

after an incredibly short time, sometimes at just 6 weeks. D&C is the medical procedure necessary to safely remove an unviable embryo and lining of the uterus so women can eventually try again to get pregnant.

So what happens if a woman miscarries after that 6-week mark? What happens to women like me who miscarried at 9 weeks? If that kind of policy had been in place in that horrible, most searingly painful moment in my life when I learned that my pregnancy wasn't viable, I would have been kept from the medical care I desperately needed—care that allowed me to undergo another round of IVF after that D&C procedure was completed, care that allowed me eventually to get pregnant with my rainbow daughter, Maile.

Over the past 6 years that I have served in the Senate, I have gotten to know some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle quite well. Today, I come to the floor to ask those Republican colleagues a simple question: Think back to that stretch of time before you became a parent. Imagine that the only way you or your partner could get pregnant was through IVF. Then imagine that some politicians deciding that appealing to the most fringe subset of their base was worth robbing you of your dream of having a child, was worth stealing that moment we all had when we locked eyes with our newborns for the first time. How would that feel? How would that sit with you?

If it so happens that you didn't struggle with infertility, that you didn't need a little medical help to have your child, then I am happy for you, truly. I can't tell you how fortunate you are. But if through sheer luck you won that proverbial lottery, how could you then stomach spending your time robbing other Americans, your own constituents, of the joy you have been lucky enough to experience?

No. No. No.

In this scary, precarious post-Dobbs world, we cannot risk one more State getting one inch closer to stripping one more person of the right to build their family, how they choose, when they choose.

That is why today, I ask my colleagues to pass with unanimous consent my Right to Build Families Act, which would ensure that every American's fundamental right to become a parent via IVF is actually, truly protected, regardless of a person's ZIP Code.

My bill would keep States from banning assisted reproductive technology—known as ART—including IVF. It would protect healthcare providers who provide ART or related counseling and would allow the Department of Justice to pursue civil action against States that violate this legislation because no one should feel that someone else's religious beliefs or partisan slants could rob her of her chance to get pregnant, and no doctor should

have to risk becoming a criminal in their State's eyes just for providing women the healthcare they need to start families.

Let's be very clear. If you believe in basic logic, then you know that there is no chance that these kinds of extremist Republicans have any right to call themselves pro-life.

If they were pro-life, they would do something about the number of first graders murdered in their classrooms by military-style assault weapons every year.

If they were pro-life, they would spend even an ounce of energy trying to staunch the maternal mortality crisis that has killed a tragic number of Black and Brown women.

If they cared about protecting life on this planet, they would do something about our planet dying. They would stop stripping basic healthcare from single parents working double shifts. They would stop trying to rip Social Security away from grandma and grandpa. If they cared about fostering life maybe—I don't know, maybe, just maybe—they wouldn't try to stop women like me from creating it. They wouldn't throw around words like manslaughter, when all we want is to become mothers.

Look, there are lots of really complicated, nuanced issues that we debate in this Chamber. This just isn't one of them.

One in four women married to men have difficulty getting pregnant or carrying a pregnancy to term, a stat that doesn't include the LGBTQ+ couples or partnerless Americans who also need the help of ART to grow families.

One in four—that is one in four blue States, one in four red States, battleground States, one in four of the biggest cities and the smallest of rural towns, one in four of the wealthiest and the poorest ZIP Codes.

Infertility doesn't discriminate. It doesn't distinguish. It doesn't see party lines or State lines.

So to my Republican colleagues, please: Think about how many women that 25 percent equates to be in your State, women willing to go through expensive, painful medical procedures just for a chance to experience the smallest, most banal moments of parenthood, just to have a newborn to swaddle, a toddler whose shoes to tie, a baby whose diaper to change.

Think about these constituents of yours. If you believe that they have the right to be called "Mom" without also being painted as a criminal, then all you have to do to prove it is to help me defend this most basic right. It is that simple. It is that easy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Minnesota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, in a moment, I will ask unanimous consent to

confirm Executive Calendar No. 1204, the nomination of Jessica Looman, of Minnesota, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor. Ms. Looman's nomination was favorably reported out of the Senate HELP Committee on November 29 with a strong bipartisan vote of 13 to 9.

Jessica Looman has very capably served as the Principal Deputy Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division since January of 2021. In recognition of her excellent service, Ms. Looman was nominated to permanently lead the Division at the Department of Labor, and I can't think of a better candidate.

I have had the opportunity to know and to work with Jessica since 2011. Jessica is from St. Paul, MN. She is a longtime labor leader, attorney, and lifelong champion of workers. In addition to being a strong advocate for working people, she is also thoughtful and innovative and fair. She has led executive agencies and has wide experience working with diverse stakeholders. I am confident that she will be a fair and pragmatic Administrator as she enforces some of our Nation's most important labor laws, including laws governing minimum wage, overtime, and child labor.

This role that she will serve in has a direct impact on working people, like the waitress who should be protected from a boss who steals her tips, like the building trades carpenter or laborer who has the right to earn the prevailing wage that can support their families when they work on a Federal project, and like the worker who has the right to earn overtime and isn't being paid for the hours they work.

At a time when we have seen child labor abuses at meatpacking plants in Minnesota and auto suppliers in Alabama, it is critical that we have strong oversight and enforcement to protect children from abuse.

Ms. Looman's values are rooted in upholding the dignity of work and supporting hard-working Americans. In all of the time I have known her, she has approached issues with a keen desire to understand both sides of an argument and to find fair solutions that both sides can accept. This is why she is respected by both labor and employers, first in Minnesota and now in her work at the U.S. Department of Labor. Ms. Looman has built this reputation because she is reasonable and builds consensus even when it is difficult and there are real differences to bridge.

Ms. Looman will be a strong, fair Wage and Hour Administrator for workers and for employers across the country. For this reason, I urge my colleagues to support her nomination and to allow this request to move forward.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, as in executive session, the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 1204, Jessica Looman, of Minnesota, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor; that the Senate

vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, before coming to the Senate, I was actually involved in a very, very small business. For nearly 17 years, this business had 1 location and 15 employees. After all that work, over the next 20 years, it did grow into then a regional company and a national one. All I can tell you is that that is the hardest job out there. Farming is another example where you are a sole proprietor and you have all the risk.

Whenever there are burdensome regulations that come into play, they have to be measured. You have to make sure you don't have things that are going to make that job even more difficult. Living that life as a Main Street business owner, I know firsthand how some of that stuff, even though well-intentioned, can end up being something that makes the difference whether you survive or not.

As Wage and Hour Administrator, Ms. Looman would be in charge of enforcing the Fair Labor Standards Act, which is a Federal statute dictating minimum wage, overtime pay, record-keeping, and child labor requirements for private employers. As Acting Administrator, she oversaw the end of the Trump administration's rules on joint employers, independent contractors, and overtime. These rules brought greater regulatory certainty and consistency to employers and entrepreneurs, small ones.

The Biden administration is working on their own version of these rules, which I fear will be job-killing, burdensome, and bring uncertainty to employers, employees, and entrepreneurs.

The other thing that these businesses do—unlike larger ones, this is their main source of income. Their living is made out of it. They are lucky if they scrape out a return on investment. So if it gets to be too burdensome, you are taking away, in essence, a paycheck.

Most recently, they announced a proposed rule for determining independent contractor classification. This proposed rule would have immediate and long-term disruptive effects on millions of workers and thousands of businesses at a time when the economy is facing high inflation rates and stress in the business community in general.

This position impacts too many Americans and small businesses not to have a vote for them or to have undue, burdensome regulations; therefore, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

OMNIBUS

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, if this is winning, I am getting tired of winning. GOP leadership declared that this bill is a victory—but not unless you define victory as adding over a trillion dollars in new deficit spending.

So really, there is a debate—a big debate—within the Republican Party. Which is more important? Is it more important to add \$45 billion to military spending, or is it more important not to add \$1 trillion in deficit to our overall debt?

We now have a \$31 trillion debt. We are adding over a trillion dollars a year, and yet Republican leadership says this is a victory because we are getting more military spending. But it is a victory at what expense? Are we actually more secure? Are we more safe? Is our national security more protected by spending more on the military, or is our national security actually more threatened by incurring more debt? I would argue the latter, that \$31 trillion dollars in debt is the No. 1 threat to our national security.

It is the week before Christmas, and, predictably, Congress is considering yet another \$1.7 trillion spending bill that we haven't had a chance to see or even read.

Last night, at 1:30 in the morning, the text of this 4,155-page spending spree was released. If you thought Congress couldn't possibly spend more money than it did last year, you would be wrong. The omnibus increases spending by 10 percent compared to last year's budget. You would think that nearly 2 years of 40-year-high inflation would create some hesitation.

You would think that a looming recession, spurred largely by exorbitant government spending, would give this Congress pause. But instead of taking a minute to consider what a responsible Federal Government budget looks like, we are, instead, placed behind the barrel of a gun, forcing us to choose between letting government expire or blindly passing a \$1.7 trillion spending package that not only does not balance, but, in fact, spends over 10 percent more than last year.

How does Congress spend taxpayers' money? Well, here are just a few examples of how your government currently spends money. We found that they spent, last year, \$2.3 million injecting beagles with cocaine. It seems that their researchers were curious—despite the pain they inflicted on these dogs—they were curious to know if cocaine causes adverse effects. Guess what. Read the newspaper. Read the news. Look at the addicts across our country. You think you need to inject beagles with cocaine to know that cocaine is a bad deal?

And \$700,000 was spent to study how male parrots attract their mate. Really? We have got people who go hungry in our country. We have people that are trying to get out from behind poverty, and we are spending \$700,000 studying how male parrots attract a female.

We spent \$187,000 to study whether or not dogs help kids cope. Of course they do. Ask any pet owner. Any pet owner could have told you, and we would have saved the taxpayer \$187,000.

We spent \$118,000 to study if a metal replica, a robot, of Marvel Comics' evil warlord Thanos could snap his fingers—\$118,000. Really? They apparently hired some dude to wear metal gloves and then try to snap his fingers. You know what? They found out that it is impossible to make a snapping sound with metal fingers.

So robots of the world, be warned: It is hard to snap your fingers.

While we continue to spend ourselves into oblivion, almost every single European nation is working to shrink their deficit. We routinely look to Europe, and we say: Look how liberal, look how Big Government, look how socialized—and yet, most of Europe actually balances their annual budget.

In 2019, 15 of 26 European countries ran budget surpluses. Another eight European countries ran deficits of less than 3 percent of their GDP. While here in the U.S., in that same year, our deficit exceeded 6 percent of GDP.

Europe is a glaring example that fiscal responsibility is possible. It is not a pipe dream. In fact, if we just cut our spending to what we spent in 2019—just 3 years ago—we would actually have a balanced budget today. Instead, we have jumped from a deficit that was 6 percent of our GDP to a deficit that is 12 percent of our GDP.

We are adding debt at an alarming rate. We are adding debt at a greater pace than we ever have in the history of our country. Thankfully, some of our predecessors in Congress anticipated this lack of restraint, and they gave us some guideposts. They gave us some rules. They established guardrails and tools to keep our budget in check. For example, there is a rule called the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act—or PAYGO, for short. It requires that if you have new spending, it has to be offset by cuts elsewhere in the budget or elsewhere in the spending bill.

Despite equipping our government with this necessary tool, though, Congress, with almost every budget in recent history, abuses its power, spends like drunken sailors, and ignores the fact that a day of reckoning is coming. Unfortunately, Congress has, virtually 100 percent of the time, voted to waive the PAYGO requirements.

The American people demand accountability for the damage the Big Government spenders are doing to our families and to our Nation's economic well-being. I will not allow my colleagues to escape accountability by hiding behind 4,000 pages of legislative text.

I, therefore, will raise a budget point of order as this bill comes to the floor that will put every Member of the Senate on record as to where they stand on fiscal responsibility. Unfortunately, most of the Senators—even if they share my sentiments—they know that