

This helps defund them, this legislation.

Donald Trump called for Republicans to defund law enforcement, and now Republicans seem to be following through. The wish list will further punish middle-class taxpayers and reward tax cheats by slashing funding necessary to go after ultrarich tax cheats while raising taxes on the middle class by depriving them of many of the new tax credits aimed at the middle class that we passed—we Democrats passed—during the last Congress.

You heard me right. This MAGA wish list punishes middle-class taxpayers while rewarding ultrarich tax cheats.

It is clear what is going on here: Speaker MCCARTHY cobbled together all sorts of extraneous measures in order to try and pass something, anything, no matter how extreme. But these extraneous measures—and they are truly extreme—have no place in a debate about avoiding default.

If Republicans truly wish to sell their extreme agenda to the American people, they should not do so in the middle of discussions to avoid default. There is a time and place to debate that, not during this debate, because what they are doing is dangerous to the country.

In the meantime, the solution to resolving the debt limit crisis has not changed. If Republicans want to avoid causing a first-ever default, they should do what we did three times under Donald Trump and twice under President Biden: work with Democrats to avoid default without brinksmanship, without blackmail, without hostage-taking, and without extraneous demands that nobody in America would want to accept, hardly anybody at all.

Speaker MCCARTHY's wish list is an extreme step in the wrong direction. It heads us in the direction of default, and time is running out.

WOMEN'S AND VETERANS' RIGHTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, next on women's rights and veterans' rights, for weeks, the senior Senator from Alabama has threatened American security by blocking over 180 routine military promotions because he objects to women in the military accessing reproductive care.

Yesterday, the Senator from Alabama's objections came before the Senate for consideration through a resolution that would have eliminated reproductive care for our veterans and their families. Senator TUBERVILLE lost the vote. Senator TUBERVILLE lost, while our women veterans won.

Yesterday's vote made two things very clear: First, MAGA Republicans are so hellbent on eliminating reproductive choice that not even veterans and our generals are safe. Americans have made abundantly clear that they reject the hard right's anti-choice agenda, but MAGA Republicans still double down.

Second, the Senate has now spoken on Senator TUBERVILLE's anti-choice

proposal and said no—one of the few instances where a CRA has been voted down in the Senate and, in this case, with bipartisan votes against it.

The Senate has spoken. Senator TUBERVILLE has zero excuse for blocking 180 military promotions. His objection has been presented, considered, and rejected on a bipartisan basis. He should drop his holds against our military personnel and move on.

I urge my Republican colleagues who care about our national defense and about our veterans to talk some sense into our colleague from Alabama so he can drop his dangerous holds.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, next on the FBI, a few weeks ago, former President Donald Trump called on Republicans in Congress to defund the Department of Justice and FBI because of personal grievances. Instead of standing up to President Trump, Speaker MCCARTHY and Republican leaders have been silent, and some Members of their party even echo the former President's call.

That is why today I am introducing a resolution denouncing President Trump's call to defund the DOJ and the FBI. The Senate will act on this measure as soon as next week.

The resolution is simple. It expresses our support for Federal law enforcement, and it condemns Donald Trump's call to defund the DOJ and FBI and any other partisan attempts to undermine their authority.

When the resolution comes to the floor, every Member of this Chamber will have a chance to do the right thing: stand up for the brave law enforcement who keep us safe and reject the former President's dangerous call to strip away their funding.

I hope the resolution passes unanimously. It certainly should.

The DOJ and FBI do critical work to protect our communities from threats at home and abroad, including drug trafficking, gun violence, terrorism, and so much more. Do Republicans really want to cut their funding, the funding of these Agencies, making it harder for them to do their jobs?

Again, where will Republicans stand? Will they stand with the Federal law enforcement who keep us safe or stand with the former President and his dangerous call to defund Federal law enforcement? The American people deserve to know how radical the hard right has become, and this resolution will give them answers.

FIRE GRANTS AND SAFETY ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the Fire Grants and Safety Act, later today, the Senate will pass a much needed lifeline for our firefighters, the Fire Grants and Safety Act.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their good work on this overwhelmingly bipartisan legislation.

Passing the Fire Grants and Safety Act will extend two important Federal grant programs that support our paid and volunteer firefighters—SAFER and AFG.

As we approach the fire season, extending SAFER and AFG is crucial to ensuring that firefighters have life-saving equipment and personnel necessary to do their jobs. This is particularly true in smaller, more rural, more suburban areas where volunteer firefighters staff the firehouses, but the equipment is hard to purchase for smaller and less wealthy communities.

Our firefighters are brave. They risk their lives for us. They run toward danger, not away from it. They work tirelessly around the clock, often in dangerous and unpredictable conditions, putting their lives on the line to keep us safe. Firefighters have had our backs, and passing the Fire Grants and Safety Act today will show we have their backs too.

I was proud, in my early days in the Senate, to work with Senator Dodd to pass this legislation.

Again, I thank my colleagues. This has been an example, again, just like we did a few weeks back on the AUMF, of how the Senate should work—bipartisan. We worked with our Republican colleagues and the ranking member of the relevant committees to allow Republican amendments, and, in turn, our Republican colleagues are supporting us moving forward on this important legislation. It is a good thing, and I hope this model continues. As leader, that is one of the things that I am trying to do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF JULIE A. SU

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, well, the Biden administration's reckless economic policies have hurt American workers and families right from the beginning. Right from the start of their one-party government, Democrats used party-line votes to light trillions—trillions—of dollars on fire and supercharge inflation that is still hammering the country right up to the present.

After 2 years of reckless policies and human pain, the American people voted for checks and balances. They

elected a Republican House and a narrowly divided Senate to literally pump the brakes on this radicalism. But there is an old saying in Washington that “personnel is policy.” So while the American people put a stop to reckless legislation last November, President Biden continues to send reckless nominations to the Senate. They want to accomplish through Big Government regulations what the voters have stopped them from doing here in Congress.

This morning, for example, the HELP Committee is hearing from Julie Su, President Biden’s nominee to run the Department of Labor. Ms. Su has a lengthy track record for all—all—the wrong reasons.

Before entering the Biden administration, she presided over a disaster as head of the State labor department out in California. Tens of billions of dollars in fraudulent payments went out the door on her watch. The State auditor found Ms. Su and her department were totally asleep—totally asleep—at the switch on antifraud efforts. Even the Los Angeles Times had to label her performance—listen to this—an “epic failure.”

Our supply chains are already in enough peril, due in part to high-stakes labor negotiations. Think about the negotiations to keep open the ports on the west coast. Think about the ripple effects. Our national economy cannot afford a track record of “epic failure” leading our Department of Labor.

She also supported and helped implement a controversial new California law that essentially—listen to this—declared war on independent contractors and tried to give Big Labor special interests veto power over the entire gig economy. In essence, these far-left Democrats want every ride-share driver, hairdresser, or personal trainer to be reclassified and handled more like a corporate employee, all so that part of their paychecks could be vacuumed up and donated to leftwing political causes.

The same partisan inflexibility has defined Ms. Su’s time here in Washington as Deputy Secretary of Labor on the national level. From the powerful No. 2 job, she helped President Biden try to force that California model into our entire economy, a giant gift for Big Labor bosses at the expense of workers and consumers alike. She also signaled that she wants to help lead the far left’s crusade against the current joint-employer rule, yet another effort to give big-money union bosses even more power to squash innovation and skim money from workers’ paychecks.

What they can’t get through legislation, they fully intend to push forward through regulations. So it is no wonder that an unending parade of small business leaders, independent contractors, and other job creators have written the Senate literally begging us—begging us—to demand a fairer and more mainstream Labor Secretary. Confirming

this nominee would compound the economic pain the Biden administration has already caused.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FIRE GRANTS AND SAFETY ACT— Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to S. 870, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 870) to amend the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 to authorize appropriations for the United States Fire Administration and firefighter assistance grant programs.

Pending:

Schumer amendment No. 58, to add an effective date.

NOMINATION OF JULIE A. SU

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this morning the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee is considering the nomination of Julie Su to be Secretary of Labor.

Before joining the U.S. Department of Labor as Deputy Secretary under President Biden, Ms. Su previously served as labor secretary for the State of California, and in that post, she was perhaps most notable for presiding over massive unemployment fraud during the COVID crisis. Unemployment fraud was a significant problem during the pandemic, but even with widespread fraud, California stood out for the scope of its problem.

During the first 6 months of the pandemic, California had an improper payment rate of 36.6 percent. Let that sink in for a moment—an improper payment rate of 36.6 percent. Ultimately, the State paid out around \$30 billion in fraudulent claims between the start of the pandemic and last spring.

Now, certainly, States faced an influx of unemployment claims during the pandemic that put additional pressure on unemployment agencies. But California’s fraud situation was not simply a result of an increased workload during the pandemic. It was also in part the result of Ms. Su’s decision to remove safeguards intended to help prevent fraudulent claims.

During the early days of the pandemic, Ms. Su directed the California

Employment Development Department to—in the words of the California State auditor—“pay certain claimants UI benefits without making key eligibility determinations and to temporarily stop collecting biweekly eligibility certifications.” These directives unquestionably helped smooth the path for widespread unemployment fraud as well as a significant number of improper payments.

It is difficult to know what President Biden was thinking when he decided to nominate someone who presided over massive unemployment fraud to be the next Labor Secretary. If that is what happened when Ms. Su was the labor secretary for a single State, it is difficult to see her as a qualified nominee to head the Labor Department for an entire country.

But my concerns with Ms. Su don’t end there. In addition to questions about her ability to effectively administer a Cabinet Department, I have serious concerns that Ms. Su would use her national platform to continue promoting policies that are hostile to workers.

During her time in California government, Ms. Su was a proponent of Assembly Bill 5, which is a piece of legislation that reclassified many workers who had been considered independent contractors as employees through a set of criteria known as the ABC test.

That test proved to be so unpopular and unworkable that ultimately dozens of occupations were exempted from the measure—so many that the list of exemptions ended up being longer than the text of the original bill. Even California voters recognized how problematic it was, which is why they approved Proposition 22, which specifically designated app-based rideshare and delivery drivers as independent contractors.

Now, people tend to think of Uber or Lyft as the prime example of gig work, but, in actual fact, gig workers and independent contractors make up a sizable percentage of the labor force and are part of a wide range of professions, from hairdressing to truckdriving to insurance adjustment. And a lot of gig workers and independent contractors are big fans of the freedom and independence that independent contracting provides and are not looking to be reclassified as employees.

A 2017 report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that a whopping 79 percent of independent contractors preferred their work arrangement to a traditional work arrangement. Less than 10 percent expressed a preference for a traditional job.

The truth is that laws like California’s arise not from a groundswell of gig worker dissatisfaction but from liberals’ commitment to Big Labor, which would like to see the majority of workers forced to pay dues.

Laws like California’s Assembly Bill 5 are supported by unions because they would put more workers in a position where they might end up joining unions, even if gig workers and independent contractors themselves don’t