

squarely behind us, once and for all, and doing that means we should extinguish the legal authority that initiated the war to begin with.

So thank you. Thank you, Chairman MENENDEZ, and thank you, Ranking Member RISCH, for moving forward with this repeal in your committee. And, again, kudos and accolades to Senators KAINE and YOUNG for their great work too. We haven't yet passed this, but their work gives us a real chance to see some light finally at the end of a long tunnel. It is my hope that we can bring this bill to the floor during this work period.

BUDGET PROPOSALS

Now, later today, I will join a number of Senate Democratic colleagues to talk about a new report that throws a spotlight on the dangerous ways the Republican budget proposals would harm average Americans.

As has been the case so many times this year, this report tells a story of contrasts. On the one hand, Democrats and President Biden have spent the last 2 years reducing the Federal deficit, lowering drug costs, lowering people's energy bills, and making sure the wealthiest pay their fair share.

But here are just a few of the things the Republican budget proposals would do. Listen to this. The American people ain't going to like it.

Republican proposals would push millions of Americans off Social Security benefits and raise the retirement age to 70.

Republican proposals would privatize Medicare, which would gut seniors' benefits, threatening their access to guaranteed services, and force those who are able to remain on Medicare to pay higher premiums.

Republican proposals would cut Medicaid by \$2.2 trillion and end coverage for tens of millions of Americans, especially people with disabilities, seniors, and families living on lower incomes. A large part of Medicaid goes to help people who are in nursing homes and assisted living, and that takes a huge burden off 30-, 40-, 50-year-olds who want to care for their parents but those high costs are something beyond their budgets.

And Republican proposals would narrow healthcare eligibility for veterans and cut VA mandatory funding—and so much more, so much more.

These proposals are anathema, I believe, to the American people, for sure, but even to most Republicans. That is why we Democrats keep insisting that Speaker MCCARTHY answer the one question we have all been asking and gotten no answer to. The question we have been asking Speaker MCCARTHY is: Where is your plan?

We believe a plan this drastic will not get the votes in the Republican conference in the House. So, Speaker MCCARTHY, show us your plan. Speaker MCCARTHY, show us your plan.

Republicans love to tout themselves as the party of the average Americans, but actions speak louder than words.

When Republicans help tax cheats; call for putting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid on the chopping block; and cut taxes for billionaires and megacorporations, there is no question where they truly stand with the wealthy, with the very well-connected, and with the biggest of corporations.

NOMINATION OF PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON

Finally, I want to make a quick mention of an important nominee who is testifying before the Senate Commerce Committee.

Recently, President Biden announced Phil Washington as his nominee to lead the FAA, or Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA needs to have a leader as soon as possible. Americans cannot afford to go through another busy travel season like the one they went through last winter. When you have widespread computer failures, delays, and an inability to react quickly, not having an FAA head is terrible.

I look forward to seeing more in the coming weeks, but I thank my colleagues in the Commerce Committee, led by the very capable, very diligent, very hard-working MARIA CANTWELL, for holding their hearing today on Mr. Washington.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The Republican whip.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in his State of the Union Address last month, the President expressed an encouraging desire for bipartisanship. But I said, at the time, that I hoped his words would be matched by his actions. After all, the President spoke about being a President for all Americans in his inaugural address. But his first 2 years in office were not exactly distinguished by bipartisanship.

So while I was encouraged by the President's words in his State of the Union Address, as I said, I am looking for them to be matched by his actions, and renominating a slew of extreme nominees, as the President has done so far this year, is no way to start.

So far this year, the President has renominated at least 16 individuals who were unable to get any bipartisan support in the last Congress. They include an individual with serious unanswered questions about his possible role in a movement to push out senior career officials at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in favor of Biden loyalists, multiple individuals aligned with Democrats' radical Green New Deal agenda, a nominee who has repeatedly embraced anti-police rhetoric, multiple abortion extremists, a leftist litigator who has called the U.S. Senate and the electoral college anti-democratic insti-

tutions and who has admitted that he is motivated by his hatred of conservatives, and the list goes on.

And then, of course, there is the nominee who recently appeared in front of the Senate Commerce Committee for the third time: Gigi Sohn. This is Ms. Sohn's third nomination to the Federal Communications Commission during the Biden administration. Her previous two nominations stalled thanks to her inability to garner any bipartisan support, and with good reason, because Gigi Sohn has to be the poster child for terrible Presidential nominees, although I suppose the Biden judicial nominee who couldn't explain article II of the Constitution should also be in the running for that title of worst Presidential nominee.

I have serious policy disagreements with Ms. Sohn on multiple issues. She not only wants to bring back the heavy-handed internet regulation of the Obama administration, but she wants to go further and have the FCC regulate broadband rates and set data caps. This would discourage broadband investment and threaten U.S. leadership in 5G, as well as diminish internet access opportunities for Americans outside of major urban and suburban areas.

As a resident of a rural State, I also have serious concerns about Ms. Sohn's position on rural broadband. She has been publicly hostile to the efforts of rural broadband companies to expand reliable internet access to rural areas, while at the same time she supported the use of scarce government dollars to overbuild networks in already well-served areas.

Her hostility to rural broadband led one former Democrat Senator to ask how Democrats can "support rural broadband expansion and also support Gigi Sohn."

But my concerns with Ms. Sohn don't end there. I not only have serious policy disagreements with Ms. Sohn. I have serious questions about her character and fitness for the office for which she is nominated.

The Federal Communications Commission has jurisdiction over radio, TV, and the internet, which means that it deals with a number of sensitive issues—notably, free speech issues. And, for that reason, it calls for Commissioners who are thoughtful, fair, and impartial.

Ms. Sohn is none of these. She is a virulent and unapologetic partisan known for speaking disparagingly of conservative media outlets—the same outlets, I would add, that she would be regulating—and the politicians who disagree with her.

Her nomination is opposed by a wide range of organizations, including the left-of-center Progressive Policy Institute, which opposes her due to a "pattern of illiberal intolerance for voices on the left who dissent from her hard left orthodoxies."

Ms. Sohn is the very opposite of fair and impartial, and I can think of few

candidates who would be more detrimental to the fair and impartial adjudication of media issues and the protection of free speech on public airwaves.

But the problems with her nomination don't even end there. Ms. Sohn has raised serious ethics questions recently with her political donations to several Democrat Senators at the same time that her nomination was before the U.S. Senate.

One of those donations was actually given to a member of the Commerce Committee, which, of course, is the committee considering her nomination.

Ms. Sohn may not have intended to influence Senators considering her nomination, but, at the very least, her decision to donate to these Senators while her nomination is before Congress gives the appearance of impropriety and raises serious questions about her judgment.

But her ethical issues don't end there.

She was less than forthcoming with the Commerce Committee about her time on the board of a company that was found to be operating in violation of copyright laws.

And questions remain about how she got the substantial settlement against her company drastically reduced.

Ms. Sohn has volunteered to recuse herself, if she is confirmed, on a variety of issues related to broadcasting and copyright violations because of her involvement with this company and the settlement.

But I am hard-pressed to understand why we would choose a Commissioner who would have to recuse herself from participating in substantial parts of the FCC's work.

Unfortunately, there is a lot more I could say about the problems with Ms. Sohn's nomination, but I will stop here.

Suffice it to say that I cannot think of a less appropriate candidate for this position.

Instead of continuing to attempt to place a virulent partisan like Ms. Sohn at the FCC, the President should nominate a qualified candidate who will do his or her job in a fair and impartial manner.

And as I said at the beginning, if the President truly wants to usher in an era of bipartisanship in this period of divided government, he could start by rethinking some of the highly partisan renominations he has made in this Congress and consider nominating individuals who are able to gain at least some bipartisan support.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR RULE REPEAL

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to warn against our administration's unrelenting campaign to weaken our energy security, our national security, and our economic security to advance, truly, their environmental and social agenda.

The ESG rule that we are going to vote on later today is just another example of how our administration prioritizes a liberal policy agenda over protecting and growing—protecting and growing the retirement accounts of 150 million Americans that will be in jeopardy.

Our country is already facing economic uncertainty, record inflation, and increasing energy costs that keep Americans up at night and put a squeeze on their pocketbooks. And we all see it, no matter where you are. Whether it is Georgia or West Virginia, we are feeling the same pain.

The Inflation Reduction Act was written with the primary goal in mind—which has not been at all promoted from our administration. The Inflation Reduction Act was intended to be—and it still is—energy security for our Nation.

If we as a nation are not energy secure, if we have to depend on foreign supply chains, if we are not able to help our allies in need, we will not remain the superpower of the world, and that is what I was concerned about as we worked on the Inflation Reduction Act.

We were going to use all the fossil fuels that we have in America to maintain for the next 10 years energy independence, energy security, and be able to have the supply chain to help our allies, which the EU—if you want to see the devastating effect of what a war on energy can be, look no further than Ukraine, look no further than the EU, where this happened over there.

So we have talked about this, and we wrote a piece of legislation where we could walk and chew gum at the same time. We could basically invest and produce more oil, produce more natural gas, basically build pipelines that carry the products much safer than rails and roads, which we are seeing so much of the devastation happening by rails right now, which should be alarming to all of us—but basically to do it and do it in a much safer way.

But when people deny—and any denier of any kind, denying the reality of what is needed today, is dangerous. That is what is happening right now.

We have a significant investment in States like mine already that allows us to produce more energy here at home, and that means onshoring our energy supply chains, creating good-paying jobs, helping our economy, and hopefully start working ourselves out of the debt that we have accumulated.

The administration should be our partners in this effort. I have always said this. Government should be your partner, not your provider but your partner. It shouldn't make all your de-

isions, but it should have guardrails on to make good, sound decisions.

But when they try to basically infiltrate, such as with the ESG, the environmental-social guidance that this bill intends to do, if you don't weigh that with the geopolitical risks that are being taken around the world today that we are involved in, being the superpower of the world and the defender of freedom and democracy anywhere and everywhere in the world—if we don't acknowledge that and allow just one evaluation, I will guarantee it would make for very unsound decisions that will be very harmful.

And again I say, look no further than the EU. The UK has basically thrown all their environmental concerns out the window just to survive. They will burn anything they can get their hands on to keep from freezing, trying to keep their economy going. That is the geopolitical risk when things are topsy-turvy or unraveled, and that is what we are facing.

Instead of the administration basically continuing to take care of every opportunity we have to be energy secure, they are twisting the legislative text and cherry-picking the pieces that they want to advance.

And I have been very, very critical because I have been watching very carefully what is going on.

When you talk about electric vehicles, well, the reason that the Inflation Reduction Act said: Well, if we are going to give \$7,500 to advance people buying electric vehicles, then we should get something as a country out of it—that means being totally, totally self-sufficient. We should not have to depend on Russia for 80 percent of the supply of the batteries that run electric vehicles when we never, in the history of the United States of America, relied on any foreign entity or supply chains for us to basically take care of our transportation needs, whether it be automobiles, whether it be trains, planes, whatever.

Now, all of a sudden, we want to switch to electric vehicles, knowing that we don't supply the main ingredients of running an electric vehicle, which is the battery. It makes no sense at all.

So what we said is, basically, you will get a credit of \$3,750 if you secure the critical minerals it takes to produce that battery in North America or countries that have a free-trade agreement with America so we have a dependable, reliable supply chain that wouldn't be choked off by a country such as China, Russia, and whether it be Iran, North Korea, those that don't have any—any—relationship to our values whatsoever and do not wish us well, as I would say.

But with that, the other 3,750—that could equal \$7,500 for a battery—would be that if the battery is basically manufactured in North America.

Now, what is wrong with bringing these types of jobs in manufacturing? If it is going to be our transportation