

this extremism, I want to assure everybody that I am not going to stop fighting.

Mr. President, someone should be allowed to travel out of their own State to get the healthcare they need. It is unbelievable that the Republicans block this bill.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 117-1

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to oppose the Kigali Amendment. That is the United Nations treaty that is under consideration in this body today.

Two years ago, this body, the U.S. Senate, passed a bipartisan bill. The goal of the bill was to reduce hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, and do it domestically. We passed it. It was signed into law.

Now, these HFCs are gases that are used in refrigerators, air-conditioners, fire extinguishers, and in insulation. They also contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.

So I worked in a bipartisan way to build a coalition of Senators to pass the bill. Two years later, here we are; the law is now in effect in the United States. Parts of the law are still being implemented. Yet, now, today, we are being asked to sign on to treaty obligations at the United Nations that I believe are wholly unnecessary.

We have already passed bipartisan legislation to reduce HFC consumption, and it has already become the law of the land. Many of the benefits and the jobs that are being touted are U.S. innovations, and it is the result of our domestic legislation, not ratification of some U.N. treaty. We did it here. We did it right.

I say we don't need to get entangled now in another United Nations treaty. Our own law can be amended if we would like. It can be repealed. It can be replaced. Depending on the impact and cost, the United States can make changes quickly. It is much harder, if not impossible, to do it with an international treaty. In fact, when you take a look at the Kigali treaty and amendment, there is actually no way to withdraw from it if we ratify and join in.

When I take a look at this, it is especially bad because it doubles down on the practice of treating China—yes, China—as a developing country. And the key word here is “developing.” China is not a developing country, but this treaty says they are a developing country, and it makes a big difference in terms of the treaty and the way that China is treated internationally because it gives China special treatment.

And I will tell you, Mr. President, they don't deserve the kind of treatment that they would get with this. Under this treaty, China would get an extra 10 years—an extra decade—to produce HFCs. Well, this places us, the United States, at a competitive disadvantage to China for 10 additional years.

Interestingly and, I think, surprisingly to people when they hear this, the United States would also be expected to give more American taxpayer dollars to a U.N.—United Nations—multilateral fund that is set aside to help developing nations. The key word here again is “developing.” And they want to treat China like a developing country. So it would send more U.S. dollars to China because they have access to this U.N. multilateral fund.

Well, the United States is already the largest contributor to this fund. We have given over 1 billion of American taxpayer dollars to this United Nations so-called—it is a slush fund.

But what about China? Do they contribute? Oh, no, China has actually taken \$1.4 billion out of the fund that we have contributed to because we are a developed nation and China is still, theoretically and legally, by this treaty, developing.

When you take a look at the debt that we have as a nation and you go and talk to any high school class or any junior high school class, as I have done in Wyoming—we did it in Wheatland, WY, with a bunch of really smart kids—they say: OK, when we have this debt, who are we borrowing the money from?

Do you know what they say? Oh, we are borrowing it from China.

So we borrow from China to give to the Multilateral Fund under this Montreal Protocol. And what happens then? The Fund gives it to China. The United States borrows from China. We give it to the United Nations. The United Nations gives it to China. So we are further in debt to China. This makes zero sense. Even to the high school kids it makes zero sense.

With ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the U.N. treaty, more and more American taxpayer dollars will be going to communist China.

Now, this is happening despite the fact that everyone knows that China is not a developing country and shouldn't be labeled as a developing country or be treated as a developing country. China is the second largest economy in the world. China is our greatest economic and geopolitical rival.

The United States should not let China play by a special set of rules that is designed to give a helping hand to truly developing nations. China doesn't fit. But this is exactly what is outlined in the Kigali Amendment. And that is why I have filed at the desk an amendment to what is being discussed on the floor of the Senate today. My amendment says the United States will not ratify this treaty until China is defined, rightly, as a developed country—

not a developing country but a developed country—because they truly are. No special treatment for China, period. Everyone should stand up for that in this body, each and every Member.

So Senators have some decisions to make: Are you going to vote to allow China to play by a whole different set of rules? Are we going to put America at a competitive disadvantage? Are we going to vote to continue to give American taxpayer dollars to China?

Now, Members and my colleagues and friends on the other side of the aisle say: Oh, it is not about China. This is about HFC, the chemicals involved. Again, we have already passed bipartisan legislation to reduce HFCs. The law is still going into effect. There is no excuse for any Senator to give China a handout at the expense of the American taxpayers and the American hard-working families—no excuse whatsoever.

We should not be outsourcing our environmental policy. I urge my colleagues to support my amendment and, once again, say no special treatment for China.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

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

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:30 p.m. today, Wednesday, September 21, all postclosure time in relation to Treaty Document No. 117-1 be considered expired; that the Schumer amendment No. 5503 be withdrawn; that the Sullivan-Lee amendment No. 5518 be the only amendment in order to the resolution of ratification and the Senate vote on adoption of the amendment; that upon disposition of the Sullivan-Lee amendment, the Senate vote on adoption of the resolution of ratification, as amended, if amended, all without intervening action or debate; further, that upon disposition of the treaty, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the Bennett nomination and that at 5:30 p.m. the Senate vote on the motions to invoke cloture on the Bennett and Prabhakar nominations in the order listed; that if cloture is invoked on either of the nominations, the confirmation votes be at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader; further, that the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 484, S. 4822, be at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, September 22.

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

The Senator from Alaska.

## BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, there has been much made in the Biden administration about the value of diversity, and I agree that having diversity in any organization is positive. You get different viewpoints. But diversity encompasses much more than race or gender or religious orientation. Those are all important. Diversity actually means having people around you with varied experiences. As I mentioned, in my mind, that is certainly important, but it is particularly important in the Oval Office, particularly important in the White House. It is particularly important in the leadership of our Federal Government.

Let's take the example of military experience in this administration. You would think the Biden administration would think it is important to have members in his Cabinet or senior White House officials who have served in the military. After all, he is the Commander in Chief, a very important part of his responsibilities. But, in fact, virtually no one in this administration, with the exception of Secretary Austin, at the highest levels—Cabinet officials, senior White House officials—have any significant military experience at all.

Why does this matter? The President doesn't have it, of course. His Secretary of the VA, Chief of Staff, National Security Advisor—just go down the list. Nobody has any experience.

In the Federal Government of the United States, why does this matter? It matters because it is obvious by the people this President surrounds himself—the people who are giving him advice on big decisions for America—that this President doesn't prioritize military, our national defense, and our troops and their families. This manifests itself in many, many ways.

First, most importantly, it matters in how we fund our national defense. I was on the floor last week, speaking about this very topic. This is President Biden's first budget. You can see this here, what he proposed. It has the increases through every Federal Agency. This was a multitrillion-dollar budget. And it says this is what we are prioritizing as the Biden administration. You can see, heck, double-digits. That is Education and Commerce. And EPA is over 20 percent, and Interior over 15 percent—on and on and on, all the green. It is just a massive expansion of Federal Agencies, except two Agencies: Department of Defense and Homeland Security, the two Agencies that actually protect Americans.

If you look to this line of inflation, which when the Biden administration put out their budget last year was about 4.5 percent, these are actual inflation-adjusted real cuts by about 2 to 3 percent to our military. That was the Biden budget not prioritizing our troops, our national security at all. My view is that that is the No. 1 job of this government. It is not the President's view, not his team's view.

In the interim—that was last year's budget—we had a war in Ukraine. We

had the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense testify in front of the Armed Services Committee that we are probably seeing the most dangerous time globally in any time in the last 40 years.

So what about the Biden budget this year?

Mr. President, you did it again.

This is actually EPA, a 25-percent increase—wow.

But here we go, all the big double-digit increases. When you get down to the Department of Defense, with now the 9 percent Biden inflation, we are talking a 5-percent real cut to our military. That is not prioritizing our military.

You are starting to see how this inflation and other things are really impacting our troops. The Army, last week, in an article, suggested that the American military members who are having trouble making ends meet because of high levels of inflation should go on food stamps. You heard that correct. We are going to give the EPA a 25-percent raise. We are going to cut defense spending by a 5-percent real cut, and if you are a soldier struggling because of high inflation to actually put food on the table, you can go get food stamps. That is the perfect example of not prioritizing our military.

I want to unpack this further. The Army is saying that, if our troops don't have enough food to eat, they should look at going on food stamps. But the President finds it absolutely essential to forgive \$560 billion in student loan debt just a couple of weeks ago. Who are the preponderance of Americans who will benefit from that lawless bailout? High-earning Americans, the elite—White House staffers, certainly. They are going to get a half-trillion-dollar bailout, and our troops are being told to go on food stamps. This should shock every single American.

So we know the President and his team don't prioritize the military. Look at these budgets or our troops or our national security. But that doesn't mean they don't find the military useful. I am going to put up a picture of a recent speech that, I will tell you, every time I look at it, my blood boils, and so should every American's blood boil.

It is this picture.

Now, every President gives partisan speeches. Now, I don't think it is wise for every President to give the kind of partisan speech that President Biden gave on September 1 in Philadelphia in which he vilified millions, tens of millions of his fellow Americans who don't agree with his administration's policies. Some of you may have seen that speech. The President told the country that many of his fellow Americans, all of whom are Republican, don't "respect the Constitution," are "destroying American democracy." He gave this speech against a blood-red backdrop, fists clenched—look at him—yelling that millions of his fellow Americans embrace anger—while he embraced

anger in his speech—and chaos. This President who continually issues lawless Executive orders, like shutting down the ANWR in my State, his half-a-trillion-dollar student loan bailout, then says that Republicans are "against the rule of law." He went on and on—the insults, very partisan, somewhat deranged, attacking tens of millions of his fellow Americans.

Now, look, Presidents do that. I don't think it is a good idea. But here is the thing about this speech: To make matters worse—look at this—he did all this, a clearly partisan speech, while being flanked by two Active-Duty marines as his political props. Look at that. Look at that—in my view, a sickening abuse of authority from a Commander in Chief who has never served in the military—I think he got five Vietnam deferments—and knows nothing about the Marine Corps' ethos of honor, courage, commitment.

Remember when General Milley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs—and was Chairman under President Trump as well—released a video where he apologized for standing beside the President, then-President Trump, when that could have been perceived as political.

This is what General Milley said:

I should not have been there. My presence in that moment and in that environment created a perception of the military [being] involved in domestic politics.

I thought that was a good speech by General Milley. He made a mistake; he apologized; and that was the right thing to do.

This is much worse. This is much worse. These marines, unlike General Milley, they are being ordered to stand next to the President of the United States while he rants against millions of his own fellow Americans.

The President certainly didn't apologize for this speech. In fact, when criticized by both Democrats and Republicans for the politicization of the military with these marines propped up next to him, the Biden administration actually doubled down in terms of their use of these two Active-Duty marines as political props in a very partisan speech.

Here is what the spokesperson at the White House said:

The presence of [the] Marines at [that] speech was intended to demonstrate the deep and abiding respect the President has for [these servicemembers] . . . [for] the ideals and the unique role our independent military plays in defending our democracy, no matter who is in power.

This is Orwellian doublespeak. What a bunch of nonsense.

Here is the fact: The presence of these marines was meant to politicize the President's speech and politically benefit from the honor and respect the few and the proud have earned in the hearts of Americans over decades, over millennium. This should disturb every single American, whether you are Democrat or Republican. This was just wrong.

Let me provide another example of the politicization of our military by