

such high input costs that they are struggling to grow the food that feeds our Nation and those around the globe. In Joe Biden's America, just as kids are heading back to school, the price of school supplies has increased by over 9 percent.

This President continues to preside over the worst economy that most Kansans have ever seen in their lifetime. This is all thanks to the Democrats' massive, hyperpartisan, tax-and-spending bills and, of course, their business-crushing Federal regulations.

As you can see on this chart, inflation was just 1 percent in January 2021—1.4 percent. Today, it is over a staggering 8 percent, almost 6 times higher than when Joe Biden took the reins and his woke inflationary policies wrecked our economy.

Look, energy, groceries, and shelter account for two-thirds of inflation, and they always lead inflation. Inflation is not going away unless this administration does an about-face on its policies, and we know that is not going to happen.

Let's take a look at what Joe Biden has done.

Energy—energy is up 23 percent; groceries, up 13 percent; shelter, up 6 percent. You might ask: Why? Why has shelter gone up 6 percent? Look, mortgage rates on 30-year loans have quadrupled under this President. Energy, grocery, shelter—all up across the board. All are essential to every individual's comfort and prosperity.

Finally, have you looked at your retirement accounts lately? Down, if you are lucky, maybe some 17 percent off its peak values.

Kansans are hurting. Main Street merchants are hurting. Americans are hurting. Instead of helping, this administration continues to pour gas on the fire with another massive spending bill. Then they had the gall to publicly celebrate last week on the south lawn of the White House—the very day the stock market went into a spiral after the CPI came in showing the highest inflation rate in nearly 40 years.

What is more, Sunday night on “60 Minutes,” the President said inflation was up “just an inch, hardly at all.”

Are you kidding me? I can't imagine an administration more out of touch, more apathetic to the pain of the people who elected him than this one. An 8.3 percent increase in inflation over last year is not just an inch. This kind of minimization infuriates everyone. I have heard it at every one of my 100 townhall meetings.

Let's not forget, since Joe Biden took his oath, inflation has increased over 13 percent. When you live paycheck to paycheck, 13 percent is not just an inch. Americans are much smarter than you think.

Inflation is going to be Joe Biden's legacy to the American people. In our history books, the texts my grandchildren—two of whom are sitting in the Gallery today—will study, they will see a graphic like the one behind me.

If anyone was hoping that the Federal Reserve would be able to slow down interest hikes, you can think again. This month's numbers made it clear to the Fed that their job is far from done, forcing them to raise interest rates by another 75 basis points.

Interest is only going to keep increasing unless they reverse their policies.

Look, life will continue to get more expensive under Joe Biden. Why? Because this President will not reverse his woke inflationary policies. Even now, President Biden and the Democrats want to continue to tax and spend us further into recession.

Make no mistake about it. After almost a year and a half of financial anxiety and paychecks that are not going as far, Americans have had enough of the failing economic agenda of Joe Biden and this Democratic majority in Congress.

November can't come soon enough. Come January, the tax-and-spend agenda will come to an immediate end. We will not allow this administration to further damage this country with their failed economic agenda.

Before COVID, we had the greatest economy in generations. We accomplished this by slashing taxes and getting out of the way of industry and letting American producers produce. This is what the American people want. This is what the American people deserve. This is what will lead America back to prosperity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Minnesota.

NOMINATION OF ROBIN MEREDITH COHN HUTCHESON

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I rise today in support of the nomination of Robin Hutcheson to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

As the Presiding Officer knows, her experience as Deputy Administrator and, currently, as Acting Administrator will serve her well. I am proud to say that she used to call Minnesota home, where she served as Director of Public Works for the City of Minneapolis for many years.

Ms. Hutcheson brings much experience with her to this job. She has served in three roles at the U.S. Department of Transportation: Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Policy, FMCSA Deputy Administrator, and currently, as Acting Administrator. She has a strong track record on safety.

As the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Policy for U.S. DOT, she was instrumental in developing the National Roadway Safety Strategy and the new Safe Streets and Roads for All program.

She also has local experience managing transportation systems in three States across the country: Minnesota, as we discussed, Utah, and Montana. In

her role as Director of Public Works for the City of Minneapolis, she oversaw a 1,100-person team across nine divisions, including all transportation functions.

During a time when our supply chains are being tested to their limits, I believe that her public and private experience, as well as her experience at both the local and Federal level, will bring a unique perspective to the role and improve the safety of our transportation networks.

I will address her unanimous consent proposal in a minute.

DISCLOSE ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I am now going to turn to the next item on my agenda before we all adjourn, and that is a speech in support of the DISCLOSE Act and the need to take action to get secret money out of our elections.

I want to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for his leadership on this legislation and testimony at the Committee on Rules and Administration hearing I held on it this summer.

Senator WHITEHOUSE has championed this bill since 2012, and I have been proud to support it alongside him in every Congress.

I also want to thank Leader SCHUMER for holding a vote to advance this bill today. While the vote was ultimately unsuccessful, it is important that the people of this country understand that Senate Democrats—and only Senate Democrats, it appears—remain committed to addressing secret money in our election.

This vote could not have come at a more important time, as we are seeing an unprecedented flood of money into our elections. Over \$14 billion was spent during the 2020 election, the most expensive in our country's history.

As we approach the general election in November with 48 days left, this is already—and we still have 48 days left—the most expensive midterm election ever. One estimate expects that nearly \$10 billion will be spent just on political advertising this election cycle, more than double the \$4 billion in the 2018 midterm elections.

As spending on elections increases, the sources of the spending are less accountable than ever before. One investigation found that more than \$1 billion was spent on the 2020 elections by groups that do not disclose their donors at all.

I want people to think about this. One billion was spent on the 2020 election, one billion—not million—\$1 billion, by groups that do not disclose their donors at all. No one likes that; I don't care if you are Democrat, Republican, or Independent, you at least want to know what money is being spent and who is paying for these negative ads that you see all over TV.

As spending on election increases, the sources of that spending are less accountable than ever before. Americans know there is way too much

money in our elections, and for our democracy to work, we need to know where the money is coming from. It is that simple.

But since the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United* opened up the flood of outside money, overturned so much of the bipartisan work that had been done by our former colleague Senator McCain—who we miss dearly—as well as Senator Feingold, our neighbor in Wisconsin, but since that time and the overturning of those requirements of the McCain-Feingold campaign restrictions, there have been no significant improvements made to disclosure laws or regulations.

Unlimited, anonymous spending in our elections doesn't encourage free speech; it drowns out the voices of you. It drowns out the voices of the American people who want to participate and be treated like everyone else. They have one vote just like a billionaire has a vote. Yet, what do we see? The billionaire gets to have undue influence, and we don't even know who he is because it is shrouded in secrecy because there is no requirement that the name be disclosed.

This unrelenting secret spending will continue unless we take action to address it. That is why we need to pass the DISCLOSE Act.

The DISCLOSE Act would address this tidal wave of secret money by requiring outside groups that spend in our elections to disclose their large donors—those that contribute more than \$10,000.

How could anyone be opposed to this? We are not talking about a lot of paperwork. We are talking about people who give more than \$10,000. Looking around the Gallery, looking at the pages, I just find it hard to believe there are people right here that are going to give over \$10,000 and then hide behind some kind of curtain of non-disclosure. That is what is happening. We just want to know who they are.

Importantly, the bill also makes it harder for wealthy special interests to hide their contributions to cloak the identity of donors, and it cracks down on the use of shell companies to conceal the donations of foreign nationals.

Let me repeat that. Who could be against trying to figure out whether shell companies are hiding the donations of foreign nationals, of people who don't even live in America who are trying to influence our elections?

I held a hearing on the bill in the Committee on Rules and Administration on the DISCLOSE Act this summer, where we heard about the effects that secret money is having on our democracy and why we need to pass this legislation.

Senator WHITEHOUSE testified at the hearing, and he spoke powerfully about the impact that secret money is having on our government, affecting all aspects of our lives, from the makeup of our courts to people's healthcare decisions to addressing climate change.

We also heard from Montana's Commissioner of Political Practices Jeff

Mangan, who told us how his State's version of the DISCLOSE Act passed in 2015 with bipartisan support. Let me repeat that. In Montana, red and blue worked together and got this passed. I couldn't agree more that transparency in our democracy should not be a partisan issue, and regardless of political party, we should know who is spending on our elections.

The American people know what is at stake. So it is no surprise that campaign finance disclosure laws have overwhelming support. One recent poll found that in swing States, 91 percent of likely voters—Republicans and Democrats—those are States that go red or blue, may be considered purple—91 percent of likely voters—Republicans and Democrats—support full transparency of campaign contributions and spending in our elections.

Another poll from 2019 found that across America, 83 percent of likely voters support public disclosures of contributions. Those are people regardless of their political stripes. There is also a long history of bipartisan support for reducing the influence of money in our democracy.

In fact, the very first limits on corporate campaign contributions came in 1907, the Tillman Act, the landmark Federal Election Campaign Act then passed in 1972, and as I noted, the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act in 2002 was also bipartisan, supported by Senators John McCain and Russ Feingold. They joined together to champion, to pass this really important bill. Guess what. All three of those bills I just mentioned, the one in 1907, the one in 1972, the one in 2002, they were all signed into law by Republican Presidents. This has always been a bipartisan issue in our country.

Former Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, never one to hide his opinions, was also a staunch supporter of campaign finance disclosure. In a 2010 case, *Doe v. Reed*, he wrote:

For my part, I do not look forward to a society which, thanks to the Supreme Court, campaigns anonymously . . . hidden from public scrutiny and protected from the accountability of criticism.

These are his words:

This does not resemble the Home of the Brave.

You can't get much more conservative than former Justice Scalia. This is a bipartisan issue. We ask our colleagues to change their minds. Ensuring the transparency of our elections has been and should continue to be a bipartisan value.

These issues are at the very heart of our democracy, and this commonsense bill would protect the right of voters to make informed choices and know who has been trying to influence our elections.

As we move forward, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting these measures in the future as well as the measures in the Freedom to Vote Act, which the DISCLOSE Act was part of that I led in the Senate that would give

us baseline—baseline—rules of the road for the voters of this country to be able to make sure they can cast their votes regardless of whether they live in Minnesota or Texas.

With that, I would like to turn to a few other matters that will help to close the Senate that I will receive in a few minutes. I have one. I will get started. Here we go. This is very exciting, happening in real time for all those watching. See, we are all prepared.

MORNING BUSINESS

TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 117-1

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, today I rise to celebrate the Senate's ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocols to phase down the use of hydrofluorocarbons, also known as HFCs. Not only did this critical amendment receive resounding bipartisan support, it also marked our Nation's participation in the most significant climate treaty in 30 years.

Across the country, there have been alarming examples of extreme weather. Parts of California are blanketed in black smoke from wildfires, many Kentuckians are still without homes as a result of flooding in July, and Hurricane Fiona left millions of Puerto Ricans without power. And around the world, we have seen a devastating drought in East Africa, Greenland's ice sheet's largest September melt event on record, and flooding in Pakistan that left a third of the country underwater. It is clear that climate change isn't something that's happening 100 years in the future, it's happening now.

That is why our ratification of the Kigali Amendment is so critical. HFCs are particularly potent greenhouse gases, disproportionately responsible for rising temperatures that are linked to catastrophic weather events. By joining the effort to reduce global HFC consumption and production by 80 percent by 2047, we can help prevent 0.5 degrees C of warming by the end of this century.

In addition to helping the planet, phasing out the use of HFCs in common consumer products like refrigerators and air-conditioners will deliver clear benefits to the American people in the form of lower energy bills. It also creates huge opportunities for U.S. businesses that have developed green alternatives to HFCs to reach global markets. This is one of the many situations where what is good for our planet is also good for consumers and businesses.

The ratification of the Kigali Amendment builds on the progress our country made with the enactment of the Inflation Reduction Act, which included provisions to tackle the climate crisis. Because of this law, we are on track to reduce carbon emissions by 40 percent by 2030. It was a huge step, but we still have more work to do to become a