

My colleague is well aware that this program that he is talking about is actively being debated, and there are concerns on both sides of the aisle. Just one of the many issues being discussed in the program is the program's lack of work requirements and insufficient means testing. It would be irresponsible to cut those discussions short and pass a measure that does not have the unanimous support of the Senate tonight. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, just very briefly, I would like to note that this has been the second time in about 6 weeks when I have tried to get the urgently needed child tax credit extended for another year here on the floor of the U.S. Senate—the second time.

We are hearing all over this country about families who are really having trouble making ends meet right now and how valuable to them the child tax credit would be. And twice in the last 6 weeks, here on the floor of the U.S. Senate, I have tried to get the child tax credit extended for 1 year. And I would just like to note that twice—in the last 6 weeks, Republicans have objected to the idea of extending the child tax credit for 1 year.

I don't think that is in the interest of American families and American kids. We will continue this debate.

And with that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for up to 15 minutes, Senator MARSHALL for up to 5 minutes, and Senator MENENDEZ for up to 5 minutes before the scheduled rollcall votes.

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

INFLATION

Mr. KENNEDY. I want to speak on two topics.

First, on inflation, President Biden's economic policies, unfortunately, have water-boarded the budgets of most Americans and most Louisianians. We see the official statistics, and the statistics are that inflation is going up 7 percent. I understand that is what the experts say, but most Americans and most Louisianians know that inflation is much worse, much worse.

I am sure that has been the experience of the good people of Georgia as well. I mean, I did some calculations before I came down today. From December of 2020 to December of 2021, the most recent numbers we have, gasoline is up 49.6 percent.

In my State, in Louisiana, it costs Louisianians \$27 more than it did last year to fill up the tank of a Chevy truck. That is every time they fill up the tank.

Used car and truck prices have increased by 37.3 percent. In New Orleans, for example, in my State, used car prices were up 38.2 percent through last September.

We all have to eat. Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, up 12.5 percent.

New vehicles, if you can find one, up 11.8 percent.

Household furnishings and furniture, up 7.4 percent. Electricity, up 6.3 percent and headed higher. Clothes, 5.8 percent. Fruits and vegetables, 5 percent. Cereals and bakery products, 4.8 percent. And I could keep going.

The truth is that most Americans are having to spend, on average, about \$3,500 more per year because of President Biden's inflation.

Now, to some people, that may not sound like much, that is a lot of money for people in my State. An extra \$3,500 out of the budget of most working Americans is a lot.

You know, I wish it weren't so, but this inflation has been caused by the Biden administration's economic policies. Inflation is not complicated. It is too much money chasing too few goods.

President Biden's coronavirus bill was the tipping point. That is clear. Now, we all voted for a number of coronavirus bills, but the last coronavirus bill was way too expensive. It was unnecessary, and it wasn't a coronavirus bill.

The President said: Oh, we have got an emergency. We have got an emergency.

And then you read the bill and find out that the bill has got nothing to do with the coronavirus and the money is going to be spent over like a 10-year period. That is not an emergency.

The current inflation has characteristics—I have not seen this—of both cost-push and demand-pull inflation, and it can be traced directly to the economic policies of the Biden administration.

And the Biden administration keeps pushing. He keeps trying to stuff more diapers down the toilet. The Biden administration wants to throw another \$5 trillion—not billion, not million, but trillion—of gasoline on the fire in the Build Back Better bill. And if we pass that, there will be another trillion dollars.

I mean, this administration spends money like it was gully dirt. I have never seen anything like it.

And then we have inflation. We have all this liquidity, which leads to inflation, and the Biden administration will not accept responsibility.

President Biden has blamed inflation—he blamed it first on COVID. Now, I will admit COVID is spreading, but I don't see people walking around coughing inflation on each other. Then he blamed it—I think he blamed it on China for a while. Then President Biden blamed it on greedy corporations. I expect next he will say that inflation originated in a bat.

But the truth of the matter is, it is not complicated. It originated with his spending policies, and it is just killing my people. It is killing them.

And, as you know, we have a lot going on here in Washington and a lot of issues in front of us that are impor-

tant—Ukraine, for example. The President shortly is going to nominate a new member to our U.S. Supreme Court. We have a multitude of bills that we are considering, and all of those are important.

But inflation is important too, and it is hurting the American people, and it is hurting the least among us the most. Yes, we are seeing inflation in terms of services, but we are seeing inflation more in terms of goods, and low-income Americans, as you well know, spend proportionately more of their income on goods than they do on services.

The President's policies, I regret to have to say, have administered a sucking chest wound on the budgets of the people in my State and the people of America, and it has got to stop.

REMEMBERING WILLIAM CLIFFORD SMITH

Mr. President, let me say one more thing, if I could. I lost a good friend in Louisiana, and Louisiana lost a good friend last week: Mr. Clifford Smith. Clifford happened to be a civil engineer, but he was so much more. Clifford was born in New Orleans, but he lived his entire life in Terrebonne Parish. Terrebonne Parish in my State is one of the southernmost parishes. It has been experiencing, for a variety of reasons, wetlands loss for decades after decades.

We started experiencing wetlands loss as soon as we levied the Mississippi River. Now, I am not saying we shouldn't have levied it, because it has obviously created a lot of commerce for America and Louisiana. But the river could no longer overflow and deposit the sediment, and the sediment has not been replenished, and the current sediment has sunk. And when your land sinks and the ocean rises, then you are going to have wetlands loss.

Clifford Smith was one of the first Louisianians, if not the first, to talk about the need for coastal restoration in my State. Clifford Smith, throughout his career at T. Baker Smith, the name of his company, created jobs for thousands of the people in my State.

He was on every board imaginable. When his church burned down in Houma, Clifford said: I will be responsible for raising the money and can rebuild the church.

It took him 5 years, and he did it. And Houma is not—it is a wonderful place, but it is not a wealthy place. But Clifford did it. He had a lot of help, but Clifford was the quarterback.

He was whip smart, and he was visionary. He was wise. He was very charming.

I have known Clifford 30-plus years. I remember when I first decided to run for office, I called Clifford and said: Will you support me? Because everybody knew Clifford Smith. Everybody respected Clifford Smith. Everybody admired Clifford Smith. And I knew if I had his support in his area of my State, it would be critical.

And he said: Yeah, Kennedy. I will support you.

And I said: Well, Clifford, you know the question that is coming next. I can't run a campaign without financial resources. Will you give me money?

He said: No.

I was shocked. This is my friend.

He said: I will not give you money.

He said: But I will tell you what I will do, Kennedy. I will—since you have decided to run for office, I will buy you a gift certificate for a psychiatrist.

Well, that was Clifford—what a poignant statement. Of course, he ended up supporting me financially, but he went on to give me advice and say: Are you sure you want to do this? Politics is a rough business.

I miss Clifford. I am going to miss him. He has a wonderful family, wonderful kids, wonderful grandkids, wonderful great-grandkids. Jo-Anne, his wife, is just a lovely person. And I know that they will continue to spread the truths that were so important to Clifford Smith.

I went down to the funeral home Monday to say goodbye, but I wanted to say goodbye on the floor of the U.S. Senate and recognize my friend and a Louisiana favorite son, William Clifford Smith.

We celebrate his life, but his loss Louisiana weeps.

I yield the floor to my good friend from Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, it was just a couple weeks ago that President Biden asked the Nation—he asked Republicans: What are Republicans for?

I want to make it clear tonight that I am for border security. I am for law and order.

I have been to the border three times in the past 4 to 5 years, and what I saw there was a crisis. And if I could, I just want to paint just for a minute what that crisis looks like.

Having been overseas doing medical mission work, I think I know a humanitarian, a health crisis when I see it, and this was a humanitarian crisis, a health crisis—thousands of people sleeping underneath a bridge. They just traveled across Mexico for days, maybe weeks, maybe months.

And as a physician, I looked out there, and what did I see? I saw people who were dehydrated, malnourishment, dehydration from diarrhea, from dysentery, scabies, tuberculosis.

The Border Patrol was overwhelmed. The doctors were overwhelmed, the nurses, the dentists—everybody was overwhelmed. That is what I would call a humanitarian crisis.

One of the biggest humanitarian crises going on, though, is human trafficking. As an obstetrician/gynecologist in Kansas, believe it or not, we would have to take care of young women who had been abused from human trafficking. Maybe they had chlamydia, maybe they were having a miscarriage, but I am just shocked at

the amount of human trafficking going on across the border.

In fiscal year 2021, 145,000 unaccompanied minors were apprehended at the southern border. And I want to emphasize, this is young girls and young boys that are being abused and sold into sex slavery.

Of that 145,000, about a third of the minors that were released to a sponsor we lost contact with. Are we turning children over to human trafficking? I think that is what we are all concerned about.

So I think certainly there is indeed a humanitarian crisis, a health crisis there.

Just to talk a little bit more about the border—and we will put that up here and renegotiate the microphone.

Look at the statistics from last year alone. Two million people were apprehended at the border last year—2 million people. Do you realize that there are 14 States in this country with less than 2 million people?

And beyond that, as I spoke with the Border Patrol there, they told me for every person they apprehend that two got across the lines, so probably an additional 4 million people came across, a total of 6 million. There are 30 States in our country with a population of 6 million people.

Furthermore, what we are doing is making the cartel rich. Again, what I was told by Texas Rangers and Border Patrol officers is the cartel is making \$3,000 to \$9,000 per person. And, of course, if it was some person maybe from the Middle East, a little bit harder to get across the border, they were getting \$20 to \$30,000 a person as well.

I haven't talked yet about the national security crisis. I think we have all seen the films and the reports of single adult males being flown on nighttime flights across the Nation being released, migrants using arrest warrants as forms of identification. I think, you know, America is not stupid. We see what is going on.

I want to talk about fentanyl for a second. So probably 90, 95 percent of the fentanyl coming into this country is made in China, coming across our southern border.

An average month of fentanyl being seized at the border was over 800 pounds. That is almost a half a ton of fentanyl. That would kill 200 million people. Now, this is a drug that if a drug dog sniffs it, it kills them. It makes them stop breathing. Most normal people, if they just had a small, small amount in it, it would make them stop breathing.

This is the national security crisis going on—more young people dying from fentanyl overdose than from COVID—and that is just part of the national security crisis.

You know, I kind of started off this discussion saying what I am for; that I am for border security. I want to tell you how we can fix the problems there, and these are solutions every American knows.

DHS, several years ago, came up with a \$25 billion budget to control the border. I couldn't think of a better way to invest \$25 billion of American dollars—to build a wall where it needs to be built, to finish the wall, to put the gates in that are sitting there rusting away. We could start with that.

We, of course, need more boots on the ground, more technology, more drug dogs—but \$25 billion would significantly improve the situation on the southern border.

Next, the administration can fully and in good faith enforce the "Remain in Mexico" policy and then catch-and-release practices.

And, finally, this, of course: work with Mexico. Let's go back and ask Mexico to help us to get the control, the security on the border; ask them to work on their southern border, which is much easier to control and, of course, work with our Border Patrol on our common border.

This is a crisis that America sees. Every townhall I do, someone is going to bring it up. Every one of them, without any question, someone is going to ask me—they say: Why does President Biden want this crisis?

I say: Well, what do you mean, he wants it?

They say: Well, obviously, he wants this crisis because it would still—it would be so easy to fix.

So if we see the problem, we know the solution—that would be my question for President Biden. Do you have the will to fix this crisis?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to voice my strong support for four highly qualified nominees whom we are soon to vote on: Dr. Amy Gutmann to be the U.S. Ambassador to Germany; Mr. Scott Nathan to be the Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation; Ms. Lisa Carty to be the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council; and Ms. Chantale Wong to be the U.S. Director of the Asian Development Bank.

They are all highly qualified. I will speak for a minute or two on Dr. Gutmann and Mr. Nathan, in particular.

Our partnership with European allies is evermore critical as we attempt to deter further Russian escalation and aggressive behavior toward Ukraine. Germany is key to this effort—absolutely critical to the work we need to do to prevent Vladimir Putin from furthering his aims to reclaim a sphere of influence and destabilize Europe.

So while it was beyond irresponsible for some of our Republican colleagues to bottle up Dr. Gutmann's nomination for months, I am pleased that we are close to getting a confirmed ambassador in Berlin; an ambassador who will help coordinate our joint efforts to