

are meant to slow down the building of American infrastructure—are certainly not the working men and women of America; it is the radical environmental groups, probably the trial lawyers. And I will give you another group that loves it when we do this to ourselves: the Chinese Communist Party. They look at us and go: Holy cow, these Americans can't get out of their own way. Nine years to permit a bridge. This is killing us in terms of competitiveness. Mayors don't like these rules.

So what we are going to do next week, my Congressional Review Act resolution is very simple. It says, we are going to rescind this Biden rule that is going to make it harder to build American infrastructure.

And here is the thing: Right now, we have a very big list of groups that are supporting my resolution. We got all the building trades of America; the operating engineers; the AFL-CIO of Alaska; the Laborers' International, LIUNA—the biggest construction union in America; and so many groups—farmers, independent business men and women. Dozens of groups are supporting our resolution to say we are not going to allow that. We want to build things. We want to build things.

President Biden likes to talk about his supposed blue collar roots. Well, I wonder where the President is going to be on my resolution because all the unions in America that build stuff are supporting it. Again, maybe he didn't even know his White House put it out there. Maybe he wants to support my Congressional Review Act resolution.

But I will tell you who this resolution is going to be really good for. It is going to be good for these men and women in America who built this country, who built this country.

I will end where I began. Next week, there is going to be a big vote here, a simple vote. I have 50 Republicans who cosponsored my resolution to get rid of the Biden administration regulation that is going to kill infrastructure. If you support the building trades and the labor unions who built America, you are going to vote yes on my resolution. If you support infrastructure for America and building it in a timely fashion, you are going to vote yes on my resolution. If you support American energy that we need so much in our country, that we have right here, that we don't need to import from Saudi Arabia or Russia or Iran or Venezuela, you are going to support my resolution. If you support the men and women who actually build this country, all of whom who are supporting my resolution, you are going to support my resolution.

But if you stand with the coastal environmental elites who want to shut down this country, shut down my State, shut down the economy, maybe you will vote the other way. Like I said in the beginning, it is going to be a test next week. Whose side are you on? Are you with these men and women and their heritage and their heroism who

built this country, or are you going to be standing with this individual, the epitome of arrogant coastal elite, smugly telling Americans that they shouldn't build energy projects?

I know where I am standing next week. I am standing with the great men and women who built this country, the great men and women who continue to build this country, the great men and women who are supporting my resolution. And I sure hope all my colleagues vote the same way. This is an easy vote for America. This should be 100 to 0. That is the reason why.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The majority leader.

#### INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, it has been a momentous 24 hours here in the Congress.

A legislative one-two punch that the American people rarely see. A little while ago, the House voted to approve the largest investment in decades to lower costs, increase manufacturing, invest in science, and help fix the semiconductor crisis. The CHIPS and Science bill now goes to the President's desk after 3 long years.

And, last night, Senator MANCHIN and I announced an agreement on the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, a bill that will take historic steps to lower costs, fight climate change, and make healthcare more affordable in this country.

Again, the past 24 hours have been a legislative one-two punch that Americans rarely ever see and which will benefit them immensely: first, a bill that will supercharge the American industry and now a bill that will fight inflation and mark a turning point in our fight against climate change.

This morning, I met with my Democratic colleagues to review the big wins contained in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, and we discussed our plan for passing it through reconciliation next week.

With the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, this Senate majority will finally take on Big Pharma and lower prescription drug prices.

This Senate Democratic majority will tackle the climate crisis with the largest package on the climate ever. This Senate majority will ensure we close tax loopholes and make the wealthy corporations and individuals pay their fair share, and this Senate Democratic majority will fight inflation and reduce the deficit.

The Inflation Reduction Act is common sense; it is bold; and it is very much needed. For decades, many in Washington have promised to address these challenges. But where previous efforts have fallen short, Senate Democrats in this majority will move swiftly to deliver to the American people.

Now, there is so much to like in the Inflation Reduction Act. By a wide margin, this legislation will be the largest action on climate change ever passed by the Congress.

Like the creation of the EPA and the passage of the Clean Air Act half a century ago, this legislation will mark a turning point in our Nation's commitment to protect our planet for our children and our grandchildren.

Through this bill, we will at last put the United States on a path to roughly 40 percent emission reductions by 2030. And it will help us achieve climate justice for communities long left behind, especially communities of color. But that is not all, for many years, people in Washington—including President Trump, including the Republican Senate—promised to lower the cost of prescription drugs, but they failed to follow through.

Under this Senate Democratic majority, that is changing. Our proposal will finally lower the cost of prescription drugs by empowering Medicare—for the first time ever—to negotiate the prices of certain drugs in Part B and Part D.

We will prevent healthcare premiums from skyrocketing for millions of Americans in the coming months. And through it all, we will ensure that no small business or family making under \$400,000 a year will see their taxes go up.

Republicans go on and on and on about how this is a tax on the American people. No, Republicans, you try to hide the truth. The truth is this bill will close tax loopholes exploited by the wealthiest Americans and largest corporations and will not touch Americans who make below \$400,000 a year. Why don't you say that? Because you know your tax policies are so unpopular with the American people, which we proved in 2017. You tried the same shibboleth then. Oh, we are cutting taxes for the American people. We Democrats make clear to the American people, no, no, no, they were cutting taxes on the very wealthy. And by the time the 2018 campaigns rolled around, they didn't even mention it. We are going to do the same thing now. We are going to tell the truth.

Yes, we are raising taxes on very wealthy people and big corporations that pay no money, not on average Americans, and you are afraid to do that.

The American people want these tax reforms. They support making sure the ultrarich and big corporations play by the rules and pay their fair share. It is common sense. The American people know that.

So when Republicans fret and panic about taxes, the truth is what they really hate is the idea of increasing taxes on Big Business and those at the very top.

And they are afraid to admit to the American people that they know they are on the wrong side of the issue. As I said, Republicans should have learned their lesson in 2018 when the American people rejected their tax cuts for rich Americans.

We all saw what the results are, what happens when Republicans cut taxes for the ultrarich and corporations: It

fuels hundreds of billions in corporate stock buybacks, and since then, stock buybacks have only increased.

According to S&P, buybacks are forecast to reach a trillion dollars this year. The American people don't want a tax code that is skewed to the top 1 percent, which is what happened under Republicans, under President Trump when they had the majority.

Republicans really know that, so they, in fear—they distract and distort and ignore the fact that under our plan, small business and middle-class families making under 400,000 won't see their taxes go up at all.

It is the same thing for the deficit. For years, Republicans have howled at the Moon about lowering the Federal deficit, but when they were in the majority, they blew a \$2 trillion hole in our deficit in order to pay for their gargantuan tax cuts to big corporations and the ultrarich.

The Democrats' proposal will actually lower the deficit significantly, which will go a long way to easing inflation.

If Republicans really care about fighting inflation, if they really care about lowering the deficit as they claimed, they should support our proposal, which would lower the deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars.

Now, at the end of the day, the American people want us to do a few commonsense things: Lower the cost of their daily expenses like healthcare, protect our planet for future generations, make sure everyone plays by the same rules and has a fair shot at achieving the American dream, and that is what the Inflation Reduction Act will do.

These are not easy matters, but we didn't come here to do easy things. To be sure, the work is not done. There is a lot we have to do in the coming days, but I am proud that right now we have a strong, bold package to move on, one that will lower inflation, fight the climate crisis, and help preserve America's place as a nation of immense opportunity into the 21st century.

Let us get to work and pass the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in 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.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

### VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote

No. 273, had I been present for the vote I would have voted yea. I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 274, had I been present for the vote I would have voted yea. •

### THE BALTICS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today is a very important date for the relations between the United States and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Today marks 100 years of continuous, uninterrupted diplomatic relations between our country and each of the Baltic countries.

Let me explain why I emphasize continuous, uninterrupted diplomatic relations. Last Saturday marked 82 years since Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles issued a declaration that is remembered to this day in each of the Baltic countries. Soviet troops had entered the Baltic states, arrested leaders, and organized rigged elections to create pro-Soviet government.

The Welles Declaration decried the "devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic Republics—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors." It was a clear, principled statement that the United States would not recognize Soviet control over these countries as legitimate.

During the 50 years the Soviet Union forcibly occupied Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, diplomats from each of the Baltic states continued their work in the United States, and we continued to recognize them as independent, sovereign countries under foreign occupation.

The Soviet Union justified sending troops to the Baltics on the basis of the threat from Nazi Germany. However, just a year before, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between the Nazis and Soviets contained a secret protocol whereby Hitler and Stalin agreed to carve up their neighbors into "spheres of influence." Under this agreement, the Baltics, Finland, eastern Poland, and what is now Moldova would be controlled by the Soviet Union, and the rest of Poland would go to Germany. Finland was able to fight back in the Winter War, retaining its sovereignty, but losing significant territory to Russia. The rest of the pact played out just as Stalin and Hitler agreed.

This isn't just history. This is directly relevant to Vladimir Putin's rhetoric, attitude, and actions in Ukraine. He believes he has a right to a sphere of influence over his neighbors just like Stalin and Hitler thought. To this day, Putin maintains that the three Baltics joined the Soviet Union in 1940 and ceased to exist as countries until the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Russian Duma has even threatened to repeal a Soviet law recognizing Lithuania's independence from the USSR—what a joke.

Let's be clear: The Baltic states are not former Soviet republics. They have been independent countries for over a century. Following in Stalin's footsteps, Putin justifies attacking Ukraine, at least to audiences outside of Russia, as a reaction to NATO encroaching on Russia. Putin casts NATO as a threat, even making up a claim that NATO was planning to put missiles in Ukraine targeting Russia.

The fact is, even our eastern flank allies in NATO do not currently have the kinds of defensive missiles they would need to repel a Russian invasion, which is unfortunate. Currently, we have meager "tripwire" forces that are insufficient to stop the kind of invasion we saw in Ukraine in February. Russia's military leaders know that NATO cannot begin to threaten Russian territory.

There were no allied reinforcements in any NATO country bordering Russia until the invasion of Ukraine in 2014. Ukraine was militarily neutral then, but seeking economic ties with the European Union, thus slipping away from economic dependency on Russia.

The fact that NATO has become attractive to Ukraine since Russia seized Crimea and part of the Donbas is a threat not to the territory of the Russian Federation, but to Russia's imperial desire for a sphere of influence. Putin blames Ukraine's westward turn on provocations by western intelligence agencies, failing to recognize that Ukrainians are making their own choices. Just like in 1940, the United States has refused to recognize another Russian occupation of a sovereign country as legitimate.

We were once a small collection of colonies seeking to chart our own, independent course free from European empires. That is why the Welles Declaration expressed admiration for the Baltic countries as they pursued self-government and democracy.

That is why the Welles Declaration made clear that the people of the United States oppose intervention or the use of force by large or powerful countries on smaller, weaker ones. That principle applies today to Ukraine. No one should decide Ukraine's fate except the Ukrainian people. True to our principles, the United States can never, directly or tacitly, consign Ukraine to Russia's sphere of influence.

As we celebrate 100 years of excellent diplomatic relations with our Baltic allies, there is no doubt in retrospect that we were right to stand up for their sovereignty, even when that seemed hopeless, even foolish. Fifty years of Russian occupation could not turn them into Russians, just as centuries of Russification policies have not convinced Ukrainians to accept the Russian view that they are just "little Russians." The Baltic countries are thriving democracies with strong Western values and some of our closest allies. Thank God they regained their independence and are now in NATO.