

The Supreme Court asked Congress to act, so that is what Senators MARSHALL, ERNST, and I—and many other Senators have now joined us in this effort. We are responding to the Supreme Court's decision.

Feeding your family is not a partisan issue and neither is protecting our food supply chain. Food security, after all, is national security.

I am engaging in discussions with as many as my colleagues as I can on this very issue. I hope this will soon be a bipartisan bill.

It is common sense to protect affordable, quality food for America's families and support the 2 percent of the country that we call family farmers who feed the other 98 percent of the people in this State; and not only produce for the other 98 percent but about a third of our agriculture production is exported. Remember, bacon doesn't grow in grocery stores.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me as cosponsors of the EATS Act.

STUDENT DEBT

I have one more statement in regard to education that I would like to give.

Mr. President, every person taking out a loan knows it must be repaid. Still, we have seen lots of talk about canceling student debt after the debt has been assumed. But that doesn't help students who are not in college yet but going to enter college. It is closing the barn door after the horse has been stolen.

To lower the cost of college, we need to let students be able to compare the true costs between schools. They can't do that now because, right now, schools that are upfront about their costs, meaning they give the students an exact figure on what they are going to have to pay to get a college degree, these very schools are at a disadvantage to their competition that doesn't play by honest rules and honest policies about what it actually costs to go to a particular school.

So I am going to go into some detail about what is wrong with the present environment, and I am going to start with the Government Accountability Office taking a look at the financial aid letters that should show students how much they will pay. Unfortunately, according to the GAO, not a single college followed all 10 best practices that have been suggested by that Agency, the Government Accountability Office.

Now, here are some examples:

A third of the colleges confused loans and grants—how misleading. You think you are getting a grant, and you find out later it is a loan. And 91 percent of the colleges understate their true costs.

So it is quite obvious the free market doesn't work if students only find out how much they owe after they have already selected the college that they will attend.

That is why my bill that I entitled Understanding the True Cost of College Act creates a standard, easy-to-read fi-

nancial aid letter. Under my bill, students could take this letter that they get from the various colleges that they have been accepted to and see, side by side, what each school offers them. They can compare, in other words, apples with apples, not apples with oranges, as is the very case today.

Another thing that doesn't make any sense: Do you know that the current practice effectively encourages students to go into debt more than what it actually costs to get a college degree? The paperwork offering student loans tends to default to the maximum eligible loan amount, whether that maximum is needed or not, to get a college degree. So then, under this practice, students have to go out of their way to borrow less money than what is offered. But guess what. Most students actually do borrow the maximum.

So, you see, we have a Federal policy that encourages students to take out more debt than they need to get their degree, and we shouldn't have the Federal Government encourage indebtedness that is not needed. The Federal Government, in other words, should help students borrow only what they need.

So I have a bill that goes by the title of Know Before You Owe Act. This act would show students their estimated monthly loan payments after graduating. They would see it compared to the average salary for graduates of their particular college major. It would also require students to type in the amount that they want to borrow, instead of clicking a box that ends up with them taking the maximum that is allowed.

Each of these proposals puts students, then, in the driver's seat, where the student should be.

Choosing a college happens to be one of the largest purchases many Americans ever make. It should be a good investment for a bright future, not a one-way ticket to excessive debt. Students should have all the information they need when they are making that decision of what college or university to attend.

All the ideas I mentioned here are bipartisan, and I have been advocating some of these issues for years. It is not a Republican or Democrat idea to give students the information they need to make the right decision for which school to attend. That is why I was glad to see each of these two ideas that I am talking about now included in legislation called the Lowering Education Costs and Debt Act.

My colleagues in the Senate are right to focus on the start of the process, when students choose a college and take out a loan. Dealing with debt only after it is taken out does not lower the cost of a college education. Right now, a student can't pick a college on price even if they wanted to.

I hope this is the start of a discussion to help students limit their borrowing on the front end and, ultimately, to put pressure on institutions to bring down the cost of college.

Whereas President Biden's proposal to wipe out student debt would give colleges a license to pump up tuition costs, these proposals would pump the brakes on soaring tuition costs by empowering students to make smart decisions on the front end.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

ABORTION

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I have a question for this body. It is not a legislative question. It starts first with just a question. It is a question for us to be able to think about, and it is a question, quite frankly, that is essential that we think about but that we don't think about very often because it is introspective, because it is personal, because it connects both science and faith and culture and background. But it is essential to who we are as people, human beings, and it is this simple question: When does life begin?

I don't say it flippantly. It is a real question. It is a question that we have had as a nation now the entire time we have been a nation, and it has been decided by different States and by different people from the very beginning of our Nation.

When does life begin? For some people, they would say life begins at birth, when I can see that child, when they are screaming and crying and just born, red-faced.

Some people would say it is actually 10 minutes before that birth; that it is not at birth; that it is just a little bit before.

There are some people who would back it up, and they would say: No, you are really a child when you are alive and you are viable—that is somewhere around 21 weeks' gestation now—that when you are viable, that is when you are really alive.

Some people would back it up even more to say: Not at 21 weeks; maybe at 15 weeks because science would say at about 15 weeks that child in the womb has a nervous system that is developed and they can feel pain.

Some would say: No, I would back it up more than that. I would actually take it to 6 weeks because, at 6 weeks, it is the early stages of a beating heart, and we would say, when that heart beat is actually happening, that is when that child is alive.

And others would back it up even further and would say: When that child has unique DNA that is different DNA than the mom or the dad—in fact, in that mom's body, every single cell in her body has the same DNA marker except for those cells. For those cells in the woman's body, that DNA is different. They are the only cells that are different, and, as they multiply and divide, that DNA signature grows, but it stays right there with that child.

It is a real question.

Fifty-one years ago, our country had different opinions. Different States had different ideas about when life began.

And each State voted, and each State had a debate in their State about when life began. That was what we were like from the very beginning of the country up to 51 years ago.

And then, in 1973, the *Roe v. Wade* decision happened in the Supreme Court, and, at that time, nine Justices said: Nope, individual States and people aren't going to decide this; the nine of us are going to decide this.

And for almost 50 years, the law of the land was that those Justices all made one determination for everybody—until 52 weeks ago, when that same Supreme Court, nine Justices again, said: No, this should be back in the hands of the people, where it has always been, because Justices shouldn't decide this issue. This is a decision we the people should make.

Justice Alito wrote the opinion in that decision, and he said this:

Roe was egregiously wrong from the start. He said:

And far from bringing about a national settlement of the abortion issue, *Roe* and *Casey* have enflamed debate and deepened division. It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives.

The permissibility of abortion, and the limitations upon it, are to be resolved like most important questions in our democracy: by citizens trying to persuade one another and then voting.

It is back to the people. So that is where we are.

Now, 1 year after the *Dobbs* decision came out, on the June 24 of last year, it is still back to the same conversation. We still haven't agreed as a nation when life begins. Maybe, we never will. But as a nation, now, that conversation is happening all over the country. Individuals are having the dialogue: When does life begin?

In the past year, there is really no way to know how many children are alive today that would not have been alive prior to the *Dobbs* decision. About half the States in America have already passed some sort of law to limit the number of abortions in their State, while about half of the rest of the country has either left abortion policies in place in their State or even expanded them.

Some of our States have no abortion at all in their States, and in some States, literally, you can have abortion all the way up until the second before delivery—late-term, literally the second before delivery—and choose to have an elective abortion. That is a pretty wide spread in our country. It is a pretty wide set of opinions.

And while we don't know how many children are alive today, we can be certain that there are tens of thousands of children alive right now who would not have been alive a year ago, prior to the *Dobbs* decision. That is tens of thousands of children who are alive that, in the next few months, will be giggling and laughing. Next year, they will be running around singing silly songs. Two years after that, they will be in

kindergarten learning their colors. They will be alive today because of that *Dobbs* decision. And while I understand some people are disappointed that those kids are alive, I am not, and I am convinced our communities and our schools and our workplaces in the future will be glad they are there.

In the past year, while a lot of people have been celebrating the value of every single one of those children who have been born, there are some who have not been.

In fact, in my frustration, this Biden administration has been obsessed with increasing the number of abortions in America, not decreasing them.

Today, there have been numerous unanimous consent requests from the floor of this Senate asking to be able to take out all of the laws across the entire country and to be able to move it back to there is abortion on demand at any stage. They all lost on the floor today, but there is a push on the floor of this Senate today to be able to expand abortion on demand all the way up until moments before birth.

This administration has taken even more aggressive actions than the Senate took today. This administration has shifted a policy longstanding on mail order abortions—do-it-yourself abortions at home, to be able to take a two-drug cocktail to be able to have an abortion at home—where they have stripped out the rules that you have to see a doctor to get this prescription, remembering that this prescription actually takes the life of a child and causes excessive bleeding. You don't have to see a doctor anymore. They have now shifted that to say you have to see a medical professional of any type.

You also don't have to have any screening for ectopic pregnancies. If you take this two-drug cocktail—and the only way you can really determine that is a medical examination—then it could actually kill the woman while it takes the life of that child as well.

If you have the wrong blood type—and the only way to really determine that is to go see a medical professional, although the Biden administration is now saying you no longer have to see them—but if you take this particular two-drug cocktail and have the wrong blood type, it will actually make you infertile for the rest of your life as well as take the life of your child. So if you want to have a baby later, you can't.

The only way you would know one way or the other on that is actually having a medical screening and test, but the Biden administration is so obsessed with increasing the number of abortions in America, they have now said: Don't worry about going to the doctor. Don't worry about if you have an ectopic pregnancy or the wrong blood type.

In fact, they have taken even an extra step and have said to emergency rooms: If someone shows up in an emergency room who has taken this two-drug cocktail and is excessively

bleeding, you do not have to report it to the FDA unless she dies.

Every other condition—excessive bleeding, on the edge of life, emergency room trips—don't report those. Those don't get reported anymore at all. Literally, they are saying we don't need the information about other side effects—only death—for this particular drug. That is an enormous shift. That is an administration that is obsessed with saying: We need more abortions in America, and if things go bad with this two-drug cocktail, don't tell us.

I mentioned before that there is a very, very old Federal law that still stands in Federal law that says you can't mail anything that is going to cause an abortion. It is against Federal law to put something in the mail and mail it to someone that causes an abortion. The Biden administration literally has put out a public opinion from their Office of Legal Counsel saying that law really doesn't apply anymore; it is old. It is trying to say: Well, it means something different than what it actually says. I would encourage anyone to actually read that statute and to come to any other conclusion other than what it says.

The Biden administration has made it very clear under the Department of Justice that, we know this is against Federal law to be able to mail abortion materials, but we are not going to prosecute this. Literally, it is against the law, but we don't care—so much so that even if a woman ends up in the hospital, in the emergency room and checked in, don't even tell us unless she dies.

Last summer, there were several of my colleagues who brought a bill to this floor to give a \$100,000 fine to any pro-life pregnancy center that didn't perform abortions. Now, just let that soak in for a minute. Now, it didn't pass, but this body was debating and trying to shut down the advice of people who are in pro-life centers who say: I believe in the value of every child.

These pro-life centers, if you have never been to one, they are almost always completely run by volunteers. They provide ultrasounds to individuals who are trying to figure out "Am I really pregnant?" They provide free pregnancy tests to be able to help people as they are thinking through it. And, yes, they talk about that they believe in the value in life. But they also provide formula for babies, clothes for babies, diapers for babies. They provide parental advice and counsel for new parents who are terrified, and they say: Hey, we are going to walk with you. If you are considering having an abortion because you are afraid you will be alone and no one will be with you, we will be with you.

Last summer, a bill came to this floor to try to do a \$100,000 fine to those folks who are trying to give away free formula, free diapers, and free mentoring, to people who would say: If you keep your baby, we will walk with you through these tough times.

This administration, the Biden administration, has shifted our VA hospitals into abortion clinics. It is against Federal law, but they have done it anyway. Literally, there is a Federal law that was put in place 30 years ago about VA hospitals and abortions, and it doesn't allow them. This administration has told the VA hospitals "Ignore that Federal law that was passed 30 years ago because we don't like it; we are not going to enforce it" and is literally taking—because there are not dollars allocated to this—literally taking dollars away from our veterans and their healthcare and moving it to doing abortions in our VA centers instead.

As far as we can tell, there are thousands of abortions that have happened in our VA centers across our country in the last few months, all of them paid for by Federal tax dollars, which is against the law, in a facility that was specifically noted could not perform abortions, which is against the law, using Federal dollars to pay for it.

It should not be a surprise to you that President Biden's budget—every year he has been President, he has asked to take away the Hyde amendment. People may not know what the Hyde amendment is, but the Hyde amendment is what prevents abortion dollars from being used—from Federal tax dollars.

A lot of people across the country, I understand, have completely different opinions about abortion, but almost every person I talked to would say: I have a different opinion about abortion, but I don't think American tax dollars should be used to pay for elective abortions. But every year, President Biden has asked to remove the Hyde amendment so Federal dollars can be used to pay for abortions, elective abortions, across the country.

This administration is so incredibly extreme about increasing the number of abortions in America, it has even extended to our southern border.

The people who are here in this room know that I have come to talk about our southern border multiple times to try to bring solutions. There are solutions that are, quite frankly, non-partisan solutions for how we can solve some of the difficult issues of illegal immigration on our southern border. I am a huge fan of legal immigration, but I think unchecked illegal immigration and chaos on our southern border is a bad idea.

This administration, in the middle of what is going on on our southern border right now, has put out what they call Field Guidance 21 out of Health and Human Services to say that if an unaccompanied minor comes across our southern border who happens to be pregnant, that unaccompanied minor is to be relocated to a State that allows abortion. The guidance gives information about how to even transport individuals who are pregnant who cross our border to abortion clinics, and it gives special guidance for those who are in

their last weeks of pregnancy on how to be able to take care of those moms as you transport them to get an abortion—late-term abortions. That is in the HHS guidance that is happening right now on our southern border.

This administration created a website to promote abortions with official Federal dollars that is connected to the White House website. In fact, this administration literally put it as a front-page piece on the White House website: Here is how to be able to get an abortion in America. They have given a \$1.5 million grant to create a national abortion hotline so that anyone who wants an abortion, it would be easier to be able to get it. They have created a reproductive rights task force to try to evaluate all States and be able to get information out on how to be able to increase abortions.

When the COVID money was done, now a year and a half ago—the previous bipartisan bills on COVID all had a restriction on any of that money being used for abortions until the last partisan bill was actually put out, and that specifically allows for abortion with COVID relief dollars.

The Department of Justice did not engage when pro-life centers were being attacked. They have engaged to be able to go after people who oppose abortion. In the past couple of years, there have been 329 attacks on Catholic churches and 87 attacks on pro-life centers, just since the Dobbs leak came out prior to the actual release in June, but there have been no prosecutions to go after those folks. Apparently, if you attack a Catholic church or a pro-life center, the Department of Justice is not interested.

There are also conscience protections. Again, not all Americans agree on the issue of abortion. Many doctors and nurses go into medical practice because they have a passion about life. We have conscience protections in Federal law right now that if you tell your employer in a hospital that you have a conscience issue on performing an abortion and they compel you to do that, the Federal Government is charged to be able to step in and make that employer protect your conscience rights.

That has happened in the past under past administrations, but under this administration, literally when this administration came in, there was a nurse who had been compelled to perform an abortion against her conscience at the University of Vermont Medical Center. She had told her employer in advance that she did not want to participate in abortions, that she believed in the value of every child.

She came in one day to work. She was called into a surgery area, and the physician looked her in the face and said: Don't hate me for this.

She said: What?

Then she turned and realized that she had been called in and was being compelled—or she would lose her job—to perform an abortion and to be a part of that abortion procedure.

Typically, under previous administrations, that person would have been protected. This HHS dropped the case. Literally, it was midway through. The Department of Justice is no longer prosecuting. They are saying that is not relevant; literally saying: If you have a conscience issue as a nurse or a doctor performing an abortion, too bad. Change your occupation. We are not going to protect you.

Oh, and did I mention that if you are in the U.S. military now, under the new Biden policy, and you went to your commanding officer and said "Hey, my grandmother passed away. I would like to get 5 days off to go travel, to go to my grandmother's funeral," you would be told no. But if you go to your commanding officer and say "I would like to be gone 5 days to get an abortion," not only would your commanding officer, under the Biden administration, be instructed "Yes, you can have 5 days' paid leave off," but they would also say to you "How far are you going to travel? We are going to pay for your travel to reimburse you while you are gone."

So if you need to go to your aunt's funeral, you don't get days off because that is too distant of a relative, but if you need to get an abortion, not only will this administration give you 5 days off to go get it, they will literally pay for your travel there and back to be able to go do it, not to mention the change in the Mexico City policy. Now we are paying for abortions overseas currently with Federal dollars.

HHS launched a new web page that actually gave out what they call creative ways for health clinics to advise teenagers on sex, birth control, pregnancy testing, and abortion. HHS, in fact, has proposed a new rule that they are in the process of finalizing which redefines "reproductive healthcare" to include abortion. It prohibits entities from cooperating with law enforcement or a court order if an investigation is related to an abortion. It redefines the word "person" to "a human being that is born alive."

HHS has also changed the billing requirements for the ACA—the Affordable Care Act—and has blatantly ignored the law on how abortion funding is done, in direct opposition to when this body debated that publicly.

If I can just mention one other thing, my State, like every other State, gets grants for what they call title X grants. These are Federal grants for cancer screenings for women, for contraceptives, for those that are in poverty. That is normal. We have that all over the country for every State. It is a typical grant that comes out to be able to have women in poverty get cancer screenings and get access to contraceptives.

My State was just informed that the Biden administration is cutting off our title X funds and will not send Federal dollars to Oklahoma for cancer screenings for women or contraceptives for women in poverty to my State. Do you want to know why?

The reason that the Biden administration cut off my State is because my State would not include an abortion hotline in all of our medical information going out to the citizens of my State. That is right. If my State would not promote ways to get abortion to women in my State, then the women of my State can't get access to cancer screenings or contraceptives for low-income women.

Literally, what they are saying is: You either promote abortion in your State, or women in your State can't get access to screenings. That is this administration's extreme policy on abortion.

Listen, I understand we have differences of opinion. I happen to believe every child is valuable. This administration believes some children are disposable and some children are valuable. I just don't find any child disposable in my world. I think they are all valuable. I think they are all important. I think we look in the eyes of those tens of thousands of children that have been born in the past year post Roe, and we look them in the face and we say, I am glad you are here. What are you going to be? What are you going to invent? What are you going to do? What is life going to be like for you?

And like millions of other Americans, they will have a chance to live out life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, because we are right there looking in their eyes. Let's have this conversation. Let's keep this dialogue going.

We are a nation that should talk about hard things in respectful ways. But let's talk about it, because there is lots of families in the days ahead that are counting on us living out our values and respectfully having dialogue where we disagree, because I think kids are worth it. So let's have that dialogue. One year after the Dobbs decision, we are not resolved, but at least we are talking about it again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

LONELINESS

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am on the floor tonight to talk about a topic that rarely, if ever, gets discussed on the Senate floor. I am here to talk about loneliness.

Every single one of us, over the course of our life, has felt lonely, maybe really intensely lonely. I certainly have. It is an awful feeling, right? It creates this pit in your stomach. It creates a consuming melancholy for many. Sometimes intense loneliness can make you physically ill. Often, it makes you really agitated and angry, right? Why is this happening to me?

Now, there are, frankly, a lot of reasons to believe that less Americans today should feel lonely than ever before. More of us live in densely populated parts of the country than ever before. Technology now allows us to con-

nect to friends and family and communities that share interests more easily than ever before at the press of a button.

But evidence from psychology and sociology tells us that the opposite is true. In recent decades, we have seen rising levels of both aloneness, which is defined as having fewer social contacts, and high levels of loneliness, which is defined as feelings of isolation.

We live closer to each other than ever before. We have technologies that allow us to connect to people with more ease than ever before, but people are feeling lonelier. As we look out at a country that seems to be kind of coming apart a little bit at the seams—I mean, people are getting shot at just for ringing the wrong doorbell or pulling into the wrong driveway. Hundreds are dying every day from taking a drug that is designed to deaden their emotions. Thousands of people engaged in violent rebellion right here in the Nation's Capital.

We need to be engaged in this search for the reasons why people are feeling more pessimistic, more frustrated, and angrier than ever before. And so about 8 or 9 months ago, I started talking about what I believed to be one of the most important political issues of our time: loneliness.

Millions of Americans are feeling this way. People report feeling more intense loneliness than ever before in our lifetime. And it is irresponsible for policymakers to just keep ignoring it.

Now, there are a lot of explanations for how we got here, but a few stand out as particularly important for my colleagues to consider.

So it is true that technology does allow us to stay connected to family and friends and find new communities, but on the whole, technology has left many Americans, especially young people, feeling more alone than ever before.

During the height of COVID-19, we learned the hard way that digital communication cannot replace the value of in-person experience. For example, studies show that face-to-face interactions create faster connections to humans and build stronger, more enduring relationships than anything that you can create online.

Of course, staying in touch electronically is better than losing touch altogether, but when Facebook likes and Instagram comments replace in-person experiences, it actually can drive up feelings of loneliness.

Staring at your screen for 6 hours a day, no matter how many people you are looking at, it can be a very lonely experience.

And it doesn't stop there, because there are millions of users with developing minds—children—who spend hours staring at their screens, scrolling through an endless stream of pictures and videos that have been carefully curated to create an illusion of perfection, leaving young people feeling inadequate or wanting.

Constant comparison breeds—in young people especially but in all of us—and can result in more anxiety than fulfillment. Kids are feeling really lousy today, and it is not just because they are spending tons of time on their screens instead of engaging in real in-person experiences. It is also because the content that they are watching is dangerous and corrosive and making them feel more alone in the world because of those feelings of envy.

Now, the second really important factor contributing to this epidemic of loneliness in America is the erosion of local communities. Now, connection sometimes happens randomly; but, mostly, it is facilitated through local institutions: churches, sports teams, civic clubs, labor unions, business organizations. We derive personal meaning as well from those institutions, from the communities that we create or join. We get connection, but we also get meaning.

Those institutions help us construct an identity, a sense of purpose. It connects us to something bigger than ourselves. But in 2023, you would be hard-pressed to find a community with the kind of thriving local institutions of decades ago.

Globalization has erased thousands of healthy, unique downtowns, where people often met each other at local businesses. And that outsourcing of commerce online has also diminished local cultures that facilitate connection, identity, and meaning. Growing up, my identity was really strongly connected to the town that I lived in, and there was no shortage of ways that I could easily connect with the people I lived with.

Back then, we had thriving local newspapers where I could learn really easily about the people in my town, which made it easier to create that connection.

Those local newspapers are drying up by the day. We all get our news from national sources. It was my local grocer who used to slip me a free slice of American cheese when I would visit on the weekend with my grandparents that made me feel like I belonged to a community, that I wasn't alone. But now the local grocer is gone, driven out of business by superstores or food-delivery drivers.

But even if you still had these local institutions to be a part of, who has time any longer? A few decades ago, one job could easily provide a family with a comfortable middle-class life. Today, adults are forced to maintain two or three jobs to match that same income, or work 50 or 60 or 70 hours a week. There is no time any longer for millions of Americans to go to church, to be part of a civic club, or just hang out with your friends or your neighbors or your family.

And so what are you seeing? Participation in youth sports is plummeting. That is in part because overextended parents are just too busy these days to shuttle their kids to games or practices, or they just can't afford the fees