

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—including—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.

Under the regulatory regime the Biden FCC wants to impose, the Federal Government would be allowed to block or prioritize internet traffic or otherwise interfere with the free flow of information. Think about that one.

Given, I would add, the Biden administration's demonstrated willingness to use its regulatory power to advance its social and environmental agenda, it is not hard to imagine the Biden administration using this proposed new regulatory power to shape Americans' internet experience for its own ends.

The Biden FCC should be focused on addressing real challenges such as continuing our efforts to close the digital divide and ensuring that every American has access to high-speed broadband; it should not be wasting time and money advancing a solution to a problem that does not exist.

Thanks, in substantial part, to the light-touch regulatory regime currently in place, the internet in the United States is thriving and bringing new benefits to American families and businesses. And if Democrats really want a free and open internet and to keep the United States at the forefront of broadband development, they will oppose the Biden FCC's heavyhanded power grab.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

UKRAINE

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, over the weekend, Congress narrowly avoided a government shutdown. It is ridiculous that it got this close. While we avoided this disaster for now, I am disappointed that partisan dysfunction prevented Congress from extending U.S. support for Ukraine at such a critical time.

As Ukraine continues their counter-offensive and their most recent aid package is drawn down, we must work quickly to get Ukraine more of the weapons and support they need to beat Putin, because, make no mistake, that is what this is about—whether Vladimir Putin comes out the other side of this emboldened or defeated.

Our military leaders have made clear that China's and Russia's aggression are the top threats that we face. While President Xi of China watches, Putin has authorized cyber attacks against the United States and proven himself a war criminal willing to invade his Democratic neighbors and intentionally—intentionally—murder women and children and abduct Ukrainian youth from their parents in an effort to recreate the Soviet empire.

Whether Putin is successful in Ukraine has serious implications for U.S. national security. Up to this point, this invasion has been a massive strategic failure for him. He underestimated the courage and the fight of the Ukrainian people to defend their homeland, which I have seen firsthand in Kyiv. He also underestimated the will of the United States and our allies to quickly and effectively support Ukraine.

Over the course of the now 20-month war, we have sent Ukraine the equivalent of a small fraction of our yearly defense budget. This has included guns, artillery, ammunition, tanks, missile systems and more. It has also included the training on how to use and maintain these systems. Now, as it should be, this support has been carefully evaluated and targeted based on what Ukraine needs most on the battlefield. It is not a blank check. It is tracked closely. I have seen this myself during two visits to Poland and Ukraine. It has also had the impact of allowing us to modernize our own stockpiles.

Think about what this support means for our own national security. Russia's massive army is now a shadow of its former self. They have lost thousands of armored vehicles, tanks, and artillery pieces. They've lost hundreds of aircraft. They are experiencing the limits of their own power, and they have resorted to forced conscription of their own citizens to fill their ranks.

China is watching this, and they are witnessing the staying power and the strength of the coalition that we lead.

Ukraine is on the move, making steady progress in a counteroffensive to take back their country. Russia is losing.

Now is not the time to let up. It is time to push forward. A majority of Republicans and Democrats in both the House and Senate agree. We know that. So, while partisan dysfunction got in the way over the weekend, we have got to work together to extend the support that Ukraine needs. For the sake of Ukraine's freedom and our own national security, we must get this done—and quickly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first let me just say "Amen" to my friend and colleague from Arizona.

Mr. President, I would ask, first, unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator SCHMITT be permitted to speak for 5 minutes and Senator CARDIN be permitted to speak for 5 minutes prior to the scheduled vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, as our dear colleague, Senator Dianne Feinstein, is lying in state in San Francisco today, the home where her leadership started for us and for the country, and as we prepare to remember her tomorrow in a special celebration of her life, I rise to pay tribute—tribute to an incredible leader and my dear friend, who dedicated her life to serving the people of California and the Nation.

Perhaps "leader" isn't strong enough. It is not a strong enough word. She wasn't just a leader. She was an American icon. She inspired generations of women to stand up and suit up and push our way into the halls of power that weren't particularly welcoming.

Like so many of us, she started in local government. Unlike many of us, her rise was sparked by tragedy. As president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, it was her job to announce the horrific assassination of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk.

She was heartbroken. But she was also calm. She was determined. She vowed that her grieving city would recover and rebuild.

She was a crucial part of that rebuilding, serving as mayor for 9 years. In 1990, she ran for Governor and lost, but she picked herself back up and said she wasn't done serving her State.

In 1992, she ran for the Senate and won, joining five other groundbreaking women who changed the face of this institution forever.

Keep in mind that before 1992, there were no women's restrooms anywhere near the Senate Chamber. This is actually something we all noticed.

Through sheer determination and a lot of hard work, she rose to become the highest ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee and chairwoman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Through her leadership, she left her mark on this institution over and over again in so many ways. She was a fierce and courageous advocate for commonsense gun laws, as our Presiding Officer is as well, including the 1994 assault weapons ban signed into law by President Clinton. That legislation alone saved so many lives from gun violence during the 10 years that it was law. I so wish that it had been able to be continued permanently. She stood up for American values when she led the years-long investigation into allegations that the CIA had used torture against terrorism suspects. Despite CIA and White House objections, Senator Feinstein courageously chose to publicly release what is known as the torture report. It was such a historic moment that it was even turned into a major motion picture starring Adam Driver and Annette Bening as Senator Feinstein.

I will never forget sitting in this Chamber behind Senator Feinstein to show support for her courage that day. She spoke to the American people about the horrific details outlined in this report.

Senator John McCain, who understood the horrors of torture more than anyone, commended Senator Feinstein and her staff for the report and added this:

Our enemies act without conscience. We must not. This executive summary of the Committee's report makes clear that acting without conscience isn't necessary, it isn't even helpful, in winning this strange and long war we're fighting. We should be grateful to have that truth affirmed.

In response to the report, Senator Feinstein and Senator McCain's anti-torture amendment was included in the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act. The amendment restricted interrogation techniques to those authorized in the "Army Field Manual" and