel by the campaigns themselves, just to make sure we aren't incentivizing spurious litigation.

But that new process allows the candidates and the campaigns, if they believe that the laws of the State have not been upheld in allowing the majority winner of that State to dictate what electors get sent to Washington, to make that claim before a three-judge panel in an expedited fashion, to have that case go up to the Supreme Court in an expedited manner as well.

Clarifying the way in which we solve for these contests, if they arise over a valid slate of electors and an invalid slate of electors is an important reform in this bill.

Listen, what we have built over the last 250 years in the United States of America, it really is a miracle, and we should never forget how much of an anomaly American democracy is when you look at the broad scope of the governments under which people have lived.

This idea that citizens, not dictators or Kings or plutocrats, get to decide who leads a nation—250 years later, it is still a revolutionary idea.

And I remind my constituents all the time that democracy is really unnatural, right? There are not a lot of other things that are important to us in our lives that we run through democratic vote. Our workplaces are really important places, but we don't run our workplace through democratic vote. The boss—the CEO—makes the decisions there.

We love our sports teams, right? We follow them. We live and die for them. But the decisions on those teams—they are not made by democratic vote. There is a coach, a general manager who makes the decisions. I love my kids, but they don't get an equal vote in the decisions of my household with my wife and me. Lots of things that are important to us in our lives don't run by democratic vote. We are very comfortable, in fact, with hierarchal systems, with one person or a handful of people making decisions for us, but we have reserved this idea of democracy for the decisions that are made that govern our community, our town, our State, or our Nation.

We need to remember that over the course of world history, almost no one has lived in a democratic civilization. Why? Because it is natural for human beings to want their chosen leader to be in charge, their preferred leader to be in charge, no matter what everybody else in the community believes. It is also natural for leaders, once they have tasted power, to want to cling to that power and refuse to give it up, no matter the wishes of their citizenry.

So we need to be constantly vigilant to protect this experiment. In the grand sweep of world history, that is what it is—a revolutionary experiment. We need to recognize the moments when the threats to that experiment are new and novel and more grave than normal and be nimble enough to respond.

So I would argue that this is one of those moments, and I am so grateful to the group of bipartisan Senators who have worked so hard to introduce this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

H.R. 4346

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the business before the Senate is a critical undertaking to shore up our vulnerability to imported microcircuits, otherwise known as semiconductors. You might wonder why this is so important if you haven't been following the debate over the last couple of years.

While this legislation has taken many names, it began as the CHIPS for America Act in June of 2020, which established a new program to incentivize manufacturers of these tiny microcircuits, known as semiconductors, to set up shop here in the United States.

We have tried to fund the program at different times through the Endless Frontier Act; the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, sometimes called USICA; the America COMPETES Act; the Make It in America Act. But no matter what the title is or whatever you call it, the purpose is to eliminate this unacceptable risk that somehow—due to pandemic, due to military conflict, due to natural disaster—our access to the most advanced semiconductors on the planet would be cut off, with devastating consequences to the U.S. economy and our national security.

I know some people wonder, Why should the Federal taxpayer provide financial incentives to semiconductor manufacturing? And that is a perfectly good question. The reason is, we are in a competition with countries all around the world that are providing incentives to build these necessary and essential facilities in their country, and if we don't participate in this competition, we will end up maintaining our dependency entirely on semiconductors imported into the United States. We saw big investments being made in other countries—China, the EU, Germany, France. A number of different countries want this manufacturing capability in their country because they understand its importance to their economy and security.

Now, you might wonder, Why is it necessary? Well, there is a reason—an economic reason—why these semiconductor manufacturers are almost all based in Asia. The overwhelming majority are made in Taiwan, and that is because it costs 30 percent less to build these facilities in Asia than it does here in the United States.

But COVID-19 exposed a lot of vulnerabilities of supply chains, whether it is PPE—personal protective equipment—or semiconductors, and this idea that just because somebody could build something cheaper somewhere else, that checked all the boxes. It does not check all the boxes. And there are some things we must have access to, and one is a secure source of these microcircuits that run everything from your cell phone to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. We know that semiconductors will get more and more important as the world competes to come up with smaller and more powerful semiconductor chips to operate everything from computers to our weapons systems.

When the pandemic hit, the supply chain vulnerability was demonstrated by empty car lots, backordered electronics, higher prices, contributing to inflation. Consumers who never needed to know what a semiconductor was found themselves impacted by this disruption.

My State is home to companies across a full range of industries that have been impacted, from consumer electronics to defense companies.

Last spring, an executive from Toyota told me that when he first started with the company, he could count the number of chips in a given vehicle on two hands. That certainly is not the case now, with almost autonomous vehicles and certainly with all the sensors that have made driving a lot safer and a lot more convenient added to new cars. Think about the high-tech features in our cars—navigation systems, Bluetooth, automatic braking, backup cameras, and parking sensors. That is on top of standard functions like power steering, air-conditioning, and window wipers. Today, some cars use as many as 1,000 semiconductor chips.

So the pandemic of COVID-19 demonstrated our vulnerability to our supply chains that made getting so many semiconductors impossible.

This wasn't just a problem for automakers; virtually every industry was impacted. In many ways, the global chip shortage served as a wake-up call—certainly to me and I believe other Members of Congress and the Senate who voted consistently to eliminate this vulnerability in our supply chains. It forced us to recognize the vulnerability of that supply chain and then to do something about it, which we are in the process of doing.

As bad as the chip-related shortages have been in the last 2 years, they pale in comparison to what could be coming if we don't act.

As I said, the vast majority of the world's chips are made in Asia, with the bulk coming from Taiwan. Sixty-three percent of the advanced semiconductors in the world are made in Taiwan. Even more concerning is that 92 percent of the world's most advanced semiconductors come from that country. So 62 percent—63 percent of semi-

conductors come from Taiwan, but 92 percent of the most advanced, the most powerful, the smallest semiconductors come from that same place. None, zero, zip, nada are made in America. None.

Taiwanese semiconductor firms make the chips used in our military's Joint Strike Fighter, the F-35, artificial intelligence, and other military-grade devices.

Now, if you have been paying attention to what President Xi and the People's Republic of China have been saying about Taiwan, they are saying they are going to unify the PRC with Taiwan either peacefully or by military action.

Again, I believe the risk of pandemic, natural disaster, or military intervention makes this risk simply unacceptable.

Last fall, I led a congressional delegation to visit Indochina, the INDOCOM area of operations, to learn more about the threat of Chinese aggression when it comes to Taiwan. One of the leaders we met with was the commander of the Indo-Pacific Command, located in Hawaii, who described the current power dynamic rather succinctly. He said it is not a question of if China invades Taiwan but when.

We even have a rough idea of when that could happen. President Xi has made no secret of his desire to unify Taiwan with the mainland, saying he wants to be ready to do that by 2027, just 5 years from now. But, as we have learned from Putin's invasion of Ukraine, when one person makes a decision, you can't depend on any particular timeline because it could happen in the blink of an eye.

It is tough to overestimate the impact this lack of access to these advanced semiconductors would have on the United States and our allies. To be sure, our cars, televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines would be impacted, but that is only the beginning. Those would be mere inconveniences. How would we manufacture Javelin missiles that are used in Ukraine? Well, we couldn't because they all run on semiconductors. There is the Stinger that is being used so effectively by the Ukrainians to go after Russian tanks invading Ukraine. The Joint Strike Fighter, the F-35, our most advanced, fifth-generation, stealth aircraft, is chock-full of semiconductors that would be unavailable if our access was cut off for some reason.

Then just think about our critical infrastructure. Think about cell towers. Think about the energy grid. Where would we get the chips that are needed for modern farming equipment? Just as cars have become more and more automated, so have tractors and other farming equipment.

What would we do for the chips that we need to treat water to make sure it is clean and easily available?

So these aren't problems just for consumers; it is a major national security vulnerability.

Back in 1980, President Jimmy Carter gave his State of the Union Address in

which he spoke about the instability of the Persian Gulf and Soviet threats to the movement of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. That was back in the days when we depended almost entirely on imported oil into the United States. But Jimmy Carter said in 1980 that any attempt to gain control of the Strait of Hormuz and to block access to that essential energy source, he said, would be “an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America.” That would be a declaration of war.

I think the same argument applies to semiconductors today. In fact, some people have called semiconductors the new oil because it is so essential to our way of life, to our economy, and our security.

Just as the Soviets could have blocked the Strait of Hormuz and choked off the global oil supply back in 1980, the People’s Republic of China could seize Taiwan’s supply of chips and starve the rest of the world. Will they go into the ventilators and the other lifesaving medical equipment or provide homes with clean drinking water? These are important questions that many of us have been asking and looking to try to find ways to mitigate, if not to eliminate, our dependency on imported semiconductors.

So funding this program in this bill currently before the Senate will shore up domestic chip manufacturing to make sure that we meet the needs of our most critical industries. It would deliver economic benefits to our communities through new investments and jobs. It will strengthen our national security by providing chips that can make their way into markets around the world. It will ensure that we have a reliable supply of chips so we can outinnovate and outcompete any and every adversary, and that is a point worth stressing.

We know we are in competition with the People’s Republic of China, but the way we will beat them is to outcompete them. The only way we will do that is with access to the most advanced electronics, including semiconductors, that are made anywhere on the planet, and we need to make them here in America so there can be trusted supply chains and readily available.

So I appreciate all of our colleagues who supported this legislation for the long and winding journey that has brought us here today, and I hope this bill will pass the Senate and the House next week and finally make its way to the President’s desk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

NOMINATION OF REUBEN E. BRIGETY II

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, you and I have had the blessing of traveling to South Africa together, so I know you know, as I do, that it is a critical nation, not just on its own terms as a country of 70 million people of a multilingual, multifair, multiethnic democracy working to achieve the incredible promise enshrined in its Con-

stitution, working to achieve the vision of a liberation struggle, but it is also a country that is critical to regional security and for the path of the globe and to the security and stability of democracy in this century. This is why I stand to speak briefly on behalf of my friend, Reuben Brigety, the nominee to be our next Ambassador to South Africa, whose confirmation we will take up in just a few moments.

Reuben is someone I admire deeply. He attended the Naval Academy, served in the U.S. Navy, was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State both for African Affairs and for Population, Refugees, and Migration.

I met him as Ambassador to the African Union, knew him well as dean of the Elliott School at GW. He took on the challenge of service as the president of the University of the South, better known as Sewanee; and now our President has nominated him to represent us in South Africa.

As we have seen in recent votes and actions at the United Nations and in discussions and debates around the world, African countries—in this moment, during this war in Ukraine, in the face of Russia’s aggression—are turning away from us. They are not believing the reality that it is Russian aggression that is causing food scarcity and fertilizer prices to spike, and they are more than not taking Russia’s side on this.

We cannot take these relationships for granted. The United States, for decades, has been a close development and public health partner of South Africa. We have to send our best, and Ambassador Brigety is the right person at the right time to advance the critical relationship goals that we have between the United States and South Africa.

TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDRA DAVIS

Mr. President, one of the blessings of serving here in the Senate is getting to know natives of New Jersey, like yourself and like my foreign policy adviser, Allie Davis.

I will do my best to get through these next few minutes of remarks without being unduly emotional, but she deserves a catch in the throat and a tear in the eye because Allie is someone who from the moment she came to join my team 6 years ago has been a remarkable person—a person of great spirit and character, someone who also spent time in South Africa as a young person.

After graduating from the University of Delaware, a tour as a Fulbright in South Africa prepared her to join my team as a foreign policy fellow.

As she was just confessing to me in my office a few moments ago, she knew far less about governance and politics than I imagined. She carries herself with remarkable grace and confidence. She steadily has risen to be a legislative aide, a legislative assistant, and now my foreign policy adviser.

I don’t have the time—but I wish I did—to detail all the pieces of significant and important legislation she has

helped shepherd through to success. She has critically supported my leadership on the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations team. She has been critical as we have worked to address this moment of global hunger. She has helped get the Global Fragility Act from concept to enactment. She has helped make the Development Finance Corporation a powerful tool for development. She helped shape and craft the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act, and she nearly single-handedly, at a time when I was confident this could not be done, got the Sudan Claims Resolution Act through this Congress and fundamentally changed the arc of the search for democracy in Sudan.

We had the chance to travel together on a Presidential mission to Ethiopia, during which she had truly memorable encounters with its head of state and an opportunity to see and participate and help drive diplomacy firsthand. We traveled together to so many other countries: from the UAE to France to Georgia to Italy and, perhaps most memorably, to Sudan, where I was honored to receive one of their leading national awards, which really was an award in recognition of her work on behalf of the Sudanese people.

She goes to serve the House Foreign Affairs Committee, whose chairman I accosted last night at an event, and said: You are causing great harm to me, and I resent deeply the fact that you are causing this most talented and skilled and trusted member to leave the Senate and go to the House.

But she joins as a member of their professional staff, a great team. And I know that we will continue to work hard and to work closely together in the years and decades ahead. A great friend, a great colleague, and someone to whom I wish great success in the many years ahead.

With that, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of the nomination of Reuben Brigety to be Ambassador, and I offer my greatest thanks to Allie Davis for her talented and skillful service on behalf of the people of Delaware.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Reuben E. Brigety II, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of South Africa.

VOTE ON BRIGETY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Brigety nomination?