

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.

WATER RESOURCES  
DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I rise today to convey my support for the Columbia River Federal Power System. The congressionally-authorized Federal dams on the Columbia River System bring unparalleled benefits to the Pacific Northwest and stand as an example to other hydropower projects worldwide. The system's capacity to generate always-on, baseload carbon-free power is vital to the Northwest. As many other parts of the country have experienced rolling blackouts, the dams in the Columbia Basin have consistently kept the lights on.

In the Northwest, we enjoy numerous other benefits from this infrastructure, including flood control, irrigation, navigation, and recreation. Due to its remarkable lock and dam system, even my landlocked home State of Idaho benefits from a seaport, sending Idaho's agricultural and manufactured products around the world in a cost-effective, low-carbon manner. As additional challenges have risen, scientists and managers at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have adapted under the direction of Congress to ensure the dams are still simultaneously beneficial to humans and our natural environment.

It is due to these important considerations that I speak on the Water Resources Development Act before the Senate today. Among a list of studies that can generally be measured in acres or at most counties is a sweeping and far-reaching study directed at aquatic habitat restoration in the Columbia River Basin. The Columbia River Basin spans nearly 260,000 square miles over seven States. This is not just another small, localized review, but instead authorizes an exhaustive study on aquatic restoration in one of the largest basins in the country.

I have long supported improving salmon and steelhead populations in the Northwest. In fact, I worked tirelessly with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass legislation—ultimately supported by the entire Northwest delegation—to address the predation that was devastating salmon populations before they had a chance to go upriver. However, what I cannot support are the constant efforts to remove the benefits provided by our hydropower system under the guise of salmon recovery or “aquatic restoration.”

We have studied this river and these dams ad nauseam. Most recently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed the 3-year Columbia River System Operations review, which intentionally and specifically considered whether dam breaching was necessary for fish recovery and determined the opposite. It has been proven, time and again, salmon and hydropower dams do, can, and should coexist. It is futile and irresponsible to spend further taxpayer dollars considering dam breaching. But this reality has not prevented the administration or other political actors from continually pushing

against the intent of Congress to protect both the species and the numerous benefits from the Columbia River Federal Power System.

With this in mind, let us revisit the ecosystem study in title II. I deeply appreciate the chairman and ranking member's attention to this issue and work to create suitable limitations to ensure this study will be held strictly to the congressionally authorized purposes of the system and considerations that would maintain the energy, flood control, navigation, irrigation, and other benefits it currently provides. While I still regard this study as too far-reaching and unfocused to result in timely proposals for anadromous fish recovery—yet again wasting taxpayer dollars better utilized elsewhere in the region—with this vital check, I am able to support this version of WRDA overall and the many essential water infrastructure priorities contained within it. Should this proposed study be signed into law, I will take special notice and trust that it meets congressional intent of preserving the Columbia River Federal Power System, all of its current infrastructure as authorized by Congress, and its innumerable benefits.

Despite political maneuvering from the administration, it is an irrefutable fact that decisions regarding the Columbia River Federal Power System are solely the responsibility of Congress. I look forward to continue working with my colleagues to identify solutions to salmon recovery that do not inhibit the clean energy, flood control, navigation, agricultural, and recreation benefits of our Federal Power System.

NOTICE OF A TIE VOTE UNDER  
S. RES. 27

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to print the following letter in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,  
Washington, DC.

*To the Secretary of the Senate:*

PN 2064, the nomination of Rebecca Lee Haffajee, of Massachusetts; to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services having been referred to the Committee on Finance, the Committee, with a quorum present, has voted on the nomination as follows—

(1) on the question of reporting the nomination favorably with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed, 14 ayes to 14 noes; and

In accordance with section 3, paragraph (1)(A) of S. Res. 27 of the 117th Congress, I hereby give notice that the Committee has not reported the nomination because of a tie vote, and ask that this notice be printed in the RECORD pursuant to the resolution.”

RON WYDEN.

## VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would

have voted no on the confirmations of Executive Calendar No. 1057, Enix Smith III, of Louisiana, to be United States Marshall for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

## ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY  
COOPERATION AGENCY,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT MENENDEZ,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 22-40, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Japan for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$293 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a new release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,  
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 22-40

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Japan.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:  
Major Defense Equipment\* \$257 million.  
Other \$ 36 million.  
Total \$293 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

One hundred fifty (150) AIM-120C-7/C-8 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAMs).

Three (3) AIM-120 AMRAAM Guidance Sections.

Non-MDE: Also included are AIM-120 missile containers and control sections; weapon support and support equipment; classified software delivery and support; spare and repair parts, consumables, and accessories; classified publications and technical documentation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical and logistical support services; and other related elements of logistical and program support.