

So let me be clear: This assistance means more jobs for American workers and newer weapons for American servicemembers.

I know that media reports about U.S. assistance to Ukraine have been really quite confusing—so has the Biden administration's messaging. Last week, for example, the administration announced what it called a "new" package of security assistance to Ukraine.

In reality, this is the latest tranche of assistance. It is not a new appropriation. It is just the latest in a slow and steady disbursement—perhaps too slow and too steady—of assistance previously approved by an overwhelming bipartisan majority in Congress.

I will have more to say as Ukraine continues to push Vladimir Putin's forces backward, and Senate Republicans will continue our efforts to invest in America's own national security.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Madam President, now on an entirely different matter, last week, Senate Democrats backtracked on plans to confirm Dale Ho to the Southern District of New York. Apparently, our colleagues didn't yet have enough votes for the self-described "wide-eyed leftist" President Biden would like to give a lifetime appointment to the Federal bench.

I have talked about Mr. Ho's criticism of the Fraternal Order of Police and his history of attacking our colleagues on Twitter. I have discussed his apparent dismay that fidelity to the Constitution as it was written doesn't really produce "progressive" outcomes. But as you might expect, the rap sheet on a nominee too radical for Senate Democrats goes on. Mr. Ho has also vocally opposed laws that ban ballot harvesting. He has railed against common-sense voter ID requirements that 80 percent of Americans support.

Senate Democrats will have to think hard about whether they are ready to ram Mr. Ho's nomination through after all of this. But in the meantime, two more of President Biden's leftwing nominees are up for a vote this week; first, Hernan Vera, nominated to the bench in the Central District of California. Mr. Vera's nomination comes with the ringing endorsement of the left's dark money operation, and a review of his record certainly shows why.

Throughout his legal career, Mr. Vera has made no effort to hide his willingness to pick progressive activism over the rule of law. He has asserted publicly that the need for greater security at our southern border is actually a "myth" and supported efforts to prevent ICE from conducting enforcement operations in county jails. In other words, Mr. Vera doesn't just oppose enforcing immigration laws; he opposes enforcing laws illegal immigrants have broken after they have arrived.

The Senate will also vote this week on the nomination of Patrick Pitts to the Northern District of California. Mr.

Pitts helped to organize student protests against military recruiters on campus when he was at Yale, but he publicly fawned over a leftist judge who later faced a reckoning over his decades of sexual harassment. Apparently, the Army was unseemly, but a notorious harasser was "an inspiration."

Aside from being a bad judge of character, Mr. Pitts has spent his legal career making life easier for Democrats' Big Labor allies. He worked to give union bosses more political influence over American workers, especially those who would rather be free from union thuggery.

I will be opposing each of these nominations and will urge our colleagues to do the same.

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. DURBIN. Madam 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.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last week, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, GEN Mark Milley, spoke at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France. In the audience were veterans—some were over 100 years old—who stormed those beaches 79 years ago on D-Day. D-Day was a critical moment in World War II. It was the beginning of the liberation of Europe, and it was the beginning of the end of Nazi tyranny.

Looking out over a sea of headstones of fallen American patriots, Secretary Austin said:

It's easy to forget how desperate the battle was . . . but, on D-Day, courage won out over terror, daring over cruelty, and liberty won out over tyranny.

Today, that same eternal battle is being fought in another place, in Ukraine, which has begun a heroic counteroffensive to finally drive out Vladimir Putin and the Russian invaders and to preserve democracy in that nation.

Next month, Senator SHAHEEN of New Hampshire and I will travel to the NATO summit in Lithuania. The location—in a nation that was once under Soviet occupation—is both historic and poignant. Success in Ukraine's counteroffensive and the country's long-term security will once again be on top of the NATO agenda. We also will welcome the security alliance's newest member, Finland. I hope, by the time we convene in Lithuania, Hungary and Turkey will have ratified Sweden's succession without any further delay—another plus for the future of the NATO alliance.

Let me also state clearly that I believe Ukraine's future is in the European Union and the NATO alliance, and

until the day that Ukraine can join NATO, the United States and other key allies must help Ukraine with security guarantees, as we do with other key non-NATO allies. It is clear that Ukraine can never trust Russia. It is in the interest of the United States and democracy itself that we ensure Ukraine can always defend itself, that any aggressor will think twice before ever again trying to threaten its people or its territory.

President Biden knows what is at stake in this fight against tyranny. So do our NATO allies. And I want to particularly note Minority Leader MCCONNELL. Echoing Ronald Reagan, Senator MCCONNELL has spoken forcefully about the need for continued bipartisan support for Ukraine. That is the ultimate strength of the American role in the NATO alliance: that we speak with one voice. And, of course, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy understands that what is at stake in Ukraine is bigger than just his nation; it is literally a battle for freedom and democracy themselves.

In his remarks at Normandy last week, Secretary Austin said:

Free soldiers will fight more bravely than the armies of tyrants.

He is correct, but the free people of Ukraine must not be left to fight this war alone. The United States and nations of the free world must provide the resources and equipment and training necessary for them to prevail against Putin and his cowardly enablers. The free people and soldiers of Ukraine are fighting today to preserve the peace and international order for which those young Americans gave their lives at D-Day. We must stand with them with resolve until Ukraine is free again.

INVESTING IN AMERICA

Madam President, on an issue that you know so well, let me say this: Last week, the White House launched a new website, invest.gov. It shows the historic investments that have been announced across America since President Biden took office.

We should not forget that under the previous President, there were 4 years of promises and 4 years where they failed to produce. Under President Biden, we have a bipartisan infrastructure bill that is changing the face of America and preparing our economy for the 21st century.

Invest.gov shows the historic investments that have been announced across America under President Biden and provides a State-by-State overview of those investments.

In a little more than 2 years, Illinois, our State, has received more than \$9 billion in infrastructure funding, more than \$1 billion to support the creation of clean energy jobs, and we are creating thousands of new manufacturing jobs at this very moment.

Today, I want to tell you about one particular project near and dear to us in Illinois. It is a project our leaders have been talking about for literally

six decades—since the time of the John F. Kennedy administration—and one that I hope we will be able to add to this Senate's long list of accomplishments. It is called the Southwest Connector, and it will be vital to my State's economy as well as that of the neighboring State of Missouri.

I have requested congressional-directed spending to support this project in the next fiscal year. It will expand Illinois State highways 127, 154, and 3 from two to four lanes and create a much-desired rural expressway between St. Louis and Southern Illinois.

Madam President, I can remember when I was new to this business, and in the first campaign, working for a man named Paul Douglas, who was our Senator at the time, I went to Southern Illinois with him in the 1960s, fresh out of college, and heard him tell the story about the valiant efforts that they made to build up Southern Illinois and to restore a broken economy. Part of that was involved in creating lakes and water supplies which still serve the region and are effective in our future view of where we must go as a nation and as a State.

Now we need to do the same thing in transportation. Expanding these two-lane highways to four lanes will boost economic development in Southern Illinois and Missouri by creating jobs and enabling the regions to better compete.

Several sections of the Connector's planned route rank in the top 5 percent of the most dangerous two-lane highways in our State of Illinois. The Connector would improve traffic safety by separating lanes of traffic with a 50-foot median, and it would improve mobility for emergency vehicles and provide faster access to healthcare facilities. The project would also benefit the National Guard armories in Sparta and Murphysboro, whose activation has been particularly crucial during the floods in the region.

When Congress passed the bipartisan infrastructure law in 2021—the largest investment in our infrastructure since President Eisenhower created the Interstate Highway System—it was proof that we could get big things done on behalf of the American people. We have a chance to do it again by moving forward on the Southwest Connector.

I want to particularly thank the mayor of Murphysboro, Will Stephens, who visited both of our offices. He has been working hard to make the Connector a reality, despite the fact that the concept of the Connector really started years before he was born.

There are countless local leaders across America like Mayor Stephens who are committed to improving our communities but who have been forced to wait on Washington to provide the funding. Let's not make them wait any longer. Congress needs to return to regular order in a timely manner to carry out the annual appropriations process and fulfill the authorizations in the bipartisan infrastructure law and to con-

sider earmarks for community projects that have the opportunity to transform rural communities across America.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am committed to working with my colleagues under the bipartisan leadership of Chair MURRAY and Ranking Member COLLINS to pass our 12 annual appropriations bills on time.

Madam President, I know this is near and dear to you as well as myself. To see this project move forward is going to change the face of Southern Illinois at a time when they need this infusion of economic activity and opportunity. I hope this project can be included in our projects that are authorized and appropriated in this year's bill. I will be working toward that goal.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

TRUMP INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, last Friday, the Department of Justice announced Donald Trump had been indicted on 37 counts related to his mishandling of classified documents. One only has to listen to the statements from former Trump National Security Advisor John Bolton and Trump's former Attorney General to know just how serious this indictment is.

As I have said before: No one is above the law—including Donald Trump. This case must be allowed to play out through the legal process without outside political or ideological interference. I encourage both supporters and critics of Donald Trump to maintain the peace and let the justice system do its work.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Madam President, now, on Senate business, it will be another busy week here in the Senate as we confirm more nominees and address pressing issues like AI. Tomorrow, the Senate will convene the first of three Senators-only briefings on artificial intelligence. These briefings are the first all-Senators briefings ever on AI. Tomorrow's briefing, provided by Antonio Torralba of MIT, will focus on the state of AI today, providing an overview of AI, where it is being used right now, what it is currently capable of, and other recent developments.

Professor Torralba is one of the top machine-learning experts in the country, someone exceptionally skilled at breaking down all the complexities of AI in an accessible and simple way.

I strongly urge all my colleagues on both sides to attend tomorrow's briefing because elected representatives in the 21st century cannot ignore AI any more than we can ignore our national security, job creation, or civil liberties. It is imperative that we Senators take time to educate ourselves on AI and its implications so that we can ensure it becomes a force for human prosperity while mitigating its very real risks.

I also urge my colleagues to attend the other two AI briefings happening in the coming weeks. Our second briefing will focus on where AI is headed in the future and how America can remain a leader in the field.

Our third classified briefing on AI, the first ever classified Senate briefing on the subject, will focus on how our adversaries will use AI against us, as well as how the DOD and the intelligence community are using this technology to keep Americans safe.

I look forward to attending the briefing tomorrow, and I thank Senators ROUNDS, HEINRICH, and YOUNG for their work on this issue.

On the nominations front, last week, after confirming several highly qualified nominees like Dilawar Syed to the SBA, I filed cloture on two more executive nominees and two district judges.

On the judicial front, we will soon consider the nominations of Hernan Vera to serve as a district judge for the Central District of California and Casey Pitts to serve as a district judge for the Northern District of California. And for the information of Senators, I will be filing cloture on more nominees later this evening.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Now, on the Republican tax plan, with the predictability of a metronome, Republicans are back doing what they do best: pushing tax giveaways that benefit the wealthy, large, huge corporations, while telling working families to take a hike. Last Friday, the House Republicans released a sweeping array of new tax giveaways that double down on some of the worst parts of the 2017 Trump tax law.

This latest GOP tax scam feels like a bad rerun. Once again, the biggest winners are billion-dollar companies, Big Oil polluters, and very high-income households. Once again, the biggest losers in this Republican tax scheme are vulnerable families and anyone who worries about protecting our planet for future generations.

The bulk of these new business tax giveaways will flow directly to the largest corporations in the country. Half of the 10 billion in interest deduction benefits, for example, will flow to companies with revenues of over a billion dollars annually.

Republicans' latest proposal will also gut billions in clean energy investments, essential for lowering our carbon emissions and creating millions of good-paying green jobs. In just 10 months, the Inflation Reduction Act has created over 142,000 new good-paying jobs, and more are coming in the next few months and years.

But Republicans want to gut those investments. Big Oil polluters, meanwhile, under the Republican plan, would get a \$10 billion tax break. It is almost too perfect that Republicans unrolled this Big Oil tax giveaway right as millions of Americans endured the hazards of toxic air pollution exacerbated by climate change.

And, of course, this tax giveaway by the Republicans will mean next to