

health at risk. And just as we have always known, this threat is not just at the State level.

Last week, legislation was introduced in this very Chamber that would enact a national abortion ban, one that would strip women of the fundamental right to control their own bodies. This abortion ban—and that is exactly what it is, a nationwide abortion ban—poses a real and serious threat to the rights of women across this country. This is a dangerous nationwide government mandate that would threaten women and their doctors—threaten them—with jail time, including those in my State of Nevada.

Pro-choice States like Nevada, where the people voted overwhelmingly to protect reproductive freedoms as part of State law, would be forced—forced—to abide by this Federal mandate. Because Federal law supersedes State law, this legislation would override the will of Nevadans and the freedom—the freedom—that they have had for decades.

If anti-choice Republicans in Congress have their way and their national abortion ban passes—listen to this—then Nevada's doctors could be prosecuted; Nevada's women could be jailed; and Nevada's women could die as a result of a lack of access to care.

So let's be clear. The only thing standing in the way of their national abortion ban is the pro-choice majority in the U.S. Senate, and I will do everything I can to fight this legislation threatening our reproductive rights not just in Nevada but across the country.

That is why I helped to introduce the Let Doctors Provide Reproductive Health Care Act, along with Senators MURRAY, PADILLA, and the Acting President pro tempore, Senator LUIZÁN, to protect doctors in States like Nevada, where abortion remains legal and protects women from facing prosecution and potentially jail by anti-choice States. No doctor—let me repeat this. No doctor should ever be jailed for providing women with the reproductive and often lifesaving care they need wherever these women are from. No doctor should ever be jailed for providing care.

Anti-choice Republicans in the Senate have blocked these efforts in the past as they have continued to push for dangerous bans.

Today—today—we have another opportunity to protect doctors and their patients by passing this legislation—without obstruction or delay—because let's be clear: We will not—we will not—give up. We will not allow a national abortion ban to pass the Senate. We will not allow doctors to face prosecution for doing their jobs. We must—we must—protect a woman's right to choose and continue fighting against this ban every step of the way.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

INFLATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on Sunday, the President appeared on “60 minutes,” where he was asked what he was going to do to help alleviate inflation in light of August's continued grim inflation news and the resulting stock market nosedive.

The President's response?

Well, first of all, let's put this in perspective. Inflation rate month to month was just—just an inch, hardly at all.

“Let's put this in perspective”? That might be something to say if the inflation rate had ticked up from, say, 2 percent—the target inflation rate—to 2.1 percent, but I am pretty sure that that is not the appropriate thing to say when you are talking about the sixth straight month of inflation above 8 percent and the ninth straight month of inflation at or above 7 percent and the 11th straight month of inflation above 6 percent.

Even more concerning than August's consumer price index rising 8.3 percent from the same month a year ago was the increase in core inflation—a measure of inflation minus the volatile categories of food and energy. This measure increased to 6.3 percent in August, up from 5.9 percent in both June and July, suggesting that inflation is sinking its roots even deeper into various sectors of our economy—or in the words of a CNBC headline from last week:

Inflation isn't just about fuel costs anymore, as price increases broaden across the economy.

But, of course, you don't have to take my word for it about the mess that we are in. Here is what one of President Obama's top economic advisers had to say last week after August's inflation numbers came out:

Today's CPI report confirms that the US has a serious inflation problem. Core inflation is higher this month than for the quarter, higher this quarter than last quarter, higher this half of the year than the previous one, and higher last year than the previous one.

“Let's put this in perspective.” That is what President Biden had to say? Here is the American people's perspective: Fifty-seven percent of Americans disapprove of President Biden's handling of the economy, and 37 percent of voters say that President Biden's policies have hurt them personally, versus just 15 percent of voters who say his policies have helped them.

These numbers are no surprise. The President may somehow still believe that he is creating an economy that will “work for working families,” but the reality is that, in the Biden economy, working Americans are suffering. Americans' utility bills are soaring; their grocery bills have ballooned; and they are paying \$1.30 more per gallon every time they fill up their car than they were when President Biden was elected. Real wages have dropped every single month since Democrats passed their \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan spending spree—the bill, I would

add, that helped plunged our economy into our current crisis. And 40 percent of Americans report having difficulty paying for their normal household expenses. Americans are dipping into their savings or working side jobs to make ends meet. They are charging more day-to-day expenses on their credit cards. In too many cases, they are having to visit food banks, which are seeing huge lines thanks to continued high inflation. What are Democrats and the President doing about this? Nothing.

Of course, last month, Democrats did pass a bill they called the Inflation Reduction Act. The problem? The bill will do nothing to reduce inflation—nothing. Again, 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.

“[S]tatistically indistinguishable from zero.”

Or you could take the word of the Democrat chairman of the Budget Committee, who admitted right here on the Senate floor that the so-called Inflation Reduction Act would not reduce inflation.

But it is not just that Democrats have done nothing to help solve our inflation crisis; they are also on track to make Americans' economic situation significantly worse.

In August, President Biden announced a massive student loan giveaway that could cost anywhere from an estimated \$500 billion to more than \$1 trillion and that the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget notes would “meaningfully boost inflation.” This is a statement from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget talking about the President's massive student loan giveaway, and they say it will “meaningfully boost inflation” or, as the president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget recently put it, “Amid 40-year-high inflation and despite the administration constantly touting its ‘fiscal responsibility,’ these changes will recklessly add to the debt and make the Federal Reserve's job in fighting inflation even harder, which will amplify our risk of entering a recession.”

Many of us would argue we are already in a recession—two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth.

Inflation has spent 8 straight months at 40-year highs, and the President has decided that now is a good time to implement a policy that will “meaningfully boost inflation.”

The economy continues to show signs of weakening, driven in large part by the inflation crisis Democrats helped create. Major companies have recently announced job cuts. Sixty-three percent of small businesses are putting a hold on hiring, and 10 percent of those are cutting jobs. We have had negative economic growth, as I mentioned, for the past two quarters. So naturally—naturally—Democrats decided this was

a good time to raise taxes on businesses. Yes, Democrats' so-called Inflation Reduction Act imposes new taxes on businesses to help pay for their Green New Deal spending.

I say "taxes on businesses," but, of course, taxes on businesses largely fall on workers and consumers in the form of fewer jobs and opportunities, lower wages, and higher prices—in other words, pretty much the exact opposite of what we need right now, with prices soaring and wages failing to keep pace with inflation.

The Inflation Reduction Act also imposes new taxes on energy that will drive up energy prices for both American families and American businesses, imposing further pain on family budgets and likely prolonging our inflation crisis even further.

The President may have wanted to build an economy "from the bottom up and the middle out," as he has described it; instead, he and his fellow Democrats have helped create an economy in which working families are struggling to make it from one paycheck to the next. And thanks to the additional tax-and-spend policies the Democrats have recently implemented, working families are likely to be struggling for some time to come.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4723

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, last week, Republicans made clear that despite the clear outcry from people across the country, overturning Roe was just their first step. Republicans want a national abortion ban. Republicans want to force my constituents to stay pregnant even when they do not want to be and to go after the doctors who provide abortion care.

I am here today to continue to say in no uncertain terms that Democrats are not going to stand for it. While Republicans are busy threatening the rights of women in every State across the country and threatening doctors with jail time, Democrats are here to defend abortion rights and defend the doctors who provide that care, because even before Republicans dropped their national abortion ban bill, I was hearing from providers in my home State of Washington who are facing a huge influx of patients due to Republicans' extreme bans.

Just yesterday, the Texas Tribune shared the heartbreaking story of a woman who learned that the pregnancy she had wanted so badly was incompatible with life, that her daughter was developing without a skull or brain. But because Republicans in Texas think they know better than this woman or her doctor, she had to travel for treatment from Dallas all the way to Seattle to get the care she needed.

Providers on the ground in my State tell me there are so many more patients being forced to make a trek like that. They are worried about caring for them, and not just because it is for so

many more patients, not just because Republicans are straining resources and causing a healthcare crisis that puts women's lives at risk; healthcare professionals are also deeply worried about how Republicans' extreme laws threaten their practices. They are terrified Republicans will take away their livelihoods and even their freedom just for doing their jobs, just for providing the care their patients need—care that is, once again, completely legal in my State.

They are right to be scared. When it comes to Republicans' extreme, no-holds-barred anti-abortion agenda, the writing is on the wall, and it has been for some time. Even before this latest bill, Republican State lawmakers were already drafting legislation that would make it a crime to provide abortion care to a resident even in another State where it is legal, and they were doing this while at the same time trying to claim they didn't want to throw doctors in prison.

On top of all of that, they were standing in the way of the bill I will offer today to protect healthcare providers. This is a really straightforward bill. It simply protects doctors providing legal abortion care.

The last time I tried to pass it, the junior Senator from Indiana said he was concerned about this bill "allowing abortions for anyone who crosses the State lines and is not a resident of that State." In other words, Republicans are worried about all the patients I mentioned earlier who are traveling to Washington State seeking abortion care that they urgently need. Republicans don't think they should be able to travel to Washington State to get healthcare, and they want to allow other States to target Washington State doctors, to threaten them for providing legal abortion care.

That is extreme. It is not what doctors want, and it is definitely not what the American people want. Women and men across the country do not want politicians making their healthcare decisions and throwing their doctors in prison. They want to be able to make their own decisions about their own bodies, their own families, their own future. They want doctors to be able to focus on doing their jobs, not fearing a jail sentence.

So I urge my Republican colleagues to step aside and allow us to pass the Let Doctors Provide Reproductive Health Care Act. This legislation is so straightforward. It protects doctors providing legal abortion care, and it ensures that they can practice medicine and save lives without fear of legal threats and intimidation. It makes clear that the attacks we have seen on doctors are unacceptable and that politicians should not be harassing or scaring or investigating, threatening, or punishing doctors for providing care that is perfectly legal, that patients want, and that in many cases is even necessary to save lives.

If Republicans have been doing what I have been doing, if they have been ac-

tually listening to doctors and patients, then they should reverse course and let us get this commonsense bill passed. But if they continue blocking these steps, if they continue ignoring the outcry from every corner of the country, if they continue to undermine the health of patients seeking care and the freedom of healthcare providers doing their jobs, they should know we are not going to stop pushing back. There is too much at stake.

So, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 4723; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, reserving the right object, I am glad the Supreme Court has returned the issue of life back to the people's elected representatives, where it should have stayed 49 years ago.

This legislation denies State representatives the right to make laws protecting life. This bill is an attempt to undermine State laws that protect life by allowing abortions for anyone who crosses State lines and is not a resident of the State.

Moreover, it gives the Department of Justice \$40 million in grant funding to help people sue States—to help people sue States—that enact policies to protect life. The Department of Health and Human Services is given another \$40 million in funding for any eligible center at Secretary Becerra's discretion. This funding is not protected by the Hyde amendment, and most likely, we are going to borrow every penny of it, like we do for most things in this place. We should not spend \$80 million to undermine State laws on life or impose a legislative backdoor for abortion-on-demand across our Nation.

For these reasons, I oppose this bill, and I do object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed. I am not surprised. We continue to see Republicans show their true, harsh colors, and the contrast with Democrats could not be more stark.

We simply want people to get the healthcare they need and let them make their own medical decisions. Republicans want to ban abortion nationwide. We want to protect doctors. Republicans want to threaten and penalize or even jail them just for doing their job, even when they are following their State's laws.

Mr. President, rest assured, I will continue speaking up for our healthcare providers, for families, for patients. And as we continue to see