

To be fair, not all of pharma's big bucks go into TV ads. Over the past 5 years, the 14 largest drug corporations spent more on stock buybacks lining the pockets of their CEOs than on R&D. Remember what I just said. They took their profits, turned them into stock buybacks so that the wealthiest people in America got a better balance sheet. Money that could have gone into research for new drugs, they diverted into profit-taking. So this notion about saying that Medicare should be able to negotiate more competitive and fairly priced drugs is not unreasonable, and it isn't going to stop research. We know that.

Can I add one other element to this? Each of these pharmaceutical companies has a benefactor, a major benefactor. Think of it. It is an Agency that generates research by the billions each year, and the product of that research—which is a suggestion for new drugs, for example—is literally given to the pharmaceutical industry to use and make a profit. What is that Agency? The National Institutes of Health. It does the basic research by the Federal Government, paid for by American taxpayers—billions of dollars—and makes it available to pharmaceutical companies to develop the next generations of drugs. That is as it should be. But this notion that the pharmaceutical companies are just making it on their own and their own skills goes way beyond the obvious. NIH is helping very much.

We want to cut healthcare costs to make sure as well that seniors cap their out-of-pocket prescription drug costs at \$2,000 a year, and \$2,000 a year is still a sacrifice for many seniors, but it is a reasonable amount. We know what is happening now. Many seniors have drugs that they are supposed to be taking. They can't afford to fill the prescriptions or they take half the dose when they should be taking a full dosage. That is the reality of the prescription drug pricing in America.

Is it a serious problem? Well, just ask Blue Cross Blue Shield in Chicago, and I have: What is the impact of these inflated prescription drug prices on healthcare premiums? Blue Cross Blue Shield said to me that it is the No. 1 driver of increased health insurance premium costs, the cost of prescription drugs.

So when we start bringing down these costs, we are also going to create a situation where we have less incentive to increase premiums for health insurance.

Fourth, we penalize drug companies if they try to increase the price of the drug more than the rate of inflation. That was another on the list of sophomore in college socialist ideas, according to the Republican leader on the floor this morning. Well, I think he is wrong. We know what happens to the price of these drugs year in and year out. They just don't go up with the cost of inflation, they go up by multiples that reach the point people can't

afford to pay it. That has to come to an end.

Five years ago, Republicans used this same process we are using called reconciliation to pass a nearly \$2 trillion tax bill that overwhelmingly benefited big corporations and the wealthiest people in America, and they put the whole boondoggle on the credit card. It was unpaid for—tax cuts unpaid for. They claimed their tax cuts would pay for themselves. Dynamic scoring, they called it. Instead, they blew up the national debt.

Our plan is paid for, and here is the bottom line: No one in America—no one earning less than \$400,000 a year—is seeing any increase in their taxes. Now, the Republicans say: Well, if you raise taxes on the wealthiest people, it is going to hurt the poorest people. When it gets right down to it, many of these corporations are extremely profitable—a billion dollars a year in profits and pay no Federal taxes. What is wrong with this picture?

The average American family is paying their taxes, as the law requires, and yet these corporations have found an escape hatch to avoid paying any taxes whatsoever. If they pay any taxes, they are going to hurt the poor families. The poor families are doing their part to pay their taxes. It is time these wealthy individuals and corporations did the same.

Instead of adding to the national debt, as our Republican colleagues did with their tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy, our proposal that we will vote on today will reduce the deficit by \$300 billion. That is on top of the \$1.7 trillion we have already cut from the deficit this year. Cutting the deficit reduces inflation pressure in the long run. In the short term, we are fighting inflation by lowering the cost of energy and healthcare, two of the biggest ticket items in family budgets.

And lastly, Senator MCCONNELL and our Republican colleagues seem to have developed a great respect for the economic wisdom of former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers. I can't tell you how many times Senator MCCONNELL has mentioned Larry Summers' name as if he is the great leader of all the great thinkers in the economics field in America. Let me tell you what Mr. Summers happens to say about our plan that we are going to vote for today and that all the Republicans are going to oppose. He said:

This bill is fighting inflation.

He also said:

This is an easy bill to get behind.

I didn't hear that this morning when Senator MCCONNELL came to the floor and talked about his view of this bill. Larry Summers was his expert previously. Now he is ignoring when Summers says we ought to vote for this bill to reduce inflation.

Do our Republican friends really want to tame inflation and help families with energy and healthcare or just come to the floor and complain? That

is the choice they have. If they want to help, we have a plan. It is fair; it is paid for; it fights inflation; and it lowers the deficit. Wouldn't it be great if they would join us in a bipartisan effort to pass this at this moment in history? It is what America is waiting for and looking for. I hope that a number of Republicans will surprise us and join us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT OF 2022

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it is good to be back in the Senate. Like a number of my colleagues, after dodging the virus for 2 years, it finally caught up with me last weekend. I spent a week in quarantine and, fortunately, experienced only mild symptoms. I think that is because I was fully vaccinated and boosted and I was glad to have the help of modern science on my side.

There is never a good time to be away from our work here in the Senate, but we all have a responsibility to keep those around us safe as well, no matter how inconvenient. Unfortunately, there are reports that our friends across the aisle may be intentionally disregarding that responsibility. I am deeply concerned by published reports that our Democratic colleagues have adopted a "don't test, don't tell" policy to ensure full attendance today.

Allegedly, they are more concerned about ramming through Senator MANCHIN's tax hike than following CDC guidelines to protect not only each other but the staff members, the Capitol Police, custodial staff, food service workers, and countless others who keep this institution running. These folks could have any number of other health conditions that could lead to more severe COVID experiences than, for example, I had or they could be caregivers for young children or elderly relatives who have a high risk of serious illness.

I sincerely hope these reports are not true. I hope our Democratic colleagues are not selfish enough to put so many people at risk in order to pass this massive tax-and-spending spree. If any of our colleagues are experiencing COVID symptoms, they should do what I did. They should get tested, period.

We know that as soon as this evening, the Senate is expected to vote on Senator MANCHIN's and Senator SCHUMER's massive tax hike on middle-class families. You can call it the Manchin-Schumer tax hike of 2022. It sprung to life, unbeknownst, I believe, to virtually all the Democratic Senators, except for Senator MANCHIN and Senator SCHUMER. And no one has seen what we will purportedly be voting on later today, even our Democratic colleagues. No one has seen the final product. Once the so-called Byrd bath has

been undertaken by the Parliamentarian, this will be a substitute bill that Senator SCHUMER will lay down, but nobody has seen it.

When the senior Senator from West Virginia announced this bill last week—or this agreement—every Republican was shocked and, from my view, most Democrats were as well. My private conversations with many of my Democratic colleagues said: Boy, that does not look good to be working so closely together on a bipartisan bill only to spring this on everybody by surprise. It looks like they were trying to pull a fast one. After all, Senator MANCHIN did put the kibosh on the reckless tax-and-spending spree bill last year, and he doubled down on his opposition just a few weeks ago.

Privately, his Democratic colleagues assured me this was not happening. But then the Senator from West Virginia has engaged in a gigantic Olympic-worthy flip-flop. Senator MANCHIN will tell you this bill is completely different from “Build Back Broke,” but it is not.

We should take a look at some of the elements of this legislation. “Build Back Broke” was a roundup of expensive, unnecessary damaging policies, including job-killing tax hikes, which would leave hard-working American families without a way to earn a paycheck, Green New Deal climate policies that would hurt our energy security and drive energy costs through the roof, taxpayer subsidies for wealthy people buying expensive cars and SUVs.

I was listening to the majority whip, the Senator from Illinois, talking about these businesses that are making too much money and so they need to pay more in taxes. That is what I have come to expect from our Democratic colleagues. They are kind of a “Robin Hood” party—take from the rich, give to the poor. Except here, this is a reverse Robin Hood. They are taking from middle-class families who can’t afford to buy expensive electric vehicles and giving a tax subsidy to wealthy people who can afford to buy them but are helped with the \$7,500 taxpayer subsidy. So you might call that a reverse Robin Hood.

Then they want to supersize the Internal Revenue Service with even more manpower and authority to track everyday American people and perform, I presume, many, many more audits, not just on the rich and famous but also on middle-class Americans.

And then there are the special handouts to powerful friends of the Democratic Party. This isn’t the type of legislation that will bring our economy roaring back to life or cool inflation. In fact, that is the first place that this bill is misrepresented. They are calling it the Inflation Reduction Act, but nobody believes that, in the near term, it is going to have a single impact, at all, on inflation.

That is what Penn Wharton said. For the next 2 years, they said, it may ac-

tually make inflation worse, but it is a negligible amount. But the one thing we are sure of is that it sure won’t go down.

So it is not an “inflation reduction act.” It is really an insult to the intelligence of the American people to think that you can spend this money and you can tax individuals and businesses during a recession—something everybody from Bill Clinton to Barack Obama, to CHUCK SCHUMER, to JOE MANCHIN has said you don’t do, which is raise taxes during a recession—but that is exactly what this bill does.

Higher taxes, bigger government, more inflation, and fewer jobs—this is a bill whose time has not come. No wonder when this bill was originally proposed as Build Back Better, Senator MANCHIN opposed the bill.

So let’s see what he and Senator SCHUMER wrote in secret behind closed doors and then sprung on the American people. And, again, we haven’t even seen the final product yet, and yet Senator SCHUMER said we are going to stay in session until it passes.

Well, it is going to have to take all 50 votes of Democratic Senators and the vote of the Vice President to do that, because not one single Senator on this side of the aisle was consulted, was asked to work on a bipartisan basis to come up with a product that could be supported across the aisle.

This will be a purely partisan exercise, after I think we have had a pretty good run of bipartisan cooperation, and I have been proud to be a part of that. But this is a complete reversal of sort of the spirit of bipartisan cooperation that we have seen, frankly, all summer long, which has produced some pretty good legislation.

Well, there are tax hikes that will leave hard-working Americans poorer. Not only will inflation be roughly 9 percent, which it is today—meaning that for every \$100 you earn, you are only going to get \$91 in purchasing power—in addition to that, the Joint Committee on Taxation said the impact of this bill will mean that individuals earning as little as \$10,000 a year will see an increase in their tax burden, because you can’t spend this much money, you can’t tax this many people without it having some trickle-down effect on taxpayers, certainly those who earn less than \$400,000, which was President Biden’s pledge. And I heard the majority leader say that again and, I believe, the majority whip, too, but this is not true.

The Joint Committee on Taxation is the entity here—nonpartisan entity—which provides the final word on those issues. So notwithstanding the denials of the majority leader and the majority whip and others, the Joint Committee on Taxation said that taxpayers earning as little as \$10,000 will see their taxes go up—maybe not their income tax, but they will be poorer as a result of this bill.

Again, part of that is because, in addition to inflation, in addition to addi-

tional tax burden, you are going to be asking them to pay taxes to subsidize wealthy people to buy electric vehicles or to subsidize people’s health insurance, even though they make well above the 400 percent of poverty cap that was initially part of ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act. That cap has been lifted now as well.

We will see what the final product looks like, but the earlier provision showed that people earning up to as much as 750 percent of poverty would then receive taxpayer subsidies for their health insurance.

Well, Senator MANCHIN and Senator SCHUMER may have slapped a new name on Build Back Better or “Build Back Broke,” but all of the essential elements are still there: tax hikes on families, the Green New Deal, massive electric vehicle subsidies.

Oh, and here is another thing. A lot of the American car manufacturers said we may not be able to access these tax credits because 70 percent of the components that go into electric vehicles are made in other countries, like China. That is how slapdash this bill was put together. If more time, more deliberation, more debate, more bipartisanship had occurred, maybe we could have come up with something that would make more sense.

But this is what happens when you get in a big hurry. You make mistakes and do things that make zero sense, like provide this subsidy to a limited class of car manufacturers when 70 percent of the components of a typical electric vehicle, including the battery, come from overseas.

As I said, this is a misleading-labeled bill. It is not going to do a thing to ease inflation in the near term. The budget experts at Penn Wharton analyzed Senator MANCHIN’s tax hike and bill and completely decimated the argument that this legislation will reduce inflation. If this bill becomes law, inflation will not get any better anytime soon. In fact, I believe Americans can expect it to get worse.

The people at Penn Wharton said the Manchin tax hike bill would increase inflation slightly in the short term and cause it to stick around for 2 more years before it would have any impact. That is what you are going to tell hard-working American families: You are being priced out of your favorite food and grocery products at the grocery store or you can’t afford to fill up your car? Just wait 2 more years.

Well, if the Democrats are successful in passing this bill with purely Democratic votes, there will be an accounting, and there will be a comparison by voters in November with, OK, they told us that if we pass this bill, it would reduce inflation, and let’s see what inflation looks like in November of 2022.

I am not wishing for higher inflation. I hope inflation will go down. But this is exactly the opposite of what you ought to do if you want to reduce inflation to restore people’s purchasing power.

Well, again, several years ago and more recently, our colleague from West Virginia said he didn't think it was wise to raise taxes during a recession. He and the majority leader have tried to convince anyone who will listen, who is gullible enough, to believe that this bill does not raise taxes on anyone making less than \$400,000 a year, but, as I said, the Joint Committee on Taxation explodes that myth.

Next year, more than 60 percent of taxpayers who earn between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year will be hit with a higher tax bill. That is what the Joint Committee on Taxation said. It is in the so-called distributional tables. It is a pretty complex calculation, but that is why we rely on the Joint Committee on Taxation to provide this expert information and guidance to us, because, frankly, it is beyond the capability of most of us in Congress. They also said that more than 90 percent of those earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000 a year will pay more in taxes, and a whopping 97 percent of those earning between \$100,000 and \$200,000 will see a tax increase.

I heard our colleague the majority whip talk about these big, rich companies—oil and gas companies, pharmaceutical companies—making too much money. But these aren't billion-dollar corporations that they are raising taxes on; these are middle-class families—and for what? To subsidize rich people driving around in fancy electric vehicles? It is a disgrace.

Well, of course, working families aren't the only ones who are going to face a higher tax bill. The Manchin tax hike also hits businesses and is sure to have a devastating impact on—guess where—West Virginia. I am not making this up. Higher taxes require companies to cut costs everywhere.

I think sometimes our Democratic colleagues have this idea that if you raise taxes on businesses, they will simply absorb it and they won't pass it along to their customers. That is a flight of fantasy. Higher taxes will require them either to pass those costs along or to cut costs elsewhere, like to cut off their employees, to not hire as many people as they would otherwise hire.

I was flabbergasted, frankly, when I saw that, according to the Tax Foundation, the industry that will be hit hardest is the coal industry. Now, we know the coal industry has been the primary target of Democrats' green policies, and maybe that is what they have in mind—to put even more coal miners out of a job.

Despite the adverse impact this legislation will have on families and communities across the country, it was written by two people: Senators MANCHIN and SCHUMER. They have been working hard since they announced their deal, arrived at in secret, behind closed doors. They have worked hard to try to get this bill to the floor, to see if it complies with the Senate rules. They continue to make last-minute

changes—going on even as I speak, which is the reason none of us have seen the final product—but we are unlikely to see those final changes before Senator SCHUMER asks us to vote on the bill. But still Senator SCHUMER said he expects every Democrat to fall in line and to vote for this legislation within a matter of hours. They haven't seen the bill either. I have to imagine that Democrats in both the House and the Senate are pretty unhappy with this process.

Experts have analyzed this bill and said it raises taxes on families, and it will have an adverse impact on jobs and keep inflation high—certainly not cut it—but the top Senate Democrat expects his colleagues to ignore these warning signs and to vote for it anyway.

Like I said, all of us are held accountable by the voters at election time. And I guess ultimately that is what this exercise will be about—it will be about political accountability.

On average, there have been about 40 amendments in a so-called vote-arama, which we are all familiar with, which we will experience presumably later on tonight. Our colleagues said: Well, there may be some amendments I would like to vote for, but I am going to vote against them because I want to make sure we get this bill across the floor, no matter how ugly the process, no matter what is in it.

Well, Democrats have tried and failed to convince the American people that the biggest problems facing our country aren't really problems at all or certainly their problem.

Despite all the obvious warnings, the Biden administration officials insisted that inflation was transitory, that it is temporary, won't last long. Now they even want to redefine what it means to be in a recession even though we have experienced two consecutive quarters of negative GDP—gross domestic product—growth, which is the textbook definition of a recession.

People in my State and across the country know better than to believe this sort of sleight of hand. Despite what our colleagues are saying today, this bill will increase taxes on families earning less than \$400,000 a year. It will stifle medical and pharmaceutical innovation and prevent new lifesaving cures from being discovered. It will threaten our economy and our energy security at a vulnerable moment when we are in a recession.

And it won't do a darn thing to ease the loss of purchasing power due to historically high inflation rates—the highest in 40 years—that consumers and all Americans are experiencing. It won't do a thing. No amount of spin or fast talking can conceal the damage this bill will inflict on the American people.

Senator MANCHIN likes to say: "If I can't go back home and explain it, I can't vote for it," but for the life of me, I don't know how our Democratic colleagues are going to explain this one in November.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business for debate only until 4 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that Senator SCHUMER be recognized at 4 p.m.

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

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT OF 2022

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I go back home to Washington State every week, and I talk to young people in Seattle who are urgently calling for bold climate action. I talk to families in Yakima County who are deeply concerned by a wildfire season that gets worse every year and parents in Vancouver who are trying to figure out how they can afford their kids' medication and make ends meet.

This summer has broken records in Washington State and not in a good way. Energy prices and temperatures have both spiked. People from Seattle to Spokane are feeling the stress, and they are feeling the heat. Climate disasters have become an everyday reality in every community across the country. Washington State has seen droughts and wildfires and floods and heat waves that literally made our roads buckle.

Families desperately need us to tackle rising costs and rising temperatures because we cannot build a stronger economy if we do not build a more sustainable economy, and that is why we need the Inflation Reduction Act. It will reduce costs for families, it will reduce emissions, and it will even reduce the debt and deficit.

The climate investments in this bill are, in a word, historic. They won't just bring down carbon emissions by a whopping 40 percent; they will help us establish real energy independence from dirty fossil fuels and foreign adversaries. They will save lives by reducing air pollution and supporting conservation efforts happening in rural Washington State right now to prevent wildfires and protect families and address the climate crisis.

This legislation will make historic, first-of-its-kind, economy-wide investment in clean energy that will create millions of good-paying clean energy jobs, including in Washington State, and it will bring down families' energy costs for people who are struggling to keep the AC on in the summer or the heat on in the winter or lights on year-round. It will help weatherize homes and install energy-efficient appliances and heat pumps and rooftop solar panels and more.

This bill will offer huge cost savings for clean or electric vehicles, new or