

the Senate will focus this week on advancing more of President Biden's key administrative and judicial nominees.

Later today, the Senate will vote to advance the nomination of David Crane to be Under Secretary for Infrastructure at the Department of Energy.

The Under Secretary for Infrastructure is a new role at the DOE, created by the Biden administration and charged with implementing the historic clean energy investments made in our bipartisan infrastructure law.

Once confirmed, Mr. Crane's job will be ensuring our infrastructure dollars translate to lower energy costs, new clean energy manufacturing jobs, and a more resilient energy grid.

Mr. Crane received bipartisan support in the ENR Committee, and I expect that bipartisan support to carry on to the floor.

Also, the Senate will advance the nomination of Dilawar Syed to serve as second in command at the SBA, the Small Business Administration. Mr. Syed is the definition of a highly qualified nominee. His nomination is supported by a broad range of business stakeholders, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and he will have the crucial task of helping tens of millions of small businesses get the resources they need to grow their operations.

The SBA has not had a Senate-confirmed Deputy for more than 5 years, and Mr. Syed is one of the longest pending nominees in the Senate. So I am exceedingly pleased this qualified nominee is now moving forward. If confirmed, Mr. Syed will also add to the diversity of President Biden's administration by serving as the highest ranking Muslim official in the administration.

Finally, this week, we will begin considering the nomination of Dale Ho to serve as a district judge for the Southern District of New York.

It is shaping up to be another busy week in the Senate, and I thank my colleagues for their good work.

INVESTING IN AMERICA

Mr. President, now on implementation, last week, Congress passed legislation averting catastrophic default. That alone is very good news for every single community in this country. Better yet, Congress averted default while also preserving the important investments we have made through legislation like the CHIPS and Science Act, the bipartisan infrastructure bill, and Democrats' landmark Inflation Reduction Act.

Now, Democrats are getting the word out on our agenda, and for months I have worked with the administration and with my colleagues to painstakingly plan out implementation.

It is one thing for Americans to read about Congress passing this bill or that bill; it is a whole different ball game for them to see these investments come to life through new construction projects, new factory openings, new job announcements, and even more private sector investments. Implementing our

agenda is not abstract; it is happening across the country as we speak. It means jobs, jobs, jobs as well as real help for so many different communities—suburban, urban, rural—across the country.

To that end, the Biden administration announced today they will hit the road very soon for their phase 2 Investing in America tour. It will be a great chance for Americans to hear directly from the administration in their own backyards and for the administration to tout the new projects sprouting across the country.

Today, the White House also announced the rollout of invest.gov—a terrific new resource mapping out precisely how implementation is taking root across the country. I encourage everyone to visit invest.gov so they can see all the projects in semiconducting, clean energy, battery and EV manufacturing, and bio manufacturing that have been announced since the beginning of President Biden's term.

My friends, the numbers don't lie. Under President Biden and Democrats in Congress, 32,000 infrastructure projects and more than \$470 billion—billion with a capital "B"—worth of private investments have been announced, including \$214 billion in investments toward semiconductors, which was largely made possible thanks to the CHIPS and Science Act; more than \$200 billion to help make America the leader in clean energy manufacturing, led by legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act. And these investments include everything from new battery plants in Georgia and West Virginia to solar power facilities in Oklahoma and South Carolina, to wind turbine assembly lines in New York, and so much more.

These are just a few examples of how Democrats' agenda is paving the way for the future and the future of jobs in this country.

Implementation will remain at the top of Democrats' priority list in the months and years ahead. Democrats have a great story to tell the American people. Now we are putting in the work to make sure Americans know precisely—precisely—how our agenda is working for them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The 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 Republican leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last week, the Senate passed an agreement that preserved America's full faith and credit and began to rein in Democrats'

runaway spending. But the Senate's work is far from over. Today, with the threat of economic crisis behind us, it is time for the Senate to focus its full attention on some of the most basic responsibilities we are sent here to fulfill: keeping America safe, keeping America fed, and keeping the lights on.

First, we have a little less than 4 months left in the fiscal year. Our colleagues, Appropriations Chair MURRAY and Vice Chair COLLINS, have expressed a shared goal to fund the Federal Government through regular order. That means 12 full-year funding bills processed, passed, conferenced, and signed into law before the end of September. I think all 100 of us agree that we should not be funding the American people's government through one big omnibus at the end of the year, but achieving that is going to require hard work and incredible cooperation.

To produce funding bills that can pass the House and become law, we will have to build on the progress we made last week. After 2 years of taxing, spending, and runaway inflation, the American people chose to elect a divided government. In the coming weeks, that divided government has an opportunity to restore stability to the appropriations process and deliver more of the fiscal sanity they expect, but only if the Democratic majority lets the process actually work.

This year, we also have the responsibility to deliver a farm bill. A full 10 percent of the American workforce depends on agriculture. The Commonwealth of Kentucky is home to nearly 75,000 farms, and, in the past 5 years, since the last farm bill was passed, farming hasn't gotten any easier. Neither has ranching or forestry. Small businesses and farm families across the country will be watching the Agriculture Committee's work especially closely. Chair STABENOW, Ranking Member BOOZMAN, and our colleagues are already hard at work producing legislation that delivers the certainty and support they need to continue innovating, supporting rural jobs, and feeding America.

And Chair CANTWELL, Ranking Member CRUZ, and the Commerce Committee are working on another measure that will require our attention before the end of the fiscal year—reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration. Reliable and affordable air travel for both people and cargo is important to the prosperity of communities and industries across our country.

So on behalf of Kentucky growers and the entire country, I hope each of these measures receives swift consideration here on the floor.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

Finally, Mr. President, as I made clear last week, the government's work to provide for the common defense remains unfinished. President Biden's request for the defense budget is simply insufficient, given the major challenges that our country faces. We are

investing roughly half as much in defense today as a share of GDP as we were at the height of President's Reagan buildup in the mid-1980s.

In the dangerous world that surrounds us today, this is wholly inadequate. Decades after the Cold War, the famous Reagan maxim—"peace through strength"—still applies. But, unfortunately, the Biden administration's record on defending America, our partners, and our interests has been one of weakness and delay.

Take, for example, the President's approach to helping Ukraine fight Russian invaders. At seemingly every opportunity—from the guided rockets to drones, to Abrams tanks—he hesitated to put decisive capabilities in Ukrainian hands until they were several steps behind the pace of relevance.

Last month, the Biden administration finally authorized the transfer of F-16 fighter aircraft, but, as with the tanks, they waited too long for these highly capable systems to be ready for a counteroffensive anytime soon, making it more likely—more likely—that this conflict becomes a stalemate or worse, instead of a Ukrainian victory.

And the President continues to avoid authorizing other key capabilities, like longer range fires and cluster munitions, even though Russia is already using them against Ukrainian forces.

The consequences of these misjudgments are not limited to Ukraine itself. The same adversaries who watched President Biden's botched withdrawal from the battlefield in Afghanistan are watching the West for signs of weakness in Ukraine. America's friends in the Indo-Pacific know that along with robust investment in real military capabilities, the best way to deter aggression from China is to help Ukraine defeat aggression from Russia.

Tomorrow, the President will welcome Prime Minister Sunak of the United Kingdom to Washington. The special relationship between our two countries is a source of strength in the face of shared threats around the world. Anglo-U.S. cooperation, including with Australia in the Indo-Pacific, will help shape the next century of strategic competition. I hope President Biden will recommit to standing with America's closest allies and partners in confronting shared threats.

Congress must commit ourselves to equipping our military with the capabilities it needs to control growing threats from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and terrorists emboldened by America's retreat from Afghanistan.

Keeping America safe, keeping America fed, and keeping the lights on—our responsibilities are crystal clear.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

NATO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the strongest military alliance in the world is the NATO alliance. President Joe Biden has made that alliance stronger than ever since its creation.

Countries like Finland now want to be part of that alliance for their own safety because they share our values. Countries like Sweden feel the same way. They want to be part of this alliance, which President Biden has supported completely.

It has never been stronger since its creation, and the contributions made by the alliance members to the war in Ukraine are unprecedented. It has never happened before. Nations from all over Europe and nations that share our values are standing behind the NATO alliance.

To hear the suggestion on the floor of the Senate that somehow there is a weakness in the Biden administration when it comes to NATO is belied by the facts and the truth.

The fact of the matter is, as well, that when you look back at the previous President, named Donald Trump, chart what he has to say about Ukraine now. He questions whether we should be helping them at all. He questions whether or not we should make Vladimir Putin angry.

You all know and remember, as I do, as well, that during the 4 years of the Trump administration, there was this ambivalence, this bromance between Putin and Trump that no one could explain. And now to have someone come to the floor and say Joe Biden isn't strong enough when it comes to standing behind the people of Ukraine, that is just flatout wrong.

The support for the Ukrainian people against Vladimir Putin is universal across—I shouldn't say "universal." Let me strike that word. It is almost universal and should be universal across all Members of Congress. Democrats and Republicans alike in the Senate believe that we are doing the right thing as a nation standing behind the people of Ukraine.

As a cochair of the Ukrainian Caucus in the U.S. Senate, I believe this in my heart and soul: If the Ukrainians do not prevail over Vladimir Putin, I am afraid we are going to have more wars to fight. I can think of other countries that are vulnerable to his expansionist dreams: Poland, for goodness' sake; the Baltic States; Moldova. The list goes on and on.

President Biden has made a stand in Ukraine, and it is the right position to take. To suggest that the NATO alliance is not behind him is wrong. They are behind him in a way that is unprecedented in history.

I am happy to report that I am not only pleased to support the Ukrainians in this effort, but I think we have done everything that we should do.

Now, remember, President Biden has an important decision to make each time someone suggests a new weapons system: Will this be provocative? Will it lead to expansion of the equipment used in war, even to nuclear weapons?

That is an important question. I don't know if I could sleep at night if I had to worry about my decision the next morning and whether it would

trigger a nuclear war. But that is what President Biden faces day after day, after day. People who come in and say, "Just send every weapon system and don't think twice about it," don't understand the burden of the Presidency—to make sure we do the right thing to support the Ukrainian people, but not a provocative action that draws in American forces or runs the risk of nuclear war.

The President has to make the careful decision with every weapons system. So if it takes an extra day or week, do it right, Mr. President. Don't be pushed into it by those who really can't understand the gravity of each of these decisions. Stand behind the Ukrainian people. Do it through the NATO alliance. Do it in a way that doesn't expand this war to include American troops or to make it a nuclear conflict. That, I think, is the bottom line.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. President, it was 10 years ago, roughly, when the inauguration of Barack Obama took place. It meant a lot to me. He was my colleague in the Senate for a number of years. He was my friend. I endorsed him for President. I was the first Senator to endorse him, and, for 14 months, I was the only Senator who endorsed him.

I traveled to Iowa many times to campaign for him as President. And, of course, I remember that glorious, cold, cold day when he took the oath of office out here on the steps of the Capitol. It was cold, but there were huge crowds. I will never forget it. I was lucky enough, being in the Senate and a friend of his, to be on the platform when he took the oath of office. And when my friend Barack Obama reached his hand over and put it on the Bible of Abraham Lincoln to take his oath of office, I was witnessing, along with America, a moment in history I had never dreamed of.

It meant a lot to many other people too. There was a class from a school in Chicago that decided to send out their students and their band to march and to honor the new President. They were as proud of him as I was, maybe more so. It was an African-American school class, and it included in its rank a young lady named Hadiya Pendleton.

After she witnessed that swearing-in, she went back to Chicago. Sadly, 2 weeks later, she was senselessly shot down and killed on the South Side. She was 15 years old. President Obama's wife Michelle Obama came to her funeral in Chicago to honor this wonderful little girl—young girl—who came to that capital to be part of history and only lived a few weeks afterwards.

Friday would have been Hadiya Pendleton's 26th birthday. I joined community members in Chicago at a violence prevention center called BUILD. The people I spoke to were united not only in wearing orange to signify their unity but in sharing the belief that we have to do more to protect our communities from gun violence.