

ran headfirst—headfirst—into this national embarrassment. Just as importantly, we will also keep pushing to rebuild America's military, both to meet major threats from Russia and China and to defend the terrorist challenges President Biden has left to fester.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Andre B. Mathis, of Tennessee, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, a month ago yesterday, Senate Democrats shoved another partisan spending bill through the Senate—this one, the inaccurately named “Inflation Reduction Act.” I say “inaccurately named” because the so-called Inflation Reduction Act will do nothing to reduce inflation. That is right. The so-called Inflation Reduction Act will not actually reduce inflation. You don’t have to take my word for it; the nonpartisan Penn Wharton Budget Model said this about the bill’s impact on inflation: “The impact on inflation is statistically indistinguishable from zero”—“statistically indistinguishable from zero.”

Democrats also claim that the bill will lead to deficit reduction, but that is not really true, either. In the first place, Democrats arrive at their deficit reduction assumptions using some extremely fuzzy math. A substantial part of their deficit reduction claims depend on not extending a program that they have already called for extending and on supposedly eliminating a rule that at this point was never going to be implemented anyway.

But even using their rosiest assumptions, the deficit reduction they would have achieved with the Inflation Reduction Act was wiped out completely 8 days after the bill was signed by the President’s costly, reckless student loan giveaway.

Democrats have clearly been seeing the polling on Americans’ opinion of the economy and their lack of faith in President Biden and Democrats to deal with the economic challenges we are facing. That is unquestionably why Democrats named their bill the “Inflation Reduction Act” and touted their commitment to deficit reduction in an attempt to suggest fiscal responsibility. The problem, of course, is that their commitment to deficit reduction, inflation reduction, and fiscal responsibility was and continues to be nothing more than window dressing.

At its core, the Inflation Reduction Act, like the so-called American Rescue Plan before it, is just another big government, big spending piece of legislation. It will do nothing to address the real economic challenges facing our Nation. Instead, it will waste taxpayer dollars on Democrats’ big government fantasies. It will drive up energy costs in the service of Democrats’ Green New Deal agenda. It will push people off private insurance and into government-run healthcare, driving up the cost to taxpayers. The legislation imposes socialist-style price controls that will discourage medical innovation and reduce the number of new treatments and cures. It imposes new taxes on businesses that will slow economic growth and result in lower wages and fewer jobs. And the list goes on.

In case there was any doubt about their intentions with this bill, Democrats made their priorities very, very clear when the Senate considered amendments. Democrats’ so-called Inflation Reduction Act hikes taxes on domestic oil and gas production—something that will unquestionably result in higher energy prices for American families, who are already facing higher energy bills in the Biden economy.

During the amendment vote-arama on this legislation, Democrats made it very clear that they are, indeed, just fine with restricting American energy production and seeing Americans’ energy bills soar.

Democrats rejected attempts to ease their tax hikes on domestic oil and gas. They rejected amendments to make it easier for companies to develop American oil and natural gas. They also rejected a comprehensive amendment to reform the burdensome permitting process, which is one of the biggest obstacles to new energy investment. They even rejected an amendment to prevent Democrats’ new electric vehicle tax credit from going to wealthy Americans. So apparently it is just fine to support measures that would drive up Americans’ energy bills, but electric vehicle tax breaks for wealthy Americans have to be preserved, not to mention the irony of U.S. automakers recently hiking prices on certain electric vehicles by \$6,500 to \$8,000, which roughly matches the \$7,500 tax credit in the Democrats’ inflation reduction bill.

Now, I have been a longtime supporter of clean energy, but the fact of

the matter is, clean energy technology has not advanced to a point where we can solely rely on alternative energy. We need oil, we need natural gas, and we will continue to need them for a while yet. Efforts to discourage domestic production of conventional energy will simply drive up energy costs for hard-working Americans and force our country to rely on unstable foreign sources of oil and gas. Now, that may very well be the Democrats’ plan in hopes of hastening the arrival of their Green New Deal future.

Democrats like to bill themselves as the party of the little guy, but their track record gives the lie to that. Democrats couldn’t bring themselves to support measures to lower Americans’ energy bills by increasing domestic oil and gas production because it conflicts with their Green New Deal ideology. They did all unite to protect a tax deduction that mainly goes to wealthy Americans in high-tax States and to make sure, as I mentioned, that wealthy Americans are able to access tax credits for electric vehicles.

Of course, they opposed a measure to prevent more audits of Americans making less than \$400,000 a year. That is right. Democrats’ legislation includes tens of billions of dollars for new IRS agents and increased audits. Democrats’ hope is that more audits of Americans will help pay for some of their spending measures like increased government healthcare subsidies and their Green New Deal priorities.

The Biden administration put out a statement claiming that this wouldn’t mean increased audits of Americans making less than \$400,000 a year, but when Democrats had the opportunity to confirm that by supporting an amendment that would have prevented the new enforcement funds from being used to audit Americans making less than \$400,000 a year, they unanimously—unanimously—voted against it.

I could go on. I haven’t even talked about the border security amendments the Democrats opposed. Republicans thought that perhaps, while Democrats were throwing money at environmental justice and climate slush funds and identifying gaps in tree canopy coverage, perhaps they could spare some money for the crisis at our southern border—a crisis that Democrats have largely chosen to pretend doesn’t exist. But Democrats quashed any attempt to divert money to address the border crisis. Apparently, identifying gaps in tree canopy coverage is more important than securing our southern border.

Democrats went so far as to oppose—an amendment that would have prohibited hiring additional IRS agents until additional Customs and Border Protection agents are hired to help secure the border. You heard that right. Now, I am pretty sure Americans are more worried about our border crisis than what Democrats apparently think is an IRS enforcement crisis. But

clearly Democrats don't want to let border security get in the way of funding for the Green New Deal priorities or supersizing the IRS.

It may have an appealing name, but, as the substance of the bill demonstrates, the so called Inflation Reduction Act is nothing more than the latest installment of Democrats' big government and big spending agenda. It will do nothing to address the real economic challenges facing Americans, and it will do nothing to address Americans' priorities. What it will do is spend hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars on Democrats' socialist and big government fantasies and raise taxes to help pay for it. Meanwhile, our inflation crisis and our border crisis and rising crime will continue.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise this morning to express my strong opposition to the so-called side deal that the fossil fuel industry is pushing to make it easier for them to pollute the environment and destroy our planet.

But, before I do, let me put my opposition to this disastrous side deal into a broader context.

As the father of four kids and the grandfather of seven, I very much wish that I did not have to say what I am going to say, but the most serious challenge facing our country and the entire world, far and away, is, in fact, the existential threat of climate change. That is not the opinion of BERNIE SANDERS, who failed physics in college. That is what the scientific community is telling us in a virtually unanimous voice.

The latest report from the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, is very clear, and it is very foreboding. If the United States, China, Russia, and the rest of the world do not act extremely aggressively in cutting carbon emissions, our planet will face enormous and irreversible damage. In fact, the world that we will be leaving to our kids and to future generations will become increasingly unhealthy and uninhabitable. That is not BERNIE SANDERS. That is the virtually unanimous conclusion of the scientists who study this issue.

The truth is that we don't need the scientists or another study to tell us what is happening. We see it with our own eyes here in the United States and all over the world. The American people, today, and people throughout the globe are seeing the devastating impact climate change is having on their communities and their families—with their own eyes. That is what they are seeing right now as I speak.

Please understand—and this may be the most important point I want to make this morning—that, with everything being equal, what is happening right now will become worse and worse and worse. This is not, "Oh, boy, we

have torrential rain," or, "Oh, boy, ain't it hot?" With everything being equal, everything we are seeing today will become worse in the years to come. Let's just take a brief look at what is happening right now in the United States and around the world.

The past 8 years have been the hottest years in recorded history. Right now, the western half of the United States is experiencing its worst drought in over 1,200 years. Right now, in California, Nevada, and Utah, they are experiencing recordbreaking heat waves.

Historic rainfall and devastating floods took place over a 5-week stretch this summer in eastern Kentucky; eastern Illinois; St. Louis, MO; Death Valley, CA; and Dallas, TX. These are supposed to be once-in-1,000-years torrential rainfalls, and we are seeing them coming all together within a few weeks.

Right now, Europe is experiencing its worst drought in over 500 years. And let's remember that when we talk about drought, it is not only, "Boy, isn't it hot?" it impacts agricultural production and the quantity and quality of food that we eat.

A massive heat wave in Spain and Portugal killed more than 2,000 people in July. Historically hot weather in London and China literally melted bridges, airplane runways, and rooftops. Let me repeat that. The extremely hot weather in London and in China this summer literally melted bridges, rooftops, and airplane runways, with all of the consequences that has.

Recordbreaking forest fires in Europe have already burned 1.6 million acres of land—56 percent more than the previous record set in 2017. That is a size that is over eight times bigger than New York City.

Recordbreaking drought in China has caused parts of the Yangtze River to completely dry up. The Yangtze River is the third largest river in the world. It is the source of drinking water for 400 million people.

Catastrophic rainfall and massive floods have been going on for weeks in Pakistan, killing at least 1,200 people and displacing another 10 million as one-third of Pakistan is now underwater.

If all of this is not sobering enough and if it is not frightening enough, a glacier in Antarctica that the scientists have dubbed the "doomsday glacier" has been in "rapid retreat" and is melting much faster than previous predictions. Without this glacier and its supporting ice shelves, sea levels could rise by 3 to 10 feet, which could cause entire coastal communities to flood and go underwater forever. We are talking about major cities here in the United States and across the world that could be underwater in the coming decades.

Just think for a moment about the massive dislocation, turmoil, and international tensions that will occur

when millions and millions of people migrate from where they have lived into new areas. The tragedies and disturbances and destruction goes on and on and on.

In the past, a series of climate disasters like these might have seemed like a silly plot in a bad movie about the apocalypse. Unfortunately, however, what we are living through now is not a movie. It is reality. This is what we are experiencing right now in front of us. Again, this entire scenario—what we are seeing now—will almost definitely become worse in the years to come if the United States, China, and the rest of the world do not get our act together and break our dependency on fossil fuels.

One of the strange ironies about this moment is that, if the United States did all of the right things tomorrow, it would not be enough. We need the co-operation of China and of countries throughout the world. We as a planet are in this together, and we are going to have to act decisively. In my view, the largest economy in the world, which is the United States of America, must lead this effort. If we retreat, it sends a terrible message to countries all over the world. If we retreat, clearly, what we will be seeing are more floods, more rising sea levels, more extreme weather disturbances, more ocean acidification, more drought, more famine, more disease, and more human suffering.

Today, to all of my colleagues here in the Senate who have kids and grandchildren—I think that is almost everybody—I just ask you to think ahead 10, 15, 20 years. Think about the discussions you will be having with your kids or your grandchildren when that young person looks you in the eye and says: Dad, Grandma, what did you do to save the planet?

I want you to think about that.

We all know that climate change is real. We know that climate change is caused by carbon emissions. No one disagrees with that. We know that climate change is already causing devastating destruction throughout the world. We know that, if we don't rapidly transform our energy system away from fossil fuels and toward energy efficiency and renewable energy, the situation will only become much worse, and our planet will face irreparable and irreversible harm. That is the simple reality.

Yet, given all that we know and given all that the scientists are telling us, what is the U.S. Congress about to do? Well, the U.S. Congress is seriously considering legislation to provide a huge giveaway to the fossil fuel industry to drill, produce, and sell more oil and gas.

Really? At a time when climate change is threatening the very existence of our planet, why would anybody be talking about substantially increasing carbon emissions and expanding fossil fuel production in the United States? What kind of message does this