

because I do know and believe that there are individual Republican Senators in this body who do want to find compromise, who do want to recognize that this cannot be solved by any President so long as the laws of this Nation don't provide resources to move asylum claims faster, don't give Border Patrol what they need, don't allow enough people to come into this country through legal pathways.

Part of the reason that I am down here on the floor today trying to correct these myths and untruths is because I think it is a necessary predicate in order for us as a body, Republicans and Democrats, to sit down and talk about solving this problem.

The lack of action in Congress has left President Biden an impossible task. He has done the best that he conceivably can with a set of broken laws. But instead of spreading these myths and often outright lies about what is happening at the border and the consequences of lifting title 42, we should, as body, instead, do our job and fix our broken immigration laws.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today to unmask one of the major players behind the Republican debt limit brinksmanship.

With renewable energy outcompeting fossil fuels, Big Oil is worried that its oil well has run dry and wants to keep pumping the American people dry for all that they are worth. So the oil and the gas industry is running its tried and true playbook with Speaker KEVIN MCCARTHY taking the snap as their quarterback.

The Republicans all voted against the Inflation Reduction Act. They turned away from its provisions to create a livable future, its millions of new, clean energy jobs, its investments in environmental justice communities. The only thing Republicans haven't turned away is the billions of dollars in new investments unleashed in their States and districts from this landmark legislation, with \$150 billion in investments already announced across the country because of the IRA, because of the largest climate bill in American history.

I have seen Republicans on TV fearmongering about the Inflation Reduction Act, but I haven't seen a single Republican turn down any of those \$150 billion or any of those jobs, or all those benefits for those communities in red States.

But the fossil fuel industry itself is actually scared that something might happen to their season of record-shattering profits. They are scared that utilities will finally wake up and realize that installing new renewables is cheaper and more cost effective than running existing coal plants.

Natural gas plants are also set up to go the way of the dinosaur. In fact, we won't have to dig up any more dino-

saur in order to create the fuel. Building new solar and wind, instead of new natural gas, could save American energy customers nearly \$30 billion on their energy bills.

Renewables are outcompeting fossil fuels. The average levelized cost of energy for coal and gas is much higher than wind and solar. How much? Well, coal is nearly double the cost of solar. Natural gas is almost 1.5 times more costly than wind. And this is not accounting for the new IRA subsidies, the new climate bill subsidies from last year.

These statistics are the real fear of fossil fuel executives. These clean energy gains threaten Big Oil's massive bonus and even bigger profit margin.

Big Oil more than doubled its profits in 2022, making nearly \$220 billion in that year alone and paying out \$110 billion to their investors. Those are windfalls made on the backs of American family budgets. Republicans say they care about budgets, but the only budget they are committed to protecting is the one of the big oil and big gas industry across our country.

That is why attacks on clean energy and climate action are on the Republicans' debt limit and budget agendas. That is why Republicans are attacking tax credits for the American-made clean energy that makes us more secure, saves money, and protects our health and our climate. That is why Republicans are reportedly trying to jam a Big Oil and Natural Gas wish list masquerading as a so-called permitting package through debt limit negotiations, instead of going through regular order on the floor of the United States Senate.

The Republican permitting package would give fossil fuels even more of a leg up while their repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy provisions would hold our clean energy future hostage. Republicans don't want to use the budget to give students and children a head start. They want to give Big Oil a headstart over clean energy.

So just as we cannot default on our national debt, we cannot default on our debt to society. That means we cannot default on climate action for a livable future.

Climate should be off the table in debt limit negotiations—no repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act, no provisions to fast-track fossil fuel permitting in our country.

We know we need to build a clean energy future, but the Republicans' permitting proposal wouldn't help build on the IRA. It would bury the IRA. The Republicans' permitting priorities are a carbon bomb designed to unleash fossil fuels to push renewable energy off the grid, to stall the progress that was made.

Their priorities, apparently, don't include fixes for the electric transmission issues in this country, when transmission is what could improve reliability and deliver affordable energy

to all Americans. In other words, they want to have permitting for more oil and gas drilling, but they don't want to fix the transmission issues. None of that is on the table that the Republicans are asking for in order to solve the problem of moving renewable energy across the country.

Permitting should be about transmission lines, not pipelines.

And combined with their attacks on the Inflation Reduction Act, their priorities will devastate our climate, take away good-paying jobs, and cost Americans billions of dollars.

The Inflation Reduction Act is projected to save households more than \$1,000 every year by 2030. It is projected to create 550,000 clean energy jobs, and it is projected to give us a fighting chance at meeting our climate targets. We cannot throw that away.

We have a climate test for success—jobs, justice, and emissions reductions. That is our climate test. If we negotiate on the Inflation Reduction Act and permitting as part of debt limit conversations, we will fail that climate test, and the end result will be an environmental and climate catastrophe.

Climate action and clean energy progress can't be held hostage in this debate. Fast-tracking fossil fuels while attacking renewables is and always has been and always will be the Big Oil game plan. We can't play their game. We can't play with our future.

We cannot default on our debt, and we also cannot allow the destructive Republican budget to be implemented. That is why I have joined some of my Democratic colleagues in calling on President Biden to utilize his authority under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, which clearly states:

The validity of the public debt of the United States . . . shall not be questioned.

It is in the U.S. Constitution. Using that authority would allow the President and the United States to continue to pay the country's bills on time and without delay. It will ensure that we prevent a potential global economic catastrophe.

But let's not forget that it is the Bush and Trump tax cuts for the wealthy that are the driving force behind the debt that the Republicans are now crying crocodile tears over.

Speaker MCCARTHY says he wants to limit, save, and grow. What he and the Republicans really want to do is to cut, gut, and slow: cut taxes even more for the wealthy and corporations; gut programs like Medicaid, Head Start, Meals on Wheels, Pell grants, and community health centers; and slow the pace of clean energy and climate action—wind, solar, all-electric vehicles, and battery storage technologies that will revolutionize energy consumption in our country—all to protect Big Oil buddies, gas buddies, all across the country.

A livable future and affordable clean energy are budget realities. We can save money for American families and save our planet at the same time.

The IRA's climate provisions and fossil fuel permitting should be off the table during this negotiation.

We cannot allow the well-being of American families or our planet to be held hostage to a radical, rightwing, conservative House of Representatives that is out of control in terms of its relationship with reality.

I appreciate the attention of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

#### LOUISIANA HOUSE BILL 12

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am going to talk for a few minutes today about HB12. That is not HB12 from the U.S. House of Representatives; that is HB12 from the Louisiana House of Representatives. Why do I want to talk about it? Because it is important. It is important for my State, and I think it is important for other States.

HB12 passed the Louisiana House of Representatives yesterday—maybe it was the day before—by a vote of 88 to 15, and it is headed to my senate.

As the Presiding Officer knows, it is frustrating in that the American people can do things that take your breath away—we can unravel the human genome; we can take a diseased human heart—we can do that in America—and replace it with a new one and make it beat; we can send a person to the Moon—but we can't seem to teach our children how to read and write when we have 18 years to do it.

I don't come here this morning to assess blame. Our problem is shared in other countries. That is no excuse. Our problem is caused by a multitude of factors, but I believe and I will bet the Presiding Officer believes that every child can learn—that every child can learn. It is harder for some than others. I recognize that some of our children do not have a supportive home life, not just in America but in other parts of the world. It seems commonsensical to me that if parents do not love their child, the child is not going to stop loving the child's parents; the child is going to stop loving himself or herself. But I don't know how to fix that. All we can do is continue to believe that every child can learn—every child.

My State, like other States, has a problem with elementary and secondary education. Over half of my children—my young people—in Louisiana are not reading at their grade levels, and at some point, as a child is socially promoted in school and progresses, it almost becomes impossible for a child to learn if the child can't read.

It is not just money. Go look at a list of what States spend on elementary and secondary education—and not just States but local governments and the Federal Government as well. One of our States in America is spending \$54,000 a year on their public schools. I mean, God bless them, but that is a lot of money. It is not just money. We have to try and we have to be courageous

enough to try new things that we think will work.

Now, what does that have to do with HB12 in the Louisiana State Legislature? Here is what HB12 would do. It would say: Look, we are not blaming anyone, but if you are a child in the third grade in Louisiana and if you can't read, according to objective standards, at an acceptable level, then you are going to stay in the third grade. We don't care if you are 16 years old. We can hold you until you are 18. But we think you can learn, and you can't learn if you can't read.

Now, that doesn't mean that the child just repeats the third grade with no help. We will assign that child special tutors. We will assign that child special attention. We will give that child a number of efforts to demonstrate that child's proficiency after getting this special tutoring and attention. But we think every child can learn.

This approach has been tried in two other States—Mississippi and Florida—and it has worked in both States—in both States. We have copied it from Mississippi and Florida. We take no pride of authorship. I am always willing to copy other people's ideas that work and give them full credit. Let me just mention the success in Mississippi, and I hope my colleagues in the Louisiana Legislature—I love every one of them—are listening to me.

After Mississippi implemented its requirement that kids can't advance until they can read, this is what one analysis says of the results of that effort:

The results are stunning: In sixth grade, three years after the intervention, retained students outperform similar students by 1.2 standard deviations (a 0.8 effect size is generally considered "large"), with no measurable impact—

None—

on student absenteeism or special education classification, negative indicators sometimes associated with retention.

Those aren't my words; that came from an in-depth study at Boston University.

This analysis goes on to say:

The magnitude of Mississippi's accomplishments with early reading is truly impressive and rightly deserves attention and replication by other states. For low-income, Black, and Hispanic students, by 2019, Mississippi had risen to the top five of all the states on the fourth grade NAEP, with each group showing more than a year's additional progress since 2013.

I could go on. I could cite you similar analyses and statistics for the State of Florida.

Every child can learn. It just requires a little extra attention and love for some of our children.

Now, HB12 in the Louisiana Legislature would copy the program in Mississippi and Florida. It has passed, as it did last year, overwhelmingly, as I mentioned, in the Louisiana House of Representatives. Last year, in the Louisiana House of Representatives, it passed overwhelmingly. This year, just

recently, it passed by a vote of 88 to 15. Last year, when the bill went to my State's senate, the bill died. We are on our second try, and the bill is now before the Louisiana State Senate.

I know every member of my Louisiana State Senate. I respect all of them, and I am pleading with them. Please, please, please, pretty please with sugar on top, pass this bill. It has worked in other States. If it doesn't work in Louisiana, I will come right to this lectern and say it didn't work, that we tried it. We gave it our best shot, but it didn't work.

But I think it will, and I think our kids deserve the chance. Every child can learn. Every child can learn, but some of our children need special attention. This bill, HB12, before the Louisiana State Senate will provide that attention.

Please, members of my Senate, pass this bill.

I yield to my colleague from Hawaii.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

#### RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, May is Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

This month is an opportunity to celebrate the many contributions of AANHPI communities and the critical role we have played throughout our Nation's history.

From trailblazers like Patsy Mink and Anna May Wong to our own Vice President HARRIS, members of our community have long been leaders in government, science, business, the arts, and more. But while we celebrate our community, this month is also a reminder of how much work remains to advance equality and equity for our community.

The AANHPI community has long been the target of racism and discrimination in this country. Among other challenges, our communities are still combating anti-Asian violence, suffering from health disparities, and experiencing sex trafficking and violence at alarming rates.

The AANHPI community is the fastest growing demographic group in the United States. In the past 20 years alone, the number of Asian Americans in the United States has nearly doubled.

But we are not a monolith. AANHPI communities come from dozens of countries and speak countless languages. The diversity makes our community and our country stronger. That is why, in a moment, I will seek unanimous consent to pass a resolution recognizing AANHPI Heritage Month.

This resolution highlights many of the leaders of our community throughout history and some of the triumphs and challenges we have faced throughout the years. It affirms the important