

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 servicemembers 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

other bad regulations, there is also the independent contractor rule, which the Biden Labor Department is likely to finalize soon. It is referred to as the “independent contractor rule,” but in many ways, that is a misnomer because this rule is likely to substantially reduce the number of independent contractors.

How? By replacing the previous administration’s independent contractor rule, which would have provided clear guidelines for determining whether a worker classifies as an independent contractor, with a vague, sweeping new rule that could end up with many workers being reclassified as employees.

Independent contractors, who range from computer programmers to freelance editors to Uber and Lyft drivers, generally value independent contracting thanks to things like the flexibility and opportunity that this path provides.

Indeed, a 2017 survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that fewer than 1 in 10 independent contractors would prefer traditional employee status. But thanks to the Biden administration, many of them may be forced into employee status.

The rule will threaten workers in the gig economy, which is made up of platforms like Uber, Lyft, DoorDash, and TaskRabbit, that allow workers to pursue full-time work with a platform or simply augment their income from a regular 9-to-5 position.

The bad ideas don’t end with the independent contractor rule. There is also the joint employer rule the National Labor Relations Board recently finalized—yet another move from the Biden administration to use the power of the Federal Government to advantage unions.

The joint employer rule substantially changes the standard of what constitutes a joint employer, which comes into play in a major way with franchising. To put this in practical terms, this rule means that companies could end up being considered joint employers of employees at franchised locations of their business, which could force both the company and the local franchise owners to negotiate with unions, or make both the company and local franchise owners liable for unfair labor practices that potentially only one party is responsible for.

The result is likely to be that companies cut back on franchising or increase oversight or control of their franchisees, which would disrupt one of the most accessible paths to business ownership for Americans looking to run their own businesses.

In comments after the new joint employer rule was proposed, the International Franchise Association noted:

The proposed rule will needlessly upend the franchise business model and close the door to opportunity for hundreds of thousands of Americans, especially women, people of color, veterans, and first-time business owners.

But, apparently, that doesn’t matter to the Biden administration, as long as union bosses are benefiting.

On the economic front, President Biden is perhaps most famous for helping to kick off the worst inflation crisis in 40 years with the so-called American Rescue Plan. But as these rules and regulations demonstrate, the President is continuing to build on that negative economic legacy with regulations that will diminish economic opportunities for workers and entrepreneurs and likely continue to drive up prices for consumers.

In other words, business as usual in the Biden administration: The President imposes his Big Government policies, and the American people end up paying the price.

I yield the floor.

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. TUBERVILLE. 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.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, Saturday, November 11, is the anniversary of the end of World War I. Today we know it as Veterans Day.

On Veterans Day, we honor everyone who has worn the uniform of the United States of America. Alabama is proud that the Veterans Day tradition started in Birmingham, AL, in the aftermath of World War II. A local veteran named Raymond Weeks recognized the need for a day honoring all of our veterans.

In 1947, Raymond Weeks petitioned the Army Chief of Staff, a general named Dwight D. Eisenhower, for a national Veterans Day. Seven years later, General Eisenhower was President and signed it into law.

Alabama is proud of Raymond Weeks. We are proud to be home to nearly 400,000 veterans. And every Veterans Day, I am proud to come to this floor to tell my colleagues about a few of our veterans in Alabama.

The first I will mention today is Ron Skoneki from Montgomery, AL. He is the son of a Polish immigrant. He enlisted in the Air Force about as soon as he could right after graduating from high school. He served in Thailand during the Vietnam war. He helped repair and maintain aircraft for a strong defense. After 33 years of service, Lieutenant Colonel Skoneki retired. But he wanted to continue to serve, so he joined Alabama’s wing of the Civil Air Patrol in Montgomery. He then served another 16 years helping to support the U.S. Air Force in a civilian capacity. Now at 87 years old, he is just as proud of his time wearing this uniform as he has ever been. And he should be.

I would also like to tell the Senate about CSM Joe Godwin of Mobile, AL.

He wanted to join the military ever since he was 14 years old. By the time he was 17, he couldn’t wait anymore; he got his dad’s permission to join the Army.

He went on to serve in three wars: World War II, the Korean war, and the Vietnam war. He helped guard and transport Nazi prisoners during the Nuremberg trials.

Today, Joe is 94 years old. When people tell him he is a hero, he says that the real heroes are the ones who didn’t make it back. He is a humble man. I think they are all heroes, anyone who served, and we ought to thank them today, tomorrow, and every day.

Finally, I would like to talk a little about SGT David Henry of Warrior, AL. Sergeant Henry has served as a firefighter and a paramedic. These experiences gave him skills that he used as a medic in the Iraq war.

His first deployment came when his son was only 6 months old. Sergeant Henry deployed again to the Middle East when his son was 3. He had to sacrifice to be an ocean away from his family during those crucial times of his son’s growing up. He had to explain to a 3-year-old why Dad was going to be gone and he didn’t know when he was coming back.

A lot of families know what that is like. Our heroes in uniform often serve as a family, and so, on Veterans Day, we thank their families, too, for their service. They are also making a huge sacrifice for our country.

Today, Sergeant Henry is back in sweet home Alabama. We are deeply grateful for his service to Alabama and to America.

Colonel Skoneki, Sergeant Major Godwin, and Sergeant Henry are just three examples of the 400,000 heroes who call Alabama their home.

The writer G.K. Chesterton once said:

The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.

You can see that in the lives of these veterans in Alabama. Our veterans fought because they believe in this United States of America. They believed America was worth fighting for and even, many, dying for. They laid down their lives for the people of this country, for millions of people they don’t even know.

Everything we have in this country depends on a military that is very strong. Our economy, our security, and our way of life depends on our military.

President Ronald Reagan summed it up best when he said:

Veterans know better than anyone else the price of freedom, for they’ve suffered the scars of war. We can offer them no better tribute than to protect what they have won for us.

This Veterans Day and this Veterans Day weekend, I hope we will remember the price of freedom and those who have paid that ultimate price.

To all of our veterans, thank you for your service. Thank you for your sacrifice to ensure America remains a