

modern infrastructure in the world. Now, that is what a nation that is prepared to compete does.

We passed the CHIPS Act to preserve America's leadership in research and innovation and to produce semiconductors and jobs and the industries of the future in America, not in China. As the President also said yesterday, why wouldn't it be in America? We invented the chip. Shouldn't we be leading the world still?

Well, with the passage of the CHIPS legislation in a strong bipartisan vote on the floor, we are going to reclaim that lead.

We passed the Inflation Reduction Act, which includes the biggest ever investment in climate change and climate resilience. It will reduce inflationary pressure by cutting energy costs now and in the future, and it also reduces the cost of prescription drugs.

We are investing in the American people on the basis of a shared, sustainable economic prosperity.

Oh, one footnote that is well worth mentioning: The Federal deficit will shrink by \$1.7 trillion this year. All of the things that I have mentioned and all of the criticism we have heard from the other side of the aisle, and the deficit is going down.

Nearly all of these economic prosperity proposals were passed with Democratic votes only. Chips is an exception. Infrastructure is an exception. But the American Rescue Plan and the inflation reduction plan were strictly Democratic votes. It is our hope that our Republican colleagues will now join us and help us get back to work in fighting the common challenges facing the Nation.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on another matter, I want to take a moment to speak about one of my highest priorities as chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee: the confirmation of highly qualified judges. This is one of the great shared successes of President Biden and the Senate Democrats and Republicans who have stood with us on some key votes.

As of today, the Senate has confirmed 76 judges to lifetime positions during this 117th Congress. That figure includes Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, an outstanding jurist, the first Black woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

I would just state that I have been in politics most of my adult life. I did not appreciate the impact that the selection of this African-American woman would have on the people I represent. Some of the toughest, hardest bargaining African-American women that I have known in politics have come up to me and, in a moment, broken down in tears to thank me for President Biden's leadership and the fact that the Senate approved this new Justice. It means that much to them. Her historic confirmation was a crowning achievement in our efforts to build a system of justice that works on behalf of every American.

Outside of the Supreme Court, as I mentioned, the Senate has confirmed an impressive number of Federal judges: 18 circuit court nominees, 57 district court nominees. Why is that important? Because the vast majority of cases don't make it to the Supreme Court. They are resolved by judges like these nominees, at the district and circuit court level.

Look at the most recent ruling yesterday, in terms of the judge in Florida and the special master that has been appointed for the records that were removed from Mar-a-Lago. That judge made a critical and historic decision. The judges we are approving are in the same position to do that, and with each one of the judges we have confirmed, the American people can trust that they will apply the law to the facts, follow the precedent, and defend the rule of law.

Now, these 76 judicial appointments are more than a statistic. With each confirmation, the Senate has taken a crucial step toward ensuring diversity in the Federal judiciary. President Biden and Senate Democrats have made it a priority to elevate judicial nominees from demographically and professionally diverse backgrounds. Many times, Republican Senators have joined us in this effort, and I want to give them credit where it is due.

During the 117th Congress we have shattered records when it comes to diversity on the Federal Bench. Of the 18 circuit judges confirmed by Senate Democrats, 14 are women and 13 are people of color. And of the 57 district court judges we have confirmed, 42 of the 57 are women and many represent a historic first—the first Muslim American article III judge to the first Latina article III judge in the State of Illinois.

We have confirmed a record number of nominees who have experience serving not only as prosecutors but also as public defenders, voting rights experts, civil rights attorneys. For too long, the perspectives that they represent have not been seen on our benches in Federal courts. Thanks to President Biden's leadership and the work of the Senate Democrats, the Federal Judiciary now includes many dedicated public servants who will help bring balance to the Nation's courts. And let me add that some of the key votes came from a handful of Republican Senators who have looked at these nominees in an honest fashion.

Every one of these jurists is highly qualified to serve our Nation and the American people. That is a welcome shift from the previous administration, which often advanced nominees who simply checked the box "Federalist Society." Thankfully, the judges taking the bench under President Biden are impartial and evenhanded. All of them will continue to administer equal justice under the law.

NOMINATION OF JOHN Z. LEE

Mr. President, later today, we will add, I hope, one more name to this impressive roster. The Senate will vote on

the nomination of Judge John Lee, who was selected for the Illinois seat on the Seventh Circuit.

If confirmed, Judge Lee will be the first Asian-American judge ever to serve on the Seventh Circuit. His confirmation will mark yet another stride forward in building a judiciary that reflects the diversity of our Nation.

Judge Lee was born to Korean parents in Germany. His father was a coal miner. His mother was a nurse. He arrived in America at the age of 4 and settled with his family in a one-bedroom apartment in the Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago.

It wasn't easy starting off in kindergarten in a new land, but Judge Lee says he found the support of a nurturing community of classmates and teachers. He quickly learned English and excelled in school, graduating magna cum laude from Harvard College and cum laude from Harvard Law School.

He began his legal career as a trial attorney in the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Justice Department before working in private practice in Chicago. His practice focused on complex litigation, including antitrust and intellectual property.

In 2011, President Biden nominated Judge Lee to the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. When he was confirmed in 2012 by voice vote, Judge Lee became the first Korean American to serve as an article III judge in Illinois.

Since joining the bench, he has written hundreds of opinions and presided over 35 trials that went to verdict or judgment. He also sat by designation on the Seventh Circuit, a number of times, writing several opinions for the majority.

During his time on the bench, he always applied the law to the facts before him in an evenhanded and fair fashion. Given his impeccable record and impressive credentials, it is no surprise that the American Bar Association has rated John Lee unanimously "well qualified" for this circuit court position.

He has the strong support of myself and Senator DUCKWORTH. I urge my colleagues to join us.

I want to close by emphasizing this: Our work is not finished by a long shot. Judge Lee is one of ten circuit court nominees awaiting action by the full Senate, and many more are still moving through the Committee. Each one of these public servants will bring much needed professional and demographic diversity.

The judges being confirmed by this Senate will ensure that the rule of law applies to every single one of us without fear or favor. They will work to uphold America's most sacred promise—equal justice for all.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. 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.

TEXAS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, here we are, back in the Nation's Capital, after having had the opportunity to spend a few weeks back home. While it is still hot in Texas at this time of year—so it is nice to get a little bit of respite back here—we certainly have a lot of work cut out for us, but it is always helpful to me to sort of compare what people are focused on here in Washington, DC, with what folks back home care about the most. It is actually the best way to get some feedback on how we can do our jobs more effectively in representing the people we represent—in my case, the 29 million people who call Texas home.

Also, people are not shy about expressing their views on what we have done and even about offering some input on things we are considering doing.

For example, in Corpus Christi, which is on the gulf coast of Texas, I spoke with industry at the Port of Corpus Christi about the untapped potential of hydrogen energy.

In Round Rock, which is just outside of Austin, I sat down with a number of sexual assault survivors, prosecutors, and medical professionals to talk about the need to train more sexual assault nurse examiners, which is a highly specialized form of nursing, to make sure that not only people who are sexually assaulted are compassionately cared for but also that the evidence that is necessary to convict their assailants is selected in a way that is admissible in court.

In Austin, I met with the Texas Association of Counties. We have 254 counties in Texas. Some of them, like in Loving County, have more cattle than people. But it is great to meet or to be able to connect with all of the elected representatives at the local level of our counties in one place and to hear what is on their minds—certainly everything from broadband development/deployment, particularly in the rural parts of our State, and disaster relief for places like Dallas, which experienced 13 inches of rain in 1 day and massive flooding.

In the Rio Grande Valley, close to the border, in Pharr, TX, I got a chance to see how their local police department is partnering with local mental health providers to respond to individuals who commit offenses—maybe because they are going through mental health crises—and how to train the officers to address those in a way that don't escalate that crisis and potentially cause harm to them as well as to the individual who is causing or is experiencing that crisis. It really is impressive to see a relatively small town like Pharr, TX, really leading the way when it comes to compassionate and ef-

fective policing and in providing our law enforcement officials, who are not necessarily trained mental health workers, the additional resources and training they need in order to respond effectively to those situations.

Those are just a few examples of the sorts of folks I got to catch up with over the last few weeks, and I am obviously always grateful to those who share their input and ideas with me. Those conversations and that input are vital to our work here in the Senate because they shed light on the problems our neighbors in our communities are facing, which isn't necessarily the coin of the realm here in Washington, DC, where politics and spin infuse everything.

For example, folks almost universally—particularly small business folks—told me about the strain of the labor shortage on their businesses. If you go to a restaurant in Texas, it may be that they are only operating on fewer hours or fewer tables because they, frankly, can't get the workforce they need to come back and help work at those places.

They are obviously all very concerned about the impact of the spending that we have been doing here in Washington, DC—some necessary and some unnecessary, in my opinion—and its impact on inflation and on family budgets, where they have seen their standard of living reduced because of the inflationary pressures on almost everything, from gasoline to groceries to housing—you name it.

They are also very concerned about high energy prices. I know there has been some talk about the reduction in the price of gasoline. That is primarily a feature of reduced demand because, frankly, people have to make choices about how to spend the money they would ordinarily put in the tank and how to do it selectively—whether to go on a family vacation or to stay at home. It certainly hasn't been because of any increase in supply as a result of our domestic energy policies by the Biden administration.

Then I heard a lot about people's concerns about crime, particularly of the fentanyl crisis that we are experiencing here in America, where 108,000 Americans died of drug overdoses last year alone. About 60 percent of those were from synthetic opioids—from fentanyl—the precursors of which usually come from Asia, mainly China, to Mexico and then across the southern border.

Then, of course, there is the ongoing Biden border crisis as a result of the open border policies of the Biden administration. There are 2.3 million migrants who have been encountered along the border just since President Biden has taken office. Because of the catch-and-release policies associated with asylum seekers, even those people who ultimately will not be able to qualify for asylum, which is roughly 85 to 90 percent of the people who claim it, will have melted into the great

American landscape. They may be given a notice to appear for a future court hearing, but because of the backlog of the immigration courts, we are talking years down the line.

These are just some of the things that I am hearing about from my constituents, and these are chronic problems for which, frankly, they do not see an appropriate and adequate response coming from Washington to address the very real impact on their everyday lives: what they can afford to buy at the grocery store; how safe their communities are; whether they feel safe while walking around their neighborhoods or sending their children out to play; whether the family will travel to see relatives for the holidays or whether they will have to stay home in order to save money to put food on the table. Those are not the problems that our Democratic colleagues—or the majority here in the Senate—seem to be focused on like a laser.

When I travel to Texas from Washington, it often feels like I am visiting a parallel universe. You get here, and things don't seem that odd at first. The scenery is different, but the same problems Texans talk about are on display.

You read headlines about the border crisis. You see that the Mayor of Washington, DC, is complaining and claiming there is a humanitarian crisis because, although it claims to be a sanctuary city, when Governor Abbott or Governor Ducey from Arizona provides transportation to these sanctuary cities, all of a sudden, the border crisis that we have been living with for a year and a half now seems very real.

It is nice to see some folks in other parts of the country experiencing what my constituents in border communities have been experiencing for a long time now, together with the additional expense associated with things like deploying the National Guard to back up the Border Patrol and Customs and Border Protection, all at Texas taxpayer expense—something that is uniquely a Federal responsibility, but when the Biden administration refuses to do its job, it falls to the people who live in those communities along the border and in those States to try to do the best they can.

Despite the fact that our Democratic colleagues are reading the same headlines about crime, drug overdoses, inflation, and the border and despite the headlines here reflecting those concerns, our colleagues here in the Senate and in the White House have chosen to ignore them pretty much altogether. Our friends across the aisle have controlled the Senate now for a year and a half, as well as the House and the White House. They have the power to set any agenda that they see fit. They don't have to ask our permission or for our consent, and they certainly have had every opportunity to do so.

What I have noticed and what my constituents have commented on frequently is this parallel universe in