

What happened in red Kansas last night is a reflection of what is happening across the country and what will continue to occur through the November elections. Voters are revolting against the extreme MAGA Republican policies that ban abortions with no exceptions for rape or incest and send women and doctors to jail.

Last night's election was also a dark reminder that MAGA Republicans are running the show within the GOP. Their views are spreading through the party like a cancer—views that are repugnant not only to most Americans but, as we saw last night, even to many Republican voters.

And Kansas was just the start. If it is going to happen in Kansas, it is going to happen in a whole lot of States. The strong pro choice turnout we saw last night in Kansas will continue well into the fall, and Republicans who side with these extremist MAGA policies that attack women's rights do so at their own political risk.

NATO

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on NATO, today the Senate will be voting on the resolution of ratification for the Finnish and Swedish applications to join NATO. This is a very important vote. The NATO vote is a very important vote for American security around the world.

Finland's and Sweden's membership will strengthen NATO even further and is all the more urgent given Russian aggression, given Putin's immoral and unjustified war in Ukraine. Putin is strengthening the NATO alliance, and nothing shows it better than the vote we will have this afternoon. With the vote, the Senate will come together in a bipartisan manner and bolster the Western alliance in the face of growing authoritarianism.

When Leader McCONNELL and I met with the Finnish President and the Swedish Prime Minister back in May, we made a commitment to get this done as quickly as possible before the August recess, and today we are keeping that commitment by working together.

Despite the differences between both sides, I have always said that when the opportunity arises, Democrats would be willing to work with Republicans in a bipartisan way to get things done. In the past few weeks, we have seen an amazing string of bipartisan achievements—a bipartisanship that hasn't been seen—with the passage of so many important bipartisan bills in such a short time.

Together, we secured a historic investment in American science and industry. We just passed the largest expansion of veterans' benefits in decades. We passed significant gun legislation. And, today, we will work together to bolster the NATO alliance.

So, again, under Democratic leadership, we want to work in a bipartisan way whenever we can, but when we

can't, we will move forward on issues like climate and prescription drugs that we feel are very important, which I will talk about in a minute.

Finally, as I mentioned yesterday, I invited the Ambassadors and other diplomats from Finland and Sweden to join us in the Gallery during our debate and votes today. So let's get this done by this afternoon.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, on the Inflation Reduction Act, this is the second place where the numbers that we read this morning show that the Democrats are on the move and that Republicans are in retreat.

Today's news provides another bevy of reminders of why the Inflation Reduction Act is not only bold and commonsense but is extremely popular with the American people.

This morning, five former Treasury Secretaries—including former Secretary Hank Paulson, who served under President George W. Bush—released a statement praising the Inflation Reduction Act and urging Congress to move quickly to secure its passage. The bipartisan group wrote that the Inflation Reduction Act “will help increase American competitiveness, address our climate crisis, lower costs for families, and fight inflation—and should be passed immediately by Congress.”

The bipartisan group of Treasury Secretaries also affirmed what Democrats have been saying for days: The Inflation Reduction Act will not—no matter how much our Republican colleagues argue to the contrary—increase taxes for any family making less than \$400,000 a year.

Again, our proposals call for closing loopholes that have long enabled the biggest companies in America to avoid paying their fair share. And even former Republican Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson is now calling on Congress to pass the Democratic agenda. He is in very good company. This morning, a poll by Navigator also showed the Inflation Reduction Act as overwhelmingly popular—overwhelmingly popular—in the minds of the American people.

According to this poll, 65 percent of Americans support the proposals in the bill, compared to only 24 percent who oppose. More than double the people support the act than oppose it. It includes 60 percent of Independent voters and even 40 percent of Republican voters. So America is on our side. They want us to pass this bill.

Now, contrast the Democrats' agenda to what we have been hearing from the other side. While Democrats want to make healthcare more affordable, just yesterday the junior Senator from Wisconsin argued that instead of strengthening Medicare and Social Security, we should put them on the chopping block.

Hear that, citizens of Wisconsin, citizens of America? The junior Senator

from Wisconsin wants to put Medicare and Social Security on the chopping block. He has argued that the benefits, which millions of Americans rely on every day, shouldn't be guaranteed but should be subject to partisan infighting here in Washington.

He would like to revoke the guarantee of Medicare and Social Security and make them discretionary. Well, you know what happens when we make things discretionary around here? All too often they get cut or even eliminated. We don't want to do that. But the Senator from Wisconsin said we should. So senior citizens of America, listen loud and clear: Senator JOHNSON called for making these programs discretionary.

For decades, they have not been. They have been programs that when you become 65, you get it. It is not up to the whims of one Congress or another.

So we will fight as hard as we can to prevent the Republicans, led by the Wisconsin junior Senator, from pulling out the rug from under seniors. We will fight the MAGA Republican politicians who want to gut these critical programs.

It is comments like these that show how out of touch the other side has become. While Republicans were perfectly willing to blow a \$2 trillion hole in our deficit in order to give tax cuts to the ultrarich and to the big corporations, now some of them are saying Medicare and Social Security should no longer be guaranteed.

Of course, our Democratic proposal, the Inflation Reduction Act, is vastly different. We will protect healthcare. We will lower the price of prescription drugs and make energy cheaper while making the largest investment in clean energy ever.

These are things that Americans support. These are things that our country needs. And these are things that we are going to get done when we pass the Inflation Reduction Act in the coming days.

I yield the floor.

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. 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 MINORITY LEADER

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

FLOODING IN KENTUCKY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, tragic flooding continues to devastate

Eastern Kentucky. In the last few days, I have spoken to State legislators and county judge-executives who represent our hardest hit counties.

The Governor reports that Knott County has seen the largest loss of life so far. County Judge Dobson tells me the toll may keep rising in the coming days.

State Representative Chris Fugate represents Breathitt, Owsley, and Perry Counties. He tells me he is housing about 85 people in his church. And the need for shelter for displaced residents will only grow.

State Senator Johnnie Turner represents five counties, including Knott and Letcher. He plans to use his own equipment to help clear debris from the roads.

All across Eastern Kentucky, emergency crews are making a herculean effort to restore access to power, roads, and running water. The Kentucky National Guard has been on the ground and in the air since the outset of this emergency, performing breathtaking rescues and rendering aid.

Some of their amazing work was captured on video. Residents stranded on the roofs of submerged houses were pulled hundreds of feet into the air on a cable and into a helicopter—just extraordinary work.

I am deeply grateful for the brave men and women of the Kentucky National Guard and their service to our State.

As professional first responders work around the clock, families, friends, and neighbors are stepping up as well. One man's actions have attracted national attention. On Thursday, an anonymous neighbor helped a family of three escape their flooded home. Video footage showed a 98-year-old grandmother sitting on a bed fully submerged in water. This anonymous rescuer whisked that woman, her son, and her grandson to safety. All three are now recovering.

Federal, State, and local officials will continue to do everything possible and coordinate rescue and relief efforts. All these courageous acts from professionals and ordinary Kentuckians alike will continue to provide a hopeful glimmer of humanity in this dark, dark disaster.

NATO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on an entirely different matter today, the Senate will approve ratification protocols to welcome Finland and Sweden as the two newest members of NATO.

I appreciate Leader SCHUMER working with me to ensure the Senate takes this vote before the August recess. And for the reasons I have explained for months now, the vote this afternoon will be as decisive—as decisive—as it is bipartisan.

There is just no question that admitting these robust democratic countries, with modern economies and capable, interoperable militaries, will only

strengthen the most successful military alive in human history.

Both countries already participate in NATO and American-led missions. Finland already meets NATO's 2 percent spending target, and Sweden is making significant investments in modernizing its military.

Even with the capabilities these militaries already have, they will bring meaningful, interoperable military capabilities into the alliance on day 1 and improve burden-sharing across the alliance.

There is also no question that their entry is specifically in our interest. These are longstanding defense partners of the United States. The Finns have been flying F-18s and buying sophisticated American munitions since the 1990s. The Swedish defense industry cooperates closely with ours and incorporates American components into modern systems like their fighter aircraft.

Even closer cooperation with these partners will help us counter Russia and China. Their accession will make NATO stronger and America more secure.

If any Senator is looking for a defensible excuse to vote no, I wish them good luck. This is a slam dunk for national security that deserves unanimous bipartisan support.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on one final matter, Democrats want to pass huge, job-killing tax hikes in the middle of a recession that they themselves created—hundreds of billions of dollars in new taxes on American jobs, American manufacturing, American electricity, and American investment.

Nonpartisan experts have proven these tax hikes will break President Biden's promise not to raise taxes on the middle class. The working class and the middle class will shoulder huge—huge—new burdens.

And all these tax hikes would buy American families no relief whatsoever from inflation. Nonpartisan experts say Democrats' bill would make inflation actually even worse until 2024 and then do basically nothing—nothing—to inflation thereafter. In the teeth of the inflation crisis, Democrats' bill would make inflation even worse over the next 2 years.

Even the most optimistic estimate, the best figures for Democrats, say it would take their legislation—listen to this—9 years—9 years—to unwind as much inflation as the country added every week in the month of June—9 years of runaway taxing and spending in order to subtract 1 week's worth of inflation. And that is an optimistic projection.

Obviously, the point of this bill is not to reduce inflation. Clearly, this taxing-and-spending spree has a different purpose. And when you look at the legislation, the real purpose is absolutely

clear: This bill is a massive goodie bag of far-left environmental activists at the expense of working families.

Democrats want to use their own inflation as a pretext to dump hundreds of billions of dollars into Green New Deal nonsense. This bill declares war on American energy independence and affordability. It will push working families' bills higher in order to send cash kickbacks to rich elites if they buy fancy cars and redo their kitchens.

Democrats literally want to increase working families' gas bill, electricity bill, and heating bill so they can send rebates to rich people who buy \$80,000 luxury electric cars.

I am not making this up. They have come up with a huge new tax on American natural gas, which millions of Americans use to heat their homes, cook their food, and dry their clothes. On top of that, natural gas is the Nation's largest source of electricity. So Democrats want to add new taxes on top of two of the major bills that millions of American working families pay every month.

That is not all. There is also a new per-barrel tax on American oil and new royalties and fees to drive up the cost of oil and gas production on Federal lands.

With all the money they collect from shaking down American families, Democrats want to finance new credits for people who can afford to buy fancy new cars, stoves, and clothes dryers. Why? Because that is really “green”—subsidizing retail therapy for liberal elites to rip out working appliances, throw them away, and replace them with the latest fashions.

We have the worst inflation in 40 years right now. Working families can barely afford gas and groceries right now. And Democrats' answer is to offer them a mail-in rebate if they buy an \$80,000 car or remodel their kitchen? A specific subsidy for electric car buyers that the senior Senator from West Virginia once called ludicrous is in this bill which he has now authored.

Oh, and the bill tries to skirt a Supreme Court victory that West Virginia just won to stop Democrats' illegal regulations from crushing the State's economy. The legislation intentionally—intentionally—flouts the victory that people of West Virginia just won a few weeks ago at the Supreme Court.

There are billions of dollars for environmental and climate justice block grants to directly enrich far-left nonprofits, including explicit language that would send taxpayer funding to political activism.

Democrats literally want to raise your electric bill in order to pay off their own protesters. I guess the people who stand in the middle of highways during rush hour to make some protest gesture now want to receive taxpayer money for their trouble. Oh—oh—and their bill would send billions of dollars to the Secretary of Transportation to tear up highways instead of building more highways.