

Again, along with the reforms that are being undertaken at the Postal Service itself, this legislation gives them the financial breathing room they need to be able to save the post office.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill. Let's put the post office in a position to succeed and provide those essential services that small businesses, veterans, and rural constituents rely on so much.

I appreciate working with my colleague Senator PETERS on this over time to find consensus. Both sides had to make concessions to get to this point. We have ended up with a good bill. Let's pass this bill and ensure that the post office is healthy for our constituents moving forward.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:44 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 2022—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, as the Senate process on the Postal Service Reform Act is underway, I want to rise today to highlight the daily impact the U.S. Postal Service has on folks back home, particularly in rural Kansas.

Many Americans rely upon the U.S. Postal Service. When a special occasion arises, they will send a card to a loved one. And while receiving a letter or a card, a gift in the mail—instead of a text message or email these days—brings lots of people lots of joy and a connection to people, the U.S. Postal Service holds a very different role for so many Kansans living in rural America.

Its services are ingrained in the daily routines and lifestyles of our rural communities. Men and women of our communities gather at the post office. They see their friends and neighbors when they go to get their mail at the mailbox at the post office. Everything from celebrating birthdays and weddings to supporting the town's economy, to even providing lifesaving assistance during a natural disaster or global pandemic revolves around the post office.

Rod Holub, former president of the Kansas State Association of Letter Carriers, reminded me of a supercell tornado that hit Manhattan, KS, in June 2008. There was no electronic communication available, and the only reliable way to communicate was the post office. One of the first people allowed in the affected area was Rod, the postal carrier.

Kansans living in Manhattan at the time have told me stories of how Rod

assured every family that they would still be able to connect to their mail service since electronic communications were down, and it would be a while before they could be restored. Insurance claim information and legal documents were going to be vital in rebuilding their lives, and Rod ensured safe, secure, and timely delivery of those documents.

Similar situations occurred in the communities of Reading and Greensburg when natural disasters cut off their access to the local post office. When natural disasters wreak havoc in Kansas, a priority in the aftermath is helping to ensure postal operations resume quickly for Kansans who lost almost everything. In both of the cases of Greensburg and Reading, the Postal Service worked quickly with the communities to reestablish mail service and provide a method of communication to rebuild from the destruction.

It is often a neglected fact that the U.S. Postal Service letter carriers are the protective eyes and ears of the neighborhood, often going the extra mile to aid a customer in need of assistance. One such story occurred when a Kansas letter carrier discovered a customer confined to a wheelchair in the heat of summer and without air-conditioning, a fan, or a ramp to get in and out of their home. The Kansas letter carrier took it upon herself to rally the neighbors who all provided the customer with a window AC unit, a fan, and had a ramp built.

Much of the benefits of the Postal Service Reform Act will be halting the service reductions Kansans have been subjected to for the past 15 years. Dozens of post offices across the State have closed and multiple rural processing facilities in Dodge City, Colby, Hays, Salina, Topeka, and Fort Scott were shuttered. Now, if you live in many parts of Western Kansas or Eastern or Southeast Kansas, your mail is processed someplace far away—North Platte, NE; Amarillo, TX. There are only two processing facilities that remain in our State. The impact of these closures and consolidations disproportionately affect rural Kansans in both service reductions and lost jobs.

Congressional action on the postal reform legislation will allow the U.S. Postal Service to continue serving rural America without fear of imminent service reductions that will further isolate rural communities. The solution to the post office's financial circumstances can't simply be eliminating service, reducing service. To ensure that the U.S. Postal Service maintains its vital services, I urge my colleagues to support and vote for the Postal Service Reform Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3652

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I rise today to discuss Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and in a moment, I am going to ask unanimous consent to pass some

legislation which has been kicking around here for a while and is way overdue.

What we have witnessed over the past 5 days is a flagrant act of unprovoked aggression perpetrated by Russia against Ukraine.

The world we are living in today is different from the one we lived in last week. For months, I, along with my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle, have watched the conflict inch closer and closer.

The intelligence community provided accurate and clear information on the situation, and for this, I commend them. I also commend them for releasing the vast majority, if not all of the information they had in an attempt to deter Putin. That didn't work. However, there is no question, we should have taken action sooner rather than later, and it is time to do so now in a much more aggressive fashion.

In preparation for this invasion, many of my Senate colleagues and I drafted hard-hitting sanctions and called repeatedly for more lethal assistance for months. We used all leverage at our disposal to pressure the administration to take sufficient action, but despite our actions, our efforts, it didn't happen. Certainly, some military assistance was provided, but it is hard not to think that if we had expedited Javelin and Stinger deliveries last year and let our allies move more equipment sooner, the Ukrainians would be making the Russians pay a much higher price.

Right now, Ukraine desperately needs the support of the international community. It needs us to sanction Russia, to punish its government for this unjustified attack. These Ukrainian heroes need more weapons, armor, and supplies to fight back the Russian invaders and preserve the lives of its population.

The Biden administration was well-intentioned in pursuit of a diplomatic resolution for Russia's aggression, but the administration was wrong to oppose our congressional efforts to impose even tougher sanctions that were essential to make our deterrence credible. President Biden made it clear that maximum economic sanctions would only come after Putin invaded. The administration's promise that the threat of sanctions would be enough to deter Putin was a mistake. Look where we are now. Diplomacy has failed. The invasion has happened.

While sanctions have now been levied on Russia, there is still room for more robust sanctions in order get Putin to pull back. I have always said I am all in on all of the above when it comes to Ukraine and Russia.

I am happy to support legislation proposed by my Democrat colleagues, but the Senate must take the lead and mandate the massive economic sanctions that President Biden and his officials committed to.

The NYET Act, which I introduced 2 weeks ago with numerous cosponsors,

contains the tough sanctions that will bring the hammer down on Putin and his regime and provide the assistance that Ukrainians need now. It is based on the bipartisan negotiations that took place over the last 2 months and includes many measures that have been endorsed by Members on both sides of the aisle.

To be clear, I understand that my friends on the other side are going to object to this; nonetheless, a good number of the things they suggested are in this bill.

The NYET Act places sanctions on Russia's lucrative mining, mineral, and oil and gas sectors—actions that the administration thus far has refused to take. This needs to be done, and we haven't received an explanation as to why they haven't done it. It punishes Russian and Belarusian Government and military officials for their horrific actions and will expose the full extent of Putin and his cronies on the left.

The bill sanctions 12 of the largest Russian banks and critically also imposes secondary sanctions on them—something the administration has yet to do. Secondary sanctions are critical to hurting the Russian economy. They force the world's financial institutions to make a choice between Russia and Western markets. They will choose the West. Indeed, for their own good, they must choose the West. Russia will be isolated.

When it comes to sanctions, I want to thank Senator TOOMEY for helping on that part of this bill, and he is going to talk about them in just a minute for just a period of time.

NYET also increases the funding for military assistance to Ukraine, as well as other Eastern European nations, to Radio Free Europe, to Radio Liberty, the Global Engagement Center, and re-fills the President's drawdown account.

It also establishes a new Ukrainian resistance fund to help Ukraine continue to resist attempts to occupy or subjugate any new territory Russia seizes, while sending a clear message to Putin that his military will pay a price for advances into sovereign Ukrainian territory. Their resistance has been nothing short of awe-inspiring; that is, the Ukrainian people themselves. We need to help them, and this bill, the NYET Act, will do exactly that.

I hope my colleagues across the aisle will put aside partisanship and join us today by passing this bill, which will impose crippling sanctions on Russia's most powerful people and which will support the people of Ukraine. All of us are moved by the Ukrainian people and their fight for freedom. I know my Democrat colleagues can and have supported nearly all of these concepts at one time or another. I ask them to join me today.

This is the most deliberative body in the world, we always say. Well, we have overdeliberated, and it is time to act.

I yield the floor to Senator TOOMEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I want to thank the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for the work he has done on this for years.

I just want to make a couple of points here. One is—it is a very hard point to make, but I think we ought to be candid, and that is, there is a very real danger that the Russian military will eventually prevail. Let's be honest. They are much larger. They have far more resources. The Ukrainians are putting up an absolutely historic and heroic fight, but it is not clear that they can hold on indefinitely.

So what should we be doing in light of that fact and the circumstances we have? I completely agree with Senator RISCH. We have an obligation, in my mind, to provide the resources that we can. We are doing that. This legislation would go further.

There is one other thing we can do that I think is extremely important as well, and that is, establish as a goal that as soon as possible, Vladimir Putin come to regret this decision. It is extremely important, in my mind, that Putin and all of the other authoritarians and bullies and dictators around the world see this invasion of Ukraine as a terrible, strategic mistake for Russia to have made because if they don't conclude that this was a mistake, then it doesn't end with Ukraine.

So how do we ensure that this is universally recognized, including by Putin and those who would like to emulate him? How do we make sure they see it as the mistake that we believe it is? There is one way to do this: We bring the Russian economy to its knees. And we have the ability to do that, but we have chosen not to do so thus far.

Now, I am pleased to see the administration moving in the direction of sanctioning. I am pleased that many of our European allies have taken steps to go in this direction. But until we shut down the main source of revenue for Putin and his war machine, we will not have accomplished what we need to accomplish.

This legislation does that. Among other things, it directly imposes the sanctions on the oil and gas industry—the industry that is 60 percent of all Russian exports, 40 percent of government revenue, and more than 20 percent of the entire economy. It goes after this source of cash to fund the war-fighting machine directly with sanctions, but it also does it in an indirect fashion that is very important, and I want to touch on this.

This legislation imposes what we call secondary sanctions on the Russian banking sector. Why is that important? We have all heard that some Russian banks are going to be excluded from the SWIFT system. That is true, and that is constructive; however, it is not dispositive by any means.

The SWIFT system is just a communication system. There is no money actually transferred on SWIFT. Payments aren't made. If we deny Russian

banks access to SWIFT, we don't deny them the ability to conduct business, the ability to move money on behalf of oligarchs and the oil and gas industry. We don't cut off the flow of revenue to Putin, not just by kicking them off SWIFT. We make it inconvenient for them, but there are workarounds that you can use to get around the obstacles.

What we need to do and what we do in this legislation is we make a very simple proposition to the entire world. Banks all around the world will understand that if this legislation becomes law, they have a choice to make: They can do business with Russian banks or they can do business with the United States of America, but they can't do both. That is not a tough decision for the world's banks. The overwhelming majority and all of the significant ones will choose to do business with the United States. That shuts down the Russian banking industry. That shuts down the revenue stream for Vladimir Putin. That shuts down the money that is funding this appalling, atrocious military campaign.

Are there any consequences to us? It is possible that for some period of time, there would be somewhat higher energy prices. We don't import very many Russian energy products. We shouldn't be importing any at this point. We don't import much. But the fact is, we can make up for a disruption in supply by enhancing our own production and encouraging an increase on the part of swing producers who are much more closely allied with us than with the Russians.

The Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian people's elected leaders have been absolutely heroic. They are fighting for their very lives. And, as I say, if Putin does not conclude that this was all a very big mistake, then it doesn't end with Ukraine.

I join my colleagues in urging the adoption of this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I thank my colleagues Senators RISCH and TOOMEY for their leadership on these efforts.

Americans are watching Russia's invasion into Ukraine, and they are looking to us for leadership. As an evil tyrant wages war, they are asking how our government will respond. So here we are. Congress is in session, and Senator SCHUMER has placed the world's most pressing issue on the back burner. What could be more important than supporting a fellow democracy under attack against a thug whose goal is to control as much of Europe as he can? A postal reform bill and a radical abortion bill.

The freedom, wealth, and resources of Europe are under attack. Senator SCHUMER wants to use our time to ensure more unborn babies can be killed and pass a postal reform bill that doesn't actually provide any long-term reform for America's postal workers.

And for what? So that President Biden has some progressive talking points he can use during his speech?

This is wrong. Even Switzerland, which has spent decades with a strong sense of neutrality, took decisive action this week and froze the assets of Putin and his thugs.

The Ukrainian people are being pushed out of their country and are losing their lives as they bravely defend their homes. We are hearing stories of Ukrainian grandfathers taking up arms to defend their families. Why can the Senate not come to work ready to take on the gross attacks by Putin?

He is threatening to use nuclear weapons, and he is threatening NATO members with cyber attacks and subversion. Yet Senator SCHUMER wants to put the Senate's focus elsewhere.

And we all know that the Postal Service is not in dire straits. It will continue delivering the mail this week, next week, and the week after.

But the same cannot be said about the continued self-rule of Ukraine or peace and stability in Europe as Putin threatens to expand this war. That is why Senator RISCH and I sent a letter to Senator SCHUMER asking he delay bringing up the postal reform bill and prioritize our support for the people of Ukraine.

When Putin is threatening to undo our global order and seize further control of wealth and power across Europe, Congress must act swiftly and severely. Placing any other legislation, especially a bill which does not address any urgent issues, ahead of addressing the turmoil in Europe is dereliction of our duty to the American people and a betrayal of our responsibility to stand for freedom and support the world's democracies.

At a time like this, we need to be clear about our priorities. First, the United States must continue to work with our allies and partners to destroy the Russian economy and levy devastating sanctions against the Russian oligarchy and Putin's thugs and cronies, both in and outside of the Kremlin.

Second, the United States must supply Ukraine with every weapon needed and continue to work with our allies and partners to deliver resources to Ukraine's military and the Ukrainian people.

Third, we must prioritize and increase our own defense spending to ensure maximum military readiness as we face both communist China and Putin's aggression. Now is not the time for weakness or any compromise of America's national defense capabilities.

Fourth, we must also immediately ban Russian aircraft from using American airspace.

Fifth, the Biden administration must immediately roll back its failed Green New Deal policies and take action to boost U.S. energy production and independence. They should restart the Keystone XL Pipeline and stop purchasing oil from Russia.

Sixth, all lobbyists currently working with the Russian Government, Russian oligarchs, and other Russian interests should immediately cancel their contracts. The same goes for those representing countries that refuse to condemn Russia's invasion or are aiding Russia's attempts to evade sanctions. It is inexcusable for any American to be lobbying on behalf of Putin's evil regime or those supporting it.

Seventh, all State and local governments should take every action possible to end their relationship with Russian Federal and local governments and with Russian-owned businesses. A number of States and local governments have already taken this step, and we applaud their leadership.

Finally, every American should take care to not purchase Russian-made products. Just like with communist China, buying products made in Russia will only fuel Putin's war. One of the best tools America has at its disposal is our ability to destroy the Russian economy and inflict maximum pain on Putin and his oligarch thugs.

Now is a time for all Americans to come together in defense of freedom and democracy, and the Senate must lead by example.

That is why I am proud to work with my colleague from Idaho on the Never Yielding Europe's Territory Act, or the NYET Act, to provide the critical support Ukraine needs to defend itself and deter Russian aggression, while imposing real costs on the Kremlin for its ongoing aggression against Ukraine.

The Senate should act immediately on this bill. American leadership is needed now more than ever, and taking these steps now is how we as a nation stand up against evil. Until this conflict is over, supporting Ukraine and making the horrific war as painful as possible for Putin and his evil regime must be our top focus.

I yield the floor to Senator RISCH.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, in closing, let me say, Ukrainians are dying. They are dying in a heroic fight; in a classic David versus Goliath fight. We can do something. We should do something. We have talked and talked; we have debated; and it is time to act.

I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of S. 3652 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

First of all, let me agree with my Republican colleagues. We stand in awe today of the Ukrainian people, of President Zelenskyy, of the Ukrainian military. They have given the Russians more than they thought was coming. They have stood up a defense and are

resistant. The world has watched with admiration, and the jury is, frankly, still out as to whether the Russians can make good on their plans, given how fierce the Ukrainians have fought.

And I have been proud to stand with my colleagues on this floor as we have delivered additional aid to Ukraine, as we have made sure they have had the Javelins and the Stingers necessary to protect themselves. I have been proud to visit Ukraine with many of my colleagues here today, and we are going to continue to stand with the Ukrainian people.

But I want to make two points today with respect to the effort that has been undertaken by my good friend, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee.

First, let me make a specific point on the merits of the bill that is being proposed here today.

Passing this bill with no committee process, no amendments, no debate would be a terrible idea. What this bill does, essentially, is to shatter American unity with Europe, with Japan, with South Korea, with all the allies that have stood with us over the course of this past week.

President Biden spent the last 2 months methodically building a never-before-seen coalition of nations to impose the most significant set of sanctions ever seen, and this bill would undo that.

Why? Because this would mandate that the United States impose certain new sanctions over Europe's objection. It calls for the United States to abandon our policy of focusing on multilateral sanctions and start over with unilateral sanctions. Why is that a terrible idea? Well, first, because unilateral sanctions just aren't as effective as multilateral sanctions are. When you are talking about energy policy, you want the Europeans with you because that is where the Russian energy ends up. Without Europe, going at it alone, it makes the United States look weak, and the sanctions just aren't as effective.

But second, this bill is a bad idea because breaking with Europe and our NATO partners right now—that is exactly what Vladimir Putin wants. Yes, he wants to control Ukraine, but what he wants more is to smash the transatlantic alliance to pieces. He sees the invasion of Ukraine as a wedge that will cause America to squabble and break with our allies. Putin is setting a trap for us, and this bill would have us walk right into that trap.

Third, let's be clear. With a couple of small exceptions, President Biden has already done everything that this bill calls for and more. This bill calls for sanctions on those responsible for the buildup of forces around Ukraine. The administration has imposed sanctions on Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Lavrov, 13 other members of Russia's Security Council.

This bill calls for sanctions on Nord Stream 2. Nord Stream 2 is done.

Thanks to the committed diplomatic efforts of the Biden administration, the German Government has put an end to Nord Stream 2, and we have applied the sanctions.

This bill calls for sanctions on oligarchs. Biden did that with our allies, and he went further. He launched a task force that is going to identify, freeze, and take from Russian oligarchs their assets.

This bill calls for sanctions on financial institutions. The administration has already targeted all 10 of Russia's largest financial institutions, which hold more than three-quarters of the Russian financial sector's total assets.

This bill calls for a prohibition on investment in occupied Ukrainian territory. President Biden did that on the first day of the war.

This bill calls for sanctioning transactions involving the Russian sovereign debt. President Biden did that on the second day of the war.

This bill calls for sanctions on Belarus. President Biden levied sanctions on 24 Belarusian individuals, 2 state-owned banks, and 13 of the country's industries.

President Biden has put together a sanctions package that is sweeping, that is unprecedented, that is breaking the back of the Russian economy. So why are we down here on the floor engaged in this back-and-forth?

And that brings me to my second point, a broader one. It used to be that the all-consuming politics of this town sometimes would take a break when the crisis was big enough. Sometimes they would stop at the water's edge. This was the case in 2001 when this country was attacked.

Republicans were in charge of the White House and both Houses of Congress, and Democrats certainly had the choice to blame the attack on President Bush to try to score political points. Democrats could have come down to the floor to offer partisan bills. Democrats in the Senate could have used their minority prerogatives to block Bush's national security nominees.

But that is not what happened in 2001. Democrats and Republicans came together because, at that moment, patriotism, the love of your country, the defense of your country was more important than politics or party.

Now, today, the shoe is on the other foot. Democrats control the White House, the House, and the Senate. And while our Nation wasn't attacked last week, I would argue that this moment is the most perilous that the United States and the world has faced, certainly since 2001, but given the nuclear stakes involved in a conflict with Russia, perhaps the most perilous since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Now, I get it. The professional outrage machine that dominates American politics today has deluded a lot of folks in the Congress into believing that unity is weakness; that putting your country over party is an anachronism. But I don't believe that.

I believe that sometimes the stakes are so high that you have got to put aside your politics—at least temporarily—put aside your disagreements and get behind your government.

Now, let's be honest. As this crisis has grown in seriousness, over and over again Republicans have had the chance to do what Democrats did in 2001: elevate loyalty to country.

But all through 2021, even as Senators were made aware of Russia's plans to invade Ukraine, Senators CRUZ and HAWLEY and a few others continued to put politics first by blocking every single national security nominee who came before this body, including those nominees who would have been working to try to help Ukraine and stop the Russian invasion.

Last month, Republicans and Democrats were working on a bipartisan bill to support Ukraine in its time of need. Those negotiations were difficult, but instead of staying at the table, Republicans walked away with virtually no notice to Democrats and introduced this bill, with only Republicans supporting it.

And now, instead of rallying behind a President who has shocked the world by uniting friends and foes behind an unprecedented set of crippling sanctions against Russia, Republicans are down here on the floor, not more than a week since the Russian invasion began, to highlight their grievances with the President's policies.

Russia invaded less than a week ago. We returned to Washington last night, and instead of deciding to sit down with Republicans today and work on agreeing on a package of support for Ukraine, like the one that President Biden has requested, Republicans have instead chosen to spend today, our first day back in the Senate since the invasion, playing politics, trying to force a vote on a bill that they wrote, that not a single Democrat supports, that everybody knows is not going to pass, has no chance of passing.

Now, we could do the same thing. Democrats could just put a bill on the floor that we all negotiated with ourselves and force Republicans to vote on it. We could choose to use this week to highlight the differences between Republicans and Democrats, but we are not going to do that because our priority is to try to work together with our Republican colleagues to find unity—unity—at this moment; to not use the first day that we are back in session since the invasion began to highlight the differences between our two parties.

And, frankly, when I look at what Republicans have been calling on President Biden to do, I don't see a lot of daylight. I don't see a lot of reason for complaint. I don't see the imperative to come down here and highlight the differences.

Nord Stream 2 is gone. It is not happening. SWIFT sanctions, previously opposed by Europe, are now happening. Russian banks are being crippled. As-

sets of Russian oligarchs are being seized. Vladimir Putin is being personally sanctioned. Embargoes are being put on key technologies sent into Russia.

The set of sanctions that President Biden announced—it goes further than what most all observers and pundits predicted. It is frankly stunning how successful President Biden's diplomacy has been.

And it just strains all credibility for Republicans to suddenly claim that this diplomacy is irrelevant and all these countries are going to impose these sanctions even if President Biden did nothing.

I wish my colleagues could see the seriousness of this moment and the need for us to focus our energies on coming together instead of playing into our enemy's hands and showing our differences at this moment.

Our President has rallied the world to this fight. Vladimir Putin is reeling, but we are forced to spend time today debating a partisan bill introduced by only one party that has no chance of passage because today on this floor scoring political points seems more important than finding a way to come together—to come together with the President, with both parties around our support for Ukraine.

And for those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, in rebuttal to my good friend's comments, first of all, let me say that a number of the things I do take exception with—for instance, his statement that if we pass this we are going to somehow shatter the unanimity with which the world has come together to impose this. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Certainly, the sanctions that we have put on have been in conjunction with a lot of our allies and a lot of our partners. Simply putting on secondary sanctions—again, in conjunction with our allies and our partners—will not in any way shatter that at all.

My good friend says, "Why are we here on the floor today?"

Senator, I would say, the reason we are on the floor today is, it is not enough.

Now, you said I came down here to criticize the President. I did not criticize the President in anything I said. I applaud the action he has taken. I want him to take more.

We have a convoy that is 40 miles long that is headed for Kyiv. Now, that convoy started out after all of these sanctions that the President put in place had taken effect. The banks, as you know, shut down—at least temporarily—in Russia. They closed their stock market. They have done a number of things, but it is not enough. We need to toughen up.

As you know, I have talked and talked and talked with the administration to try to get them to embrace secondary sanctions because it is the secondary sanctions that are truly going

to shut the thing down lock, stock, and barrel; and Putin is going to have to answer to his people if we do get it shut down.

Look, this is not partisan. I am not here to try to drive a wedge in the party. And as you know, your party had substantial input into the NYET Act that we have here. The chairman of the committee, I think, negotiated in good faith as we put this together. I have told him that personally. I have said that publicly.

The fact is, we came very close to the bill, and the NYET bill is very close to what we agreed to, but we couldn't come together on the last few things; and that is, a permanent shutdown of Nord Stream 2—not just the sanctions that are in place on a temporary basis, but a permanent shutdown—and on secondary sanctions, which we believe will be the final nail in the coffin for the economy in Russia.

So, again, I answer the question asked: Why are we here? We are here because it is not enough. The convoys are continuing. There are tens of thousands of more Russian soldiers that are entering Ukraine. They are having a tough, tough time of it.

I agree with Senator TOOMEY. You know, you sit here, and you see what is going on. The question you have to ask is: How long can the Ukrainians hold out? We want them to hold out.

There are provisions in this act, as you know, that provide additional help for the Ukrainians themselves. But most importantly, what it will do is it will flat shut down the economy in Russia.

In addition to that, you and I discussed, I think, the fact that we can never use sanctions in a manner where we or our allies get hurt worse than the enemy does or, for that matter, to any great extent. That is why there are waivers in here. And sanctions always have waiver provisions in them so that it can take the edge off on anything that causes us or our allies any difficulties. So in that regard, I think that you are wrong on that.

Back to the basic bill: I said I am an all-of-the-above person. If the Democrats want to bring their bill down, it will probably look very much like this, but it won't have secondary sanctions in it, it won't have a permanent closing of Nord Stream 1 and 2. I will stand up here and say, We can do better, but I am still going to vote for your bill, and I wish you would do that on mine. But I would respectfully request that you back away from this complaint that this is a partisan exercise. It is not a partisan exercise.

There isn't a person in this body that doesn't want to do all we can possibly do to preserve the lives of the Ukrainians that are perishing every day—women, children, civilians. We need to do all that we can, and Putin is not going to be deterred until we do all that we can, and that comes to permanently shutting down—excuse me, to completely shutting down the economy in Russia. This bill does that.

Again, I apologize if you think there is anything political about this. It is not. It is trying to do the right thing, as you and I have talked about. We have an obligation to do this as Americans, as the strongest country in the world. We can't stand by and watch this slaughter that is happening, and when that convoy gets there, it is going to be even worse.

This is something we can actually do to do more than what the President has done.

And I will say it—I said it before and I will say it again. I commend the President for what he has done. But we also, as the first branch of government, have a responsibility. We believe this bill exercises that responsibility.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 819

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, Russia continues to engage in ruthless and unprovoked attacks against the democratic and independent nation of Ukraine. I strongly condemn Russia's dangerous aggression against the people of Ukraine. Putin is responsible for the death and destruction in his wake, and he must be held accountable.

The one sledgehammer that we can use against Putin is American energy resources. Reducing the amount of Russian energy going to Europe would hurt Russia's economy. The oil and gas revenues made up about 36 percent of Russia's national budget last year. In 2021, Russia sold \$100 billion worth of oil and natural gas to Europe.

Russia is Europe's main supplier of energy. The European Union received over 40 percent of its gas imports from Russia. Russia also has significant ownership in Europe's energy infrastructure, including pipelines, distribution centers, and storage facilities.

With natural gas prices increasing and oil surpassing \$100 a barrel, more of our allies' money will be lining the pockets of Vladimir Putin. Due to high energy costs, Russian oil and gas revenues exceed initial plans by 5 percent this past year, totaling \$119 billion. In 2021, revenues from Russian oil and gas were almost \$500 million each and every day. It is a windfall for Vladimir Putin. As a result, the amount of Russian energy going to Europe is a major problem.

We must help our allies escape Russia's energy trap. American energy resources can allow Europeans to meet their energy needs and deprive Russia of the revenue it uses to fund its military aggression. Due to technological advances and an abundance of natural gas, the United States can be a strategic energy supplier to Europe. Our Nation has more than enough gas to meet America's needs and to export to other countries. We must speed up the process of getting American liquefied natural gas to our allies.

That is why I introduced S. 819, the Energy Security Cooperation with Allied Partners in Europe Act, commonly known as the ESCAPE Act. It cur-

rently has 23 sponsors. The bill, as amended, does three things: It deems it in the public interest to export U.S. liquefied natural gas to NATO countries and defense allies. It creates a transatlantic energy security strategy focused on increasing American energy exports directly to Europe. And it directs our NATO representative to help our allies and partners improve that energy security.

So, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 819 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the Barrasso amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, reserving the right to object. First, very quickly, let me make a few final points about Senator RISCH's comments.

Senator RISCH says that this isn't a partisan exercise. It is. The bill that Senator RISCH is talking about was introduced by only Republicans. It was introduced with no notice to Democrats. There was a big showy press conference in which only Republicans were there. In fact, the introduction of this bill was a messaging point for Republicans to announce that they were no longer negotiating with Democrats.

And so I appreciate that Senator RISCH often is working very industriously with Democrats, but in this case, it is a partisan bill. Only Republicans support it.

And offering it today is not helpful to the process because it had no chance of passage. Instead, today, we should be working on getting additional funding to the Ukrainians.

President Biden has requested our help, has requested Congress to step up and provide humanitarian assistance and more lethal assistance to Ukraine. Right now, with the time that we are spending arguing over a bill that is supported only by Republicans that is never going to pass this body, we could be using that time to come together around a bill that can pass, that will pass.

So that is why there is anger on our side about this exercise. There are these moments in American history and world history where our focus should be on unity, where our focus should be on coming together and finding what we can do together; and, instead, the piece of legislation that was just offered was a bill that was specifically introduced to highlight the Republican position in contrast to the Biden administration.

As for Senator BARRASSO's bill, it suffers from the same problem, which is it separates us from Europe. It separates us from our allies.

There is a lot of wisdom on the Republican side of the aisle, but it mystifies me why so many of my friends who know so much about Russia don't understand that Putin's primary objective is to break NATO into pieces, is to smash the European Union, is to create tensions and fissures within the transatlantic alliance, right?

Putin sees the greatest catastrophe of the last 100 years as the breakup of the Soviet Union, and he blames the United States and the West for that breakup. So, while the invasion of Ukraine is part of his process of remedying that grievance, the real crown—the real cherry on top for Vladimir Putin—is the splintering apart of NATO and the United States from Europe. Now, we almost got there during the Trump administration. Relations were never worse; threats of pulling out of NATO or refusing to honor our article 5 obligations.

I would argue that this invasion is happening in part because the Biden administration made clear that there wasn't going to be a natural disintegration of the transatlantic alliance, and so Vladimir Putin is using this invasion of Ukraine, first and foremost, to get control of the territory he wants but also to try to split us from each other. And our fear is that bills like this essentially step into the trap that Vladimir Putin has laid for us because secondary sanctions on European entities against the wishes of European governments splits us from each other. Had Joe Biden gone this route, you would have never had the Europeans working with us on swift sanctions. You would have never had the Europeans working with us on the seizure of Russian assets.

But because Joe Biden made the wise decision to do these sanctions in concert with Europe, we got more than we could have ever imagined. And this bill would walk us backwards, undo that unity with our colleagues.

It may be that there will be a moment in time where we can convince our European colleagues to move with us on sanctions against certain elements of Russia's energy economy, but we must do that together. We have to do that together because you need to understand what Putin's larger game is. It is the breakup of the transatlantic alliance.

I wish my colleagues were on the floor today, celebrating—celebrating what President Biden has done. Nobody thought that he could keep the alliance, that he could keep us together with Europe, that he could get Europe to agree to what they have already agreed to. I wish we were rallying behind our President right now.

I get it that there are always differences between the Republicans and a Democratic President, but, boy, this would be a great moment for us to be on the floor, supporting the breakthrough that President Biden has achieved on crippling sanctions against Russia and spending this day working

together to try to deliver billions of dollars in additional aid to Ukraine. Instead, we are engaged in a partisan squabble over bills that have no chance of passing, that are literally just as valuable as the pieces of paper that the press releases from the Republicans will be written on.

I hope that we can get beyond today and get down to work on serious business—the serious business of coming together, Republicans and Democrats, and providing Ukraine the assistance they need, in a bipartisan way, through a package of support that can be supported by both parties and signed by this President.

For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, just to point out, Members are clearly entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts.

The facts of the matter are that this bill that I have at the desk right now includes no sanctions, none whatsoever—none, zero.

This bill that we have at the desk is something that our European allies have asked for. It is not to divide them or us. They have asked for this to help them divide away from Putin. They need the energy; they need the liquefied natural gas. Some of the countries have built or are building what are called gasifiers so they can turn the liquefied natural gas, which comes in at a very low temperature, and turn it into gas that they can use for energy so they don't have to buy it and be held hostage by Vladimir Putin.

This is a bill that has previously gotten bipartisan support, in this very body, with Members of both sides of the aisle supporting efforts to help our European allies—our NATO friends—break the dependence from Russian energy. Those are the facts of the matter. People are entitled to their opinions. These are the facts.

Russia's actions against Ukraine emphasize just how important it is for nations—and specifically for America—to be energy independent.

Under the previous administration, America was energy dominant. We became the world's largest producer of oil and gas. It was the first time we had been energy independent in nearly 70 years; yet this administration has reversed course. It has made it harder for us to use American energy, and that has empowered and emboldened Vladimir Putin. We have moved from energy dominance to energy dependence. We have American energy in the ground that this administration won't let us get out of the ground. We have energy resources that would help lower the cost and help lower the pain at the pump that the American public is living with. It would help break the dependence of our European allies and the people of Ukraine from Vladimir Putin.

We were much better off as a nation when selling energy to our friends than having to buy it from our enemies. We need to expand our energy production to bring down prices for working families in this country whose paychecks can't keep up with the inflation, and we need to sell it to our allies so they can remove themselves from the clutches of Vladimir Putin.

Freeing Europe from Russian energy dependence is going to strengthen both our allies and our NATO alliances. We must provide American energy resources to those countries as quickly as possible. They are asking for it; they want it; they need it. It strengthens our national security and takes money directly out of Vladimir Putin's pockets.

It is this administration's energy policies that have driven up the cost of energy and driven down the production of American energy, which is what has provided a jackpot for Vladimir Putin to fund his war machine. Energy security is a critical part of our shared defense. There is a national security problem for the United States when our allies are more and more dependent on Russian gas.

The world knows Vladimir Putin uses energy as a weapon. Energy is called the master resource for a reason. It powers our country—our economy, our military. It powers the world. Vladimir Putin uses his energy as a weapon to intimidate, to influence, and to coerce other nations. Energy funds Vladimir Putin's aggression, and it has been the cash cow for his invasion of Ukraine.

Look, we have abundant natural gas supplies. My home State of Wyoming has amazing energy resources. We just need to be allowed to produce it. Europe's reliance on Russian gas undermines our national security. Our national security is increased by reducing the leverage that Russia holds over our allies.

It is time for Congress to provide our NATO allies and defense treaty partners a better energy option than they have had under this administration, and the Senate should start by passing S. 819.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to highlight the 150th anniversary of Yellowstone National Park.

When it was established on this date 150 years ago, Yellowstone was the first national park in the world. Today, it is still one of the most popular parks on Earth. One-hundred-fifty years ago, it was a new idea to set aside public land for public enjoyment. With the establishment of Yellowstone, Congress set the gold standard.

Based on Yellowstone's success over the past century and a half, hundreds of additional national parks have been created for Americans to enjoy. Many

other countries have followed our lead and have established their own national parks.

Yellowstone spans over 2 million acres throughout Wyoming, as well as parts of Montana and Idaho. That is more land than the entire State of Rhode Island and Delaware combined. Yellowstone's vast and varied landscapes provide some of the most spectacular views in the world, and this is just one of them. Cascading waterfalls, steaming geysers, and gaping canyons often leave visitors speechless. Many generations of Americans have enjoyed these same views.

That is what Congress intended 150 years ago when it established the park, as they said, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. Millions of people come from all across the world to experience the park's beauty. From hiking and biking, to boating and wildlife viewing, Yellowstone offers some of the best outdoor recreation opportunities all around the world.

It also has iconic natural wonders like Old Faithful, the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, and Yellowstone Lake. It has 25 square miles of geysers—over half of the total number of geysers in the world. The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, of which the park is a part, is one of the largest and most intact natural ecosystems in the world.

Yellowstone also has the greatest concentration of mammals among national parks in the lower 48 States. The bison in Yellowstone are part of America's largest and oldest free-range herd.

Today, we carry on a tradition at Yellowstone that goes back not just 150 years but over 11,000 years. For thousands of years, Native Americans have hunted, fished, and used the thermal waters for medicinal purposes.

The people of Wyoming are rightly proud of the culture, as well as its history. Today, the park supports thousands of jobs in Wyoming and Montana and Idaho. It contributes greatly to local economies.

Cam Sholly, the superintendent of Yellowstone, is doing an incredible job. A third-generation Park Service employee, Cam goes above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the park delivers a world-class experience to everyone who visits. Under his leadership, the park has hosted record numbers of visitors. During the height of the COVID pandemic, when the only place to go was outside, Yellowstone set the standard on how parks should operate. Health, safety, security, and public access were always a priority.

I am very grateful for the dedicated leaders and staff at Yellowstone who made it possible for people to visit and enjoy this international landmark.

Recently, the Senate passed my bipartisan resolution to honor Yellowstone on this historic day. This resolution celebrates the park's 150 years of unique cultural heritage and natural beauty. It also encourages people across America and around the world to visit Yellowstone to experience its extraordinary treasures.

I am proud to celebrate Yellowstone with my colleagues in the Senate, along with Senator LUMMIS, who is my colleague from Wyoming, as we celebrate with the people of Wyoming and with all Americans on this historic day.

Congratulations to all of the people of Wyoming who work to keep Yellowstone one of our Nation's greatest treasures.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS NOMINATIONS

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise in support of the swift consideration of President Biden's five nominees to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

Over the last year, our economy has improved tremendously, thanks to President Biden's American Rescue Plan and the bipartisan infrastructure law, and we have been guided along the way by steady leadership at the Fed. We are seeing positive results.

Last year, GDP grew by 5.7 percent, and we gained over 6.6 million jobs. In each month during the second half of last year, the family tax credit in the American Rescue Plan pulled approximately 3.5 million children out of poverty; unemployment claims are at a 50-year low; the unemployment rate is at 4 percent; and nominal wages are rising at the fastest pace in decades.

We have also begun investing \$1.2 trillion from the bipartisan infrastructure law that will help businesses and the economy in the decades ahead and will provide an extraordinary number of jobs.

We are not yet out of the woods from the pandemic, and there are critical economic challenges we need to address, including inflation, the lack of affordable housing, the high cost of prescription drugs, the need for affordable childcare, and others. The Fed plays a pivotal role in making sure our economy grows on an even keel so that we can meet these challenges and remain the world's leader.

I might add also that this is a very, very difficult time for the world economy as we respond to the illegal attack by Putin on Ukraine. The world, under the leadership of President Biden and the United States, has imposed unprecedented sanctions. It is in this volatile moment that the Fed also will play a critical role.

Unfortunately, Republican partisan brinkmanship is now preventing us from having a fully staffed and functioning Fed, just as Republicans have stymied nominations of qualified individuals to serve at key posts in the Defense Department, in the State Department, and in several other Agencies.

I would note that, at times, we are being forced to break filibusters on nominations that eventually pass with 70, 80, or 90 "yes" votes. Perhaps my colleagues think that these tactics are somehow politically beneficial, but the

fact is that these tactics diminish and degrade the ability of the Federal Government to serve the American people.

And so we come to the Federal Reserve. The seven-member Board is technically operating with four of its seven members today, and two of those are in confirmation limbo.

Jerome Powell, who has been nominated for a second term as Chair, is serving on an acting basis. Lael Brainard is a Governor and is also the pending nominee for Vice Chair. There is no Vice Chair for Supervision, and two ordinary Governor seats are vacant.

The President has nominated a slate of five qualified, bipartisan candidates to fill these positions, including Mr. Powell.

Mr. Powell was first appointed Fed Chair by Donald Trump and has served admirably for the last 4 years. Lael Brainard was confirmed to her current position on the Federal Reserve Board with strong bipartisan support. Sarah Bloom Raskin is a former Governor and has been nominated as Vice Chair for Supervision. The Senate confirmed Ms. Raskin to the Federal Reserve Board a decade ago by voice vote and as Deputy Treasury Secretary on a bipartisan vote. Lisa Cook and Phil Jefferson are mainstream academic economists who have been nominated as Governors.

Earlier this year, the Banking Committee held hearings on these nominees. They demonstrated their qualifications and responded to hundreds of questions. They have met with Senators on the committee individually as well. But on February 15, my Republican colleagues blocked the Banking Committee from voting on these nominations. They didn't show up and vote no on the nominees whom they opposed; they just didn't show up. They decided to skip the meeting precisely to keep the committee from moving these nominees to the full Senate. They have taken this step during a pandemic, a bout of inflation, and a growing, violent conflict in Europe. At a time when the Federal Reserve's job has never been more important, our Republican colleagues have chosen to stall the confirmations of qualified nominees to help lead our economy.

The Federal Reserve's monetary policy decisions are made by the Federal Open Market Committee, also known as the FOMC. The FOMC has 12 voting members, including all seven Governors on the Board in Washington. The others are presidents of the regional Reserve banks. Due to the Republican boycott, the FOMC is now operating with only nine members—four Governors and five Reserve bank presidents.

The FOMC's primary job is to establish interest rate targets and authorize open market operations to achieve those targets. This function makes it the most important economic policy-making body in the world.

The FOMC now faces enormous challenges to bring prices under control

without harming the strong economic recovery. Supply chain disruptions and the pandemic have pushed inflation up. Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, which many economists expect to make supply shortages much worse and cause energy prices to rise, creates huge risks for the global economy.

These economic challenges collectively demand a fully staffed FOMC. Indeed, one of the FOMC's biggest strengths is its ability to inspire confidence in the United States and in the world. It is able to do this because it typically works by consensus—consensus that reflects the view of its 12 expert members. But when the FOMC doesn't have its full complement of members and when members are serving in an acting capacity, it doesn't speak with the same authority. At a moment when there is so much turmoil in the domestic and global economies, it is reckless to deny the FOMC its full membership.

My Republican colleagues have spent plenty of time talking about inflation without offering solutions. Now, when presented with a chance to empower the FOMC to combat higher prices, my Republican colleagues have instead chosen to handcuff it.

By weakening the FOMC, Senate Republicans are increasing the odds of a mistake. That makes it more likely for higher prices to persist, and this outcome is unacceptable when millions of Americans are struggling to cover increased costs for everyday expenses. The American people should not need to bear any further economic hardships, however slight, that could result from Republicans continuing to block these nominees.

Blocking these nominees also robs Congress and the public of an important mechanism to hold the FOMC accountable for its decisions. My Republican colleagues say they are committed to accountability, but their blockade is ensuring that the five Reserve bank presidents, who answer to the Nation's commercial banks and are not confirmed by the Senate, are a majority on the FOMC. That means these five non-Senate-confirmed officials predominate when it comes to interest rate decisions.

Congress promised the American people an FOMC led by members who exclusively serve their interests. I urge my Republican colleagues to deliver on that promise.

If the Federal Reserve fails to deliver maximum employment and stable prices, the American people will question why.

Reasonable minds can differ about whether the FOMC ultimately raises interest rates too much, too little, or just enough. Economists are sure to debate that question in the years to come. But one obvious conclusion will be that the FOMC lacked a full complement of members to support the difficult decisions that it will make this year. That conclusion will spread

doubts about the integrity of the Federal Reserve and its policies. If those doubts take root, it will be harder for our Nation's central bank to support the economy.

In these rather uncertain economic times, the American people need more certainty, not less, and they need an FOMC that is accountable to them.

I urge my Republican colleagues to allow the Senate to vote on these highly qualified nominees.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this evening, the Ukrainian Ambassador, Oksana Markarova, will be the honored guest of President Biden in the State of the Union Address. Yesterday, we hosted the Ambassador for a meeting with almost 25 Senate colleagues. It was a meeting I won't soon forget.

Her country, Ukraine, is facing a barbaric, unprovoked military assault from Russian dictator Vladimir Putin. The images and the stories are heart-breaking and infuriating—more than 600,000 Ukrainians fleeing to neighboring countries; brutal destruction, leaving people without homes or power during the winter; and Russian shelling of residential neighborhoods. We are witnessing innocent lives callously taken and uprooted.

This is a photo from yesterday's Washington Post. It shows a paramedic in Ukraine desperately trying to save this man's young daughter. She had been a victim of Vladimir Putin's shelling in her country of Ukraine. She did not survive.

Why is Putin doing this? Because his own petty grievances and warped nostalgia for the dark days of the Soviet Union have taken control. In his twisted mind, an entire innocent nation of 44 million Ukrainians must be attacked and occupied at any cost.

There is another reason he is trying to end Ukraine as we know it. He cannot bear to have a free and independent nation on his border because it shows to the people living in Russia the stark contrast of democracy versus despotic rule.

This morning, the Human Rights Council in Geneva met. When Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov began his speech, 100 diplomats all rose and walked out in protest of Russia's war on Ukraine. All of NATO and nearly the entire world are united in outrage at Russia's aggression.

Mr. Putin should think about the infamy of his legacy. For years, he has poisoned and suppressed his own people. Now he is trying to destroy an entire nation, killing this little girl and who knows how many other innocent people. Mr. Putin will not win this war. And every day, every hour that Russia continues its assault on Ukraine, he is harming his own people and ensuring that he leaves a legacy of shame.

What is also remarkable about the meeting yesterday with Ambassador

Markarova was the determination and courage she and her fellow Ukrainians are showing against Putin. She explained to us that Ukrainians are peaceful people, but they will fight.

They will participate in the negotiations, but they won't surrender. And they will fight until the Russians leave. Quite simply, the Ukrainians might be outmatched by the Russian military, but they will not be defeated by it.

Here is one of the many acts of courage and defiance in recent days. In Odessa's historic Brodsky Synagogue, performers sang a moving 19th century version of the ancient Jewish hymn "Adon Olam"—now a prayer for an end to the invasion.

And the world is on Ukraine's side—with rallies of support in all corners of the globe, Japan, Sweden, Finland, Chicago, even in cities across Russia. Countries like ours are providing urgently needed weapons to help Ukraine defend itself against Russian aggression.

Poland and other Ukrainian neighbors are helping with hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing in panic and disbelief. Think of it. While we have political factions in the United States who are determined not to let any refugees into our country, Poland and other countries—Moldova, Romania, for example—are opening their doors and accepting the Ukrainian refugees to give them some safety and security.

We must continue and increase all of the help that we can send—military and humanitarian. Let us be crystal clear: Putin will not win this. In the end, the Ukrainian people will prevail. And Putin's legacy and history will be written in the blood of the children and innocents his invasion of Ukraine has spilled.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. President, yesterday, I spoke briefly about President Biden's announcement on Friday of his nomination to the Supreme Court of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson. Today, I would like to offer some additional thoughts on this nominee.

For those who are less than familiar with Judge Jackson, let me tell you a bit about her. Born in Washington, DC, her mom and dad were public school teachers. When she was 3 years old, Judge Jackson and her family moved to Miami, FL, so her father could attend law school.

Judge Jackson's father later served as the top attorney for the Dade County School Board, and her mother spent 14 years as a high school principal in Miami. In Judge Jackson's family, education and service were honored.

Two of Judge Jackson's uncles were police officers. One became police chief in Miami. Her younger brother also became a police officer and a detective in Baltimore, MD, before going on to serve in the U.S. Army where he was deployed to Iraq.

From a young age, Judge Jackson has been recognized as brilliant and

thoughtful. In high school, she was the class president and the star of the debate team.

It was during a national high school debate championship at Harvard that she fell in love with the university. She would go on to graduate from Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

She then embarked on an amazing and storied career. She practiced law, civil and criminal, at several leading law firms and clerked at all three levels of the Federal judiciary, including—and with some irony—for Justice Stephen Breyer, the Justice she hopes to replace.

She has also worked as a Federal public defender, served on the U.S. Sentencing Commission, spent 8 years as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. She currently serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, which is often considered to be the second most prestigious court in our Nation. She was confirmed to that position just last year through our Senate Judiciary Committee on a bipartisan basis.

As I noted yesterday, the Senate Judiciary Committee has examined her record three times for three different positions and confirmed her on a bipartisan basis for all three positions.

She has performed each of these public service roles with distinction. In the coming weeks, the Senate Judiciary Committee will undertake another comprehensive review of her record, her qualifications, and her approach to judicial decision making. As chair of the committee, I am determined to see that this review is careful, fair, and professional.

I have great respect for her record, and I will be saying more in the coming days and weeks. For today, I want to focus on three important points: the President's selection process, the historic significance of this nomination, and how Judge Jackson will build upon the honorable legacy of Justice Breyer.

President Joe Biden is a leader who respects the Senate. When Justice Breyer announced a month ago that he intended to retire, President Biden pledged "to fulfill my duty to select a justice not only with the Senate's consent, but with its advice."

The President kept that promise; and for that, he should be commended. The process for nominating Justice Breyer's successor has been rigorous and bipartisan. It has included the Senate every step of the way.

Just days after Justice Breyer's announcement, the President hosted Senator GRASSLEY—the ranking Republican on this committee—and myself in the Oval Office to discuss the nomination. Repeatedly, he said to Senator GRASSLEY and to me, "If you have someone you think I should consider, please let me know." And he was sincere.

Over the next several weeks, President Biden sought the advice of many Senators—not just the two of us—including all the members, Democratic

members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, then he made this decision to nominate Judge Jackson.

Every Supreme Court nomination is critically important, but this one has special historic significance. In the United States history, our Supreme Court has had 115 Justices; 108 of those Justices have had one thing in common. They were all White men.

Five of those who served on the Court as Justices were women. Only three have been people of color, out of 115. With Judge Jackson's nomination, we have already seen history in the making. If confirmed, she will be the first Black woman ever to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. With this nomination, Judge Jackson and we have the opportunity to bend the arc of history toward justice.

In accepting President Biden's nomination last week, she said one of her heroes, another brilliant, trailblazing Black woman, was named Constance Baker Motley. Judge Motley was a champion of civil rights and women's rights, a key attorney on Thurgood Marshall's side when the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund argued *Brown v. Board of Education* and other cases which finally ended legal segregation in America.

Judge Motley was the first Black woman to ever argue before the Supreme Court. She went on to be the first Black woman appointed to the Federal judiciary, serving as a U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Judge Motley didn't know it, but on her 48th birthday, a little baby girl was born in Washington, DC. She would grow up to be one of the finest legal minds of her generation, and she would be the first Black woman to be nominated to serve on the Supreme Court.

Upon accepting that nomination last week, Judge Jackson said: "Today, I proudly stand on Judge Motley's shoulders, sharing not only her birthday, but also her steadfast and courageous commitment to equal justice under law."

And then she added: "If I'm fortunate enough to be confirmed as the next Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, I can only hope that my life and career, my love of this country and the Constitution, and my commitment to upholding the rule of law and the sacred principles upon which this great nation was founded will inspire future generations."

I want to conclude my remarks by acknowledging the extraordinary legacy of Justice Stephen Breyer. It is a legacy upon which I believe Justice Jackson will build if she is confirmed. In his time on the Court, Justice Breyer has been defined by his rigorous intellect, his thoughtful, pragmatic approach to judicial decision making, his collegiality and consensus building, and his devotion to the core principles on which America is founded—freedom, liberty, and equality.

By all these measures and more, Judge Jackson is a natural successor

to the Justice she once clerked for. She has proven her intellectual mettle—from the debate team in high school in Miami, to Harvard Law where she served as supervising editor of the Harvard Law Review, to clerkships on the District of Massachusetts, the First Circuit, and the Supreme Court, and to an extraordinary record of excellence on the Federal bench.

It goes without saying that if you are going to be the first of anything in America, you have got to be the best. You have got to bring remarkable achievements to your aspiration to make history. Judge Jackson does that.

She is a jurist who understands the importance of pragmatism and real-world experience. She will draw on her broad range of experience on the U.S. Sentencing Commission, as a Federal public defender, as a litigator in civil lawsuits in private practice. Judge Jackson has also demonstrated the premium she places on collegiality and consensus-building, especially with those who may not share her views. That may be unusual, but it sure is important in these days.

Judge Thomas Griffith, a conservative jurist appointed to the DC Circuit by President George W. Bush, wrote in support of Judge Jackson's nomination to the DC Circuit, and he has written again in support of her nomination to the Supreme Court.

Judge Griffith wrote: "Judge Jackson and I occasionally differed on the best outcome of a given case However, I have always respected her careful approach, extraordinary judicial understanding, and collegial manner, three indispensable traits for success on the Supreme Court.

He added: "Judge Jackson has a demonstrated record of excellence, and I believe, based on her work as a trial judge when I served on the Court of Appeals, she'll adjudicate based on the facts and the law and not as a partisan."

Finally, like Justice Breyer, Judge Jackson has shown her dedication to the Nation's founding principles, on and off the bench. She has a deep faith in the power and promise of our Constitution and an unwavering belief that we must protect and preserve those ideals that set our Nation apart from so many others.

Last Friday, when President Biden nominated Judge Jackson, the Senate Judiciary Committee, we sent the traditional questionnaire that is sent to nominees and candidates. It was returned to us last night promptly. It was lengthy and comprehensive. We have seen much of it before, earlier last year when Judge Jackson was aspiring to be on the DC Circuit. And it is a great starting point for any Senator or any member of the staff who wants to understand Judge Jackson.

She has published over 500—in fact, 573—written opinions. Her background and thoughts on important issues will be no mystery or surprise for those who

want to take the time to look at those cases. It has been less than a year since she was approved here on the floor of the U.S. Senate, but we are starting this process anew with her visitations with Senator MCCONNELL, Senator SCHUMER tomorrow, as well as myself and Senator GRASSLEY.

Senators who wish to meet with her personally and talk about her positions on any issues or other relevant topics are welcome to do so. Senator GRASSLEY this morning in the Judiciary Committee encouraged his colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle to take advantage of the opportunity if they wish. We want to make sure that this is an orderly, respectful, collegial, and professional process.

My dearest hope is at the end of the day, she will receive bipartisan support for this nomination. It would be a great day for the Senate, as well as for the Supreme Court if that happened. But she needs to earn it. And to do it, she will be making the rounds in the Senate with individual Members making her case and then appearing before our committee at a later date, which we will announce this week.

I want to thank my colleagues for taking this as seriously as they should. It is rare in our Senate career that we are allowed to bring up the issue of advise and consent to the highest Court in the land—a lifetime appointment, a critically important appointment for the history of the United States and the history of that great Court.

I want to make sure that on the Senate Judiciary Committee, we are respectful and bipartisan in every aspect of that effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Alaska.

UKRAINE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to come down to the floor and talk about the issue that is certainly the focus of America and the world right now, and that is Ukraine, and that is the President's State of the Union Address, which will be a very important one tonight.

And I know that Americans all across our great Nation are glued to their televisions, social media streams. And what we are seeing in Europe is quite remarkable, quite unsettling—another major war on the European continent. We are seeing children in bomb shelters singing the Ukrainian national anthem. We are seeing brave young men and women on the front lines taking up arms to defend their country. We are seeing grandmothers take to the streets, foisting upon Russian conscripts the seeds of their country's flower. One of the most effective acts of resistance I have ever witnessed.

Mr. President, you and many of us were over in Europe just about a week ago at the Munich Security Conference, where we had the opportunity to meet with many of these brave Ukrainian ministers, the mayor of

Kyiv, parliamentarians, young parliamentarians. And our message—my message certainly was a hard one. At the time, the war had not started, but we were seeing increasing intelligence that it would any day.

And the message was, if war comes, it will be important for the Ukrainian people, the leaders, to fight. And we are seeing that. All across the country, the people in Ukraine are fighting and willing to die for freedom, for their country.

I want to say I think I speak for the whole Senate: Watching these acts of courage and heroism has been truly inspiring, and we all applaud the courage and heroism that we are seeing in Ukraine, and we stand with the people of Ukraine.

Given the circumstances in Ukraine and across the globe and in our country, where working families are struggling under increasing energy costs and inflation, I want to talk a little bit about the President's State of the Union tonight and what I certainly hope he is going to tell the American people.

I and several of my colleagues here, Republican colleagues in the Senate, will be sending a letter to the President very soon, urging him to announce specific actions that relate to an entirely new world with this invasion of Ukraine by Russia and start to announce a course correction on issues under which the Biden administration has been going the wrong way on two key, key areas.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter to the President.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, March 1, 2022.

President JOSEPH R. BIDEN,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We appreciate your call for Americans to come together in light of Russia's brutal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. We strongly support working with our allies and partners—one of our nation's most important strategic advantages—as well as sending U.S. troops to support and defend NA TO allies in Eastern Europe during these challenging and dangerous times.

Yet, as our nation prepares for this new era of authoritarian aggression led by the dictators in Russia and China, we have serious concerns that we encourage you to address in tonight's State of the Union and thereafter act upon immediately.

First, you must submit a robust military budget that significantly increases defense spending to reflect the realities of our geostrategic competition with China and Russia. Your Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget proposed significant real cuts to the Department of Defense when, at the same time, you proposed massive increases to almost every other federal agency and department. Putin and Xi were undoubtedly encouraged that the President of the United States proposed significant budget cuts to his own armed services. We implore you not to make the same strategic mistake again. The FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NOAA) was a clear bipartisan rebuke of your mis-

guided defense budget cuts. You must put forward a robust, real increase in defense spending focused on the current and future readiness and lethality of our force. You should also continue to press our NATO allies to meet their two percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) goal for defense spending.

Second, your Administration's energy policies—which focus on restricting, delaying, and killing the production of American energy—have had the predictable but catastrophic effect of driving up energy prices for American working families, increasing pink slips for American energy workers, and significantly empowering our adversaries, especially Putin, who has used energy as a weapon for decades.

You recently told the American people in a press conference that your Administration was using “every tool at our disposal to protect American families and businesses from rising prices at the gas pump” and “taking active steps to bring down the cost.” Mr. President, respectfully, that is not true and the facts show it.

Time and time again, your administration has taken steps to unilaterally disarm the American energy sector. We hope that in your address tonight, you make a strategic course correction on your misguided energy policies that properly reflects your recent promises to reduce energy prices for American families, protect the national security of the United States, and provide meaningful support to our allies who are struggling to meet their energy needs. You can do this through the following actions:

1. Rescind your decision to cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline and fast-track other similar energy infrastructure projects across the country.

2. Work to rescind the recent decision by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that makes it much more difficult to approve natural gas pipelines.

3. Commit to fast tracking and producing American energy on federal lands, including the 1002 Area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska (NPR-A), and the Gulf of Mexico, all of which have decades of abundant proven reserves of oil and gas.

4. Expedite the permitting of critical minerals mining and processing, particularly Alaska's Ambler Road project, and reinstate the leases issued to Twin Metals Minnesota LLC for the northeastern Minnesota mining project.

5. Reinstate the January 2021 proposed rule from the U.S. Office of the Comptroller of the Currency that would prevent America's large financial institutions from black-listing whole sectors of the economy and ensure the energy sector has fair access to capital and banking service to advance critically needed energy projects.

6. Direct the Department of Justice to appeal the U.S. District Court's decision invalidating the Department of the Interior's Lease Sale 257. Appealing the Court's decision to block this sale will demonstrate the administration's commitment to continuing critical offshore development.

7. Direct the Department of the Interior to finalize a new 5-year offshore lease plan by June 30, 2022.

8. Use your bully pulpit to encourage—not discourage—America's financial institutions to support American energy independence by investing in American oil and gas.

9. Sanction Russian oil and gas exports to America and our allies. We have seen a spike in American imports of Russian energy during your Administration. We would replace such imports, which only empower Putin, with increased production of American energy for our citizens.

10. Issue all pending export licenses and announce an initiative to surge American liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports to our allies and partners in Europe who are being blackmailed and are trapped by the whims of tyrant Vladimir Putin.

11. Terminate the positions of White House Climate Czar Gina McCarthy and Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, who have aggressively pushed an all-out assault on America's energy sector—at home and abroad—and whose actions are dramatically weakening America's geostrategic advantages. John Kerry's statements just days ago clearly portray someone who does not care about the lives lost in the crisis in Ukraine but rather protecting the climate agenda no matter the cost. In his own words, he said, "Massive emissions consequences to the war, but equally importantly you're going to lose people's focus. You're going to lose, certainly, big country attention because they will be diverted, and I think it could have a damaging impact," and "I hope President Putin will help us to stay on track with respect to what we need to do for the climate."

12. Withdraw your nomination of Sarah Bloom Raskin based on her commitment to reduce American energy projects that would provide energy to our allies and reduce America's dependence on Russian oil.

It is our sincere hope that you announce these changes in your address this evening. Only then will your promise to use "every tool at our disposal to protect American families and businesses from rising prices at the gas pump" be fulfilled and our national security appropriately protected.

The American people are looking to their President to rise to this critical moment. Our national security, global stability for ourselves and our allies, as well as the prosperity of every American family are on the line.

We await your response in tonight's address.

Sincerely,

DAN SULLIVAN,
United States Senator.
KEVIN CRAMER,
United States Senator.
ROGER WICKER
United States Senator.
JAMES LANKFORD,
United States Senator.
JOHN CORNYN,
United States Senator.
JOHN HOEVEN,
United States Senator.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, let me begin with one of the areas of course correction that we are urging the President to undertake, and that is in the area of national defense.

There are many lessons that we are going to learn from this Ukrainian invasion, but one of them is certainly that we have entered a new era of authoritarian aggression, led by the dictator in Russia—that is Putin—and the dictator in China—that is Xi Jinping. When they sense weakness, particularly military weakness, they are acting.

As I mentioned, this new era of authoritarian aggression is something we need to be ready for. It is led by the dictators of Russia and China, who are increasingly isolated and dangerous. They are driven by historical grievances, they are paranoid about their democratic neighbors, and they are more than willing to use military force

and other aggressive actions to crush the citizens of such countries on their periphery. These dangerous dictators, Putin and Xi Jinping, are increasingly working together to achieve their aggressive goals.

We must wake up to the fact, and that is what we are calling the President to do—hopefully he does in his speech tonight—that this new era of authoritarian aggression is likely to be with us for decades.

What are the areas which we should focus on and which we are respectfully requesting the President to focus on and announce tonight? Well, first, as I mentioned, our Nation's national defense. Now, unfortunately, this has not been a priority of Democratic Presidents. That is a fact. This has not been a priority often of my Democratic colleagues—some; not all but some.

Let me just give you some of the numbers. In the second term of the Obama administration, the Pentagon's budget was slashed by 25 percent—25 percent. Our military readiness plummeted.

When I got elected to the Senate—in many ways, I ran because of these issues in 2014. When I was elected in 2015, I was on the Readiness Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee. The numbers at the time were classified because they were so horrendous in terms of our military's readiness. Three out of fifty-eight brigade combat teams of the U.S. Army were at the tier 1 level of readiness needed for deployment—3 out of 58. The Air Force was the smallest and oldest in terms of aircraft age ever, and less than half of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps' aviation fleet could fly. That was the U.S. military during the end of the second term of the Obama administration. When you gut defense spending, you gut readiness, you gut lethality.

During the Trump administration, when the Republicans had control of the Senate, we worked to reverse this dangerous hollowing out of our military by dramatically increasing funding. Many of the areas I talked about involving readiness and lethality returned back to the levels that the American people expect of their military.

Unfortunately, when the President, President Biden, was elected, he reverted back to what Democratic Presidents always do: He submitted a budget that cut defense spending in real terms, inflation adjusted, about 3 to 4 percent cuts.

What was remarkable, if you looked at the Biden budget, everywhere else, it was double-digit increases. You name the Agency, it got a double-digit increase, with the exception of two: Department of Defense and Homeland Security. Budgets are an indication of priorities, and this President was not prioritizing his own armed services.

So what we are doing with regard to the letter today is asking the President of the United States: You can't do that anymore, Mr. President. We are in a new era.

We had a hearing in the Armed Services Committee today. I asked both the witnesses what they thought Xi Jinping and Putin thought when the President of the United States put forward a budget to cut his own military. The witnesses answered today in this hearing: Undoubtedly, it helped embolden Putin and Xi Jinping.

So the first thing we are asking the President to make clear in his speech tonight is that he needs to put forward a robust, real increase in defense spending to make sure we have current and future readiness and lethality of our military forces. Obviously, if you turn on the TV and see what is going on around the world, this needs to happen.

The President also needs to continue, as every President has done before him, to call out our NATO allies, whom we are acting closely with right now, to meet their obligations that they have committed to for years, which is to spend at least 2 percent of their GDP on defense spending.

The good news is, Germany just announced that it was going to do this, that it was going to double its budget. That is remarkable. That is great news. But we can't have Germany leading on the calls for increasing defense spending and lethality. The President of the United States needs to do it, and he needs to do it tonight.

The second issue that we raised in our letter on the critical need for a strategic course correction with this administration is with regard to energy. Everybody knows it. Everybody feels it. Everybody understands it. Yet, for some reason—I think driven by the far left of the Democratic Party—this administration won't get real on energy.

Let me talk about that for a minute because it is a topic I care deeply about and, by the way, have been pressing the Biden administration on since day 1, that this is bad for our economy, bad for working families, and bad for national security.

What am I talking about? Well, first, it is important to understand what President Biden inherited. Over the 4 years of the Trump administration, with Republicans in control of the Senate, we were able to achieve a bipartisan goal of American foreign policy and energy security that we collectively as a nation had been seeking for decades: American energy independence.

Before the pandemic hit, the United States was the largest producer of oil in the world, bigger than Saudi Arabia; the largest producer of natural gas in the world, bigger than Russia; and a leader in producing renewables—all-of-the-above energy.

At the same time, and I really want my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to listen to this, we led the world in terms of major economies on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Since 2005, we have reduced these by almost 15 percent. No other industrialized nation in the world has a record like

that, including our high standards on producing energy. In China, the emissions are going through the roof. In the United States, they are coming down dramatically because of the American energy revolution. Millions of jobs were created because of this revolution in energy, in U.S. manufacturing, in energy sectors, and our energy independence significantly enhanced our Nation's national security.

I often recount this story. In a meeting about 4 years ago I had with Senator John McCain—a close friend of mine and mentor in the Senate—and a very senior level Russian dissident. At the end of the meeting, I asked this brave Russian dissident: What more can the United States do to undermine the Putin regime and to undercut Vladimir Putin's malign influence in Europe and around the world? Without hesitation, this Russian dissident said: It is easy, Senator; America needs to produce more American energy. That is exactly what we did, and our country and our allies benefited enormously.

So what has been the policy of this administration? From day 1—and I mean day 1—hour into his administration, President Biden has intentionally done the opposite. We are not going to produce more American energy, as that Russian dissident told me and Senator McCain to do to undermine Putin. To the contrary, the Biden administration made the conscious decision: We are going to undercut the production of American energy.

Since taking office, this administration has shut down energy production, has made it hard to produce on Federal lands, has killed energy infrastructure like pipelines, has strong-armed American financial institutions and not invested in energy here and particularly in places like my State, the great State of Alaska.

All of this restricting, delaying, killing the production of American energy, driven by a far-left agenda that makes no sense, has had the very predictable result of what? Catastrophically driving up energy prices for American working families—we are seeing that every day; my colleagues know that—increasing pink slips for American energy workers. Keystone XL laid off 10,000 workers, a lot of laborers. First day on the job—that was the President's call.

Here is the thing that matters right now: This war on American energy has significantly empowered our adversaries, especially Vladimir Putin, who has used energy as a weapon for decades.

Again, I see this every day. Think about this statistic if you are an Alaskan citizen. This administration comes up to Alaska and tries to delay and shut down the production of American energy. Guess what. At the same time, year 1 in the Biden administration, we are now importing 700,000 barrels a day of oil from Russia—almost a 40-percent increase in year 1 from the Biden administration. Does any American or

any U.S. Senator think that makes sense—killing American energy production in our great Nation and importing hundreds of thousands of barrels more from Vladimir Putin? Because if you do—well, actually, I don't think anyone thinks that makes sense. But that is what is happening right now. In effect, the United States, in many ways, along with countries in Europe, is funding the very war that Putin has launched.

The United States still is the world's largest producer of natural gas, but, again, due to the irrationality and hostility toward pipelines, we can't get enough natural gas to the Northeast. So you see places like Boston importing LNG from where? Russia.

This is insane. This is insane. This is a colossal, strategic mistake. It is clearly harming American working families. I am sure every Senator hears about it when they go home. But it is also national security suicide.

It is being done, supposedly, to lower carbon emissions, but I want to be clear about that, too, because it isn't. In fact, oil produced in the United States has lower emissions than oil produced in most other countries. LNG shipped to Europe from the United States has a 41-percent lower carbon emission footprint than gas piped in from Russia, and we also have some of the most rigorous environmental standards anywhere on the planet in terms of production.

So, again, the Biden administration's energy policies are strengthening Putin, increasing costs and hurting Americans, and are actually doing zero to address global emissions. The only conclusion I can come up with is the far left has undertaken some kind of holy war against the production of American energy, and it makes no sense.

So here is what we are asking the President. He gave a speech to the American people the other night where he said that he is using all available tools to address these energy challenges. With all due respect to the President of the United States, that is not true. The President knows it; his team knows it; every Senator here knows it, and the American people know it.

So in our letter today that we are sending to the President, we are saying, President Biden, if you want to keep your word to the American people on what you just told them, "all available tools," here is what you can actually announce tonight at the State of the Union that will have very significant, real impacts on lowering energy costs in America and increasing our national security relative to Putin.

Some of the actions we requested the President to take in the letter we are sending him before the State of the Union.

Simple, rescind your decision to cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline and fast-track other similar energy infrastructure projects around the country.

Work to rescind the recent decision by the Biden administration's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, that makes it much more difficult to actually approve natural gas pipelines. My understanding is my good friend from West Virginia Senator MANCHIN is holding a hearing on this very issue on Thursday because he knows that this is national security suicide.

Commit to fast-tracking and producing American energy on American lands, particularly where the Congress has told you to do so, like ANWR in Alaska, like the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska—Congress has said produce there; that is the law—like the Gulf of Mexico. We have decades in our great Nation of abundant proven reserves of oil and gas. So why are we importing so much from Putin right now?

This brings me to another request. And this is a request of many Senators, and I believe Democratic Senators also. We should be banning the importation of Russian oil into the United States. Canada just announced it was doing it yesterday. Why would we be importing 700,000 barrels a day of Russian oil when we have millions and millions of barrels in Alaska? Can somebody answer that question?

I hope the President of the United States looks at our letter and recognizes these are commonsense approaches that are going to be needed to address this new era of authoritarian aggression, not just with Vladimir Putin but with Xi Jinping as well. When you look at what the Communist Party fears more than anything, it is American energy dominance. And yet this administration has come in, in year 1, unilaterally disarmed one of our most important strategic advantages in the world.

One other thing we mention in the letter, which makes so much sense, is to issue all pending export licenses and announce an initiative to help surge American liquefied natural gas to our allies in Europe and partners in Europe who right now are being blackmailed and trapped by Vladimir Putin's use of energy.

Again, you would think that would be a no-brainer.

And we hope the President looks at the American people tonight and goes through this list of good energy ideas that we have given him and says he is going to do it—says he is going to do it.

The world is reeling right now. Our country certainly is hurting, in terms of inflation and many other challenges, many of which are self-inflicted like the energy challenges. We can take steps to strengthen our country. And a strong United States, of course, strengthens the world.

We have seen this time and time again throughout history. Our country is the beacon of freedom and hope, and the light of that beacon can only shine brightly, can only cast light on all corners of the globe when we are strong. And it shines most brightly when our

citizens are not struggling, but when we have strong communities, strong families, bolstered by good-paying jobs that provide dignity.

Our light of freedom shines most brightly when our country is on a common mission, and I think the President can call us toward a common mission tonight by listening to some of the things that we as Republicans have implored him to talk about and focus on in his speech.

As I mentioned, as a country, it is important that we wake up to the fact that this new era of authoritarian aggression will likely be with us for decades. We need to face it with confidence and strategic resolve.

Our country has extraordinary advantages relative to the dictatorships of Russia and China if we are wise enough to utilize and strengthen them. Our global network of allies, our lethal military, our world-class natural resources and energy resources, our dynamic economy, and most important, our democratic values and commitment to liberty.

Xi Jinping and Putin's biggest weakness and vulnerability is that they fear their own people. We should remember and exploit this vulnerability in the months and years ahead.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, yesterday, many of us in the Senate had the opportunity to meet with the Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States.

It was an opportunity for many of us to express our admiration for the commitment of the Ukrainian people to the sovereignty of their country. They are motivated by the love of their country and a passion for freedom. Their President, President Zelenskyy, has shown courageous leadership. He has been inspirational as we have watched how he has put his own life at risk in order to serve his country. He has put country before personal safety.

Ukraine versus Russia, good versus evil, this unprovoked attack on a peaceful sovereign country, orchestrated by Mr. Putin. We are not surprised. It was widely publicized, the use of his playbook. We knew what he was doing hour by hour in planning the invasion on Ukraine. It doesn't diminish the tragedy of Mr. Putin's actions. This is Mr. Putin's war, and he must be held fully accountable for what he has caused.

I want to thank President Biden for his extraordinary global leadership on this issue. We have seen unity among our alliance, and we have seen global unity in condemning Mr. Putin's actions, which is so important in order to put the right focus on who is responsible and who can end this tragic war.

We have imposed the strongest set of multilateral sanctions ever on Russia's leaders and institutions. We have cut off many of its banks from the Swiss system of banking. We have put personal sanctions on Mr. Putin and his

enablers. We have frozen assets around the world. We have isolated Russia from international organizations and events. We have restricted airspace to Russian aircraft. All that has been done not just by the United States but in conjunction with our allies around the world, and it is having a major impact on Russia.

We have seen unity in NATO. I think Mr. Putin thought that his campaign in Ukraine would weaken the NATO alliance. It has done just the opposite. It has strengthened the NATO alliance. We have sent NATO troops to the countries that border Russia that are members of NATO to make it clear that we understand our collective obligation under article 5 of the NATO treaty: an attack on one is an attack on all, and we will come to each other's mutual defense.

And we have seen many countries that have been reluctant to get involved in war-type activities change their position because they realize how clear it is what Russia is doing violates every international commitment and jeopardizes not just the integrity of Ukraine but the integrity of Europe, the integrity of sovereign states around the world.

So let me point out just one of our NATO partners, Germany. Germany canceled—put on hold Nord Stream 2. We know Mr. Putin has used energy as a weapon. He has weaponized the source of energy he has in his country. He has done that several times. Nord Stream 2 would give him additional wealth and energy—stopped by Germany. But Germany has gone further than that. For the first time, now they are going to be supplying lethal weapons to Ukraine, recognizing that all of us have a responsibility to help Ukraine in its hour of need.

And, yes, Germany has now made a commitment that we have asked all NATO nations to do, devote 2 percent of their economy to our mutual defense, and Germany is now stepping up to meet that 2 percent commitment. That is what we are seeing from NATO partners.

Turkey is going to block the use of warships from being able to use its waters in order to get engaged in the conflict; that is, Russian warships.

We have seen non-NATO countries step up to the plate. We are very pleased with the global response, Finland's response, Switzerland's response. This is unprecedented that we had this type of global unity saying to Mr. Putin: Stop this invasion, an unprovoked attack on a peaceful nation. Stop it.

Now, the consequences of our action have had major impact on the Russian economy. Their interest rates have gone up dramatically. The value of their currency, the ruble, has fallen dramatically. Their economy is suffering dramatically. And when the Russian people want to know who to blame as a result of their economy going into the tank—one person, the person who caused this war, Mr. Putin.

The Ukrainians are defending their country and have disrupted Putin's military expectations. These are really people motivated for the right reasons to defend their country, and they have been able to do amazing things in stopping Russia's advancements. That is because of the will, determination, and bravery of the Ukrainian people.

They need our help, and they need the help of our allies in supplying the necessary military equipment in order to defend themselves. We know how many Russian tanks are out there, and we know how many Russian aircraft are out there. They need anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, and they need ammunition. They need a lot in order to defend themselves, and we and our allies need to step up to make sure they have what they need.

They also, by the way, need humanitarian aid. We know that there are already over several hundred thousand refugees who have escaped the violence in Ukraine and have gone into neighboring countries. It is estimated that number could grow into the millions. We need to work with the international community in regard to the humanitarian needs of the refugees. We also have to realize that Ukraine's supply chain has been totally disrupted. We need to provide humanitarian aid within Ukraine, get it to the border, and work with the Ukrainian officials so they can get it inside the country. That is our responsibility in order to help in this hour of need. We need to do even more than that, and there are additional steps that we can take.

We need to continue to ratchet up the sanctions that are being imposed against Mr. Putin and Russia. As I said earlier, these sanctions are severe today, and we need to consider doing more. The administration is already setting up a process by which we can trace laundered assets so that, when we say we are going to freeze the assets of those who are being sanctioned, we will find those assets wherever you try to hide them. We are going to work with our allies around the world in order to make it clear that there is no safe haven for you to hide your wealth.

We need to continue to build on individual sanctions. We know that. Individual sanctions mean a great deal, and there are others who need to be sanctioned. Yes, I think we need to consider the oil and gas industry as to how we can make it clear that we are not going to let Mr. Putin benefit from his assets.

Trading policies need to be reevaluated. A country that invades another country without any provocation whatsoever should not be entitled to normal trade relations with the United States, and we should be looking at how we can enforce those types of changes.

Yes, there needs to be personal accountability. It has now become quite obvious that Mr. Putin has had no regard whatsoever for civilian casualties. In fact, there have been reports that he may have targeted civilians in his effort to gain control of Ukraine. We

need to make it clear that, if the facts are there, we will pursue potential war crimes. No one should escape accountability. We should hold those who are responsible for these tragedies accountable for them.

Let me make it clear. As Mr. Zelenskyy has said, the President of Ukraine, we will always look for a diplomatic way to end this war. We want this war never to have started, and we want it to end as soon as possible. We will look in any way we can for a diplomatic end to this war—preserving the sovereignty of Ukraine.

We recognize that Mr. Putin's war has brought to our attention other issues that we need to really pay attention to. One is the energy policy of Europe and the United States. I have heard my colleagues talk about this, but the right answer is energy independence, investment in renewable energy sources, so that we can not only protect our national security but so that we can also protect our environment. We need to make those investments moving forward so none of our allies ever has to rely upon an autocratic government's supply of oil or gas.

I want to underscore the importance that was brought to our attention yesterday. There was a parliamentarian from Ukraine who was there who said: Thank you so much for the Magnitsky sanctions that you have imposed on individuals because that really hurts.

Well, we are proud because it was this body that initiated the Magnitsky sanctions.

Let me remind my colleagues that our law expires at the end of this year. Now is the time to expand and extend the Global Magnitsky law. We need to protect our supply chains. We saw that during the coronavirus, but we also recognize, with supplies in autocratic countries, that we need to shore up our own supplies and make them in America. We have legislation that has passed the House and Senate. Let's get that bill to the finish line. That would be so important for our national security.

Our immediate priority: Let us all stand with the people of Ukraine in their struggle for freedom. They have not only our admiration, but they have our support. We want to do what we can, and we stand with the people of Ukraine.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, last week, President Putin of Russia ordered 100,000 to 200,000 Russians across Ukraine's border. Air raid sirens rang out. Bombs rained down. Russia declared war on Ukraine—the first war in Europe since 1945.

Putin's terror is hard to watch. We have all seen it on television in realtime, but it is important we not look away. Amid it all, we are seeing examples of heroism and hearing stories of strength.

Early in the fight, Russian warships called for Ukrainians to lay down their weapons on the small Snake Island. Ukrainian fighters answered with a bold response that has reverberated as a sort of drumbeat of defiance across the country. Since then, we have seen Ukrainians embody determination in the face of desperation—all in the name of freedom and love for their country. A Ukrainian marine sacrificed himself to blow up a bridge near Kyiv so that Russian tanks could not cross.

All the while, President Zelenskyy of Ukraine has stayed. He has not abandoned his country, even though he knows Putin's goal is to topple the Ukrainian Government—all this while knowing that President Putin of Russia has sent over assassins to eliminate him. He planted his feet and squared his shoulders for the fight and is rallying his fellow countrymen to do the same.

Ukrainian citizens are following suit, showing true bravery in the face of madness. As the Ukrainian Government began to hand out weapons, thousands and thousands lined up to receive them, men and women. Volunteers, ordinary citizens, are adding to the resistance. They are men and women, young and old, coming from all backgrounds and walks of life—all to defend freedom and democracy in their country.

It is clear Mr. Putin underestimated the Ukrainians' will to fight. While Ukrainians are handing Russia a tough fight, we know there will be hard days ahead. Mr. Putin's rationale for invading was the "demilitarization and de-Nazification of Ukraine," arguing that, if Ukraine joined NATO, the West would have an excuse to invade Russia. That is paranoia. That is delusion. That doesn't sound like a strong leader. It sounds like a weak leader. Putin was betting that NATO would fold and that countries would turn against one another. If anything, Mr. Putin's bullying has strengthened NATO.

Last week, Germany halted the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, and now, in a somewhat surprising about-face, Germany is agreeing to send weapons to Ukraine. This not only frees up other countries to follow suit, but it also reverses their historic policy of never sending weapons to a conflict zone.

Over the weekend, the United States joined with the European Commission and Canada, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany to ban select Russian banks from SWIFT. By limiting access to this international payment system, we move closer to the goal of further isolating Russia. Additionally, the group leveled sanctions on Russia's central bank—paralyzing assets and freezing transactions. At least 26 NATO countries have either independently issued sanctions or have joined the EU sanctions.

Since the invasion, the United States has not only imposed economic and financial sanctions, but we also authorized \$350 million in new military aid to

Ukraine, including anti-tank and air defense capabilities, and the State Department has sent millions in humanitarian aid. We are now seeing an inflection point for other countries—a time for choosing. Countries like Sweden, Finland, and Kosovo are all voicing a desire to join NATO. They are choosing to align with the West.

So, in a moment of apparent frustration over the past few days, Putin ordered his Russian nuclear deterrent forces to be put on high alert in response to what he calls "aggressive statements" from NATO leaders and the West's financial sanctions.

But I ask this question: Why? Why were all of these sanctions not presented 6 months ago to possibly deter this aggression and save tens of thousands of lives?

We were late.

As it currently stands, this is not a fight for American troops, but if a NATO country is threatened, we will and do need to act. Facts could change; therefore, policies have to change, which is why we need to continue to impose harsh financial sanctions and project strength during this very ugly situation.

Another step we must take is to regain energy independence. We import nearly 600,000 barrels of oil a day from Russia. The Keystone Pipeline would have provided us 800,000 barrels per day.

Ahead of the invasion, President Biden admitted "defending freedom will have costs for us at home here as well." The irony is that Americans aren't just now feeling the economic strain as we begin to "defend freedom" through sanctions on Russia. Gas prices began to soar long before Mr. Putin waged war in Ukraine. It started with the President's first day in office when he blocked the Keystone Pipeline and undercut our Nation's energy independence. Russia ramped up aggression against Ukraine at the same time as the administration was canceling 80 million acres of oil and gas leases. Green policies here at home have pushed us to seek energy abroad, and our country is paying a huge and hefty price.

President Biden has again admitted that we might need to dip into our oil reserves, but why not dig into the oil reserves—dig our own oil?

This is no time to be a purist and think others can bail us out. The United States of America is an energy-rich nation, but we must have smart policies in place to use them.

This is an economic and a national security issue. You cannot have a strong economy without low energy costs, and ridding ourselves of our reliance on Russian energy is a matter of national security. What happens in Ukraine matters, but so, too, do our actions here at home.

So as our country prepares to hear from President Biden tonight on the state of our Union, I urge the President to project a strong path forward, to

double down on investments in our military, and to put forth policies to ensure we regain our energy independence.

If the state of our Union here at home is strong, it will only serve to strengthen our standing abroad.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, Russia is waging war, the likes we have not seen since World War II. They are waging war on freedom and democracy.

Over recent days, the world has watched in horror as Russian troops have invaded and brutally attacked Ukraine and Ukrainians. So far, estimates are that 350 Ukrainians have been killed. We really don't know what the number is, but we do know that countless civilians have been injured, and more than half a million Ukrainians, including women and children, are now refugees.

This invasion was not weeks or even months in the making; this has been Moscow's plan for years. Putin has made no secret of his desire to redraw the maps of Europe and to restore the Russian Empire. That is why in 2008, Russia invaded the nation of Georgia. In 2014, it invaded Ukraine, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, taking the Crimea region. So the current invasion of Ukraine is really the second invasion we have seen from Vladimir Putin's Russian Federation since 2014. Putin's appetite has not been satisfied. If anything, these invasions have made him hungrier for power.

The people of Ukraine have lived under the shadow of Russian aggression for years, and it has always been a question of when, not if, Russia would finally act. For months, Russia has amassed hundreds of thousands of troops on Ukraine's border, with numbers growing from a few thousand to more than 150,000.

Defenders of freedom and democracy everywhere look to the United States for leadership. But, sadly, they were let down. That is because when it comes to projecting strength to authoritarians like Vladimir Putin and President Xi, to the Ayatollahs in Iran and Kim Jong Un in North Korea, the Biden administration repeatedly projects not strength but weakness.

First of all, when it comes to Europe and Ukraine and Russia, President Biden should not have waived sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline last year. He should have never suggested that certain Russian attacks would be disregarded by the United States. A minor incursion, he said, might be overlooked.

And he should have taken swift action and imposed paralyzing sanctions on Russia before—before—an invasion to give them a taste of what might come, in an effort to deter Putin from invading in the first place. And we should have earlier sent greater defensive weapons to the Ukrainians. Strong

action was called for before the war started, but unfortunately, we have been playing catchup since it did start.

But now, we have a critical task ahead of us. Between this crisis and the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan stranding thousands of Americans without consultation or communication with any of our NATO allies that were discouraged and shocked to find out that we would leave them hanging, President Biden has repeatedly given our NATO allies reason to doubt our commitment and our credibility.

I am sure Vladimir Putin is taking notice. I am sure President Xi and the People's Republic of China has as well. In fact, Xi Jinping has already expressed approval of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Putin has now put Russia's nuclear forces on high alert, threatening to escalate to the unthinkable—something that hasn't happened since 1945—the discharge of a nuclear device. He has also ordered his hoodlums to fire on residential neighborhoods, a clear-cut example of a war crime.

There is need of decisive action to counter Russian aggression. With the eyes the world looking at the United States for leadership, it is time for us to step up in defense of this democracy. President Biden needs to follow through on his promise to make Putin a "pariah on the world stage." The Biden administration has put harsh sanctions on Russia, but its most valuable asset remains virtually untouched, and that is Russia's oil and gas sector.

Even as Russia wages a brutal war against the people of Ukraine, it is exporting energy to the rest the world and using the profits—\$100 oil and higher—to fund the war against innocent Ukrainian citizens. Sanctions against banks and oligarchs are crucial, but we should not ignore Russia's single largest economic asset.

The United States must identify ways to offset the global demand for Russian energy, both here at home and with our oil-producing allies abroad, so we can cut off Putin's biggest stream of revenue. That would be the biggest and best sanction of all.

Our friend John McCain used to joke that Russia was a gas station masquerading as a country to make the point that their oil and gas sector is the single most important part of their economy. And yet so far, the U.S. Government has left it relatively untouched and unscathed.

In addition to economic penalties, we must provide additional materiel support for Ukrainian forces to sustain their heroic and inspirational fight against Russian aggression. A few weeks ago, I began working with a bipartisan group of colleagues on a far-reaching bill to counter this aggression. This package included legislation that I introduced called the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act, reminiscent of what the United States did when Britain was hanging by a

thread under Nazi aggression in World War II.

Just as we did in World War II for our allies in Britain, this bill would ensure that Ukrainian forces and the Ukrainian citizenry had the defensive weapons, the air power, the ships—whatever they needed—in order to defend their sovereignty. It also included security assistance, as well as sanctions on Russia.

And even though we agreed on a bipartisan basis on the vast majority of what was being discussed, the administration's oppositions prevented us from reaching a final agreement.

I am disappointed that we were unable to act and send a strong and united and bipartisan message as Congress to Vladimir Putin, but the fact that we were unsuccessful then doesn't eliminate the need for us to take further action now.

Thanks to the leadership of the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator RISCH from Idaho, I was proud to join my Republican colleagues in introducing legislation that will kneecap Russia's efforts. The Never Yielding Europe's Territory Act doesn't just support Ukraine or impose economic consequences on Russia on counter Russian aggression, it does all of the above.

This legislation includes a range of measures to strengthen Ukraine's ability to defend itself, including my lend-lease bill. It imposes harsh economic consequences on the Russian economy through far-reaching sanctions.

As we all know, Senator MENENDEZ, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator RISCH, the ranking member, negotiated for days and indeed weeks upon weeks, but were unable to come up with a bipartisan package.

I am especially disappointed that today, when Senator RISCH offered to take up and pass this bill by unanimous consent, that it was blocked by one of our Democratic colleagues. I wonder what kind of message that sends to Vladimir Putin—not a good one.

America stands with Ukraine, and we must do everything in our power to help Ukrainian forces defend their freedom and their democracy. Through the devastation that we have seen over the past couple of days, we have all been inspired by the strength and courage of the Ukrainian people. They are on the frontlines of the war against our values, against their sovereignty, against democracy, and they deserve our unequivocal support.

As the conflict—indeed, as the war—in Ukraine wages on, strong American leadership is desperately needed on a bipartisan, monolithic basis.

This evening, President Biden will have a chance to provide his State of the Union message, and I hope that he sends a clear message to the world that Russia's belligerence and hostility will not be tolerated. The American people, our friends and allies, and our adversaries will be paying close attention,

and President Biden should not pull any punches. He should not mince words. He should say that America stands with Ukraine, and we will not tolerate as civilized nations—as democracies—a blatant attack on a fellow democracy.

In addition to the many challenges abroad, the American people are facing the failures of the President Biden's domestic policies here at home. Families are being battered by the worst inflation in 40 years, up 7½ percent so far this year alone. It is more expensive in Texas to heat your home, to stock your pantry, or fill your gas tank.

I spoke to cotton producers in Abilene, TX, just last week. They told me their single biggest problem is the cost of inputs, of fuel, fertilizer, and other things they need in order to grow their product, their commodity.

Anyone who has a need to make a big purchase—things like a car or home appliances—has likely experienced extreme sticker shock.

Business owners, too, have been hit with a double whammy as supply chain issues make it even more difficult and more costly to produce, sell, and ship their products.

Wages have increased some, which would normally be good news, but wage growth is still being outpaced by inflation; meaning that for the average American family, their purchasing power is shrinking, not growing because of inflation. That means our workers have essentially gotten a pay cut because of the flawed policies of the Biden administration.

Economists said that if our Democratic colleagues had proceeded with their nearly \$2 trillion partisan spending spree at the beginning of last year, that it would cause inflation. I still remember Larry Summers, a Democratic-leaning economist who served in Bill Clinton's Cabinet, warning that all of this money that Congress is spending—not the money we were spending for public health purposes or to mitigate the economic consequences of COVID-19, but the money spent on other items in our Democratic colleagues' outbox—he said that we are risking the return of inflation like we haven't seen in the last few decades. Despite the warning from people like Larry Summers and others, our Democratic colleagues forged ahead and now America's working families are paying the price.

I hope President Biden has a plan he will announce tonight on how to attack inflation. But that plan cannot—cannot—involve his ill-conceived “Build Back Broke” agenda. This is another \$5 trillion spending bill that, thanks to bipartisan opposition, did not go anywhere, but which threatened huge tax increases and huge inflationary spending. This is not time to pile on and make the American people's pain worse. We need to do everything we can to reduce inflation, to increase their buying power.

I would like to also hear the President's strategy to address another cri-

sis, and that is the crisis at our southern border. My State has 1,200 miles of border with Mexico, and, last year alone, we have seen 2 million people show up at the border, either to be returned to their country of origin or, more likely, to be welcomed into the United States and be given a slip of paper that says: Show up for your immigration court hearing in a year or 2 years.

We know that the human smugglers are getting rich smuggling people into the United States. They understand our system. They know how to exploit the flaws in our system, and they are getting rich doing so. And by flooding the border with so many people, including unaccompanied children at one time, it takes Border Patrol off the frontlines while the drug smugglers move their illicit cargo into the United States. And it is those drugs that have contributed to the loss of more than 100,000 American lives due to drug overdoses last year alone.

I want to hear President Biden's answer: Why haven't you done anything about it? Why haven't you welcomed or asked for the help of bipartisan Members of Congress to try to address this crisis at the border?

Instead, the Biden administration made it worse. They revoked many of the policies of the previous administration that deterred an influx of migration, and they failed to anticipate the obvious consequences. When you lay out the welcome mat on the U.S. border, people will come, and they come not just from Mexico and Central America. They come from around the world.

I remember early on during the Biden administration talking to the chief of the Border Patrol in the Del Rio Sector. He said: In the last few weeks, we have detained people from 150-plus countries.

The reason for that is obvious. Illegal immigration is the way that international criminal networks get rich and do business. And if you have enough money, they will get you across the southern border, exploiting the laws that we know need to be changed but we cannot seem to muster the support from President Biden nor our Democratic friends to fix.

Local governments and my constituents in the Rio Grande Valley and along the border, who are largely Hispanic themselves, understand the difference between legal and illegal immigration, and they are being inundated with illegal immigration and the burdens that are associated with that. They are looking to Washington to do something about it, but those calls are not being answered. So the burden falls on State government—Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislature—to try to step up. But this is the Federal Government's responsibility, not the State government's responsibility. Leaders in Texas have begged the Biden administration to step up and do its duty. They have asked for more staff, better re-

sources, and policies that put an end to these pull factors, but the administration has done nothing. The only conclusion I can draw after all this time is they just don't care.

As we head into the spring, which is typically the busiest time at the border, the Biden administration needs to take action. The President cannot continue to ignore this humanitarian crisis. We need a concrete plan to address this chaos and ensure that migrants are treated fairly and humanely in accordance with U.S. law.

But, sadly, the border crisis isn't the only problem the administration has shown complete and utter disregard for. Communities across the country are worried about alarming increases in violent crime.

This morning alone, we had a hearing in the Judiciary Committee on carjacking, the violent theft of an automobile using a gun or other weapon to steal it from a person who may be driving their kids to school or to work or to church, only to have their car stolen and their life threatened or taken.

In 2020, murders rose nearly 30 percent from the year before—30 percent—the single largest increase on record. We are still waiting for the rest of the data from 2021, but, so far, the picture is no brighter. A number of major cities experienced their deadliest years on record. Of course, this was in the wake of this boneheaded idea called “defund the police,” which destroyed support for the police at the local level and demoralized the men and women who are doing their duty in an honorable and necessary way each and every day. This is the price that you pay for such misguided efforts as defunding the police.

The American people are paying attention, as you would expect. A poll in November found that more than half of those surveyed believe that local crime had gotten worse—a 13-percent jump from the previous year. Concerns at the national level are even higher. Nearly three-quarters of Americans believe that crime is up nationally. They believe that because it is. This is bad news for families, for communities, for businesses, and for our dedicated law enforcement professionals, and the administration needs to take action.

American families are facing a host of crises at home, and democracy is taking a beating abroad. Tonight, I hope President Biden will outline a clear plan to address these many challenges and come up with answers that we can work on together in a bipartisan way. Trying to do things in a 50-50 Senate or at the 4-vote majority in the House of Representatives is destined to fail, as we have seen time and time again. The only way to get things done in a 50-50 Senate is to work to build consensus and get bipartisan support.

I hope we will see a midcourse correction from the administration on these many challenges that I mentioned

today. I hope the President will finally acknowledge and commit to helping address the humanitarian crisis at the border, which he has ignored for more than a year now. I hope and I trust he will send a strong message to the world that America condemns Russian action and stands with solidarity with Ukraine. The American people deserve to hear their President explain his plan to address each of these looming challenges, and I hope he doesn't let them down.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

VOTE ON H.R. 3076—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3076.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 2022

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3076) to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4955

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER], for Mr. PETERS, proposes an amendment numbered 4955.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the deadline for the initial report on the operations and financial condition of the United States Postal Service)

On page 61, line 18, strike "240 days" and insert "eight months".

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 291, S.J. Res. 32. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 2:30 p.m. be equally divided between the leaders or their designees on the joint resolution, and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate vote on the joint resolution.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be

in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 693, John F. Plumb, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 694, Melissa Griffin Dalton, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

WOMEN'S HEALTH PROTECTION ACT

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I strongly believe women should have the right to choose. That freedom is under attack in many States across the country. For this reason, I voted to move to the Women's Health Protection Act. I will continue to fight to codify Roe v. Wade, as I have since coming to the Senate, so that no matter where you live in America you can access the full range of reproductive health care. I know that many Coloradans have a moral difference of opinion on this matter, and I respect their beliefs. In the end, I believe the value of individual liberty demands that people, not governments, make these most personal decisions.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

BETH TFILOH CONGREGATION SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of a rare event happening this Saturday at my home synagogue of Beth Tfiloh in Pikesville, MD. At what is the largest Modern Orthodox Synagogue in America, with over 1,200 members, we will install only the fourth senior rabbi since the founding of the congregation in 1921.

In Judaism, a rabbi is a leader or teacher. "Teacher" is the literal translation of the word. He or she is a spiritual guide for the community through spiritual learning and religious exploration. Our rabbi is an integral part of all life-cycle and congregational events.

Rabbi Chai Posner was selected by a unanimous vote of the members of the Beth Tfiloh congregation as the next spiritual leader of our synagogue in September 2019, just before the pandemic transformed our world. While his official installation will take place on Saturday, March 5, Rabbi Posner officially became the senior rabbi of Beth Tfiloh Congregation and dean of the

Beth Tfiloh Dahan Community School on January 1, 2022.

Originally, from Brooklyn, he has been a member of the Beth Tfiloh clergy since 2010 and is often described as "wise beyond his years." Rabbi Posner represents the next generation of leadership in our community. He has a keen understanding of where the community has been and where we are heading.

In a recent interview with local Jmore Baltimore Jewish Living, he described the legacy he has taken on: "One of the main reasons that Beth Tfiloh has been so successful is we have stayed true to our mission but have also adapted to the changing world around us. Rabbi Samuel Rosenblatt, Beth Tfiloh's founding rabbi, was committed to tradition, modernity, Israel, education, children and women's inclusion. All of those look different today than they did 100 years ago, but it's astounding to see that we are still committed to all of these same principles."

The other part of this spiritual transition, along with Rabbi Posner, is Rabbi Mitchell Wohlberg, who held the position of senior rabbi for 43 years. He will serve in the position of rabbi-in-residence through December 2025.

What can I say about Rabbi Wohlberg? He has been a friend and a counselor, a leader and guide for Beth Tfiloh Congregation and Baltimore over the course of four decades—for my family and me as well.

Through his legendary sermons and community involvement, his moral leadership has inspired generations of community leaders. For 40-plus years, he has led our community through the most joyous and most painful moments in our lives, and everything in between. Through it all, he maintains, "we are supposed to serve God in joy."

As for those sermons—on every topic imaginable and then some—they stand as a legacy to Rabbi Wohlberg's love of scripture, his faith, and the world as a whole. In one such sermon, he shared "It is said that actions speak louder than words. That may be so but words carry a lot of weight. They are what makes us human."

Rabbi Wohlberg also has embodied the spirit of tikkun olam—repairing our world. I want to share one example among countless instances of how he has transformed the lives around him.

A half-dozen years ago, Rev. Dr. Terris King of the Liberty Grace Church of God in Ashburton reached out to Rabbi Wohlberg in fellowship. This was a time when Baltimore was still healing from the death of Freddie Gray and some national leaders chose to attack Baltimore for their own personal gain. Rabbi Wohlberg and Dr. King connected over faith, shared community and shared history. Barely 5 miles separates the two congregations, but as the two clergy have explained: "In some ways, Ashburton and Pikesville are in two different worlds. But the reality is, we are next-door neighbors. Maryland's recently maligned