

SEC. 5. ANALYSIS AND REPORT ON TREATMENT OF VETERANS FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO TOXIC EXPOSURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall analyze, on a continuous basis, all clinical data that—

(1) is obtained by the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care furnished under section 1710(a)(2)(F) of title 38, United States Code; and

(2) is likely to be scientifically useful in determining the association, if any, between the medical condition of a veteran and the exposure of the veteran to a toxic substance.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report containing—

(1) the aggregate data compiled under subsection (a);

(2) an analysis of such data;

(3) a description of the types and incidences of medical conditions identified by the Department under such subsection;

(4) the explanation of the Secretary for the incidence of such medical conditions and other explanations for the incidence of such conditions as the Secretary considers reasonable; and

(5) the views of the Secretary on the scientific validity of drawing conclusions from the incidence of such medical conditions, as evidenced by the data compiled under subsection (a), regarding any association between such conditions and exposure to a toxic substance.

SEC. 6. ANALYSIS RELATING TO MORTALITY OF VETERANS WHO SERVED IN SOUTH-WEST ASIA.

(a) ANALYSIS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, shall conduct an updated analysis of total and respiratory disease mortality in covered veterans.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The analysis required by paragraph (1) shall include, to the extent practicable, the following with respect to each covered veteran:

(A) Metrics of airborne exposures.

(B) The location and timing of deployments of the veteran.

(C) The military occupational specialty of the veteran.

(D) The Armed Force in which the veteran served.

(E) Pre-existing health status of the veteran, including with respect to asthma.

(F) Relevant personal information of the veteran, including cigarette and e-cigarette smoking history, diet, sex, gender, age, race, and ethnicity.

(b) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered veteran” means any veteran who—

(1) on or after August 2, 1990, served on active duty in—

(A) Bahrain;

(B) Iraq;

(C) Kuwait;

(D) Oman;

(E) Qatar;

(F) Saudi Arabia;

(G) Somalia; or

(H) the United Arab Emirates; or

(2) on or after September 11, 2001, served on active duty in—

(A) Afghanistan;

(B) Djibouti;

(C) Egypt;

(D) Jordan;

(E) Lebanon;

(F) Syria; or

(G) Yemen.

SEC. 7. STUDY ON HEALTH TRENDS OF POST 9/11 VETERANS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an epidemiological study on the health trends of veterans who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001.

SEC. 8. STUDY ON CANCER RATES AMONG VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the incidence of cancer in veterans to determine trends in the rates of the incidence of cancer in veterans.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The study required by subsection (a) shall assess, with respect to each veteran included in the study, the following:

(1) The age of the veteran.

(2) The period of service and length of service of the veteran in the Armed Forces.

(3) The military occupational specialty or specialties of the veteran.

(4) The gender of the veteran.

(5) The type or types of cancer that the veteran has.

SEC. 9. PUBLICATION OF LIST OF RESOURCES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR SUCH VETERANS AND CAREGIVERS AND SURVIVORS OF SUCH VETERANS.

(a) PUBLICATION OF LIST OF RESOURCES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish a list of resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs for—

(A) veterans who were exposed to toxic substances;

(B) families and caregivers of such veterans; and

(C) survivors of such veterans who are receiving death benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.

(2) UPDATE.—The Secretary shall periodically update the list published under paragraph (1).

(b) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall develop, with input from the community, an informative outreach program for veterans on illnesses that may be related to exposure to toxic substances, including outreach with respect to benefits and support programs.

SEC. 10. REPORT ON INDIVIDUAL LONGITUDINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date on which the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record achieves full operational capability, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the data quality of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record and the usefulness of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record in supporting veterans in receiving health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An identification of exposures to toxic substances that may not be fully captured by the current systems for environmental and occupational health monitoring and recommendations for how to improve those systems.

(2) An analysis of the quality of the location data in determining exposures of veterans to toxic substances and recommendations for how to improve the quality of that location data.

(3) Recommendations on how to improve the usefulness of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) INDIVIDUAL LONGITUDINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.—The term “Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record” includes any pilot program or other program used by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense to track how members of the Armed Forces or veterans have been exposed to various occupational or environmental hazards.

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

Mr. TESTER. I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, it is important, I think, that we acknowledge a very simple truth that few people can disagree with and that is we are living at this moment in the most difficult time of our lives.

I say to the American people, if you are feeling anxious, feeling depressed, if you are feeling overwhelmed, if you are feeling confused, if you are feeling angry, you are not alone. Many millions of Americans feel exactly the same way.

This pandemic has had a devastating and horrific impact upon our country. Over 900,000 people have died from COVID and tens of millions have been made ill. Many thousands of workers have lost their jobs simply because they went about doing their jobs. They had to go to work. They were critical workers and many thousands died as a result.

In the midst of the pandemic, in an unprecedented way, millions of other workers have chosen to find new employment paths. They have given up their old jobs.

But it is not just working people who have been impacted; it has been a terrible time for the young people of our country. The education of our younger generation, from childcare to graduate school, has been severely disrupted in a way that we have never seen in the modern history of this country.

But, again, it is not just for workers or the children; it is for elderly people. You have senior citizens in this country who have died at alarmingly high rates, but in addition to that, they have been isolated over the last several years because of fear of catching the virus, which means that they can't come in contact with their kids or their grandchildren. They can't get out of the house, and they are hurting as a result.

In America today, it is no great secret—an issue we are trying to deal with—that mental illness is on the rise as is drug addiction, alcoholism, and domestic violence. In other words, these are difficult and, in fact, unprecedented times within our lives.

But what I want to point out this afternoon is that while the vast majority of people in our country are hurting emotionally, they are hurting economically. These are not difficult times for everybody. That is an important point to be made.

In fact, I want to start off, if I might, with some really, really good news if you are a billionaire in this country or a CEO of a large corporation.

For those people, these times have not been bad; they, in fact, have been very, very good. In fact, if you are one of the very richest people in this country, this moment right now has never been better for you than anytime in American history.

Today, corporate profits are at an alltime high, and CEOs, heads of large corporations, have seen huge increases in their compensation packages. Let me just give a few examples.

Everybody in America is worried about the high price of gas. You drive around, and today, gas prices are higher than they were yesterday.

While gas prices are soaring, shock of all shock, oil company profits are now higher than they have been in over 7 years. Gas prices are soaring, and—guess what—large oil companies are making huge profits. In fact, in the last quarter, ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, and BP made nearly \$25 billion in profits in one quarter.

Gas prices are soaring. The profits of the oil companies are soaring as well.

But that is not all. Everybody is worried about higher food prices. Many senior citizens living on fixed incomes go to the grocery store, and they get very upset about seeing increased prices on meat and vegetables and everything else.

Well, it turns out that the food industry is also enjoying huge increases in profits. In fact, Kroger, one of the largest grocery store chains in America, made a recordbreaking profit of some \$4 billion in 2021. While their stock price dropped 36 percent in the past year, its CEO got a 296-percent pay raise over the past decade. They have been able to spend \$1.5 billion on stock buybacks and dividends to enrich their wealthy shareholders.

Food prices are soaring. Yet company after company in the food industry is making huge profits.

For the people on top, the good news is that it is not just that corporate profits have never been better—that is good news—but even better for them is that CEO compensation has never been higher.

You know, there was a time way back in the 1950s when I was growing up when CEOs did very, very well. They made 20 times more than their average worker. Well, if you are a CEO, the

good news is, those days are long gone when you only made 20 times more than your average worker. Today, as I am sure the CEOs of this country know, they are now making 350 times more than what the average worker in America makes—350 times more. Talk about greed.

By the way, at a time when we pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, the really, really good news is that the CEOs of the top eight pharmaceutical companies in America made over \$350 million in compensation in 2020. Got that? Eight CEOs of the drug companies that charge the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs made \$350 million collectively in compensation.

If that is not good enough news for the billionaire class, let me give you some even better news. Today, the billionaire class owns more income and wealth percentage-wise than at any time in American history as a result of a massive transfer of wealth.

You know, we hear a lot of talk about transfer of wealth—oh my God, we can't tax the rich and transfer wealth; terrible; terrible—but there has been over the last many decades a huge transfer of wealth. The only problem is, it has gone in the wrong direction—from working families to the top 1 percent. As a result of that, what we have now is that the top 1 percent owns more wealth than the bottom 92 percent. The top 1 percent owns more wealth than the bottom 92 percent.

Rather amazingly, the two wealthiest people in America now own more wealth than the bottom 42 percent. Two people own more wealth than the bottom 42 percent. You know, in this country, we pride ourselves on being a country that believes in fairness, that believes in justice—justice for all. It is not fair, it is not just that two people now own more wealth than the bottom 42 percent of the American people—that is wealth, accumulated income.

In terms of income, what we earn in a given year, since the Wall Street crash of 2008, the top 1 percent has earned 45 percent of all new income created in this country. Got a hundred people; the guy on top earns 45 percent of all of that income.

You know, every day, as you well know, Members of the Senate and the House go to the floor to give congratulatory remarks to the Boy Scouts, congratulating them on their anniversary or kids who have done well, and the Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, sports teams. I guess we recently honored Tom Brady for his great football success. That is what we do. Every day, somebody is coming here and congratulating somebody else, and that is fine. I do the same. In fact, we just congratulated some great Olympians from Vermont. But maybe the time is approaching when we should offer a unanimous resolution congratulating the billionaire class for their enormous success in moving this country into the oligarchic form of society that they have

long desired. Maybe we should do a UC on that issue.

By the way, here is another area of congratulations to the billionaire class. When we speak about oligarchy—when we speak about oligarchy—we should all understand that we are not just talking about massive levels of income and wealth inequality. We are not just talking about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. We should all understand that never before in American history have so few owned so much.

This issue, the issue of the incredible concentration of ownership in our country, is almost never talked about here in Congress or in the corporate media, and that has a lot to do with the corrupt political system that we operate under where many Members of Congress receive huge campaign contributions from these very same people.

But here is an important point to make, and tomorrow, actually, I will be doing a hearing on this as chairman of the Budget Committee. This is an issue we almost never discuss, and it is of enormous consequence.

Today in America, just three Wall Street firms, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street—I suspect that many Americans have never even heard of these firms—BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street, three firms, manage over \$21 trillion in assets—\$21 trillion in assets. What does that mean? Well, for starters, it means that the amount of money these one, two, three firms control is more than the gross domestic product, the GDP, of the United States of America, the largest economy in the world, and more than five times the GDP of Germany.

These three firms, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street, are major shareholders in more than 96 percent of S&P 500 companies. What does that mean? It means that they have significant influence over many hundreds of companies that employ millions of American workers.

Now, it used to be, way back when, there was a company, Company X, owned by somebody—nice guy, not a nice guy, good employer, bad employer. There was a person or a group of people who owned a company. That is rapidly changing in the oligarchic world that we are living in where a handful of Wall Street companies have major control over hundreds and hundreds of companies.

You know, after the Wall Street crash of 2008, I recall a lot of discussion about the wealth and the power of the big banks, the giant banks, and whether or not they were too big to fail. There was a huge amount of discussion.

Well, today, these three firms, three Wall Street firms, are the largest shareholders in some of the biggest banks in America: JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, and Citibank. In other words, these banks are also owned by a handful of Wall Street firms.

What about transportation? You know, we all get on planes and go here

and there. Well, these three major Wall Street firms, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street, are among the top owners of the four major airlines—United, American, et cetera.

Well, what about healthcare? What about healthcare? Who owns the healthcare industry? Well, together, these three Wall Street firms own an average of 20 percent of the major drug companies. They also own many hundreds of nursing homes, hospitals, and emergency rooms.

What about housing? Well, what we are seeing is a handful of Wall Street firms are now the major owners of rental housing in America—at a time, by the way, when the cost of housing and rents is soaring in this country.

Maybe, just maybe, if you haven't heard a whole lot about these issues, it might have something to do with the fact that a handful of Wall Street firms control half of the newspapers in America.

I think there is a reality which maybe says it all, and that is, during this terrible, terrible pandemic, when so many people have died and become ill and lost their jobs and missed school and suffered all of the isolation this pandemic has brought about, 745 billionaires in America became more than \$2 trillion richer. That is, to my mind, the clearest example of the level of corporate greed we are now experiencing.

Desperate workers who live paycheck to paycheck are forced to go to work. They go to work in hospitals. They go to work in public transportation. They go to work in meatpacking plants. They are busdrivers—whatever they may be. Thousands of them have died on the job while a handful of billionaires—745—became more than \$2 trillion richer.

When we talk about the growth of oligarchy in America—I talk about it; not a whole lot of other people here do—when we talk about oligarchy in America, it is not just that the very rich are getting much richer. That is one thing. But the reality is that tens of millions of working-class people, lower income people, in the wealthiest country on Earth are suffering today under incredible economic hardship, desperately trying day to day to survive, and 745 billionaires in the pandemic—\$2 trillion increase in their wealth, and tens of millions of Americans are struggling hard just to survive.

Today, nearly 40 million Americans live in poverty; and tonight, almost 600,000 people will be sleeping out on the streets or in homeless shelters. They have no apartments, no places in which to live.

And here is an important fact to remember: In our country today, the average worker is making \$42 a week less than he or she made 49 years ago. In other words, when you try to appreciate the anger that exists in this country, the discontent, it has a lot to do with the fact that the average American worker is worse off in terms

of real inflation weekly income than was the case 49 years ago.

Now, think about that. Think about how crazy that is. Think about all of the increase in technology and productivity that we have seen, where workers today are producing a lot more than they used to because of the new technology, and yet, because of the huge transfer of wealth and income, they are worse off than they were in 1973.

Half of the people in our country today are living paycheck to paycheck, and tens of millions are an accident, a divorce, an illness, or a layoff away from economic devastation.

In America today, we remain the only major country on Earth not to guarantee healthcare as a right. The result of that is we have a system in which over 80 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured and tens of thousands die each and every year because they don't get to a doctor when they should.

While many public schools throughout our country lack the resources to adequately educate our young people or pay their teachers the wages those teachers deserve, at the same time, we are the most heavily incarcerated Nation on Earth. We have got more people in jail than any other country.

Meanwhile, 45 million Americans who did go to college—they saved up; they went to college—they are now drowning in \$1.8 trillion in student debt. I talk to those nurses and workers every day who say: Bernie, we have got to do something because every month I am paying hundreds and hundreds of dollars in student debt.

And here is something else that we don't talk about—you know, we have a habit here, I am afraid, in the Senate and the House; we talk about a lot, but often not the most important things in the country—and that is that I suspect that, as part of human nature, every person in America and around the world would like to live long and happy and productive lives. That is pretty basic human nature. But in America today, the very richest people live, on average, 15 years longer than the poorest Americans.

So when you talk about income and wealth inequality, it is not just about this guy has a nice house, this person doesn't have a nice house; big car, no car. That is one thing. If you are poor in America, you are dying at a significantly younger age than if you are wealthy.

The polls seem to show that more and more Americans are giving up on democracy. They work long hours for low wages. They worry about their kids. They can't afford healthcare. They see their jobs going to other countries. Meanwhile, the people on top are doing better than any time in American history, and they wonder: Hey, if we elect these guys to the House and the Senate, Governors, what are they doing for us? Do they understand? Do they live in the real world?

Do they understand what is going on in our lives, or are they too busy going out and raising campaign contributions from the rich and the powerful?

I believe that the time is long, long, long overdue for the Congress to start addressing the needs of the American people. And I know it is a radical idea to suggest that maybe, just maybe, we should do what the American people want and not what wealthy campaign contributors want.

When 83 percent of the American people want us to lower the cost of prescription drugs—do you know what, it might be time for the Senate to do that.

When 84 percent of the American people know there is something wrong with elderly people who can't afford dental care, hearing aids, or eyeglasses—84 percent—maybe, just maybe, we may want to expand Medicare to cover those basic healthcare needs.

When overwhelming numbers of the American people know that it is beyond absurd that some billionaires and large profitable corporations don't pay a nickel in Federal income tax, maybe, just maybe, we might want to change our tax system so that the rich and the powerful start paying their fair share of taxes.

When 76 percent of the American people understand that our home healthcare system is a disaster, that many elderly people and disabled people would rather stay home rather than be forced into a nursing home, maybe we should expand home healthcare.

When we remain the only major country on Earth not to have paid family and medical leave—the only major country on Earth—maybe it is time that the Congress pass a paid family and medical leave act.

When we have a dysfunctional childcare system in which in my State, not different around the country, working parents are paying 25 percent, 30 percent of their income for childcare so they can go to work, maybe we should reform our childcare and pre-K system so that it is affordable for all parents in this country.

And maybe—I know this is another radical idea. There is a piece in the paper today about the impact of climate change. The sea level is going to rise by a foot in the next few decades. We are looking at drought, floods, extreme weather disturbances. Here is a really radical idea: Maybe, at a time when the scientists tell us that it is questionable in terms of the kind of planet we are going to leave our kids and future generations, whether or not it is going to be habitable or livable, I know it is a radical idea—a lot of fossil fuel money coming into this place—but maybe, just maybe, we stand up to the fossil fuel industry and tell them their short-term profits are not more important than the future of this planet.

So we have a lot of work to do. I am not sure that we will do it. I am not sure that Members of Congress have

the willingness or the courage to stand up to the powerful special interests who control the economic and political life of this country.

But this, I will say: If we do not do that in terms of the economy, in terms of climate, in terms of healthcare, in terms of education, future generations will look back at this Congress and say, Where were you?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Wyoming.

ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to specifically talk about Americans' need for more American energy.

For the last year, the American people have been suffering from ongoing Joe Biden inflation. They are paying the price, they are feeling the pain, and it all started on day 1 of the Biden administration, when he took out his Executive order pen, and he killed a pipeline bringing energy from Canada to the United States.

And as this war on American energy has continued, we are now at a point where inflation is the worst it has been in 40 years. So it is no surprise that the President's approval rating has dropped to a low of only 40 percent in America.

Well, this incredible rise in prices for energy, as well as all of the other components—whether it is gas, whether it is groceries—but if energy gets more expensive, we know that it costs more to manufacture things, it costs more to grow things, it costs more to transport things from where they are grown or manufactured to market.

So much of this inflation has been brought on as a result of the Joe Biden policies related specifically to American energy.

When you look at the laws that he has promoted, the executive actions that he has taken from day 1, going all the way up to a speech he gave just yesterday, this is a President who is dancing to the tune of the climate elitists and wants to keep American energy in the ground.

Energy prices are up overall about 30 cents on the dollar since Joe Biden took over. They have gone up 8 months in a row. Gasoline prices are up by about a dollar a gallon, if not more so, since Biden took office.

I was at a high school in Greybull, WY, and started talking about energy prices. I asked if they know what the cost of a gallon of gasoline was, and the student body knew to within nine-tenths of a penny how much the cost of gasoline was in their hometown of Greybull, WY.

You can see it right up there, and people know the price, and they have been watching, since Joe Biden took over, the price of energy going up; and we have also seen Joe Biden's approval going down.

This isn't a coincidence. This is a direct result of the anti-American energy policies of this President and the Democrats in this body and this administration.

On his first day in office, his very first day in office, Joe Biden killed the Keystone Pipeline. He blocked new oil and gas leases on public lands. He has gone after energy exploration in Alaska.

And for the senior Senator from Alaska to come to the floor and go to an Energy Committee and say: It is hard to believe, but we are using more energy in the United States today, she said, from Russia than we are from Alaska, that is a result of the actions of this administration.

So what has happened with all of this? What has the impact been to American families?

Well, they are struggling. They are suffering. They are having to change the way they drive, the way they eat, the way they live. People can't keep up. Wages aren't keeping up with costs. They are just not. People's dreams are being crushed because they have to take the savings that they have been saving for different items they wanted to do and they have to use it to just get by, where it costs about \$275 a month now, this year, to just get by compared to last year. Just to maintain a standard of living, people are having to pay \$275 more each and every month, just to maintain and not to get ahead.

Apparently, according to the majority leader, the Democrats finally—finally—yesterday at their lunch were going to talk about inflation. It is now February of 2022; Joe Biden came into office January of 2021. He said inflation was going to be temporary. A month, he said, after month after month after month, and now 10 months into a very serious situation, we still don't hear any practical solutions coming from the Democrats. We do hear gimmicks. We do hear gimmicks.

Joe Biden, in September, had his National Security Advisor, unbelievably, beg OPEC and Russia—Russia—to produce more oil. We are using twice the amount of crude oil now from Russia than we were a year ago. Vladimir Putin, who may any day—even this day—invasion Ukraine, is still exporting 5 million barrels of crude oil a day. The price of oil is \$90 a barrel, probably going to \$100. The Biden and Democratic policies have been a jackpot for Vladimir Putin.

So, in November, after he tried the effort to beg Putin to produce more energy and sell it to the United States, the President went to another trick in his bag of tricks—another gimmick—and he said: Let's release some energy from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

So he said how much he was going to release. The Secretary of Energy was asked in a press conference: Well, how much is that relative to how much we use in the United States? She didn't have any idea. Turned out it was 2½ days' worth, and the impact of the release dropped the price by 2 cents a gallon—2 cents.

Oh, Democrats patted themselves on the back, and then prices went up again—a complete failure.

Now prices are expected to go even higher, as I said—maybe \$100 a barrel soon. Many experts are predicting \$4 a gallon when you go to fill up this summer. And now we hear another gimmick coming from the Democrats.

This time it is a temporary pause in the gasoline tax until after election day. So the New York Times had a story about it today: "Democrats, With Eye on Midterms, Search for Ways to Bring Down Rising Prices."

It is not because Americans are suffering, not because people at home, if the Democrats ever go home, are telling them how hard it is, not because they have an understanding of the needs of the American people—nope, none of those reasons. The Democrats, with an eye on the midterms, have introduced this legislation. When you look at the cosponsors, it is interesting that so many of them are people who are listed as "vulnerable" come the elections in November. This might be the gimmick to end all gimmicks. Suspending the gas tax—and, oh, by the way, bringing it back right after the election. It is all election-driven.

Are we going to need less energy after election day? Is there going to be more expensive energy after election day? That is what we get.

I found it interesting to see one Democrat stand up and comment on this. It is Larry Summers. He was an economic adviser and Secretary, Cabinet Member, worked with both the Clinton and Obama administrations. What did he call it? "Short-sighted, ineffective, goofy, and gimmicky."

Thank you, Larry Summers, for pointing out to the Democrats in this body what the American people already see—your efforts are "short-sighted, ineffective, goofy, and gimmicky."

Of course, the gas tax is the way that we pay in this country for roads and bridges. If the gas tax went away today, the American people and those kids in high school and grade school who can do the math, who know that the gas tax is 18 cents a gallon—Federal gas tax—knows that the increase in the cost of gasoline to what they are paying at the pump is still about \$1 a gallon higher today than it was when Joe Biden became President of the United States.

This newest proposal by the Democrats is not about affordable energy; it is a cheap political trick. It might sound good in a press release. The kids in Greybull, WY, know it is not going to help them.

Democrats desperately want to look like they are trying to do something after ignoring inflation, denying it was even there in the first place. Yet, after months and months and months of the American people suffering, the American people know a gimmick when they see it. So Democrats have tried to spend 5 months passing their billion-dollar reckless tax-and-spending bill. The President calls it Build Back Better. That is what he called it yesterday when he gave a speech to a number of