

he spent considerable time calling for spending proposals that would cost taxpayers trillions of more dollars.

He also failed to meaningfully address another crisis that has been raging over the past 2 years, and that is the security and humanitarian crisis at our southern border. It is a crisis that the President has spent 2 years ignoring. On Tuesday night, he essentially ignored it again. In a speech that was notable for being the most wordy State of the Union speech in the past 6 decades—clocking in at 9,191 words—the President devoted just 120 words, approximately 1 minute, to immigration. He spent a good chunk of that minute attempting to suggest that it is Congress and not he himself that needs to act. In fact, the President's brief 120 words on immigration managed to convey the impression the President had been trying to secure the border all along, instead of reflecting the reality that the President ignored this crisis—a crisis, I might add, that he, himself, triggered—for 2 years and only began to somewhat acknowledge it a mere month ago.

The President's speech was also strikingly light on a vision for our national security in spite of a war of aggression from Russia, which has made its imperial ambitions very clear, and continued troubling activity from China. There wasn't even a mention of Iran, which continues to be the leading state sponsor of terrorism, or North Korea, which just unveiled an alarming quantity of ICBMs.

The President devoted just nine words to the importance of modernizing our military, even though the past year and, indeed, the past week, has underscored the necessity of making sure our military is the top fighting force in the world so that we can deter and, if necessary, confront any threat.

While the President's speech was light on immigration and national security solutions and on any recognition of the economic crisis the President's policies helped create, the one thing his speech was not light on was the Democratic playbook on taxes and spending. The President kept bringing up and encouraging Congress to "finish the job." It quickly became clear that was code for "spend more taxpayer dollars" or maybe "expand government," even though it was excessive government spending that helped get us into this inflation crisis in the first place.

But if there was one thing that became clear Tuesday night, it was that the President wants to have it both ways. He wants to cut the deficit but simultaneously expand and grow government. He celebrates "Made in America," but in nearly the same breath, demonizes businesses. He wants to boost American innovation, but he also wants to raise taxes and impose price controls.

Perhaps no example of this wanting to have it both ways was more telling than the President's clear belief that

oil companies should increase domestic oil production, despite the fact that the President campaigned on eliminating fossil fuels. The President recounted an exchange with oil industry representatives who told him that they were reluctant to invest because they were concerned the President would shut down oil wells and refineries. The President clearly intended the anecdote to illustrate the selfishness of Big Oil or Big Business, but the anecdote did a much better job of illustrating just how outrageous it is that the President assumes he should be able to get as much oil production as he wants while simultaneously working to sunset—to get rid of—oil companies.

The President might like to have it both ways, but he can't because policies have consequences; spending has consequences; taxation has consequences.

And the result of the Big Government tax-and-spend policies the President laid out Tuesday night would not be the prosperous future he imagines, but more economic pain for American families and businesses. And any bipartisan work that we do over the next 2 years needs to move away from the failed policies of the past 2 years and toward a more fiscally responsible future.

The upcoming debt limit debate represents an outstanding opportunity to take a good, hard look at government spending and see how we can handle taxpayer dollars more responsibly.

I was disappointed that despite his calls for bipartisanship, the President decided to call for a "clean" debt limit increase Tuesday night. In other words, an increase in the Nation's credit card limit unaccompanied by any effort to stop adding to our bill. The President's attitude was all too reminiscent of Democrats' partisan "my way or the highway" approach over the past 2 years. I sincerely hope he will rethink that position.

I was also disturbed by the President's attempt to suggest falsely that Republicans are interested in paying for the debt limit increase by cutting Medicare and Social Security. I suspect the President is well aware that is not the position of the Republican Party. And his scaremongering was not reflective of the kind of bipartisanship I hope we can achieve over the next 2 years.

What Democrats and Republicans should be doing is working together to put Medicare and Social Security on a more secure financial footing going forward, and that would be greatly helped by addressing excessive government spending and working to rein in our national debt.

I appreciated, as I said earlier, the fact that despite trotting out far too many of the tax-and-spend policies Tuesday night, the President did make a real nod toward bipartisanship. I truly believe that we can do a lot together over the next 2 years from passing a farm bill to reauthorizing the

Federal Aviation Administration and improving our Nation's air traffic control system to creating new market access for American producers and securing more transparency and accountability from Big Tech. I hope that the President's words in support of bipartisanship will be borne out by his actions in the coming months and that working together, we can build a record of achievement that will help make life better for the American people.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON BENJAMIN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Benjamin nomination?

Mr. HEINRICH. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 7 Ex.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—3

Coons	Fetterman	Schumer
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Chung nomination.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Cindy K. Chung, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 1 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:46 a.m., recessed, and reassembled at 1 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PETERS).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

AMERICAN ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the Biden administration's war on American energy.

Over the last 2 years, Joe Biden's energy policies seem to have been based on two principles. One is restricting American energy production, and the second, regrettably, is a policy that benefits China.

Time and again, Joe Biden's energy policies have hurt America and have helped China. On Joe Biden's first day in office, he shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline, and I think he did it for spite. It would have brought 800,000 barrels of oil to this country every single day.

Joe Biden then stopped all new energy leases on Federal land, and in Wyoming we have a lot of Federal land. He did it in a way that was blatantly illegal. A Federal judge actually ordered Joe Biden to follow the law, to sell energy leases.

Follow the law, Mr. President.

As of today, Joe Biden has leased fewer acres of Federal land for energy than any President in modern times, and he raised the royalty rate for oil and gas development on Federal lands. Now, this is the fee that the government collects for energy that is produced on Federal lands. He raised it by half, and he did it overnight. These higher fees will get passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices, and—oh, by the way—people are noticing the price at the pump is going up—again.

Joe Biden also raised taxes on natural gas by billions of dollars. He raised taxes on coal by \$1 billion as well. As a nation today, we are still producing about 2 million barrels of oil less than was projected we would be producing every day, a number of years ago, before the pandemic.

With lower production and higher taxes, it is no wonder that energy

prices have been painful for the American people—punishing for the American people—who are just trying to make ends meet. Working families have lost nearly \$3,000 specifically because of Joe Biden's radical leftwing energy policy. We are paying a lot more than that for additional causes of inflation, but on energy alone, it has been about \$3,000 more than they should have spent in a normal situation.

And who have been the big winners under all of this? Well, regrettably, it has been China. We are really less independent, less competitive, and more dependent on China. This is compared to the day that Joe Biden took office. I am going to give you a couple of examples.

First, Joe Biden ended America's role in helping developing countries—other developing countries—explore for energy. Many countries are very poor, but they do have massive energy resources. They just need some help in getting to use them. Millions of people could have benefited and been lifted out of poverty if we had helped them use the energy that they already had.

Joe Biden stubbornly refuses. As a result, now these countries that need money to develop their energy resources—what are they doing? Go talk to a high school class. Joe Biden ought to try that. They will tell him what is happening. Those countries are turning to China. More and more countries, of course, then will owe money to China.

We know China uses debt and loans as a weapon. More debt to China means more control by China, overall, of these additional countries. Joe Biden won't let us in the United States help these countries or help the World Bank or help other lending institutions lend to those countries—and we see it all over Africa—because Joe Biden is too pure, and he doesn't like their energy. So he just turns them right over to China for predatory lending.

Joe Biden's obsession with electric vehicles also is turning over American power and money to China. The batteries in electric vehicles require a specific set of critical minerals—a specific set of critical minerals that goes into the batteries of electric vehicles. Well, we can mine it in this country. Oh, no, we can't. Joe Biden says: No, don't mine it in America. He is actually shutting down mining in this country, and he has been doing it since the day he took office. We are not going to let you use the minerals that are critical for the electric vehicles that he wants us to use that come from the United States.

So where are we going to go? Oh, but let's send more money to China. With supply and demand, our demand goes up. China has it to supply, and prices go up as well.

Just in the past few weeks, Joe Biden has shut down proposed copper mines in Minnesota and in Alaska. Well, where are we going to get the minerals for the electric vehicles that Joe Biden

and the Democrats want us to buy? China and countries under the influence of China.

China produces three-quarters of all of the lithium-ion batteries. China also has 70 percent of the world's production capacity for the key parts of EV batteries. China has a majority of the world's lithium, a majority of the world's cobalt, a majority of the world's graphite processing and refining capacity. All of these are necessary for the electric vehicles that the Democrats and Joe Biden say we must buy. Where are these going to come from? There is only one place, and they won't let us have it from America. They won't let us use what we have here.

China now dominates copper and cobalt mining in places like the Congo. The conditions at many of these mines—and this has been widely reported—are inhumane: child labor, brutal conditions. These are not like the mines that we have here in the United States or the mines like we have in Wyoming. Our mines in Wyoming and in the United States are technically sophisticated and professional. Many of the mines and the miners in the Congo are not professional at all. We are talking about young mothers who are working for a few dollars a day and are controlled by China. That is Joe Biden's answer to electric vehicles and every Democrat's answer to electric vehicles.

These young mothers often bring their babies with them to the mines. Not in the United States—oh, no, we are too pure here in the United States to be able to mine for the chemicals that are needed for the electric vehicles. So Joe Biden wants mothers to take babies into the mines in the Congo for the minerals for the electric vehicles that he is mandating that we drive here in the future.

So what happens to these mothers and these babies? Well, they inhale toxic cobalt all day long.

According to a United Nations report, 40,000 children are scavenging for cobalt in the Congo, for the electric vehicles, so China can sell us the chemicals that Joe Biden and the Democrats will not let us get out of the ground here in the United States. Most people would call this criminal. Women and children in Africa are inhaling toxic minerals so that the climate elites in San Francisco can drive their electric vehicles.

I guess that is the American dream. That is the Democrat dream for America: Force these people into this kind of labor so they can drive the electric vehicles of their dreams.

China also sells less expensive EVs, and they are for sale all over Europe. Well, they may be on the road in San Francisco and in Manhattan in just a few years.

Then there is the bloodshed and brutality that China uses to make solar panels. Joe Biden loves solar panels as much as he loves wind turbines. Well, there is a shortage of solar panels in