

King	Peters	Smith
Klobuchar	Portman	Stabenow
Lujan	Reed	Sullivan
Manchin	Rosen	Tester
Markey	Rounds	Thune
Marshall	Rubio	Van Hollen
McConnell	Sanders	Warner
Menendez	Sasse	Warnock
Moran	Schatz	Warren
Murkowski	Schumer	Whitehouse
Murphy	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Murray	Scott (SC)	Wyden
Ossoff	Shaheen	Young
Padilla	Sinema	

NAYS—11

Crapo	Paul	Tillis
Lankford	Risch	Toomey
Lee	Romney	Tuberville
Lummis	Shelby	

NOT VOTING—3

Cornyn	Leahy	Merkley
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). On this vote, the yeas are 86, the nays are 11.

Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this motion to concur, the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this is a wonderful moment, especially for all the people who have made this happen who are observing it. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business for debate only and with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NATO

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now, I am about to lock in an agreement that will allow the Senate to pass the resolution of ratification for the Finnish and Swedish applications to join NATO. Our NATO alliance is the bedrock that has guaranteed democracy in the Western World since World War II. This strengthens NATO even further and is particularly needed in the light of recent Russian aggression.

When Leader MCCONNELL and I met with the Finnish President and Swedish Prime Minister in May, we committed to do this as fast as we could and certainly before we go home for the August recess.

With the help of Chair MENENDEZ, Ranking Member RISCH, Senator SHAHEEN, and Senator TILLIS, we were able to get to this point.

I appreciate their hard work and bipartisan work. I know Leader MCCONNELL does too. For the awareness of my colleagues, I invited the Ambassadors from Finland and Sweden to join us in the Gallery during our debate and votes tomorrow.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. And so now, I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday,

August 3, 2022, at 1:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 5, treaty document 117-3; that the treaties be considered as having advanced through the various parliamentary stages up to and including the presentation of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification; that there be 3 hours for debate, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, on the treaties and resolution of advice and consent to ratification; that the only amendments in order to the resolution of advice and consent to ratification be the following: Sullivan 5191, Paul 5192; that following the debate, the Senate vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed; and that upon disposition of the amendments, any committee conditions, declarations, or reservations be agreed to as applicable, and the Senate vote on the resolution of advice and consent to ratification as amended, if amended, with no intervening action or debate; that if the resolution of advice and consent to ratification is agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

I yield the floor to the great Senator from the State of Montana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

PACT ACT OF 2022

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, 86 to 11. 86 to 11. We have been fighting for this for decades—for decades. And I will tell you that the last few days have not been particularly easy for me, and they have been even more difficult for the veterans around this Nation who thought they had a benefit on June 16 and then found out that it wasn't there.

But today, the Senate took the historic step of delivering healthcare and benefits to all eras of veterans by the passage of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act, otherwise known as the PACT Act.

For hundreds of thousands of veterans of all generations, for our all-volunteer military, this bill puts us on a path to finally paying the cost of war.

Look, I take my cues from the veterans as chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. When I first introduced this bill last year, we set out with a clear goal to right the wrongs of decades of inaction and failure by us—the U.S. Government—to provide all eras of toxic-exposed veterans the VA care and benefits that they have earned.

We knew the only way to do this was to put forth a comprehensive package that took care of our past, present, and future veterans. I am grateful—and I mean this—this wouldn't have hap-

pened without my good friends Ranking Member JERRY MORAN, JOHN BOOZMAN, and MARTIN HEINRICH. We all worked together to make sure that this toxic exposure package came together so we could have the vote we had today, with help from both sides of the aisle.

I am thankful for the leadership of President Joe Biden who addressed this issue in his State of the Union speech and got the ball rolling; to the VA Secretary, Denis McDonough, for his leadership as Secretary of the VA, and the House Veterans Affairs Committee chairman, MARK TAKANO, and so many others that I can't even list them all, so I am not going to start down this line.

This bill is legislation we envisioned when we set out to right wrongs of our toxic-exposed veterans. The PACT Act recognizes that responsibility, and it recognizes the cost of war.

Veterans service organizations across this country and the veterans they represent and the advocates have understood this for a long time. That is why not only have they been incredible partners in this, but that is why this has been the No. 1 issue for veterans service organizations in this country—the No. 1 issue.

And, in fact, so important to them and the folks that pretty much left here—the Chamber—but it is so important to them that they were willing to sleep on the steps of the Capitol for the last 5 days. Now, you might not think that is a big deal, but it isn't exactly nice in Washington, DC, the 1st of August or the end of July.

And last night, we had one heck of a thunderstorm, rolled me right out of bed. Those folks were out there. They were making their names be heard. They were making the policies be heard that they fought for.

And I am just going to say one more thing: If you take a look at our military, the finest in the world, there is a reason for that. There is a reason for that. And that reason is these folks are willing to get the job done, and they did. And that is why we got a vote of 86 to 11.

That is why folks said: Enough is enough. We are not doing any more games; we are going to vote on this bill. That is what the folks sent us here to Washington, DC, to do, and we did it.

And I couldn't be prouder of the U.S. Senate, but I am also more proud of the folks who served this country in the military and their families. I got on this floor earlier today and said: The longer we delay, the longer we are going to deny healthcare for our veterans and veterans are going to continue to be in crisis and they are going to continue to die. Now, we have passed the bill that rights that wrong, that is going to help these veterans across the board. And I think we are going to see improvement in all sorts of things—not only the diseases caused by toxic exposure, but the mental health that is also associated with service to this country.

We put politics aside. We delivered results through action, through real action. And we said thank you to the men and women who have served in our military. Thank you for what you have done for this country. Thank you for protecting our freedoms. Thank you for keeping us safe.

And most importantly, we told them you held up your end of the bargain; we held up ours.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT OF 2022

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I wanted to come down to the floor and say a few words about the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, which may be coming to the floor this week.

But before I do, I want to put this reconciliation bill into the context of where we are as a nation from a political perspective. And where we are is not a good place to be.

According to the most recent Gallup poll, the approval rate for Congress is at 16 percent with massive numbers of people disapproving of the work we are doing here. Further, according to a recent University of Chicago poll, a strong majority of Americans believe that the government is "corrupt and rigged against me." That is how people perceive the government.

Further, according to a recent USA TODAY poll, a very strong majority no longer believe that the Democratic or Republican Parties are responding to their needs, and we have to move away from a two-party system to a multiparty system.

And most frighteningly, there is a growing number of Americans who actually believe that they have to take up arms—literally become violent—against their own government in order to accomplish what they think needs to be done. And, of course, we saw an example of that on January 6 of last year, with the terrible violence and deaths that occurred.

All of this speaks to a very dangerous moment for American democracy and in some ways resembles the conditions that existed in Europe in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which eventually led to fascism and totalitarianism.

And I should mention that, as we speak right now, while working families and the middle class are falling further and further behind economically, the billionaires in this country, through their super PACs, are doing everything that they can to elect Members of Congress who will support the wealthy and powerful against the needs

of average Americans. In both parties, huge amounts of money from billionaires are coming into campaigns to elect the candidates who will represent the 1 percent.

The people of this country believe, in my view correctly, that we have a corrupt political system dominated by the wealthy and powerful and that we have a rigged economy, in which large corporations are seeing massive increases in their profits while the middle class and working families of the country continue to see a decline in their standard of living.

We don't talk about it much here in the Senate or in the corporate media, but at this moment in American history, we have more income and wealth inequality than at any time in the last 100 years.

Now, I know we are not allowed to talk about it. It is not fashionable. We might offend some wealthy campaign contributors. But today, obscenely, you have got three people who own more wealth than the bottom half of American society. You have the top 1 percent owning more wealth than the bottom 92 percent; you have 45 percent of all new income going to the 1 percent; and you have got CEOs of major corporations making 350 times more than average workers.

In other words, the people in the middle, working people, struggling; people on top doing phenomenally well, and the people on the top have enough money to elect candidates who represent their interests.

And that is the overall context, in my view, in which this reconciliation bill is coming to the floor.

Now, I have heard from some of my colleagues that the Build Back Better legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives and supported by some 48 out of 50 Members of the Senate Democratic caucus and by the President of the United States is dead; it is not going anywhere; can't get the 50 votes that are needed.

Now, I don't know if that is absolutely true or not, but I do know that if it is true, it would be a disaster for the working families of our country who, today, are desperately trying to survive economically.

So let me briefly review what was in the original Build Back Better plan and contrast it with what is in the so-called Inflation Reduction Act.

And I should mention that every one of the provisions that I will briefly be discussing has overwhelming support from the American people according to poll after poll after poll. In other words, that is what the American people want.

At a time when the United States has the highest rate of childhood poverty, shamefully, of almost any major nation on Earth, this reconciliation bill that will soon be coming to the floor does not extend the \$300-a-month-per-child tax credit that working parents of this country had last year. That is gone. That is not in this bill.

If you are a parent today, paying \$15,000 a year for childcare—which is what it costs in Vermont and is about the average cost all over America, \$15,000 a year to have a kid in childcare—this bill completely ignores that crisis and does absolutely nothing for you.

And, of course, unlike the original Build Back Better plan, this bill does not provide free and universal pre-K.

So if you are a working parent right now, struggling to pay for childcare, this bill turns its back on you.

At a time when 45 million Americans are struggling to pay student debt and when hundreds of thousands of bright, young people every year are unable to afford to go to college and get a higher education, this bill ignores that reality and does nothing for these young people.

The original Build Back Better plan did not go as far as I wanted it to, but it would have provided 2 years of free education at a community college. That is a big deal for millions of young people, but that is no longer going to happen.

If you are an elderly American—one of the millions of elderly people trying to survive on your Social Security benefits—and you cannot afford to go to a dentist and your teeth are rotting in your mouth or you have no teeth so that you can digest your food or you can't afford to get a hearing aid to communicate with your kids or grandchildren or you can't afford the eyeglasses that you need, this bill does nothing, zero, to expand Medicare to cover these very basic healthcare needs that the American people want to see covered.

As a result, millions of seniors will continue to have rotten teeth and lack of dentures, lack of hearing aids or eyeglasses that they deserve.

Further, at a time when millions of elderly and disabled Americans would prefer to stay in their homes rather than be forced to go into a nursing home, this bill does absolutely nothing to address the very, very serious home healthcare crisis in our country. We will continue to lack the decent-paid, decent-trained staffing that we need to address the home healthcare crisis. This bill ignores that issue completely.

I think there is no disagreement on the part of anybody that we have a major housing crisis in this country. Some 600,000 people are homeless in America, sleeping out on the streets all across this country, including a few blocks away from the Capitol.

In addition to that, some 18 million households in our country are spending an incredible 50 percent of their incomes for housing.

Yep, you guessed it. This bill does nothing to address the major housing crisis that exists in State after State after State all across the country. We are ignoring that major issue as well.

One of the criticisms made against the original Build Back Better plan is that it would be inflationary because it