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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN W. HICKENLOOPER, a Senator from the State of Colorado.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our hearts are steadfast for You. Though evil sometimes seems to prosper, we trust You to cause justice to prevail. In these turbulent times, our hope is in Your goodness that continues to sustain us.

Today, give our Senators the ability to realize more fully that they are servants of Heaven. As good servants, give them Your perspective on their daily tasks and decisions. In faithfulness to You, provide the litmus test by which they evaluate each decision.

Lord, give our lawmakers such integrity that they will refuse to be careless about their spiritual and moral fitness.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, August 2, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JOHN W. HICKENLOOPER, a Senator from the State of Colorado, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Elizabeth Wilson Hanes, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

FLOODING IN KENTUCKY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we learn more each day about the devastating toll that ongoing flooding has inflicted on Eastern Kentucky. As rescue and recovery efforts continue, Kentuckians are grieving lost family members and friends and neighbors.

One of the victims of last weekend's flash floods was Gabe Hensley, a 30-year-old coal miner and father. Gabe

was working a shift when the floods hit. On his way home to rescue his wife and son, he stopped to help a man who had wrecked a four-wheeler. He cleared trees and turned people away from danger. Then, tragically, the floodwaters swept Gabe away.

As Gabe's cousin told the Herald-Leader yesterday, "Eastern Kentucky lost a hero."

We are all grieving for the men, women, and children this flood has taken from us. The Hensley family has asked that people honor Gabe by helping other flood victims. Flooding, high winds, and power outages are still ongoing, and forecasters predict more heavy rainfall in the region throughout next week. The threat of even more disaster in Eastern Kentucky is acute.

I spoke with the Governor, State legislative leaders, and officials on the ground in Eastern Kentucky yesterday. They echoed the need for food, cleaning supplies, and water.

In such dire times, the ray of hope is the fact that generous Kentuckians from across the Commonwealth are hearing these calls for help and answering loud and clear. Already, the Eastern Kentucky relief fund has received about \$2.3 million in charitable donations. Across my home State, from the Winchester VWF to neighborhood restaurants in Northern Kentucky, locals are organizing donation drives. The University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville's men's basketball teams are both fundraising for flood relief, and police departments from around the region donated cruisers to help with search and rescue.

All this generosity will play a crucial role as we begin to rebuild. As the officials I spoke to emphasized, it will be a long road ahead for the families affected by these awful floods. But I know I speak for every Kentuckian when I say: We will be with them every single step of the way.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. President, on a different subject, the Democrats have had a tough few

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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days rolling out their latest reckless taxing-and-spending spree. It turns out that proposing huge, job-killing tax hikes and more runaway spending during inflation and a recession doesn't go over very well. Here are a few of the things nonpartisan—nonpartisan—experts have already proven about the Democrats' proposal.

No. 1, the so-called Inflation Reduction Act would actually increase inflation in the short term and do nothing to tackle the problem in the long term. That is from the University of Pennsylvania.

No. 2, their tax hikes would shatter President Biden's promise not to impact households earning below \$400,000. Many billions of dollars of the new tax hikes would fall—listen to this—directly on the working class and the middle class. That, of course, is not from Republicans but from the Joint Committee on Taxation.

No. 3, also from the Joint Committee on Taxation, fully half of the Democrats' \$300-plus billion—billion—new tax on American jobs would come crashing down on American manufacturers in particular—manufacturers in particular.

Now, those groups that I cited are neutral and nonpartisan. But, just for fun, let's take a look at the most favorable numbers—most favorable numbers—for Democrats. Let's look at their own spin.

One of the Biden administration's favorite outside economists, somebody who has consistently been overoptimistic about inflation and Democrats' policies, claims their bill will reduce the Consumer Price Index by a grand total—listen to this—of one-third of 1 percent—one-third of 1 percent—between now and the end of the year 2031—wow—0.33 percent over 9 years. That is one twenty-eighth of the inflation Democrats have caused in just the last 12 months. For goodness' sake, Democrats added four times that much inflation just in the month of June alone.

So, listen, the friendliest estimate for Democrats says their taxing-and-spending spree would take 9 years—9 years—to unwind literally 1 week's worth of recent inflation. Hundreds of billions of dollars in tax hikes, hundreds of billions of dollars in new spending, and it would take 9 years to remove 1 week's worth of Democrats' inflation—goodness.

So let me repeat it one more time. This is the most generous estimate for Democrats. Neutral experts like the University of Pennsylvania say even this is too optimistic, and their bill would actually make inflation even worse in the coming months.

So, look, this isn't an Inflation Reduction Act—not even close. It is just a catalog of tax hikes and green boondoggles that Democrats have wanted, literally, for years with a false new label slapped on the front. The Inflation Reduction Act won't reduce inflation any more than the American Rescue Plan actually rescued America.

The Inflation Reduction Act won't reduce inflation any more than the American Rescue Plan actually rescued America. The only thing the so-called rescue plan rescued the country from was stable prices and a functioning economy. And the only thing their inflation reduction plan will reduce is American jobs, wages, after-tax incomes, energy affordability, and new lifesaving medicines. Wow. What an accomplishment.

So the Democrats say they need to pass another massive economic failure because their first huge economic failure has made it necessary. Well, the American people see things quite differently.

TAIWAN

Mr. President, now on one final matter, public reports indicate the Speaker of the House just landed in Taiwan as she travels through Asia. I believe she has every right to go, and it has been unseemly and counterproductive for President Biden and his aides to have publicly sought to deter her from doing so.

There is significant precedent for high-ranking U.S. officials visiting Taiwan, including a past Speaker of the House. Beijing claims such a visit is now unacceptable. They claim that things have changed. Well, it is certainly true China has stepped up its aggressive actions. They are trying to change the status quo through force. They have expanded militarily in the South China Sea. They have invested in anti-ship and anti-aircraft capabilities to threaten U.S. vessels. They have manipulated and threatened neighbors and mounted an all-out assault on democracy and autonomy in Hong Kong.

Now Beijing wants to dictate Taiwan's future to its people and snuff out the island's democracy, and they are building the military capacity to actually bring that about. That is what is provocative. And to hear those responsible for this aggression complain—complain—that Speaker PELOSI's travel itinerary is provocative is utterly absurd.

So I welcome the Speaker's display of support for Taiwan's democracy, but I hope she returns from Asia more mindful of the military dimensions of the Chinese threat and more committed to working with Republicans to address the changing balance of military power in the region. What that requires is selling the right mix of weapons to Taiwan on a prompt timeline, while helping Taiwan's military prepare for likely threats.

The Biden administration has had 2 years to build on the robust investments their immediate predecessors made in military modernization. Instead, they submitted defense budget requests that pointed in the completely wrong direction. While China keeps ramping up, the Biden administration proposed to actually cut—cut—our defense spending after inflation.

So when Congress debates the Defense authorization and appropriations

bills, we must address national security challenges in the Indo-Pacific head-on. And I hope the Speaker's travels will mean that we do so with more of a bipartisan consensus on American might than we have seen in the recent past.

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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, over the last 5 days, we have seen what President Biden and a Democratic-led Congress are focused on getting done: bringing terrorists to justice, lowering costs, reducing inflation and the deficit, helping out our veterans, and better competing with countries like China.

I want to begin with a word on last night's strike. Last night, President Biden reported that the United States conducted a strike that targeted and killed Ayman al-Zawahiri, the notorious mass murderer, the leader of al-Qaida, and one of the sick planners of the September 11 attacks, which in New York and around the country and the world we are still mourning.

The strike against al-Zawahiri is a major victory for the United States. It will make our country and the entire world a safer place. It will also help bring an element of justice for the 9/11 families, as well as the many Americans who still carry the scars deep within.

I applaud President Biden for bringing final justice to this loathsome murderer who orchestrated the killing of thousands of my fellow New Yorkers, including some people I knew quite well. I also want to thank the President's national security team for keeping Congress fully and currently informed throughout the process. Finally, I want to applaud the skill and bravery of our dedicated intelligence community, servicemembers, and diplomats who work day and night—day and night—to keep America safe.

This successful mission will send a chill down the spines of terrorists all over the world and likewise will send a clear message to those who wish to cross our Nation and harm our citizens: You will find no comfort. You will find no quarter. You can run, but you can't hide. We will hunt you down to the ends of the Earth until justice is carried out.

PACT ACT OF 2022

Mr. President, now on the PACT Act, every day that passes without action on the PACT Act is another day that our Nation's veterans have to do the