

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. President, now, on a different note, across the way, yesterday, a small band of MAGA extremists plunged Congress into pandemonium. For the first time in American history, a Speaker of the House of Representatives has been removed from his position at the hands of radicals that he empowered from day one. What happened yesterday is a failure entirely of the House Republicans' own doing, a disaster in the making, to the great detriment of Congress and to the detriment of the American people.

Speaker Boehner, Speaker Ryan, and now Speaker MCCARTHY have all learned the same hard lesson: You cannot allow the hard right to run the House or the country. And all three of them were chased out by the MAGA right. You cannot allow a small band of MAGA extremists, which represent just a very small percentage of the views of the country, to tell the overwhelming majority of Americans what to do.

But Republicans' problems with MAGA extremism seep far deeper than any single leader. MAGA extremism is a poison that the House GOP has refused to confront for years, and until the mainstream House Republicans deal with this issue, the chaos will continue.

I thought House Republicans would have finally realized the dangers of MAGA extremism after what happened last fall, but, year after year, they end up making the same mistake, and it always leads to disaster. By now, I hope it is obvious: MAGA extremism is not good for House Republican leadership. It is not good for the GOP. It is not good for Congress. And MAGA extremism is disastrous for the country.

If MAGA Republicans had their way, they would take our country back all the way to the 19th century. They would turn the clock back radically on women's choice, on voting rights, on workplace protections, on education, on corporate greed, on the environment. They would disfigure our precious democracy, all for a handful of greedy, very wealthy people who just want to not have anything to do with the rest of us.

The MAGA agenda is a dark and dangerous vision of America, one most people overwhelmingly reject. Even so, they are the ones running the show right now in the House GOP.

We find ourselves in a dangerous situation. With about 40 days to go before the government shuts down, the House has ground completely to a halt. Until Republicans stop their infighting, the House can vote on no bills; no appropriations work can get done. If, God forbid, some national crisis were to occur that demands immediate action, the House would be unable—unable—to quickly respond.

So let me say this to the next Speaker of the House, whomever that may be: Think carefully about what happened to your predecessors before trying to coddle the hard right. Each of

your predecessors got burnt each time. I urge the next Speaker not to make the same mistake, not just for their own future but for the country's. Whomever the House elects as Speaker will not be able to ignore the realities of divided government, no matter what the hard right demands. The need for bipartisanship will not change. We will need bipartisanship to keep the government open. We will need it to finish the appropriations process. We will need it to make life better for the American people. For the good of the country, I urge my Republican colleagues in the House to, once and for all, accept that reality. If not, it is my fear—deep fear—that the chaos from yesterday is just the beginning.

CODEL

Mr. President, now on our codel to China, next week, I will lead a bipartisan delegation of Senators on a visit to China, Japan, and Korea. This will be my second time leading a congressional delegation as majority leader after our first visit, which went to India, Pakistan, Israel, and Germany.

Let me first thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for joining me on this visit: Senator CRAPO, ranking member of the Finance Committee; Senators CASSIDY, HASSAN, KENNEDY, and OSSOFF.

"Bipartisan" is our watch word in the Senate, and you can see that this delegation is no exception—three Democrats, three Republicans.

Our trip will be a visit to the most consequential region in the world, focusing on the issues of economic competition and security, on American national security, and on global leadership and advanced technology. Unlike recent delegations to China, I am proud that we will go as elected representatives of the American people, underscoring how serious Congress is about maintaining America's global leadership in the 21st century.

We will meet with government and business leaders from each country, with American Ambassadors and diplomats, and with American companies to hear from them about what they need to best succeed in Asia.

Our message to China will be clear but fair: The Chinese Government must work with us to ensure a level playing field so that U.S. businesses and American workers have the opportunity to compete fairly in decades to come.

So we will focus on the need for reciprocity in China for U.S. businesses, and we will focus on advancing America's national security interests and leadership in critical technologies.

I also look forward to having a direct, candid, and respectful conversation with Chinese leadership on the need to combat the distribution of fentanyl, on China's human rights record, regional security and stability, and on the need for cooperation where possible.

I thank all my colleagues for joining me on this bipartisan delegation to Asia, and I look forward to a construc-

tive trip where we can work together to advance America's interests and leadership on the world stage.

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.

KEVIN MCCARTHY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to begin today with a few words about my outgoing House counterpart, Speaker KEVIN MCCARTHY.

Shepherding an institution like the House of Representatives—every bit as stubborn and diverse as the Nation it represents—is a tall order. Getting a slim majority pointed in the same direction at any one time can seem like nothing short of a miracle. I have said before, in reference to my own position, that being leader of your party in the Senate is much like being the groundskeeper in a cemetery. Everybody is under you, but nobody is listening.

Of course, I doubt that KEVIN MCCARTHY has ever seen himself as above anyone else—not the son of a firefighter, not the grandson of immigrants who stood up his own small business and worked his way through school.

In the beginning of the Speaker's House career, it was clear to anyone paying any attention that he was a doer in the model of Teddy Roosevelt's "Man in the Arena" and an idealist in the model of his fellow Californian, Ronald Reagan. Congressman MCCARTHY didn't shy away from worthwhile fights. In fact, he usually dove in headfirst. He didn't hesitate to get his hands dirty.

When the circumstances were tough, he drew on his faith, his family, and his belief in American exceptionalism. His Bakersfield roots kept him grounded. His beloved mother kept him apprised of kitchen table concerns with frequent calls about the price of gas. In other words, he had all the qualities of an effective representative and Speaker.

I am not sure anyone could have predicted just how much these qualities would come in handy over the past 9 months. Speaker MCCARTHY took office with a commitment to America. He insisted on restoring regular order. He made sure that the people's House was once again open to the American people. He took on the gravest challenge, a looming debt crisis, with single-minded determination.

The Speaker and I worked closely throughout his tenure, but I was particularly struck by his persistence. He literally willed the President of the United States to the negotiating table and kept coming back again and again until he had helped secure the Nation's full faith and credit.

Speaker MCCARTHY was a partner I could trust to be honest and candid and, without fail, optimistic. I am grateful for the enthusiasm he brought to our shared work and for the patriotic conservative convictions he wears on his sleeve.

Perhaps the most telling thing about this week's events in the House has been the way the Speaker handled them—with grace and with gratitude. Speaker MCCARTHY should be proud of what he and his team have accomplished on behalf of the American people over the past 9 months. He can rest assured that his colleagues—myself included—will continue to draw on his talents and optimism in the days that lie ahead.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, I spoke yesterday about the list of urgent and unfinished business Congress has to address in the coming weeks. We will start with resuming our work on full-year appropriations to invest in critical infrastructure, take care of America's farmers, and continue modernizing our military to contend with adversaries like China.

But we will also need to make progress on supplemental resources for safeguarding America's direct interest in Ukraine's defense, for helping communities pick up the pieces after natural disasters, for restoring security and sanity to our southern border and to the streets of our cities. The Nation is watching closely for progress on each of these priorities.

In the meantime, they are continuing to face the painful reality of Washington Democrats' historic inflation. Across the country, working families continue to report that soaring prices are their top concern. Among workers and small business owners alike, just 28 percent of Americans say they are satisfied with the state of the economy, and 59 percent disagree with the President's policies behind it.

Working Americans watched Washington Democrats pour trillions of taxpayer dollars into a wish list of liberal spending, driving up the prices of everything from groceries to housing. They watched the President's war on abundant American energy send home heating and gas prices, literally, through the roof.

Meanwhile, the wave of violent crime I spoke about yesterday isn't just terrorizing citizens, it is shutting down Main Street businesses. According to one recent retail industry survey, increased violence makes it harder for retail stores to maintain inventory and inhibits hiring and staff retention. Across the country, 45 percent of retailers are reporting that they reduced store opening hours in response, and 28 percent had to close stores outright.

Of course, these nightmares come on top of the thicket of Biden administration redtape that has already made it as hard as ever to create and sustain a business here in America.

Mr. President, this is Bidenomics in action. In the past week, a flurry of headlines have reported that even Democrats are beginning to worry that the President's decision to put his personal brand on this latest economy is turning out to be a political misstep. Well, it is a good thing they are finally recognizing what working Americans have known for almost 3 years now.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. 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.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the specter of heavyhanded government regulation of the internet reared its ugly head once again last week with the Federal Communications Commission's announcement that it will consider a so-called net neutrality proposal at its October meeting coming up later this month.

So what is net neutrality? Well, at its most basic level, it is simply the idea that internet service providers shouldn't prioritize or block certain internet traffic at the expense of others. Understood in that way, it is a concept that enjoys broad support in both parties. But that is not what we are talking about with the Biden FCC's net neutrality proposal. Like the Obama FCC before it, the Biden FCC wants to assert broad new government powers over the internet using rules—get this—that were designed for telephone companies and monopolies back during the Great Depression.

This is a quote from FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel last week:

Today, there is no expert agency ensuring that the internet is fast, open and fair.

Proving once again that Democrats' faith in Washington experts is undying and that nothing scares a Democrat more than the thought of some aspect of society not being regulated by the Federal Government.

This is not the first time Democrats have sounded the alarm about the perils that await us if we don't let the Government regulate the internet with a heavy hand. In fact, back in 2015, the Obama FCC actually implemented the regulatory regime the Biden FCC is now considering imposing again. This opened the door to a whole new host of new internet regulations including—in-cluding—price regulations.

Unsurprisingly, broadband investment declined as a result. That was a problem for Americans generally who benefit when the United States is at the forefront of internet growth and expansion, and it was particularly bad news for Americans in rural States like my State of South Dakota.

Getting broadband to rural communities is already more challenging than

installing broadband in cities or suburbs, and the possibility of heavier regulations act as a further disincentive to expanding business. No big surprise there.

Fast forward to 2017, and the FCC under Chairman Pai voted to repeal—the heavyhanded internet regulations passed by the Obama FCC. The prospect of this repeal was greeted with near hysteria from Democrats. We were told that internet traffic would slow to a crawl, that innovation would be stifled, that our freedom of speech was threatened, and more. And in the wake of the repeal, none of the things that Democrats predicted came to pass. The internet as we know it not only survived, it thrived. Innovation flourished, the internet remained a vehicle for free and open discourse. And internet speeds not only didn't slow down, they got faster and faster.

During the pandemic, despite the explosive growth of internet usage, American networks had no problem keeping up with demand, delivering the reliable service that Americans have come to expect. Now contrast that with Europe—where internet regulation is much more heavyhanded—where they struggle to deal with increased internet usage. In fact, European service providers slowed internet speeds to maintain connectivity throughout the course of the pandemic. The United States is now a leader in adopting next-generation telecommunications services like 5G and advanced Wi-Fi, while Europe struggles to keep pace. But that may not last if the Biden FCC goes ahead with its net neutrality plans.

As I said, the last time a Democrat-led FCC put heavyhanded internet regulations in place, broadband investment declined. There is a good reason to believe that the same thing would happen this time. There is also substantial reason to be concerned that the Biden FCC's proposed regulatory regime would result in higher internet bills for Americans.

As FCC Commissioner Carr, a Republican appointee who opposes the Democrats' proposal, recently pointed out:

Since 2017, the prices Americans pay for Internet services have decreased on an inflation-adjusted basis. Meanwhile, the prices for utility-regulated services like electricity, water, and gas have increased over two times faster than the prices for Internet services. Monopoly regulations invariably lead to monopoly prices. In addition, Title II regulation opens the door to regulators adding new taxes and fees to consumers' monthly broadband bills.

That is from Brendan Carr's statement.

In addition to higher prices for consumers and decreased broadband investment, another consequence of the Biden's FCC's proposed new regulatory regime would be government interference in internet traffic. Ironically, given Democrats' professed concerns, it is precisely the net neutrality regime they are calling for that could imperil the free and open internet they claim to want.