

from the fiasco of a month ago: Hard-right proposals, hard-right slashing cuts, hard-right poison pills that have zero support from Democrats will only make a shutdown more likely. I hope they don't go down that path in the week to come.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on nominations, earlier this week, I am proud to say—really proud to say—that the Senate majority confirmed the hundredth woman to the Federal bench since President Biden took office, and I am equally proud to say it was the 150th judge overall.

Today, the Senate will hit two more significant milestones. After we confirm Monica Almadani and Brandy McMillion today, this Senate majority will have confirmed 50 Black judges and 100 people of color to the bench. Democrats are making our courts look more like America. This majority has confirmed more women, more Black people, more people of color to the bench than any full first term of any previous President. That is a record to be proud of.

Under President Trump, just 16 percent of judicial nominees were people of color. Under President Biden and this Senate majority, 100 of the now more than 150 judges have been people of color.

And yesterday, the Senate confirmed Ramon Reyes as a district judge for the Eastern District of New York. Judge Reyes is now the only male Federal judge of Puerto Rican descent and the second Hispanic man to ever sit on the Eastern District. Judge Reyes is a truly outstanding jurist who will be an excellent addition to the Eastern District. I was proud to recommend his nomination to President Biden and even prouder to see him confirmed yesterday.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. President, on our AI Insight Forum, yesterday, the Senate held our fifth and sixth bipartisan AI Insight Forums. Both AI Insight Forums were a huge success. We learned a lot; we had a lot of good discussions; we all left with a better understanding of the ways AI is already reshaping our world.

Our Elections and Democracy AI Insight Forum was especially informative. It is the area that requires the most immediate action because the 2024 elections are fast approaching, and we know there have already been—and always have been—bad actors trying to jaundice our elections. But we agreed, we agreed in the forum, that AI will be a dramatic force multiplier for the spread of disinformation.

We also agreed that government can't alone act to create guardrails to protect our elections in the age of AI. I was proud to see three major companies in the room during the AI Insight Forum—Meta, Microsoft, and Google—come out and say they supported legislation to create these guardrails.

We also agreed that we need to act quickly to secure our democracy in the

age of AI because time is of the essence ahead of next year's elections. It may be the thing we have to do first when it comes to legislating and creating guardrails in AI.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. President, on the Supreme Court, the American people are experiencing a severe crisis of confidence in the integrity of the highest Court in all the land. Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee is taking an important step to restore confidence in the Supreme Court by voting to authorize subpoenas to Harlan Crow and Leonard Leo, who have used their immense power to gain undisclosed access—undisclosed access—to Supreme Court Justices.

I support Chairman DURBIN and the Judiciary Committee's decision to authorize these subpoenas because Americans are sick of reading in the paper that rich MAGA extremists are using their yachts and jets and gifts to pal around with the Supreme Court and doing so largely in secret. These previous undisclosed reports of lavish gifts suggest there is a two-tiered system of justice, and that needs to be fixed.

Americans know there is something shady going on when ultrawealthy MAGA extremists can basically buy face time with the Justices, who then turn around and overturn *Roe v. Wade*, gut affirmative action, block student debt relief, and green-light discrimination against LGBTQ Americans. The same millionaires—billionaires—who are giving gifts and giving trips to these Justices are the very same people pushing a whole lot of this agenda with the Supreme Court, and, whoa, lo and behold, the Supreme Court does it.

The bottom line is, at the very least, the appearance of this kind of impropriety needs to stop, and Americans need to learn more. And the Senate is well within its right to look under the hood to ensure we can increase transparency, which these subpoenas would do.

I support the Judiciary Committee's vote to authorize these subpoenas, and I thank Chairman DURBIN and my Democratic colleagues on the committee for their work.

REMEMBERING LIZ MOYNIHAN

Mr. President, now on Liz Moynihan, this week, New York lost one of its talented figures, one of its brightest minds, one of its most radiant spirits—Liz Moynihan—who passed away Tuesday evening. I had the immense joy of knowing her for many, many wonderful years, the partner to my old mentor, Senator Moynihan, here in the Senate.

Senator Moynihan may have been the one in the spotlight, but everyone knew there would be no Daniel without a Liz, who was not just a lifelong partner but also his top adviser, his best advocate, and, arguably, the best political strategist. To borrow a phrase attributed to another powerful New York woman, “behind every great man is a greater woman.” And that was certainly true for Liz.

Liz Moynihan was someone always who preferred to operate outside the

limelight but was always able to command the attention of Presidents, Senators, ambassadors, and mayors, and even archeologists, having discovered on her own the gardens of the Mughal Emperor Babur, while living in India.

In short, Liz Moynihan was a virtuoso in so many ways. She never held office herself. Yet she made the careers of so many—most of all, her husband's—possible. May she rest in peace after a wonderful, full, and rich life, dedicated to making this country better.

My condolences to my dear friend Laura and all of the Moynihan family and everyone whose lives she touched over the years.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. McCONNELL. This weekend, with parades and gatherings, solemn ceremonies and phone calls to loved ones, America will mark Veterans Day by expressing our gratitude to the men and women who have served our Nation in the Armed Forces.

But Veterans Day is much more than a once-a-year observation. It is a reminder of our daily obligation to honor their service, uphold our promises to care for them when they come home, and do everything we can to equip those defending our Nation today and tomorrow for success.

So, today, I am reminded of some letters I have saved in my archives. They are letters my father sent home to my mother from his own service in Patton's army in 1945.

With Nazi Germany on the ropes, with peace within reach, my dad was already seeing firsthand the sorts of threats that would define the next half century of American history. In the parts of his letters that made it past Army censors, he told us how the Russians were going to be a big problem.

Well, today, America faces threats every bit as grave. Like those of the 1940s, our adversaries today aren't being shy about their efforts to win the next half century of competition with America and the West. As one recent analysis summed it up, Russia, China, and Iran are “working to end the world order that has prevailed for three generations under American leadership”—“under American leadership.”

This didn't happen by accident. The Western order of peace and freedom was delivered by the sacrifices of American servicemembers like my father and preserved by generations of brave men and women in uniform ever since.

Right now, we have an obligation to those servicemembers, to our allies, and to the American people to behave like the world-leading power we actually are. We have a duty to invest seriously in American strength. It is time to offer a clear strategy for victory against Russia and then deliver the resources Ukraine needs to achieve it right now.

Putin is not deterred and his imperial ambitions do not end at Ukraine's border with the NATO alliance. If the United States abandons our support for Ukraine's resistance, we risk yet another generation of American forces being veterans of war in Europe.

It is time to get serious about deterring Iran, the world's leading sponsor of terrorism and the leading sponsor of violence against American service-members in Iraq and Syria.

I welcomed yesterday's strike on an Iranian facility in Syria, but it will probably take more than striking ammunition warehouses to restore the deterrence the Biden administration's policies have actually squandered.

It is time to redouble our efforts to equip allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific to raise the cost of further aggression from communist China.

And, as I have said repeatedly, it is long past time to make commonsense policy changes to address our southern border crisis that has required U.S. servicemembers to help Border Patrol maintain order.

These are the tasks before us, and they will not get any easier to address the longer we wait.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, now, on another matter, for 3 years, the Biden administration's radical climate agenda has laid siege to affordable American energy and American consumer choice: slashed development of abundant domestic energy reserves, soaring prices for gas and heating oil, and a thicket of new regulations from unelected bureaucrats—from construction permitting to home appliances.

As the President's policies made life harder for working Americans, the Democrats took the administration's green obsession on the road. Special Climate Envoy John Kerry went to China hoping to treat climate goals as a "free standing" issue from our major strategic competition. Not surprisingly, the PRC saw things differently, and Chairman Xi stated publicly that China had no plans—none—to stop increasing its carbon emissions for at least another 7 years.

Meanwhile, the Governor of California took his own trip to Beijing and pledged to PRC officials that "regardless of what happens nationally, subnationally, you have a partner in California."

Well, they sure do. In fact, the supply chains for some of our coastal liberals' favorite green fashions, like electric vehicles, run directly through China. Close to 75 percent of lithium batteries, as well as 70 percent of our cathodes and anodes required to produce these batteries, come from China. The PRC holds more than 50 percent of the processing and refining capacity for critical minerals like cobalt.

By all relevant measures, the United States lags dangerously behind; but earlier this year, the Biden administration decided to make bringing these critical supply chains home even more

difficult by waiving "Buy American" requirements for the materials used to make electric vehicle chargers.

Apparently, the administration is so desperate to force its radical climate agenda that it is willing to enrich America's single biggest strategic adversary to get there. Washington Democrats so badly want to force working Americans to drive blue States' millionaires' favorite electric cars that they are willing to cut communist China in on the profits.

Fortunately, the Senate had an opportunity yesterday to set things straight. Thanks to the leadership of Senator RUBIO, a bipartisan majority voted to block the Biden administration's waiver policy using the Congressional Review Act. Apparently, the President's radical climate agenda is too radical for several Members of his own party. Hopefully, he will listen to them soon.

TRIBUTE TO MARK HANEY

Now, Mr. President, on one final matter, hard-working men and women in Kentucky have been in the business of growing the food that feeds our Nation for centuries. When it comes to supporting these farmers, there is no organization that has had a greater impact on the agricultural community than the Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation.

Mark Haney, the farm bureau's longest serving president and a proud farmer himself, has played an important role in preserving our Commonwealth's agricultural heritage and recruiting the next generation of young producers. This year, the farm bureau bids Mark a warm farewell as he prepares to step down, closing out 15 successful years as president and over three decades on the board.

Nearly 75,000 farms back home help keep dinner plates full all across the country, and for the better part of this century, they have trusted Mark to lead them through the good times and the bad from adapting to ever-evolving redtape from Washington to helping farm families recover and rebuild after devastating storms to navigating a once-in-a-generation pandemic.

Personally, I have leaned on Mark for his counsel on the challenges that face rural America; and having worked with him for decades, I am confident this is not our final goodbye. Mark is sure to be an invaluable asset to Kentucky's agricultural community and the organization he loves well into the future.

So Elaine and I extend our warm wishes to our good friend Mark and his wife, Marlene, on his well-deserved retirement.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill 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.

LABOR REGULATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as I have said before, when it comes to the actions of government, it is often legislation that grabs the biggest headlines. But it is equally important to focus on what a Presidential administration is doing with its regulatory power—something I was reminded of again last week when I signed on to a letter headed by Senator CASSIDY on the Biden administration's proposed new overtime rule. Because in the modern regulatory state, Presidents have a tremendous amount of power to affect our economy and Federal policy through regulation.

Today, I would like to take a couple of minutes to talk about some labor regulations coming out of the Biden administration that are likely to prove detrimental to workers, business owners, and our economy.

Let me start, as I mentioned, with the Biden administration's proposed new overtime rule. This proposal would impose a 55-percent increase in the exemption threshold for providing overtime pay for covered employees.

Currently, employers are required to pay covered employees making less than \$35,568 per year overtime if they work more than 40 hours per week. Under the Biden administration's proposed new rule, employers would be required to pay overtime to covered employees making less than \$55,068. As I said, a massive 55-percent increase in the exemption threshold.

So what would be the effects of this proposed rule? It would likely result in some combination of higher prices, fewer job opportunities, and lower base pay for employees because employers—and I am thinking particularly of small businesses that are always going to be hit hardest by regulations like this—are going to be forced to look for ways to offset what could be a substantial increase in costs.

Indeed, many small businesses will have to find some way of offsetting this cost increase if they want to stay profitable. So businesses large and small are likely to compensate either by increasing prices on their goods or services, reducing the number of positions that they have available, or lowering the base pay to create room to pay overtime wages. Needless to say, none of these are attractive options for workers, consumers, or businesses.

Consumers are currently stretched to their limit with price hikes in the Biden economy, and lower base pay or fewer available positions are not attractive options for American workers.

By the way, you don't have to take my word for it on that lower base pay. The head of President Biden's own Council of Economic Advisers has previously noted:

The costs of increase [overtime] coverage would ultimately be borne by workers as employers set base wages taking expected overtime pay into account.

It would be nice if this were the only bad labor rule coming out of the Biden administration, but it is not. Among