

this Chief Justice—on the issue of a code of ethics in the Supreme Court, I delivered on February 13, 2012, during the Obama administration. So this is not some newfound interest. I have been working on it for years. My colleague Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE also has dedicated a major part of his Senate career on this issue of ethical standards before the Supreme Court. So the notion that we just invented this because of unhappiness with recent court decisions just doesn't hold up. Many of us have been working on this issue for years—years before any of these decisions were handed down.

There was also an argument that the Congress has no authority to establish standards for the Supreme Court. As I mentioned earlier when we had this stock disclosure law passed last year, it was embraced by the Court. The Court goes through some form of financial disclosure based on the law passed in 1978. By and large, there are many ways that the Congress interfaces with the Supreme Court, not the least of which is its budget. So we are in constant communication with the Court and its operation.

I believe that we clearly have the authority to establish ethical standards in law for the Supreme Court. The Republicans on our committee, to a person, disagree with it.

We also had an argument made that somehow we had singled out Clarence Thomas, a Justice on the Supreme Court, and decided that he was going to be persecuted by this type of inquiry. Well, let me say, the facts that were disclosed about his gift-taking from a Texas billionaire were extraordinary. I think they were a surprise to most people.

Justice Thomas is not denying the fact that he took hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of vacations—yacht trips to Indonesia, private aircraft—from this Texas billionaire. He dismissed it and said it was personal hospitality. Personal hospitality does not include transportation, and, of course, this included a lot of the most luxurious transportation imaginable that the Justice received. So to say that this was acceptable conduct, it clearly was to Republicans yesterday, but I think most Americans want to know more about the relationship that would lead a Justice to take hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of trips. Not to mention that this same billionaire bought his mother's home and allowed her to live there afterwards. So that was worth at least \$140,000 to the benefit of the Justice's family again.

There were questions raised throughout as to why we would pick on one conservative Justice. I will tell you, the disclosures that have come out since the Thomas article about the gifts he received from the Texas billionaire have included many members of the Court, certainly those who wouldn't be put in the conservative category, and questions have been raised.

Questions are raised about Members of Congress all the time, and they should be. I know each year when I disclose my taxes and my net worth in detail, somebody is going to call it into question: Explain this item to me. Explain that item to me. That is part of the responsibility of public service. It is no fun, but it is part of the job. If you want to be a public figure, I think you owe it to the people to be assuring them in every step of the way that you are being honest in the way you discharge your duties.

So we haven't given up. When it comes to the Senate Judiciary Committee and the issue of ethics, we are far from finished. We had good testimony yesterday from witnesses who I think give us a basis for moving forward in this area.

At the end of the day, we want to make sure that people, as skeptical as they are of politicians, as they have every right to be, believe the institutions—whether it is Congress or the Supreme Court or the President's office—are at least credible and trustworthy. Establishing a fundamental ethical standard that assures that fact is absolutely essential, and the Senate Judiciary Committee will continue in that pursuit.

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. 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.

ENERGY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last week, I came to the floor to talk about how the President's economic policies are failing to serve the lower and middle-income Americans he claims are his priority.

The President talks about wanting to give American families "a little more breathing room," but his Big Government, big spending policies are taking away Americans' breathing room, as cash-strapped families struggling with the effects of the President's historic inflation crisis can attest.

Today, I want to talk about another set of the President's policies that aren't serving Americans, and that is the President's energy policy. Since the day he took office, President Biden has pursued an agenda that is hostile to conventional sources of energy; namely, oil and natural gas. He set the tone on his very first day in office when he canceled the Keystone XL Pipeline—an environmentally responsible pipeline project that was already underway, and was to be paired with \$1.7 billion in private investment in renewable energy to fully offset—fully offset—its operating emissions.

He also almost immediately froze new oil and gas leases on Federal land,

sending a clear signal to oil and gas producers that his administration would be reluctant to work with them to increase American energy production. And he has continued along the same lines ever since, from raising taxes on conventional energy to proposing a rule that would effectively mandate that automakers only make electric vehicles beginning in the near future. The President's policies have targeted conventional energy.

In March, the President announced that he would close off a substantial part of the Arctic to oil and gas development. In the same week, his Environmental Protection Agency finalized a rule—a so-called good neighbor rule that threatens to close a number of fossil fuel-powered power plants.

So why is all this a problem? After all, Members of both parties support alternative energy technologies. Why are the President's efforts to shut down conventional energy production a problem?

Well, the President's attacks on conventional energy are a problem because conventional energy still plays an essential role in providing a steady, reliable energy supply to American consumers.

No matter how much the White House might wish it weren't the case, the technology to fully transition the United States to clean energy simply doesn't exist yet, and all of the Green New Deal, anti-conventional energy policies in the world can't change that basic fact.

What the President's Green New Deal, anti-conventional energy policies can do, however, is jeopardize our Nation's energy supply and drive up prices for American consumers. Americans know the energy price hikes of the Biden administration all too well. From restricting oil and gas production to imposing tax hikes on conventional energy, President Biden's energy policies have driven up Americans' energy costs, but that will be nothing compared to what will happen if the President succeeds in choking off and drastically reducing conventional energy production. Prices will soar; blackouts, brownouts, and calls for energy rationing will become commonplace; and our economic and national security will be in jeopardy.

We are not at the point yet where we are experiencing blackouts and brownouts on a regular basis—unless, I guess, you are a resident of California, whose energy grid is known for being unreliable because of the State's overreliance on renewables—but the President's policies could push us over the edge.

In February, the PJM Interconnection, which manages a substantial part of Eastern America's electric grid, released a report warning that fossil fuel plants are being forced to retire at a faster rate than new renewables can be brought online, at a rate of roughly 2 to 1. In other words, we are rapidly approaching a situation where we simply don't have the ability to keep up with

the electricity demand, and as the report underscored, that situation is being driven by anti-conventional energy policies.

The Wall Street Journal, which weighed in after the PJM report was released, noted that “most projected powerplant retirements are ‘policy driven.’” That is what the report says. In other words, powerplants aren’t closing because they have reached the end of their operating lives; they are closing because of policies designed to discourage conventional energy.

I have already mentioned the EPA’s new good neighbor rule, which could force powerplants in 22 States to close. Then there are things like utility company environmental, social, and governance—or ESG—policies. They are policies that utility companies can voluntarily adopt but that this administration wants to mandate, which the PJM report highlights as a factor in plant closures.

Not only do overreaching ESG policies force some of our most reliable energy facilities offline, these facilities are also being replaced with technologies like solar that are inherently intermittent and can’t be dispatched in times of high demand.

The Wall Street Journal notes that “Illinois and New Jersey climate policies could reduce generation by 8,900 [megawatts].” That amount of energy would be enough to power over 7 million households.

So, in other words, policies that discourage conventional energy are already having an effect and threatening our Nation’s energy supply. If the President continues to pursue these types of policies, his Presidency may be remembered not just for a historic inflation crisis but for setting off a long-term energy crisis caused by an unreliable and insufficient energy supply.

Instead of trying to bring about a clean energy future before we have the technology to get us there, the President should be pursuing an “all of the above” energy policy—an energy policy that embraces the full spectrum of available energy sources, both renewable and conventional.

I am a strong supporter of clean energy, like so many of my Republican colleagues, but unlike Democrats, Republicans recognize that our Nation is not going to be fully transitioning to 100-percent zero-emission energy anytime soon no matter how much the administration would like it to. There are a lot of hurdles to be crossed before we can rely solely on clean energy.

So Republicans are committed to supporting both alternative energy and the responsible development and deployment of the conventional energy we need to keep our Nation’s energy grid reliable and Americans’ energy costs down. For evidence, you need look no further than the energy legislation recently passed by the Republican-led House of Representatives, which would advance both responsible

conventional energy development and clean energy technologies.

Predictably, the Senate Democrat leader has declared this legislation “dead on arrival” in the U.S. Senate. Democrats are so beholden to the radical environmental wing of their party that anything that doesn’t adhere to their Green New Deal orthodoxy isn’t up for discussion. But Democrats’ opposition is unfortunate, not just because this legislation would help ensure an adequate supply of conventional energy but also—also—because it would help advance alternative energy projects.

Republicans’ legislation would tackle permitting delays, which are a leading impediment to energy development, including alternative energy development. Republicans’ legislation would also actually help support the electric car development that Democrats are so committed to by enabling the development of critical mineral resources here at home—the same critical minerals that are essential ingredients in electric car batteries.

While I am on the subject of cars, I will say that the President made one right decision on energy last Friday by approving the sale of E15 fuel for this summer. Americans saved \$57 million last year thanks to summertime E15 sales. With the war in Ukraine continuing to stress fuel markets, renewing this E15 permission will help drive down the expected summer surge in gas prices while at the same time benefiting our environment and offsetting production cuts from OPEC.

But while I am glad the President listened to calls from me and others to extend E15 sales through the summer, it is unfortunately one of just a handful of times when the President has opted for reliable and affordable energy instead of an unrealistic anti-conventional energy policy.

An “all of the above” energy policy—a policy that embraces both conventional and renewable energy sources—is essential for keeping energy prices affordable, ensuring the reliability of our Nation’s energy supply, and keeping our Nation secure. If the President doesn’t start encouraging conventional as well as renewable energy development, consumers and our country are going to pay a heavy price.

The President has already ensured that he will be remembered for a historic inflation crisis. He should make sure he isn’t remembered as the instigator of a future energy crisis as well.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator PADILLA be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes, followed by Senator KENNEDY for up to 15 minutes, prior to the scheduled rollcall votes.

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

The Senator from California.

NOMINATION OF JULIE A. SU

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support

President Biden’s nominee to serve as Secretary of Labor, current Acting Secretary Julie Su.

Julie is a proud Californian and a champion for workers everywhere. She was a tireless advocate for workers in California for years. I was honored to introduce her before the HELP Committee 2 years ago when she was first nominated to serve as Deputy Secretary of Labor.

I should note that, that year, I was also proud to see every single Democratic Senator vote to confirm her nomination. In the time since, I think it is perfect to ask, what has happened? I will tell you what has happened. She has gained even more experience in defending workers nationwide and in managing a Federal Department.

As a highly effective Deputy Secretary of Labor and now as Acting Secretary, she has played a critical role in helping the administration add 12.6 million jobs to the American economy, which is more job gains than any previous President has achieved in a 4-year term. It is further proof that job creation and strong labor protections are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they go hand in hand in building a strong, resilient economy.

Julie’s service and track record come as no surprise, frankly, when you understand where she came from. She is the daughter of immigrants and a native of California. She knows personally the sacrifices that many working families make to make ends meet. Her parents worked hard for decades in minimum wage jobs before establishing and growing their own small business.

So, yes, colleagues, Julie Su and her family have seen both sides of a paycheck. They instilled in Julie a strong work ethic, which has led her to take on tough fights as a labor lawyer, as labor secretary for the State of California, as Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, and now as Acting Secretary.

I also have to note, as the secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency—the then-fifth largest economy in the world and now the fourth largest economy in the world—she was a strong manager who led a number of major departments, boards, and panels at the State level.

Her experience and qualifications are unmatched. As former Secretary Walsh put it, Julie is a “lifelong champion of America’s workers.”

I will end with this: If confirmed, she would be the first Asian American to serve as a Secretary in President Biden’s Cabinet. Millions of Americans will see themselves represented at the highest levels of government and take pride in her story as a daughter of working-class immigrants.

I was proud to hear her impressive recent testimony in the HELP Committee when I introduced her once again and where she was successfully voted out of committee. She is exactly the type of labor champion we need at this critical time.