

Today, I ask my colleagues to stand up for our kids, for our grandchildren, and for future generations. We have got to have the courage to finally tell the fossil fuel industry that the future of this planet is more important than their short-term profits.

I yield the floor.

#### NOMINATION OF ANDRE MATHIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Andre Mathis to serve on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Mathis is an outstanding nominee with extensive litigation experience and deep ties to the Tennessee legal community.

Over the years, he has litigated hundreds of civil cases and has defended approximately 150 criminal cases as a member of the Criminal Justice Act panel in the Western District of Tennessee. Mr. Mathis has tried 19 cases to verdict or final judgment and has briefed 23 appeals. And if confirmed, he would be the first Black man to sit on the Sixth Circuit from Tennessee. Mr. Mathis was rated unanimously "well qualified" by the American Bar Association, and he received a bipartisan vote in committee. Despite his extensive experience, some on the other side have questioned Mr. Mathis' credentials, as well as his confirmation process itself.

Let's set the record straight. Mr. Mathis is highly qualified for this job. And any claim that there was no meaningful consultation between the White House and the Tennessee Senators on this vacancy is simply false. Over a period of 6 months, the White House asked the Tennessee Senators for proposed candidates, interviewed one such candidate, and made Mr. Mathis available to the Senators to conduct their own interviews. There is a clear record of good faith consultation regarding this vacancy, consultation that far exceeded that afforded by the Trump White House to several Democratic Senators.

Remember, under the former President, Senate Republicans regularly supported circuit nominees who were nominated, even though the Trump White House did not seek any input from home-State Democratic Senators. I have said it many times: There cannot be one standard for Republicans and another for Democrats.

With Mr. Mathis' nomination, this Senate has an historic opportunity to confirm a lifelong Tennessean and a person of outstanding credentials and integrity to serve the community that raised him. I look forward to supporting him and urge my colleagues to do the same.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the 11:30 a.m. vote start now.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### VOTE ON MATHIS NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Mathis nomination?

Mr. PETERS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF), and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 329 Ex.]

#### YEAS—48

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Sinema
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lujan	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Markley	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden

#### NAYS—47

Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Romney
Blunt	Hagerty	Rounds
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young
Fischer	Portman	

#### NOT VOTING—5

Burr	Murkowski	Rosen
Menendez	Ossoff	

The nomination was confirmed.

(Mr. BOOKER assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Salvador Mendoza, Jr., of Washington, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The senior Senator from Texas.

#### SOCIALISM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am a firm believer in the American dream. People come to this country, perhaps as legal immigrants, start with little, invest themselves in a lot of hard work because they don't have anything else to invest, provide for their families, maybe even eventually start a small business of their own, create jobs and a means to earn a livelihood for their employees. That is what I think most people think of when they think about the American dream.

And it is built on an economic system known as capitalism, as distinguished from socialism. And capitalism has lifted more people out of poverty than any other economic system known to humankind.

There are those who have a different point of view. They call themselves democratic socialists.

I actually have here before me the Democratic Socialists of America web page that asks the question: "What is democratic socialism."

They start first with the criticism of capitalism. They say:

Capitalism is a system designed by the owning class to exploit the rest of us for their own profit.

That is an incredibly cynical and, I think, misguided view, but that is their opinion.

And they go on to say:

We must replace it with democratic socialism.

And there are a number of Members of Congress, notably the junior Senator from Vermont here who is an advocate for democratic socialism. I have read where he gave a speech explaining why he thinks that is a better way to go.

And then there are a number of Members of the House known colloquially as the Squad, who are members of the Democratic Socialists of America and advocate their particular point of view.

Even though Joe Biden was elected President of the United States in 2020, he essentially has embraced the democratic socialist agenda—the Green New Deal, Medicare for All, free college, free childcare, free everything.

Well, to no one's surprise, once people called it what it was and what it is, it didn't make it very far. The American people experienced a severe sticker shock when they heard the cost of these proposals.

One estimate pegged the cost of the Green New Deal at a whopping \$93 trillion, an absolutely unfathomable amount of money.

And much to our Democratic colleagues' surprise, families do not want the Federal Government managing every little detail of their lives, from making their childcare arrangements to determining which doctors they can see or, rather, which doctors they can't see.

Our Democratic friends found that socialism wasn't as popular as they hoped, but they weren't ready to give up on the bigger government dreams so they made a few marketing changes.

They switched branding. They adopted a new strategy, and now what we are seeing, I believe, is the new socialism.

Now, it is not as in your face, not as startling as what we saw a couple of years ago when people openly advocated democratic socialism, but the new socialism, I believe, is just as bad and even more dangerous because this time it is actually coming to fruition.

You don't need to look very far. Just look at President Biden's claimed authority to "forgive" student loans. The President announced that he would cancel student loans for millions of borrowers. Any family with a mortgage or car payment or credit card debt knows there is no such thing as canceling debt. Every dollar that was borrowed will have to be paid back by somebody. Traditionally, and legally, that responsibility lies with the borrower—the person who took out the tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars in student loans without a thought about how they might eventually pay it back.

But the President decided to throw tradition, personal responsibility, and, I would argue, the law, out the window in favor of a socialist approach where everybody chips in.

To state the obvious, not every taxpayer has outstanding student debt. Many of our fellow Americans never went to college. Many have very good-paying jobs because they have pursued a trade—carpentry, plumbing or the like or they may decide they want to be a teacher or perform some other work that doesn't pay perhaps as well as a Wall Street job.

Many people who did get a degree decided they needed to work at least part time to help pay for their bills. And then many, perhaps most, decided they had to pay the loans back after they graduated, just as they had agreed to do.

Still, every person without a college debt will be expected to shoulder the cost, under President Biden's proposal, for someone else's degree, regardless of their ability to pay it back.

College degrees are not a public good that should be covered by tax dollars. We provide a lot of generous support for higher education, and we should—Pell grants. Many colleges and universities have huge endowments that they use to give scholarships and financial aid to students.

But this is not something that ought to be placed at the foot of the American taxpayer, in this form certainly. Once somebody has agreed to pay back their student debt, to be able to just walk away from it, to me, encourages all sorts of irresponsible conduct and expectations.

These aren't shared expenses like commonly used roads, hospitals, or police departments. The individual who decides to borrow the money so they can attend college alone reaps the benefits of that degree. And, in fact, if you do go to college, your chances of earning more income tend to go up.

But the real kicker here is that student loan socialism will cost the American taxpayer roughly half a trillion dollars—all to pay off the debt that the individuals involved knowingly and willingly took on.

Of course, President Biden isn't the only one forcing more socialism on the American people. Our Democratic colleagues have gotten into the action too.

Last month, they passed a reckless tax-and-spending spree that included enough handouts to make Fidel Castro proud.

First are the expanded Affordable Care Act subsidies. Originally, the subsidies were provided, back when ObamaCare passed, to provide subsidies for people earning less than 400 percent of the Federal poverty level.

But our Democratic colleagues last month not only increased the amount of assistance people can receive, they also expanded eligibility; in short, giving more people more money, regardless of their ability to pay for their own expenses, shifting that, again, out of the pockets of middle-class taxpayers into the pockets of those who don't need the subsidies and especially those who can pay for their expenses themselves.

Our colleagues said this was a temporary provision that was critical to the pandemic response, but here we are, a year and a half later, and they have already extended it.

The people who gained insurance coverage because of this proposal aren't low-income families. Those individuals have already been eligible for ObamaCare. Assistance now extends to people earning 750 percent of the Federal poverty level—six-figure earners.

So, here again, our Democratic colleagues are taking money out of the pocket of middle-class taxpayers, who are struggling with inflation and trying to make ends meet, and providing enhanced, generous subsidies to people making 750 percent of the Federal poverty level.

So even as this started out as a temporary fix, I don't have any reason to believe that our Democratic colleagues will ever allow these subsidies to expire.

In the words of Ronald Reagan, "The closest thing to eternal life on earth is a [temporary] Government Program." Our Democratic colleagues seem to be intent on proving the accuracy of that statement.

The Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation estimated the cost of permanent expansion, and it is pretty jarring for a number of reasons.

First is the financial cost. By expanding the ObamaCare premium tax credits and making them permanent, our Democratic colleagues would add \$248 billion to the Federal debt over the next decade. Of course, this will have an adverse effect on people with private insurance. Under permanent expansion, some 2.3 million people will

lose their current employer-provided coverage. So our country would end up basically paying wealthy people to lose their employer-sponsored healthcare so they can end up on a taxpayer-funded plan.

This isn't about helping the uninsured; it is just a backdoor way to implement Medicare for All—another Democratic socialist objective. Our Democratic colleagues couldn't get enough support for this radical plan by trying to build consensus, so they passed it with 50 votes, plus the tie-breaking vote of Vice President HARRIS. So, bit by bit, our colleagues are pushing Americans closer to a single-payer healthcare system that they do not want.

Then there is electric vehicle socialism—taxpayer handouts for wealthy car owners who buy fancy, state-of-the-art electric vehicles. A couple earning up to \$300,000 a year can now count on taxpayers to chip in for their big-ticket purchase—\$7,500 for a new electric vehicle or \$4,000 for a used one.

Families are already being crushed by inflation—high grocery costs, up 13 percent over the last year alone; high gasoline prices; housing prices that are going up dramatically. These families are now being burdened with the expense of helping wealthy car owners buy fancy, new electric vehicles when they can't even afford to buy one on their own. Someone who can only afford a quarter of a tank of gas because they can't afford to fill up the whole tank doesn't have \$80,000 to spend on a fancy, new electric vehicle. Still, thanks to our colleagues' electric vehicle socialism, middle- and low-income families are getting stuck with the bill, which always seems to be the punch line.

Well, in order to finance this new socialist redistribution, our Democratic colleagues need more money on top of the debt that they are adding to. They needed a cash cow, so what they did is they turned to everybody's favorite: the Internal Revenue Service.

Our colleagues voted and passed a bill that will double the size of the IRS by adding 87,000 new agents to ensure that those IRS agents can squeeze every last penny out of hard-working American families. This isn't going to have an impact on the top 1 percent; it will unleash a tidal wave of audits on middle-class families and small businesses. Families earning less than \$225,000 a year are already five times as likely to be audited already, and this will just make it even worse.

The independent Congressional Budget Office confirmed that lower and middle-income taxpayers will see more IRS audits as a result of this move. The government is about to squeeze, once again, working families like a piece of coal, while our Democratic friends say: Well, we are just making diamonds.

I must add, I live in a border State, Texas, where we have seen 2.3 million migrants come to the border in this last year and a half during President

Biden's administration. We have seen 108,000 Americans die of drug overdoses, with most of those drugs coming across the southwestern border because the criminal organizations that move people and drugs across the border understand that if they flood the border with people, with migrants, it will divert the Border Patrol's attention, so the drugs can come flowing into our country, distributed by criminal networks and street gangs who are responsible for most of the crime and gun violence in our local communities.

Don't you think some of the money that our colleagues have spent to try to build an army of IRS agents over the next 10 years—that some of that could have been spent to help secure the border, to stop some of those drugs? Well, unfortunately, the Biden administration has an open borders policy. They don't actually believe in enforcing our immigration laws, and what we have seen as a consequence is a result of that.

Thanks to our Democratic colleagues' new socialist policies, Texans who are trying to save money to go to college or buy a home or prepare for retirement are about to get stuck with the bill for massive government expansion. And what is this going to do to inflation, which is already at a 40-year high? It is going to make it worse. As the Federal Reserve ratchets up the discount rate or interest rates in order to slow inflation, it is going to slow our entire economy and make it harder on middle-class families just trying to get by.

Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of England, once wisely said:

The problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money.

Again, that is true. We have seen approaches of socialism fail over and over and over again, and we have seen its leaders oppress their people and send their country into ruin.

Well, right now, we are seeing the new socialism rooted in American soil gaining ground in Congress and the White House every day. This new socialism may look a little bit different, but the goal is the same: to grow the role of government in the lives of everyday Americans and to burden them with additional taxes to pay for this bigger and bigger government and to take money from people who, by virtue of their hard work, were pursuing the American dream and transfer that money to someone who is well-off in order to advance misguided policies like \$7,500 taxpayer subsidies for rich people for electric vehicles.

Part of it is an attitude or perspective that our Democratic colleagues seem to have. They seem to think, We know better; we know better what is good for people than they do themselves.

That is why they want to choose what kind of healthcare plan they get or what kind of childcare facilities families get to use.

They want to take money out of your pocket and redistribute it to the chosen wealthy few.

They want to denigrate the concept of hard work and personal responsibility that has made America the economic success that it is because of our capitalist system and because of the American dream, again, where people can come here, let's say as a legal immigrant, with very little, but by virtue of hard work and commitment and determination, they can achieve their dream and help others achieve their dream at the same time—but not if you eliminate the concept of hard work, accountability, and personal responsibility and just continue to dole out government handouts.

So it doesn't really make any difference what our colleagues try to call it. They call it the Inflation Reduction Act—the bill they just passed, the reckless tax-and-spending bill—when virtually all of the outside experts said: No, it won't reduce inflation, certainly not in the near term. So it doesn't make any difference how they try to brand it; socialism is socialism, and it is leading our country down the road to a dangerous destination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Socialism. This is all about socialism. I listened very carefully to my friend from Texas, and he is my friend—we work together on many things—and he believes the downfall of America is the advent of socialism. Well, I am not sure what that label means to him, but I want to take a look at some of the areas that he made a comment on.

He thinks it is socialist for us to expand the coverage of the Affordable Care Act. We are down to 8 percent of Americans without health insurance—8 percent. The goal is zero. We may never reach it. We have dramatically decreased the number of Americans without health insurance.

Have you ever lived in a situation where you didn't have health insurance, when you are a new father of a baby with a health problem and no health insurance? I have been there. You don't want to go to that place.

We want to give everybody the peace of mind that they have quality healthcare available to them. Is that socialism? Is that the government making the decision that you are going to have health insurance? I don't think so. Right-thinking people across this country, regardless of political stripe, believe that health insurance is critical for a happy and healthy family.

He used the term—he said Medicare is a socialist objective. Ha. Try that one on for size in any State. Run your campaign on getting rid of Medicare and see how it works. I can tell you what the result will be. Medicare, over the last 60 years, has liberated senior citizens in America so that they can live longer and live independently and have quality care through the later

years of their lives. Socialism? The government knows better? It is a program which people value, just like Social Security. I hope people won't brand that as socialism. Many did when it was created. These are programs that families count on, real families. These programs are not socialist; they are as American as can be.

The student loan program? I support what President Biden did. I might have done it a little differently. But the fact that he is tagging that student loan forgiveness to the wealth of the individual and family is the right thing to do. A \$10,000 student loan forgiven for those with individual income below \$125,000 a year—that is not unreasonable. That means that middle-class and lower income kids are going to have \$10,000 of their student loan forgiven. If they happen to be on Pell grants, which means they really were low-income families when they went to school, they get an additional \$10,000.

I hear all this lamenting and whining and crying of socialism. Where in the heck was this comment about socialism when we were giving out PPP loans all across America by the thousands?

It turns out that some of the harshest Republican critics of student loan forgiveness took out PPP loans. Do you know what that meant? They were forgiven. They didn't have to pay them back. It was OK when they were receiving the money, these conservative Republicans, but the idea of some student burdened with student loans having loan forgiveness is socialism. Not where I am standing.

Now, I also want to say something about fiscal responsibility. Do you know, after the reconciliation bill, after the Inflation Reduction Act, how much we will reduce the deficit this year? One-point-seven trillion dollars. How did we achieve this? Well, we achieved it by saying we are going to establish a minimum tax for certain corporations. Which ones? Corporations that showed an average of \$1 billion a year in net profit—average of \$1 billion in net profit a year—over a 3-year period of time will finally have to pay some Federal income tax. Is that too much to ask? Is that socialism? No. It is fairness.

In terms of the EV socialism, this is one where Senators ought to take care. When they give speeches on the floor about electric vehicles and electrification, they are basically betting that the future is going to be a lot different than I see it.

Why do we have so many electric vehicles? Well, it must be a Federal mandate. No, it wasn't. It was a decision by the private sector to build electric vehicles and make that the future of transportation in America.

Take a look at Ford Motor Company. We had one of the Ford family come and tell us this story. They made a decision that electric vehicles were part of their future, a big part of their future, and they made a marketing move

that I thought was genius. What were the first two vehicles they electrified and advertised? One was the Ford F-150 Lightning—the most popular pickup truck in America. A lot of White males drive those around. I am sure the Presiding Officer knows a couple. I drive one myself. They are going to electrify that vehicle, and they can't produce them fast enough to meet the demand.

So the people who many Republicans feel are the national allies on this subject are waiting in line to buy a Lightning, an F-150.

Then what was the other car they were going to electrify? A Mustang.

Well, I just want to tell you that certain age groups still dream about Mustangs. I can remember in 1964 when they put them on the market for the first time. They are going to electrify them. These cars are wildly popular, and they can't build them fast enough. So the Republicans who are betting that this is just a fad and it is going to go away are dead wrong on this. The private sector's production of automobiles is moving toward electric vehicles in a big way, and it is going to happen.

I would say the Republicans who believe it is pure socialism to have electric vehicles in our future should get out of the way because those electric vehicles are going to run all over you in no time at all.

Also, this idea of 87,000 IRS agents was invented by one Senator who came to the floor and made his calculation. It was like the death squads. They pick up a phrase, and they say this is the reality—87,000 IRS agents. That isn't even close to the truth.

What we know is this: The vast majority of Americans and American families pay their taxes legally and on time, and they should be respected for doing that. Who we are looking for are the people who don't do that—either don't pay their taxes or don't pay what they owe. Those people are not accepting their fair share of responsibility for this Nation's future.

The IRS has been starved in the past of basic things—computerization, for example, and agents to do audits. The President has made it clear that his target is never going to be working families. His target is those who are defying the law and defying the system of taxation. He believes they should pay their fair share, and I couldn't agree with him more.

In terms of this idea—of this socialist mantra—that we know better, that the government knows better, it is interesting when it comes to personal liberty and freedom. When you get into another area, like the reproductive freedom for women, exactly the opposite position is being taken by many people on the other side of the aisle.

Here is the point I want to make: We considered the reconciliation bill just a few weeks ago. We had 41 straight roll-calls. I know because I was on the floor for every one of them. At the end of the day, we passed the reconciliation bill,

the Inflation Reduction Act. What has happened since? Well, if you want to call it socialism, let me tell you what our socialist moves have done so far.

Tomorrow, President Joseph Biden is going to New Albany, OH, to join the CEO of Intel in breaking ground on a new multibillion-dollar semiconductor plant. It is one of the largest investments of its kind in American history, and it is going to create thousands of good-paying jobs for construction workers and engineers. Over the next decade, Intel plans to transform New Albany into one of the largest semiconductor manufacturing sites in the world. That is a big shift from the days when we shipped microchip production overseas to Asia.

Socialism? Is this Joe Biden's brand of socialism to open up a plant that finally is going to make computer chips, which are absolutely essential to the growth of our economy?

This investment in America's future was made possible by the CHIPS and Science Act, and I want to give credit where it is due. There were some Republicans who stepped forward and joined us in that effort. I wish there would have been more. I wish they all would have been with us in this effort. We believed—and the President backed us up—that if we were going to make this investment in semiconductor chips for our future, America was going to be there. I don't think that was inspired by socialism; that was inspired by common sense.

Yesterday, the New York Times reported that, in the weeks since the Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law—and that is the one with 41 roll-calls—companies throughout the country have unveiled “a series of big-ticket projects to kick-start our clean energy future.”

Socialism—a future that will be made in America by American workers?

I would like to remind everyone that we passed that law without a single Republican vote. Not one Republican Senator would join us in this effort.

Well, what has happened in the 4 weeks since we passed it?

Well, Toyota announced it is going to invest billions of dollars in manufacturing batteries for those electric and hybrid vehicles here in America. That has happened since we passed the bill.

One solar company, named First Solar, announced another billion-dollar investment to build a new facility in the Southeast.

Socialism?

Honda, LG, Samsung—all of them announced billions of dollars in investments to make components for electric vehicles right here in America.

In West Virginia, one company plans to build a nearly 500,000-square foot electric battery factory. And who is going to be working in it? Well, they are targeting laid-off coal miners. They want to put them to work first.

Socialism?

Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, these jobs aren't going overseas

anymore. They are staying right here in America.

New manufacturing projects are lighting up across the country, like a constellation of hope, marking a new era of renewal and renaissance for American families. I am glad to say that a big piece of it is taking place in the Midwest.

Earlier this week, in my home State of Illinois, the company T/CCI announced it is going to invest millions of dollars into retooling its facility in Decatur, IL, to make compressors for—hold onto your socialist hat—electric vehicles. Here they come again. And our Governor, Pritzker, announced that the State will work alongside Richland Community College to establish a climate center for innovation and research—an innovation hub.

Socialism?

This is a chance for the Decatur community to play its part in an electric vehicle revolution. Most importantly, once again, these investments are going to create good-paying jobs right here in America. For cities like Decatur, this is a lifeline. It wasn't that long ago that the city was struggling with population decline. Now it is a new story.

Under President Biden and a Democratic Congress, we are leaving no town behind. We are investing in the future of every community from Chicago to Decatur. In doing so, we are honoring America's history as the land of opportunity.

There is a statue in downtown Decatur. It is a site where it says that a 21-year-old, barefoot Abraham Lincoln delivered his very first political speech supporting the Whig platform. Just 2 years after that speech, Lincoln announced his first campaign for public office in my home county of Sangamon. He ran for the legislature.

So, as we celebrate the new funding for jobs and development coming to cities like Decatur, I find it interesting that one of the first policies Lincoln supported was known as internal improvements. He announced at his first run for office:

Time and experience have verified to a demonstration, the public utility of internal improvements. That the poorest and most thinly populated countries would be greatly benefitted by the opening of good roads, and in the clearing of navigable streams within their limits, is what no person will deny.

The challenges we face in America today are more sophisticated, but we also passed an infrastructure bill, the largest in the history of the United States.

Under the previous President, Donald Trump, he promised every week was going to be infrastructure week. Unfortunately, his response was so weak there was never an infrastructure week—never during his Presidency—and that is a fact. President Biden turned that around, and we passed an infrastructure bill that is putting America back to work, as it should. It is about time.

For decades, the Republicans have prayed to the altar of trickle-down economics. They call every initiative that we have on the Democratic side socialism: Social Security, socialism; Medicare, socialism; this idea of leading into the electric vehicle revolution, socialism; the government knows best.

Well, I will tell you they are wrong. What we see is leadership and leadership that is long overdue. We can't leave working families behind in this country. Four decades of cutting taxes for the rich on some wild theory that this was somehow going to lift all boats just turned out to be false.

I will tell you this: Roads and bridges crumbling beneath our feet, generations of good-paying jobs going overseas, the world's wealthiest trying to save a few bucks, and skyrocketing economic inequality is not American. Fixing it is not socialism; it is just fairness.

The last President spent 4 years declaring infrastructure week but had nothing to show for it. In less than 2 years, President Biden and the Democrats have delivered on their promise of rebuilding America and putting American workers back to work. We have had the largest growth and job creation—ever in the history of the United States—in the last year and a half under President Biden, and 660,000 of those jobs are manufacturing jobs—real jobs with a good paycheck. We are investing in the interest of industries of the future. More importantly, we are investing in American families.

The policies we have enacted during this Congress are going to help move America forward. Together, they represent a new vision for America's future: roads and bridges, microchips, wind turbines, deep research into advanced technologies like quantum computing. What does it mean for the American people? Take a look at the auto industry. Today, the industry, which with Barack Obama as President was saved despite Republican opposition, is an industry in which major manufacturers are betting big on its electric future.

Members of the Republican Senate caucus may not see electric vehicles in the future, but they have closed their eyes if they are in that position.

With the infrastructure package, we are going to create good, good jobs—union jobs—of fixing and building our roads and installing charging stations all across America.

With the CHIPS and Science Act, we are shoring up the domestic supply of semiconductors so we can assemble the next generation of electric vehicles in American factories. That chips bill also authorized billions of dollars in funding for scientific research—laboratories like Argonne and Fermilab. This research even has the potential to unlock new discoveries in battery technology.

Now, with the Inflation Reduction Act, we are making life more affordable for working families. That is not

just to bring down costs of prescription drugs and energy bills; it will help lower the costs of American-made electric vehicles so more families can buy one.

This is the Democratic platform in action: building products and components we depend on here at home, pioneering technology breakthroughs to change the world, and leveling the economy so that every family has a fighting chance. Thanks to the policies we have passed so far under the Biden administration, we are rolling.

I do want to tell you this for the record: On my way to catch the plane at the airport in St. Louis earlier this week, I saw gasoline for sale at \$3.46 a gallon. That is still high, but it is a heck of a lot better than the \$5-plus we were paying just a few weeks ago. Is that socialism? I think it is the government at work, and this President has done everything he can to bring down the cost of living that families face.

It is still a challenge. We haven't conquered it, but we are moving in the right direction, and this economy is moving in the right direction. I wish we could have had some Republican support for that effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I want to go into some comments about some things that I heard from Oklahomans in August—in, thankfully, a deep-breath moment when we were not in session here for a little while. But I first need to just make a couple of quick comments for folks who might have just heard my colleague before, from Illinois, saying that Republicans believe that electric vehicles are socialism if you promote electric vehicles and that we oppose electric vehicles and electrification. Actually, I just have to make a quick comment about that.

I don't hear that Republicans are in opposition to electric vehicles. I hear Republicans in opposition to handing companies billions and billions of dollars of taxpayer money and saying: If you will produce electric vehicles, then we are going to give you these billions of dollars to be able to do it.

I also hear Republicans, like myself, in opposition and saying: 85 percent of the world's lithium, which runs these electric vehicles, comes from China. So, until we can actually get our own supply of energy for lithium, we shouldn't be running toward electric vehicles, because if you run toward electric vehicles and then you are dependent on communist China for your fuel, that is a bad idea.

I also hear Republicans saying: Our infrastructure is not ready for this. This is not some fairytale. Today, in California, they are telling people to turn up their thermostats because they don't have enough electricity, and don't charge your electric vehicles.

So what I hear is a little bit of common sense on our side of the aisle to

say: We don't have a problem with electric vehicles. People should be able to choose to drive whatever vehicle they want to be able to drive and that the consumer will actually purchase. But when you hand companies billions of dollars and say that you only get this money "if" and if you push people to use a fuel that is dominantly coming from a communist nation and we don't have the infrastructure to actually support it but say you need to get it anyway, we think that is a challenge.

The market is going to drive this. People will make choices, and the market will be able to keep up. But when government arbitrarily pushes that forward faster, that causes a problem in our economy, and we have seen it already.

As I traveled around the State, our State, like several other States, goes back to school early. It is always funny to me when I return after Labor Day and people are talking about their kids are going to school this week. I always smile and say: Our kids returned to school 3 weeks ago, actually.

August is a great time to be able to see families getting organized, people heading back to school, talking to teachers and superintendents and talking about their hope and prayer for a normal school year, where there aren't mask mandates and all the things coming down on them.

It is time for me to actually, some evenings, be able to stand out in the yard and be able to talk to my neighbors. It is great to just be able to visit and catch up, to be able to chat with someone in my Sunday school class and to be able to hold their young child and to be able to look in the face of a new baby.

I had the opportunity to be able to be home and to be able to stand in a funeral home with a law enforcement officer who was murdered in the line of duty.

It was an opportunity to be able to talk to some of our electric cooperatives that are getting power to our rural areas and making such a difference.

It was an opportunity to stand and pray with a cancer survivor in Guymon who has had a really—the past couple of years, it has been tough.

It was an opportunity to be able to visit with an aerospace company in Oklahoma—in fact, several that are doing the technology and the innovation that are making quite a difference in both our national security and in our own aerospace safety and to visit with small business owners who are making things work in a very tough economy based on their work, not based on what is happening in Washington, DC—based on their work.

August is an opportunity to go visit the stockyards and feedlots and get a chance to be able to talk to folks who are, every day, making our food supply work. It is an opportunity to be able to visit with big companies based in Oklahoma that have large facilities like

Amazon and Macy's—major companies that are out there that are doing business across our State and, quite frankly, to be able to interact with companies that are just as large that are also coming toward my great State of Oklahoma because it is a great place to be able to do business.

There were individuals whom I got a chance to be able to visit with in the fire training center, many of them volunteers who come to this fire training center because they want to be able to learn better about how to be able to fight fire because this is literally neighbors taking care of neighbors. I hear so much conversation in Washington, DC, about how Washington, DC, is solving all the problems in the country. But when I meet with volunteer firefighters, they know full well it is everybody taking care of everybody's neighbors, doing what they can to be able to help each other.

I had the opportunity to both sit in church and watch 25 people get baptized on one Sunday and see life change literally happening before my eyes.

I also had the opportunity to be able to visit with folks in nursing homes and visit with their staff who are really struggling under some of the mandates that are on them still. I have to tell you, for many of the families who are living with nursing homes and are dealing with CMS right now and some of the mandates that are still on them, it seems like life is returning to normal for many places, but the mandates are still on prisons, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and Head Start facilities. For those kids and for those seniors, it is tough, and they are looking for relief from DC.

I had the opportunity to be able to go through No Man's Land Beef Jerky, some of the best beef jerky in the country. You ought to try it sometime for folks who haven't. You walk through No Man's Land Beef Jerky, and there is a lot of meat there, let me just tell you, as they are hand-trimming each section and dehydrating and preparing it for customers all over the country—quite frankly, many places around the world.

I was able to visit VA centers, talk with their staff, talk with veterans who are there getting care, able to go to our military bases and able to talk with leadership there about what do they need because they work every day to be able to protect our Nation's future. I was able to visit our inland water ports. Yes, there are ports in Oklahoma. For those of you all who are not tracking geography, Oklahoma has the northernmost inland ports in the country, and it is a vital link to the Midwest, getting fertilizer and getting wheat out, taking care of heavy steel and supplies. They are a vital part of our technology and of our transportation.

There are too many places to be able to name, but I do have to be able to call out some amazing folks who are in New Leaf. New Leaf is a group of peo-

ple who have dedicated their lives to helping the developmentally disabled. There are hundreds of people who serve there, serving hundreds of people. These are developmentally disabled adults who have hopes and aspirations. They want to work. They have dreams and goals for their life as well. They want to get married; they want to engage; and they want to have friends. They are a group of people who have wrapped around these families and are blessing them in ways that most folks would never know. It is neighbors helping neighbors.

As I traveled around the State, literally from Guymon all the way across to the east of my State—as I traveled across the State, I heard the same comment over and over and over again: When is inflation going to come down? When is the cost of living going to get better?

From every small business that I talked to, they would talk about supply chain issues and the costs and the contracts and the prices that they are selling things for and the prices that they are getting things for and the challenges they face.

NFIB works with a lot of small businesses around the country. They do an optimism index every year. Thirty-seven percent of small business owners now report their single biggest issue as a small business owner is inflation.

I got into a lot of conversations with a lot of folks, as probably many people in this room did. But I can't even begin to tell you the number of conversations I got into that, within minutes, the conversation turned to the price of eggs, to say: Wow, have you bought eggs yet? They seem to go up every single week.

If it feels that way for folks, I can tell you it actually is that way for folks. The data continues to be able to show that. Studies show, in Oklahoma, relative to January of 2021, Oklahomans are paying \$593 more a month right now than they were just in January 2021. That equals out to \$7,115 more a year that each family is paying this year than they were 2 years ago—\$7,115. This is a real effect on families.

While all of us are grateful that the price of gas seems to be coming down little by little—everyone is celebrating that gas prices are only \$3.50 now—we understand that just a year and a half ago, gas prices were a dollar and a half less than what they are now.

The single biggest effect on our economy right now—single biggest effect—is the price of gasoline and the price of energy. As energy prices rise, and they continue to stay high, it continues to drive the cost of every other product because you have got to move products to actually be sold or to be manufactured.

Gasoline right now, this July, is 44 percent higher than it was last July—44 percent. And while it has come down, we forget how fast and how high it rose. People seem to be relieved now that it is only three and a half bucks,

knowing that that is 44 percent higher than it was a single year ago.

The cost of breakfast cereal is 16 percent higher than it was a year ago. The cost of chicken is 18 percent higher than it was just a year ago. The cost of milk is 16 percent higher than what it was a year ago. The cost of coffee is 20 percent higher than what it was a year ago. The cost of butter is 22 percent higher than what it was a year ago. Baby food is 15 percent higher than what it was a year ago. And just household cleaning products, it is 11 percent higher than what it was a year ago.

For many people who hear this outside of this room, they would say: Yes, all those things are true. They are obvious. But I have yet to run into a family, as I traveled around my State and engaged with so many great Oklahomans—I didn't hear a single one say: I am so grateful that we are going to have more IRS audits in the next couple of years because that is going to bring down inflation. I didn't have one. I didn't have anyone say: I am so glad there are going to be additional subsidies for electric vehicles because that is going to bring down the cost of eggs.

There is a real concern here. People are worried because they don't know what happens next.

For retirees, the latest study that came out, \$3.4 trillion—\$3.4 trillion—has been lost from IRAs in the past year—\$3.4 trillion. So the mix that we have right now are individuals who are worried about just paying for the next thing, when the cost of living for them is \$7,000 more this year than it was last year, just trying to be able to keep up. And the challenge for retirees, watching the value of their retirement go down, as many who are on a fixed income also realize, the costs have gone up dramatically. It is real, and people do feel it.

While in Oklahoma, I interacted with lots of folks who are neighbors taking care of neighbors. There is a very real concern about Washington, DC, and what they will do to them rather than for them, and people are worried about it.

I would say we, as leaders, have a responsibility to be able to set a direction to be able to take care of other people's money—that is the tax dollars that are there; that is other people's money—to be able to manage the debt of this Nation that has accelerated dramatically in the past several years, much of it due to COVID, much of it not. We have some responsibilities to take care of. I hope everyone had the opportunity to be able to listen to people in their own States and to be able to hear what I was able to hear in August.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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



The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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. 1033.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lara E. Montecalvo, of Rhode Island, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First 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:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 1033, Lara E. Montecalvo, of Rhode Island, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Tammy Baldwin, Tina Smith, Jeanne Shaheen, Chris Van Hollen, Elizabeth Warren, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tim Kaine, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher Murphy, Maria Cantwell, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Gary C. Peters, Tammy Duckworth.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, September 8, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote scheduled for 1:45 begin immediately.

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

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 986, Salvador Mendoza, Jr., of Washington, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Ben Ray Lujan, Jack Reed, Jacky Rosen, Tina Smith, Angus S. King, Jr., Patrick J. Leahy, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Christopher A. Coons, Alex Padilla, Chris Van Hollen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Elizabeth Warren, Jeff Merkley, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tim Kaine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Salvador Mendoza, Jr., of Washington, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 48, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 330 Ex.]

#### YEAS—48

Baldwin	Graham	Padilla
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	Kelly	Sinema
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Lujan	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Warner
Duckworth	Markey	Warnock
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden

#### NAYS—43

Barrasso	Hagerty	Romney
Blackburn	Hawley	Rounds
Blunt	Hoeven	Rubio
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Braun	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Shelby
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Cramer	Lummis	Toomey
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Paul	
Grassley	Risch	

#### NOT VOTING—9

Burr	Murkowski	Portman
Crapo	Osoff	Rosen
Menendez	Peters	Scott (SC)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). On this vote, the yeas are 48, the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### REMEMBERING QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, we take a solemn and somber pause. A few minutes ago, we learned the sad news of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the longest reigning Monarch in British history. I join with Leader MCCONNELL, with my Senate colleagues, and with all Americans to offer deepest sympathies and prayers to the royal family and to the people of the United Kingdom.

I never had the honor of meeting Her Majesty the Queen myself, but I admired much about her until the very end. It is hard to fathom that today we have to say goodbye because, after all, most Americans—to say nothing of the British people—have never lived in a world without Her Majesty the Queen.

It is a marvel to think that in the same year of Her Majesty's coronation, Harry Truman was in the White House. The world was still coming out of the shadow of the Second World War, entering a bold, uncertain, uncharted future.

In her time, she came to know 15 different Prime Ministers, 14 U.S. Presidents, traveled to well over 100 countries, and made over 200 official state visits. She was the first British Monarch ever to address a joint session of Congress. And thanks to her, the special relationship between the United States and the UK gained even more special significance.

Her reign saw the dawn of the atomic age, the age of the internet, the fall of the Soviet Union, an unprecedented global pandemic. She didn't just witness the great turns of history; she helped shape them over the seven decades—seven decades—of her reign. And every step of the way, she was precisely the kind of leader the moment demanded.

In times of hardship, she was both strong and comforting. In times of joy, she was gracious and dignified. She was a rock, the living embodiment of the virtues that lie at the core of the nation she so proudly led. I dare say we will never see a leader quite like her for as long as we live.

So, today, we join the people of the UK and the royal family in mourning the loss of Her Majesty the Queen. May she rest in peace.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Mendoza nomination be considered expired; that the Senate