

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

Washington, DC, where the Democrats aren't using the power they have to address the problems working families are facing. They have chosen to focus on a completely different set of issues.

For example, let's look at the recent reckless tax-and-spending bill. Our Democratic colleagues, although we have worked together constructively on bipartisan legislation, in this case decided to pass a partisan bill to spend \$740 billion strictly along partisan lines. All of this money and the tax increases that go along with it won't address the biggest problems families are facing anytime soon. In fact, they are likely to make the problems even worse.

At a time when many people are struggling to pay for gasoline for their cars, our Democratic colleagues decided to give well-to-do people who can afford \$80,000 electric vehicles a taxpayer handout of about \$7,500 at the expense of the working families who can't afford to buy an electric vehicle of their own at any price.

This ensures that gas prices will climb even higher. This bill will revive the old Superfund tax on American energy production. It will guarantee families will face higher electricity prices this winter by slapping a new methane tax on energy producers. And that is all just the climate portion of the reckless tax-and-spending bill.

Our colleagues decided that it was the smart thing to do to supersize the Internal Revenue Service and giving it even more manpower to invariably audit middle-class America and small businesses. And then they have doled massive handouts to some of their key constituencies like labor unions.

They have chosen to impose socialist price controls on prescription drugs, which will stifle medical innovation and prevent new, lifesaving cures from being discovered. And perhaps worst of all, they raised taxes on the middle class.

I know President Biden promised, and promised time and time again, to never raise taxes on anyone earning less than \$400,000 a year, and our Democratic colleagues still claim that this bill makes good on that promise. But that is simply not consistent with the facts. It is not true. The nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation has confirmed it.

The JCT found that taxpayers making far less than \$400,000 at some point get walloped by higher prices. That includes people making between \$30,000 and \$40,000 a year. You can read it yourself, the distributional tables, at the Joint Committee on Taxation website.

We know that inflation is outpacing wage growth, which means that workers already are receiving a silent pay cut or silent tax, thanks to overspending here on things that, frankly, are not priorities. And many of those same workers are going to pay even more in Federal taxes.

But perhaps the most insulting part of this reckless tax-and-spending bill

that our Democratic colleagues decided to pass unilaterally was they chose to call it the Inflation Reduction Act. Leading economic experts say this bill won't do a thing to address inflation, certainly, in the near term. In fact, over the next couple of years, they predict inflation is likely to get slightly worse.

But that is how things work in this parallel universe known as Washington, DC: Democrats see that families are being battered by inflation, but they don't actually pass legislation that will help. Our colleagues just want to use the plight to come up with a sympathetic title for a radical, partisan bill, and they are happy to stick middle-class Americans with the check.

The icing on the cake came a couple of weeks ago after this bill became law, when President Biden made an Executive decision to cancel half a trillion dollars in student loans. Any family knows, you can't just cancel debt. There is no magic wand that will make it disappear. Every dollar that was borrowed will eventually have to be paid back by someone, but President Biden has just shifted the burden on whom that someone will be. Now the middle-class taxpayers are on the hook yet once again.

Under President Biden's proposal, it doesn't matter if a person took out loans and repaid them already; in other words, did what they said they would do by repaying the money that they had borrowed. Whether they worked their way through school, whether they held two or three jobs, or chose not to attend college at all, their tax dollars will pay for someone else's college debt.

My point is there is a remarkable divide between what Washington Democrats are trying to accomplish and the problems middle-class families are actually facing. Families are struggling to put food on the table, and our Democratic colleagues are spending hundreds of billions of dollars on climate initiatives.

This reminds me of a few years ago, a social movement by the so-called Yellow Jackets—a mosaic of French working-class people who felt disenfranchised from the urban elite who, as they said, "can focus on the end of the world, while we're worrying about the end of the month." That is what average working families in Texas and across the country are concerned about: How do we get to the end of the month with enough money to put food on the table and gas in the tank?

Workers can't afford a full tank of gas, and Democrats are forcing them to subsidize electric vehicles for the wealthy. People are worried about how much their electricity bills will cost this winter, and Democrats imposed a new tax that will send those costs even higher. These policies aren't going to make life better for the middle class anytime soon. They aren't going to help families or businesses that are

trying to create jobs and opportunities for their communities. And it certainly isn't going to bring our economy roaring back to life.

The fact of the matter is, since Democrats took control of the government more than a year and a half ago, Texans' lives have gotten harder, not easier. Inflation has skyrocketed, wages have fallen, our economy fell into a recession, and the border is on fire. And our colleagues—certainly, the Biden administration—don't seem to care. In fact, they seem to block out the concerns of middle-class Americans so they can pursue an ideological agenda like there is no tomorrow.

When I am home in Texas, folks talk about the problems workers and families are facing every day. They don't want to send taxpayer handouts to wealthy people buying electric vehicles or help subsidize labor unions or payoff someone else's loans. The sooner our Democratic colleagues realize that, the better off we will all be. But then again, maybe it is going to take an election this November.

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 called the roll.

(Ms. SINEMA assumed the Chair.)

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider calendar No. 1043.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Arianna J. Freeman, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows: