

new jobs. They invested in their employees, and they opened new opportunities for American workers by moving production and capital into the United States. Contrary to what some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would have you believe, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act also helped increase revenues to the Federal Government.

In short, tax reform helped create an economic environment for American businesses and American taxpayers to prosper, with some of the biggest benefits going to lower and middle-income Americans.

Our economy's rebound from COVID—and much of the strength it still has after 2 years of Democrat-fueled inflation—is in large part due to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

We are at an inflection point right now when it comes to tax policy and to our economy. Key parts of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act are set to expire in the not too distant future, and certain provisions—provisions that help boost American innovation and make it easier for small- and medium-sized businesses to thrive—have already expired.

There are two ways we could go. We can either maintain and build on Tax Cuts and Jobs Act policies designed to help businesses grow and expand opportunities for American workers or we can move in the direction the President is moving, which is dismantling pro-growth provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and making tax hikes the focus, with the intent not of growing the economy but of growing the Federal Government.

I, for one, believe we should be focusing on tax policies that help spur economic growth and help allow Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money. I intend to do everything I can to preserve the economic benefits of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act by working with my colleagues to expand and make permanent its policies.

Even the President has grudgingly agreed that the lower rates for individuals making under \$400,000 should be continued, and I hope he will work with Members of Congress to make that happen in the very near future. But we need to extend not just the lower individual rates that Republicans implemented but the other tax policies that helped American businesses grow, ensured more individuals can save for their retirement, and provided new opportunities for Americans to invest in their future.

American workers don't just need reasonable tax rates; they also need a thriving economy, the kind of economy that produces good jobs and good wages and rewarding careers. That is the kind of economy the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act helped create, and that is the kind of economy we need to be fighting to create for the future.

The massive tax hikes President Biden is proposing would tear down the tax structure the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act created and drag our economy and the American taxpayers down with it.

I will do everything I can to prevent the President's job-killing tax hikes from being implemented. We don't need a pro-government Tax Code; we need a pro-growth, pro-opportunity, and pro-taxpayer Tax Code. For the sake of all the South Dakota families and businesses I am lucky enough to have the opportunity to represent and all the hard-working families and businesses across our great country, that is the kind of Tax Code I will continue to fight for.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

SUPPORTING AMERICANS WRONGFULLY OR UNLAWFULLY DETAINED ABROAD ACT OF 2023

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, from dark prison cells in Tehran to the FSB's prison in Moscow, autocrats and dictators are unjustly detaining innocent Americans as pawns to advance their geopolitical goals. So I come to the floor today, as families of these Americans have gathered in Washington, to shine a spotlight on the plight of their loved ones and to support passage of the Supporting Americans Wrongfully or Unlawfully Detained Abroad Act of 2023, which is a bipartisan effort I am leading with the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator RISCH, as well as Senators SHAHEEN and HAGERTY.

This bill would make a simple yet meaningful change to lessen the burden on these families as they work toward the release of their loved ones. It would allow the State Department to cover travel and lodging costs for families to advocate for their loved ones' release in Washington. It would also advance efforts to support the mental health and well-being of detainees and their families.

It will eliminate a completely arbitrary distinction under U.S. law. Currently, if your loved one is being held hostage by a nonstate actor—for example, a terrorist group like ISIS or al-Qaida—the government pays the costs for limited family travel to Washington, but if your loved one is being unlawfully detained by a foreign government—Russia, Iran, Venezuela, and the like—there is no such funding available. This doesn't make any sense, and Senator RISCH and I are trying to fix it on behalf of American families who find themselves in unbearably difficult and painful circumstances.

This bill passed unanimously out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Let me repeat that—unanimously. It is not and should not be controversial. This is the least we can do for families who lie awake wondering if their son or daughter, sister or brother will return home, who wonder if there is something else, just one more thing they could do to make a difference that would break the deadlock of their loved one's captivity—maybe one more meeting with a U.S. Government official or a Member of Congress; maybe the right confluence

of events to bring their child back home.

So I ask this body to give these families just a little bit of peace as they navigate an unimaginable nightmare. Surely cutting a bit of redtape, getting them a train ticket or a plane ride to Washington once or twice a year, is not too much to ask.

I am here to seek passage of this bill. I was going to seek a unanimous consent request. I understand that my colleague, the Senator from Kentucky, Senator PAUL, has a fiscal issue. I just met with him. We look forward to hopefully working it out and then being able to return to the floor to seek its passage.

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I don't think I really need to do this with the length of my speech, but just in case it runs up against the vote, I ask unanimous consent to be able to finish my speech.

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

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND FBI

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in the past several years, I have come to this Senate Chamber to discuss my constitutional oversight of the Justice Department and the FBI. In many of those floor speeches, I have discussed legally protected and unclassified whistleblower disclosures that were made to my office relating to the Hunter Biden criminal investigation.

These disclosures were made public in the interest of transparency and accountability because the public's business should be public, and we should know, as Senators or Congressmen and Congresswomen, whether the executive branch of government is faithfully executing the laws as the Constitution requires.

Those disclosures that I have made have a very common theme: The Justice Department and FBI have allowed political infection to take root within each Agency's decision-making process. Such an infection is an existential threat to any government Agency, but to a law enforcement Agency that can interfere with our constitutional rights, such an infection is catastrophic.

After Crossfire Hurricane, which was the definition of a political investigation, the whistleblower disclosures demanded congressional attention more than ever. So I wrote public letters asking questions. I directly asked the same to the Attorney General and the FBI Director at committee hearings. I have asked them about allegations that politics infected the Hunter Biden

investigation. This sort of political bias erodes trust in government and prevents the equal application of the law as required by the Constitution.

I have also asked them about allegations that the FBI used false claims of Russian disinformation to bury potential criminal investigations about Hunter and James Biden. Also, I asked them about allegations regarding specific records within the Department's possession relating to potential criminal conduct by the Bidens. I have asked about allegations regarding specific records that show Joe Biden may have been involved in Hunter Biden's business arrangements.

The allegations my office has received are very precise, very direct, and very consistent. Accordingly, they are highly credible. These credible allegations raise important and fundamental questions, like these questions:

Did the FBI follow normal investigative procedures to vet these claims?

Did the FBI follow the facts wherever they led, or did they improperly shut down credible leads in advance of the 2020 election?

Remember, I have been raising these questions for a long period of time. I have done it through many venues: letters, in hearings, in private calls with Agency leadership, and, like today, right here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

The Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation had plenty of opportunities to respond to all of these questions I have raised. Not once—let me emphasize: not once has the Justice Department or FBI ever substantively disputed the whistleblower allegations that I have made public. I have given Attorney General Garland and Director Wray every opportunity to put our worst fears to rest and assure the American people, as they should, that everything has been done by the book. Both Agencies have failed to do so.

Just think how simple it is to say that everything was done the right way—if they could say that. And that ought to tell you something. Even with their credibility on the line, the FBI and Justice Department have refused to cooperate when asked for basic information. So, as you know if you have been following all this stuff—and I don't expect people to have time to do that—yesterday, House Chairman COMER issued a letter accompanied by a subpoena from the House committee demanding one FBI document. Based on protected and highly credible whistleblower disclosures, the unclassified document exists, and it is allegedly referencing a criminal scheme involving then-Vice President Biden.

Notably, it is a crime to provide false information to Congress during a congressional investigation.

Most importantly, this very document was generated by the FBI themselves. It is time for the Justice Department and FBI to come clean to the American people. What did the Justice

Department and FBI do to investigate the information in the document at issue? The answer goes to the heart of whether taxpayer-funded government Agencies proceed normally or whether that Agency cuts corners.

Simply put, did the Justice Department and the FBI treat this information like they would if "We the People" were implicated, or did they sweep it under the rug to protect then-candidate Biden and now-President Biden?

If the Justice Department and FBI have any hope of redeeming their once trusted position—and that is what the American people have long held, to trust the FBI—Attorney General Garland and Director Wray must answer. Their credibility is on the line.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF LASHONDA A. HUNT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Judge LaShonda Hunt to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Born in Mississippi and raised on the South Side of Chicago, Judge Hunt received her bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School.

After working as a staff attorney for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, Judge Hunt clerked for Judge William J. Hibbler on the Northern District of Illinois. Immediately following her clerkship, Judge Hunt worked for 2 years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois. In 2010, she returned to this role and served for another 5 years. As a Federal prosecutor, she handled cases involving employment discrimination, civil rights violations, healthcare fraud, and more. After leaving the U.S. Attorney's Office, Judge Hunt worked for the State of Illinois in the Department of Corrections and the Department of Central Management Services. In 2017, the Seventh Circuit appointed Judge Hunt to serve as a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Northern District of Illinois. She has presided over approximately 22,000 bankruptcy cases and adversary proceedings, about 75 of which have gone to verdict or judgement.

The American Bar Association rated Judge Hunt "well qualified," and she received a strong bipartisan vote in committee. Given her extensive experience, dedication to public service and deep knowledge of the Northern District of Illinois, Senator DUCKWORTH and I strongly support Judge Hunt. I am honored to vote for her confirmation, and I urge my colleagues join me.

VOTE ON HUNT NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hunt nomination?

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll. Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 113 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	Kennedy	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	McConnell	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Warnock
Fetterman	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Welch
Graham	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—41

Barrasso	Ernst	Ricketts
Blackburn	Fischer	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Romney
Braun	Hagerty	Rounds
Britt	Hawley	Rubio
Budd	Hoeben	Schmitt
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lee	Sullivan
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Cramer	Marshall	Vance
Crapo	Moran	Wicker
Cruz	Mullin	Young
Daines	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Feinstein	Johnson	Tuberville
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 79, Colleen Joy Shogan, of Pennsylvania, to be Archivist of the United States.

Charles E. Schumer, Ben Ray Lujan, Alex Padilla, Christopher Murphy, Jeff Merkley, Michael F. Bennet, Tammy Baldwin, Richard J. Durbin, Mazie Hirono, Gary C. Peters, Tammy Duckworth, Catherine Cortez Masto, Cory A. Booker, Jack Reed, Raphael G. Warnock, Tim Kaine, Christopher A. Coons.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.