

## BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the 117th Congress is drawing to a close, and there is a lot we need to do before the end of the year when the 117th Congress is no more.

At the top of that list, of course, are must-pass bills. In the next couple of weeks, the Senate is expected to pass a short-term funding bill to avert a government shutdown. Later this year, we will either have to pass another short-term extension or a full government funding package, otherwise known around here as an omnibus.

On top of that, Congress needs to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, which it has done 61 years in a row. The majority leader has, so far, declined to put that bill on the floor. This is a piece of legislation that provides our men and women in uniform the training they need and the equipment they need to fight and win America's wars and, hopefully, to prevent a war. It also supports our military families, and with an all-volunteer military like we have, it is critical that Congress step up and not only provide for those who wear the uniform but for those who also serve as members of that military member's family.

Even though these major pieces of legislation garner most of the attention, there are countless other bills that need to reach the President's desk before the end of this Congress. As the Presiding Officer knows, if a bill passes one Chamber but doesn't pass both and isn't signed into law, it literally expires. Many of these bills pass the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support but continue to collect dust on the House calendar.

One of those bills is the Jenna Quinn Law, which I have spoken about many times here on the Senate floor.

This legislation carries the name of a brave young woman from Texas who was a survivor of child sexual assault. Jenna, as a result of her own terrible experience, has made it her mission to end the cycle of abuse that harms children and communities across the country. Her work is having a big impact. She was the inspiration behind the 2009 Texas law that requires training for teachers, caregivers, and other adults who work with children on how to prevent, recognize, and report child sexual abuse. Since then, a number of other States have passed similar laws, but this training lacks a source of funding in many instances, and that is where the Jenna Quinn Law comes into play.

I introduced this bill with Senator HASSAN of New Hampshire to finally back those training sessions with Federal funding through grants from the Department of Health and Human Services. We initially introduced the bill last Congress, and it passed the Senate unanimously. Unfortunately, it became a political hostage and was used to try to exert leverage to advance a partisan bill that stood no chance of passage. So here we are, 2 years later, and the bill is, once again,

stuck in House purgatory. It has now passed the Senate twice—both times with unanimous support—but for some inexplicable reason, the House refuses to even hold a vote.

This is an issue that is way too important for politics. The children who suffer as a result of child abuse and neglect continue to suffer. As for the caregivers who might be able, as a result of the training they receive, to identify a child who is suffering from the abuse, that training is not occurring as a result of the intransigence of the House of Representatives.

So I would implore of Speaker PELOSI, Leader HOYER, and other Democratic leaders in the House who control the majority to please pass this critical legislation.

Here is another great example of a bill that passed the Senate but which is stuck in the House.

Last year, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill I introduced with Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island, called the Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Act, to help incarcerated individuals who are struggling with drug abuse.

There is a well-established link between drug abuse and crime. In order for these individuals who have the requisite desire to try to turn their lives around to have the best shot at living healthy and productive lives, they need to break the cycle of addiction. The Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Act provides incarcerated individuals with access to treatment for their substance use disorders. This treatment is coupled with programs to prepare these men and women to reenter society, and it provides them with community-based treatment once they are released.

We learned, from experience in Texas, that it is not enough just to give people who commit nonviolent crimes an opportunity to improve themselves while they are in prison. There also needs to be follow-on services to support them, particularly if they are trying to recover from their addictions.

Our bill updates the program and expands access to treatment in jails and prisons around the country so we can reduce recidivism and build safer and healthier communities. More than two dozen organizations have endorsed this bill, including law enforcement, criminal justice, and behavioral health groups. It passed the Senate with unanimous support last year, but for some unknown reason, it still is lingering on the House calendar.

This is a commonsense, nonpolitical bill that will help get folks the critical assistance they need in order to break the cycle of addiction and to live healthier, productive lives. So why won't the House pass a bill that will help fund law enforcement and bolster our fight against drug abuse? Well, we are not receiving any sort of answers.

The third bill I would like to mention is one I introduced with Senator

PADILLA, the Senator from California, to support infrastructure projects and disaster relief across the country.

Last year, State and local governments received huge sums of money for COVID-19 relief, but as more people have gotten vaccinated and we have learned, somehow, to live with this virus, many of these governments at the State and local levels have found themselves with huge amounts of cash that they can't use for the agreed-upon purpose and that they don't need any more for that purpose.

So the idea behind the bill is pretty simple: Give the State and local leaders the flexibility they need to invest in the most critical projects in their communities. In some places, that may mean pandemic relief-related expenses still, eliminating hospital staffing shortages, and supporting more vaccinations. But in places where the need is simply not there, our bill gives these leaders the option to invest in things that are actually needed and that will have a lasting impact. That includes infrastructure projects like constructing bridges, extending railways, modernizing ports, and expanding access to broadband. It also includes disaster relief, which is a major need in many States across the country.

Both Texas and Kentucky, for example, have experienced devastating flooding in the last couple of months. Jackson, MS, is in the midst of a water crisis that has dragged on for weeks, with no end in sight. The Speaker's home State of California continues to battle destructive wildfires.

If this bill becomes law—again, it passed the Senate 100 to 0—State and local leaders will be able to put a portion of the COVID-19 relief dollars toward disaster relief. This is voluntary on their part. There is no requirement that they do so, but if they need it and they don't need it for COVID-19 purposes, then, we ought to give them the authority to use it. Again, these funds are already appropriated. So there is no worry about an inflationary appropriation of additional funds. Local leaders know their communities best, and they should be able to use this funding in a way that makes the most sense for them.

Senator PADILLA and I worked with our Senate colleagues and the White House to craft language that everyone could live with. We built broad bipartisan support for the bill, and it passed the Senate, as I said, 100 to 0. Once again, 8 months later, the House has done nothing. Speaker PELOSI, so far, has declined to let this bill pass even though it would support disaster relief in her own State and even though it passed by huge bipartisan majorities.

Those are just three of the bills that are stuck in the House that have passed the Senate.

The Senate has unanimously advanced legislation to support programs for those experiencing mental health crises, to provide tax relief to survivors of human trafficking, to equip law enforcement officials with the tools they

need to help people in mental health crises, to increase cross-border trade with Canada and Mexico, and to beef up security for cargo at ports of entry. There are bills to cut redtape, to increase payments to the child support program, and to ensure noncustodial parents have the opportunity to spend more time with their children.

Our colleagues have even refused to pass a bill naming the post office in Arlington, TX, after their late colleague and my friend Congressman Ron Wright. There is no particular reason for it. They just haven't done it, with no explanation.

All of these bills I have named are just a handful of the ones I have introduced that are waiting in House purgatory. Add in the long list of bills led by our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and you have got a major legislative pileup in the House.

Unlike the Senate, the House has not been in continuous session, and the House is only scheduled to be in for 6 more weeks this year. Unless Speaker PELOSI allows movement on these commonsense bipartisan bills, we are going to have to start all over again come January. It is time to get these bills moving.

I know our colleagues in the House don't necessarily embrace all the legislation that is passed by the Senate, but when commonsense legislation passes with unanimity or broad bipartisan support, there just doesn't seem to be any excuse for not acting.

These aren't controversial bills. We are talking about preventing child sexual abuse, breaking the cycle of drug abuse, strengthening disaster relief, supporting people in crisis, and so much more.

As I said, these bills are just one step away from heading to the President's desk for his signature. So I implore Speaker PELOSI to please take up these Senate-passed bills and allow the House to vote on them, pass them, and send them to the President for his signature.

I yield the floor.

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.

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

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

#### NOMINATION OF DAVID P. PEKOSKE

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to ask my colleagues to vote on the nomination of Admiral David Pecoske to serve a second term as Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration.

We recently commemorated the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and the 3,000 lives lost here in the United States when tragically the Pentagon was struck, downtown Manhattan, and

Shanksville, PA. In response to that, Congress created the TSA—Transportation Security Administration—to strengthen the Nation's security and our transportation system.

And every day that TSA works the frontlines to protect the traveling public, it is working to also prevent future attacks. It is safeguarding our Nation's infrastructure and certainly working every day to make sure that the flying public continues to move through a successful process.

TSA's mission lies in the commitment of professionals and highly skilled individuals. Admiral Pecoske's confirmation and continued leadership of this team will enable the TSA to further its ongoing and important mission.

Over the past two decades, the TSA has had to deal with many challenges: facing the continued threats of concealing weapons in shoes and underwear and even in soft drinks. And in 2010, the TSA began detecting explosives in electronics and countering attacks on the public side of airports.

Today, the landscape is even more sophisticated with state and nonstate actors and cyber attacks. Unique challenges posed to us during the COVID pandemic have made these challenges to the aviation security landscape even greater.

We know that we need to have continued experienced leadership. And Admirable Pecoske is well qualified for this position. He will continue to make transportation security and its modernization the Nation's No. 1 priority as it relates to the sector.

Each day, at over 430 airports across the country, TSA screens over 2 million passengers and 1.4 million checked bags for explosives and other dangerous items. This helps ensure the security for over 24,000 domestic flights and nearly 3,300 outbound international flights per day.

Security demands for the Agency are returning and every day are continuing to grow. Over the Labor Day weekend, TSA screened nearly 11 million people, or 3 percent more, over the corresponding period in 2019. In fact, TSA screened more people on 4 of the 5 days, from September 1 to 5, marking the first sustained period of checkpoint throughput during a holiday weekend above prepandemic levels.

So the traveling public is back, and, obviously, we need dedicated TSA officers and individuals to continue to work. We are not saying that there aren't improvements to that process—there certainly are—but TSA has been charged with a critical, obviously, responsibility to make sure that we continue to work to ensure the safety of our air transportation system.

Last year's ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline threatened nearly 50 percent of the east coast's fuel supply. So we must harden all of our targets and make sure the TSA has leadership to make sure that they, too, are helping us address these emerging threats.

Admiral Pecoske's experience in leading TSA in these critical missions deserves support for renomination to this position again.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### INFLATION

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the harmful economic consequences Americans are seeing from President Biden's reckless tax-and-spend agenda. Earlier this week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the latest Consumer Price Index figures for the month of August, showing that inflation increased 8.3 percent compared to August 2021. Inflation has now exceeded 8 percent for 6 straight months. This persistent high inflation is causing price increases for American families at the grocery store, the gas pump, and for basic housing needs, leaving many Americans struggling to make ends meet.

Rather than getting government out of the way, increasing domestic energy production, securing our border, and taking meaningful action to reduce inflation, the Biden administration is instead doubling down on its failed economic policies. Gas prices are \$1.34 per gallon higher than when President Biden took office, and diesel fuel prices are even higher, at nearly \$2.40 per gallon more than January 2021. A gallon of diesel now costs more than \$5 a gallon.

Yet, last month, as followup to the massive \$2 trillion spending package from March 2021 that fueled the inflationary fire we are now dealing with, Democrats jammed through another package on a party-line vote, a tax-and-spend bill that imposes new energy taxes and Green New Deal-style subsidies that will only worsen our energy crisis and weaken our Nation's economic and national security.

Ironically, the so-called Inflation Reduction Act does nothing to reduce inflation. Analysis by economists at Penn Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, the Federal Reserve, Moody's Analytics, the Congressional Budget Office, and others, all agree that this bill will do nothing to help reduce inflation.

Meanwhile, the cost of food at the grocery store has increased 13.5 percent over the last 12 months—the largest 12-month increase since March 1979. Yet the Biden administration has done nothing to help alleviate these inflationary price increases on Americans.

This week, we neared the brink of another inflationary supply chain disaster as railroad unions threatened to go on strike. Obviously, shutting down freight rail movement throughout the country would be a huge disruption to