

their fair share, the truth is that it is lower and middle-income Americans who are suffering as a result of the President's economic policies.

This summer another big economic issue will come into play: The debt limit. Sometime in the next few months, the United States will reach the limit of its borrowing capacity, and Congress will have to pass—and the President will have to sign—legislation to raise the debt ceiling to enable the United States to pay our debts. Needless to say, that will require negotiations between the President and Congress, something the President has so far refused to engage in.

Why? Because the President doesn't want an increase in the debt limit to be paired with any measures that might cut spending or actually do something to reduce the debt.

I suppose that is not a surprising position from someone who wants to grow government, increase the size of the Federal budget to a staggering \$10 trillion, but it is a deeply problematic position—both because it ignores the increasing danger represented by our ever-increasing national debt and because it is an unrealistic position.

In a divided government, a refusal to negotiate cannot be an option. And if the President doesn't want to go down in history as the President who forced the United States to default on its debt, he needs to start engaging in negotiations.

House Republicans are putting forward a serious bill to restrain excess spending while protecting the full faith and credit of the United States. The President needs to join the Speaker at the negotiating table. Responsible spending reforms might not undo the economic damage the President has done, but they could put us on a more sustainable and less-damaging path for the future. And they could spare Americans some of the economic pain that would result from more of President Biden's reckless government spending.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL ZAMORE

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, it was John Quincy Adams who once said:

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

For the last 14 years, the members of my team have had an outstanding leader in our chief of staff, Michael Zamore, who has constantly and consistently inspired the team and me to dream, to grow, to strive to do better every single day for ourselves and the people we serve.

But after nearly a decade and a half, as the heart and soul of Team Merkley and more than 22 years on Capitol Hill, Mr. Zamore has decided to close this chapter of his life and career and set off to begin writing the next chapter. I know I speak for many when I say how hard it is to imagine our office or the Senate without Mike Zamore.

Mike has been with me from the very beginning. He was one of the small crew working out of the temporary basement office the day I was sworn in. Five new Members of the Senate and a couple of staff members crowded into a single, little, expanded room downstairs, trying to figure out what we were doing, how to get around.

Where are those hearing rooms? How do we get the paper for the printers? How do we get staples for the staplers?

He has been a pivotal part of every success that our team has achieved since, and there have been a lot of legislative highlights in the time that he has led Team Merkley—to name just a few: outlawing predatory mortgages; passing financial reform to shut down the Wall Street proprietary trading casino; winning Senate passage of ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, to end job discrimination against our LGBTQ+ community; drafting and introducing the Equality Act to end LGBTQ discrimination across the board; leading the effort to end the horrific Trump policy of ripping children out of their parents' arms at the border; ending the importation of Chinese products produced with slave labor; and so many more and so many different initiatives to improve healthcare, to establish more decent and affordable housing, to expand quality education, and to increase the number of good-paying jobs for working Americans.

But it isn't just policy that is relevant to the role of a chief of staff. Mike has worked to ensure that our team has the best operation for answering constituents' letters to be found on Capitol Hill, to empower the Oregon half of our operation to build a fabulous constituent services team and an excellent set of field representatives to work with Oregon's counties and cities to address the challenges and opportunities within our State, and to keep our DC team and our Oregon team working closely together as one.

He did this through many trips to the State and by encouraging staff here in DC to travel and be in Oregon as well and by ensuring we connected and coordinated through weekly all-staff meetings and that we connected through biannual retreats: getting everyone together face-to-face with the Oregon team and the DC team, spending time together to know one another, enjoy each other's company, and expand the connections that lead to successful progress forward on issue after issue.

And because we like to be a team that not only works hard but plays hard, Mike always had a little special

presentation for those occasions when we were all gathered together, on one occasion dressing up in colonial garb to perform a special Team Merkley rendition of a song from "Hamilton" or, on another occasion, doing a sea shanty during our nautical-themed virtual retreat. In doing these presentations, he proved himself to be a far, far braver man than most of the rest of us, but I know that that extra bit of effort has always been beloved by everyone on the team.

His most lasting legacy will be through the talented individuals he has carefully recruited to be members of our team over the last 14-plus years and the way that he inspired them and led them, with heart and humility, imbuing them with the same passion for public service that has guided Mike throughout his entire career.

I believe we have had one of the most energetic, capable, and motivated teams ever assembled on Capitol Hill, and that is because we have had one of the most energetic, capable, and motivated chiefs of staff in Mike Zamore.

As chief, Mike worked hard to champion and reinforce specific values. One of them that has resonated over the years is the idea of continuous self-improvement—the idea that none of us are perfect and never will be and that we should always be striving to be better ourselves as individuals and as a team.

Mike never exempted himself from that same spirit of continual self-improvement. He sought out and welcomed honest feedback from everyone, from the newest intern to the most senior staffer, on how he was doing and how the office was doing and how we could do better.

Jack Welch, the former head of GE, once said:

When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.

Mike has always cared deeply about helping the members of our team grow. That is why he has always loved outside-the-box thinking, like when a staff member suggested that I should hop on a plane and go down to the border to find out for myself what was really happening with the administration's zero-tolerance family separation policy. It is why he enthusiastically embraced and championed our office's mission of inclusivity and was so supportive of the creation of a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee. Our DE&I team members have created learning opportunities, and they share information to educate and inform the rest of the team about a wide range of issues, and they work to inspire honest, open, and sometimes uncomfortable dialogues so that we can all be the best versions of ourselves and so that we can serve all of the people of Oregon with the highest level of respect and responsiveness.

It is why his door was always open for what he called "Z hours," when folks would come in and talk about anything whether it was work related or not.

The office and Team Merkley won't be the same without Mike. It won't be the same without the ringer on his phone quacking like a duck and interrupting meetings. It won't be the same without our office mascot—Mike's loving husky, Juneau—around to brighten everyone's day.

The writer Walter Lippmann noted:

The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind in others the conviction and will to carry on.

And I can tell you that the values of service, compassion, and humility that Mike has enshrined in the heart of Team Merkley will carry on because the folks whom he has painstakingly brought together have the conviction and will to do so.

Thank you, Mike. Thank you for all you have done for the team, all you have done for the Senate, and all you have done in advocating for policies to make our State, our country, and the world a better place. We wish you and your family the best as you start writing that next chapter of your life.

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

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

VEHICLE EMISSIONS

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to a resolution that has been presented to overturn the EPA's lifesaving heavy-duty NO_x rule.

Across the country, heavy-duty vehicles, including trucks and buses, make up one-third of all transportation NO_x emissions. Now, this is the same source of smog and soot that darkens skies in many communities and certainly poisons the lungs of too many Americans.

In an effort to address those real challenges, the EPA's heavy-duty vehicle pollution rule is projected to cut NO_x emissions from the heavy-duty sector by nearly half over the next dozen years. This represents a monumental investment and significant step forward in our Nation's health and air quality that will benefit all Americans. But instead of supporting this rule, some Members have suggested that we reverse course and instead leave in place an outdated pollution standard—a rule that even the heavy-duty vehicle industry acknowledges is too weak—and, in so doing, endanger the lives of thousands of Americans. This makes no sense.

Consider the Inland Empire in Southern California. Truly this region, this geographical area, is the heart of our Nation's supply chain. No one in the Inland Empire wants the economy to shutter, but residents in the region know all too well the dangers that surround them. Children's playgrounds, veterans health centers, schools, and entire neighborhoods are surrounded

by warehouses and distribution centers. Now, the warehouses in and of themselves aren't threatening our air quality or public health, but think about the emissions from the trucks that carry goods to and from those warehouses. As a result, communities throughout the Inland Empire, which happen to also be mostly Latino and low-income communities, experience higher rates of asthma, decreased lung function in children, and higher rates of cancer. It is not hyperbole. The data is there. Statistics are clear.

It is not just the Inland Empire. I raise that as the most significant example. In fact, it is communities all across the country near freight corridors that are impacted—almost 72 million people who live near freight routes.

So yes, Mr. President, I am standing up for the fundamental human right to clean air for all Americans.

Now, truth be told, I actually wanted the EPA to be more ambitious in its final NO_x rule and to align more closely with California's stringent heavy-duty vehicle rules. California proudly leads the Nation in decarbonization and emissions reduction, and we have done so by working thoughtfully and collectively with industry and communities to cut deadly NO_x and other pollution from vehicles while we transition to zero-emission vehicles.

So to my colleagues who claim negative business or economic impacts, California is doing this while having just grown from being the fifth largest economy in the world to the fourth largest economy in the world. Economic growth and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive. Economic growth and protecting public health are not mutually exclusive. We can and must do it all together.

Last I checked from business leaders whom I talked to—I mentioned industries at the table and also at the State level—they actually appreciate that regulatory certainty that I know you and I have talked about, Mr. President, where we lay out a rule, an agenda, a policy objective, and work together to create a plan to achieve it and keep that plan, not ripsaw back and forth about what regulations are going to be in place from one year to the next, from one congressional majority to the next, et cetera.

I am also continuing to push the EPA to finalize a strong phase 3 heavy-duty vehicle rule with my clean air and clean transportation partners in the Senate, including Chairman CARPER of the Environment and Public Works Committee and Senator MARKEY and others.

But, at the very least, we can't undercut two decades of progress we have already made, and this CRA undermines the scientific and technical expertise behind these important standards and public health protections. And we know that the CRA is part of a bigger effort to stop the bold action we are taking to tackle the climate crisis.

So, colleagues, for the sake of clean air, for the sake of our environment, and for the sake of the health of all communities across the country, I urge you to oppose this repeal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent to be able to complete my remarks before the vote.

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this week, the House is expected to vote on legislation to begin to rein in Congress's out-of-control spending and avoid a debt default. As the American people know, this is a critical task that has become more urgent by the day.

The United States hit its debt limit, basically maxing out on our national credit card. We maxed out on our credit card in January, and the Treasury Department has been using what they call "extraordinary measures" to prevent the government from defaulting on its debt. Because it depends on how much revenue is coming in the front door from taxes, we don't know exactly when these measures will be exhausted, but experts say it could happen as soon as June, which is only 1 month away. So clearly it is time to get serious about solutions.

From the beginning of this discussion and debate, two things have become abundantly clear: One, default should be avoided at all costs. This is something that Republicans and Democrats both agree to. Our economy is still stabilizing from the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, our banking system has endured two high-profile collapses, and inflation continues to wreak havoc on family budgets.

The latest RealClearPolitics average for the Biden administration's handling of the economy says that only about 37 percent of the American people believe President Biden has done a good job on the economy. So clearly they are feeling vulnerable to any shocks to the economy that might occur should the debt limit not be passed.

We know that if the United States defaults on these debts, all of our challenges will only get worse. Social Security and Medicare benefits would be delayed. Members of the military and Federal employees would not get paid. We could see skyrocketing mortgage rates, sinking stock prices, and an instability all across our economy.

In short, this is not a time for a game of chicken; this is a time for responsible people to step up and to do their job. A default is the very last thing our country needs, and Congress and the administration need to act before it is too late.

I am glad we agree on that point, but the second point is where there is clearly a difference of opinion. It is clear that America's borrowing and spending are unsustainable. With \$31