

targets to dramatically reduce carbon emissions in the United States, the IRA also made historic investments to accelerate the transition to a clean energy future. It was an ambitious piece of legislation. But the truth is, the IRA's impact in just a year—just a year—has surpassed even the most hopeful projections. And none of the parade of horrors that the fossil fuel industry articulated ended up happening: Prices did not go up for regular consumers; the economy didn't crash; and all of the things that, frankly, the clean energy side said was going to happen—and some of it, in my view, was aspirational, like hundreds of thousands of new union clean energy jobs—it actually is happening. So everything we said was going to happen, happened. None of the things that they were fearing would happen did happen, and it is working faster and better and more powerfully than even our experts were able to project. But there is still more to come.

The IRA has proof that big, bold climate action is not just possible, but it benefits everyone, and it offers a roadmap for the rest of the world. As my dear friend and family member—may she rest in peace—Madeleine Albright always said that “We are the indispensable nation.” The United States is the indispensable Nation.

And I look at the presiding officer, and I think you know this: When we go abroad, it is a little shocking the extent to which people are hanging on tenterhooks wondering, What does the United States think? You don't need to be the head of state for people to still be especially tuned in to. What is the United States going to do? What are they going to say? What actions are they going to take?

And, finally, after the first COP, where we organized through President Obama's leadership global climate action and we had some momentum, and then we lost our momentum. Federal action on climate basically ground to a halt. So we were going to these COPs to say: Hey, we are still in. We are still committed to climate action. Yes, it is true that we weren't able to do something this year or last year or the year before, but we are still in. And it was hard to make that case year over year over year as the indispensable Nation while we try to tell everybody to take climate action and we hadn't yet done it at the scale that was necessary.

Well, this is different. Now we have done it. It is working. It is equal to the task in front of us. And every other nation should capitalize on this opportunity and do their own version of the Inflation Reduction Act. This is a real chance for us to put words into action. We have been talking about what to do about climate for years. It is time to finally put the resources and the money behind those pledges as time runs out.

What absolutely cannot happen in this conference is that it cannot be co-opted by fossil fuel interests. Too many oil and gas companies are paying lip

service to addressing climate change, all the while actively expanding their fossil fuel enterprise.

Just this week, we saw alarming reports that the host of the COP was looking to cut deals with countries on oil and gas projects. Now, I know that he denied that. I know that the reporting is somewhat mixed, and I don't begrudge UAE chairing this COP. It is a rotating COP. It goes by region. UAE gets to chair it. That is not the problem.

The problem is the extent to which fossil energy companies, the American Chamber of Commerce, and other international corporations have decided to bear-hug this process to undermine it. And we have to be very, very wary. If there are fossil companies or energy companies that are both on the clean and the fossil side that want to be constructively engaged in how to take climate action, that is great. But we will be damned if we allow these companies to bear-hug the COP process to the point where it becomes meaningless.

And so myself, Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator CARDIN, Senator HEINRICH, Senator MARKEY, and others will be watching this like a hawk.

NOMINATIONS OF MICAH W.J. SMITH AND
SHANLYN A.S. PARK

Madam President, on another note, the Senate is about to vote on the first of two Hawaii nominees to the U.S. district court, Micah Smith and Judge Shanlyn Park. Both of them have had distinguished careers in law and public service and are extraordinarily qualified to serve as United States district court judges.

Micah Smith has been a Federal prosecutor for the U.S. Attorney's Office for over a decade, most recently in the District of Hawaii where he serves as Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division and Criminal Civil Rights Coordinator. Those who know him are quick to highlight his balanced temperament and deep commitment to equal justice.

Likewise, Judge Shanlyn Park spent two decades as a public defender, giving a voice to those most in need, and has brought her integrity and sound judgment to the bench as a State court judge.

Both of these nominees represent the very best of Hawaii and will represent all of us well on the judiciary, and I urge my colleagues to vote to confirm them both to the Federal bench. They both had a bipartisan vote in the Judiciary Committee, and I am looking forward to a bipartisan vote on the floor. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled roll call vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I come to the floor to urge action on the

fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills that fund critical programs, programs that are so important to America and to American families, programs ranging from biomedical research to our national defense.

On November 1, the Senate passed its first package of three appropriations bills: the military construction and veterans affairs legislation, the Agriculture and FDA bill, and the Transportation and Housing bill. And due to the extraordinary work of the members of the Appropriations Committee, they passed by overwhelming bipartisan vote of 82 to 15.

Despite the Appropriations Committee working hard to report all 12 of the funding bills by the end of July, additional full-year appropriations bills have not been brought to the Senate floor. Instead, the Federal Government has been operating under short-term funding patches known as continuing resolutions since the start of the fiscal year on October 1. These temporary funding patches lead to harmful uncertainties, needless inefficiencies, and wasted taxpayer dollars.

One of the bills that I hope will be brought to the floor soon is the Department of Defense appropriations bill. This bill would provide critical resources for our military at a time when we are facing many complex threats from around the globe, including those posed by an imperialistic Russia, a hegemonic China, and an increasingly belligerent Iran and its proxies.

Earlier this summer, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the defense funding bill by a strong bipartisan vote of 27 to 1. This bill contains funding for key national security priorities, including providing our troops and their families with the pay and benefits that they deserve, expanding our naval fleet, and modernizing the nuclear triad, strengthening deterrence against China—our pacing threat—rebuilding our munitions stockpiles, and addressing military readiness and capability gaps.

Each day that the Department of Defense operates under a temporary funding measure rather than its full-year appropriations bill, important national security investments remain on hold. For example, the Department has identified more than 330 new programs or production increases that cannot proceed. This includes more than a dozen high-priority initiatives identified by the Air Force, 6 billion in Army transformation efforts, and multiyear procurement authority for the Virginia class submarines.

In a letter that was sent to the Appropriations Committee just today, Chairman C.Q. Brown, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff writes that “We cannot outpace our pacing challenge while under continuing resolution.”

In other words, continuing resolutions give China the upper hand.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of General Brown's letter be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

Recently, some have called for simply passing a year-long continuing resolution for fiscal year 2024, essentially locking in last year's priorities, continuing to fund programs that should not be funded or should be reduced, and preventing the funding of new programs. I would like to take just a few moments to describe just how harmful that would be to our national defense. A year-long continuing resolution would simply fail to provide the resources needed to protect our Nation. For fiscal year 2024, it would reduce defense spending by 26.6 billion relative to the President's budget request and the Fiscal Responsibility Act and by 34.6 billion compared to the funding levels approved by the Appropriations Committee by that wide bipartisan vote.

So you can see the big difference that having a year-long CR would lock in completely inadequate funding levels, given the threats that we face. Many of the key national security priorities funded in the Defense bill would suffer under a year-long continuing resolution.

Let me give some specific examples. To respond to military recruitment challenges, the Senate committee-approved bill would invest in our men and women in uniform. It includes funding for the 5.2 percent military pay raise. As General Brown points out, a year-long CR would create a \$5.8 billion shortfall in military personnel funding and exacerbate recruiting and retention challenges.

To offset the cost of the pay raise for the military, DOD would be forced to slow recruiting—the last thing we want to see happen—delay servicemembers' moves, and take other detrimental actions.

So this chart compares our committee bill versus a year-long CR. And as you can see, there are tremendous differences in quality-of-life issues for our servicemembers and the actual funding for the pay raise which will go into effect, but the Department would have to take money out of other personnel accounts.

Other quality-of-life initiatives in the bill, such as expanding prekindergarten for more than 4,000 children of servicemembers and improving living conditions for sailors serving aboard ships would not be able to proceed during a year-long CR. Our committee-passed bill also invests in the overdue modernization of all three legs of the nuclear triad. These efforts would be delayed under the yearlong CR because of a nearly \$3.4 billion funding shortfall.

At a time when China's Navy is already at least 80 ships larger than our own, the committee-approved bill includes record investments—more than \$33 billion—in Navy shipbuilding. It includes funding for two destroyers and

advance procurement for a much needed third.

In recent days, the capabilities of these ships and the professionalism and expertise of the sailors who serve aboard them have been on full display as they have downed numerous drones and missiles headed toward them and aimed also at Israel.

Two of these ships, I am proud to say, the USS *Carney* and the USS *Thomas Hudner*, were built at Bath Iron Works in my State.

Since October 7, Iranian-backed proxies have launched at least 73 attacks on U.S. servicemembers and bases. Our fleet is essential to protect those servicemembers and bases as well as Israel.

The Senate committee-approved bill also includes funding for two Virginia-class submarines, two frigates, and a downpayment on an amphibious ship, which is the Marine Corps' top unfunded priority. In addition to contributing to cost increases and delays in the delivery of ships to the Navy, a yearlong CR would result in only one Virginia-class submarine, one frigate, and potentially no funding for the amphibious ship or the third destroyer.

General Brown points out in his letter that 30 percent of the funding in the Navy shipbuilding request could not be spent.

The Defense bill also includes more than \$65 billion for capabilities or requirements related to the Indo-Pacific, including \$857 million to meet the highest priorities of the most senior U.S. military commander in the region and an additional \$981 million for other unfunded requirements listed as priorities by our military services focused on deterring China.

Our bill would authorize multiyear procurements for seven munitions critical to the region, such as long-range precision missiles, Patriot air defense missiles, and anti-ship missiles. Multiyear procurements provide stability and predictability to our defense industrial base and save taxpayer dollars. Neither the additional funding nor the authority to award these contracts would be possible under a yearlong CR.

Our committee-passed bill would ramp up investments in the U.S. defense industrial base. It would increase munitions procurement funding by 31 percent compared to the last fiscal year and includes \$1.8 billion to modernize 23 Army depots, arsenals, and ammo plants across 17 States. Under a yearlong CR, both of those initiatives would be blocked or delayed.

Our committee-passed bill also includes readiness investments that would be put at risk under a yearlong CR. Up to 75 Navy ship repair availabilities would be delayed or canceled, which would degrade the Navy's ability to deploy its fleet for operations, even as the Navy is maintaining a greater presence and projecting power in the Middle East since Hamas's terrorist attack against Israel.

There was just yesterday a news story talking about the Department of

Defense ordering an additional aircraft carrier strike group, air defenses, fighter jets, and hundreds of troops to the Middle East since the surprise terrorist attacks on Israel in an effort to prevent that conflict from spiraling into a regional war. But the problem is that the military, because it has not received its regular appropriations bill, is having to scramble to find the funding for this. Because these Middle East troop movements weren't planned, the Pentagon has had to pull money from existing operations and maintenance accounts. That means less money for training exercises and deployments that the military had already planned for this year.

Our Nation's security and our service men and women deserve better than a yearlong continuing resolution. In the letter sent today, General Brown writes that besides passing a supplemental, "the single greatest thing that Congress can do to enable the Department to execute our strategy is to enact a full-year appropriation."

Let's get our work done and pass the full-year funding bills. I urge my colleagues to work together. Let's meet the challenges our Nation faces.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT
CHIEFS OF STAFF,
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
Chair, Committee on Appropriations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM CHAIR: Thank you for the opportunity to share my view on the impact that a year-long Continuing Resolution (CR) would have on the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Joint Force. In addition to the critical need for Congress to take action to support our allies and partners by passing the President's national security supplemental funding request, the single greatest thing that Congress can do to enable the Department to execute our strategy is to enact a full-year appropriation.

DoD has never operated under a year-long CR; it would be historically costly to the Joint Force. In a CR, the DoD's actual buying power is significantly impacted and degraded. Failing to fully fund the DoD would disrupt important progress made in fiscal year 2023. The National Defense Strategy lays out evolving security challenges, which require the Joint Force to modernize quickly or risk losing our strategic advantage. As I have said previously, we cannot outpace our pacing challenge while under a CR.

A year-long CR would prevent the DoD from executing numerous multi-year procurement contracts that are critical to meeting our requirements in the Indo-Pacific; delay or deny investments in important modernization projects; and create a significant shortfall in personnel funding.

Thousands of programs will be impacted with the most devastating impacts to our national defense being to personnel, nuclear triad modernization, shipbuilding and ship maintenance, munitions production and replenishment, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) priorities.

Personnel: A year-long CR would create a \$5.8 billion shortfall in military personnel funding and exacerbate recruiting and retention challenges. DoD would be forced to delay service member moves and slow recruiting to offset the costs of the 5.2 percent pay raise for the military.

Nuclear triad modernization: A year-long CR would delay nuclear triad modernization, including a delay in the procurement of the B-21 Raider and could prevent the award of the second Columbia class ballistic missile submarine.

Shipbuilding and ship maintenance: Under a year-long CR, 30 percent (\$9.7B) of the funding in the Navy shipbuilding budget request could not be spent and only one of two requested Virginia class submarines could be awarded. Additionally, a year-long CR would cancel or delay ship depot maintenance availabilities, impacting readiness.

Munitions production and replenishment: Under a year-long CR, DoD could not award multi-year procurement contracts to increase production capacity or replenish inventories for munitions critical to INDOPACOM, including long range anti-ship missiles, GMLRs (precision rockets), Patriot air defense missiles, the naval strike missile, and a long-range version of the joint air to surface standoff missile.

Pacific Defense Initiatives: A year-long CR would jeopardize \$1.3 billion in investments critical to DoD's INDO-PACIFIC posture including impacts to forward basing, sensor-to-shooter capabilities, long range radars, hypersonic defense, and investments in classified capabilities.

No new military construction projects: Military construction projects are, by definition, new starts, so a year-long CR could cause a year-long delay in construction projects intended to modernize our installations and improve quality of life.

Passing a full-year funding bill and the President's national security supplemental request would prevent these devastating impacts. It would also provide funding for critical weapons and equipment for our allies and partners while replenishing depleted DoD stocks and providing for robust investments in the defense industrial base.

We owe our servicemembers the tools they need to be successful. We have asked them to modernize and accelerate the future capabilities they need to continue to deter and project credible combat power. We need full appropriations to stay ahead of pacing, acute, and unforeseen challenges.

I appreciate your continued support for our Joint Force and look forward to our future engagements.

Sincerely,

CHARLES Q. BROWN, Jr.,
General, U.S. Air Force.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 379, Micah W.J. Smith, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Alex Padilla, Jack Reed, Patty Murray, Christopher A. Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie Hirono, Peter Welch, Richard Blumenthal, Jeanne Shaheen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Chris Van Hollen, Brian Schatz, John W. Hickenlooper, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination

of Micah W.J. Smith, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 319 Ex.]

YEAS—57

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rounds
Booker	Kelly	Sanders
Brown	Kennedy	Schatz
Butler	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Lujan	Sinema
Carper	Manchin	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	Menendez	Tester
Coons	Merkley	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Mullin	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Graham	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—42

Barrasso	Ernst	Paul
Blackburn	Fischer	Ricketts
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Braun	Hagerty	Romney
Britt	Hawley	Rubio
Budd	Hoeven	Schmitt
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tuberville
Crapo	Marshall	Vance
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young

MOT VOTING—1

Hickenlooper

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Iowa.

IRAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, if the Biden administration decides to allow a terrorist state access to billions of dollars, then, at a bare minimum, the Biden administration must perform exceedingly strict oversight of how that money is used.

It is pretty simple, common sense requires considering the attendant risk that this money gives to Iran. The Biden administration has created a serious problem that needs strict oversight.

More than all that, the Congress must also have the same regard of how the executive branch conducts its business in regard to these billions of dollars.

Today, I have an on-point example to present to my colleagues. In September of this year, the administration's State Department provided Iran access to \$6 billion as part of a prisoner swap agreement. Then, in mid-October, the United States and the Qatari Governments decided to refreeze these funds due to the

October 7 Hamas terrorist attack on Israel.

Hamas, an Iranian-funded terrorist organization, as we all know, attacked Israel and murdered civilians, seized hostages, and destroyed towns. Hamas committed unspeakable acts of terror and evil, not seen since the Nazis, toward Jewish people.

On October 12 of this year, Secretary of State Blinken addressed the international media and, in that address, claimed that the State Department has "strict oversight of the funds and retains the right to freeze them"—meaning freezing the \$6 billion.

Now, there had better be strict oversight—the taxpayers ought to require that—exceedingly strict oversight. I now ask: What did the Secretary of State mean when he said "strict oversight"?

I don't want lip service from the Secretary. I want details. So on October 12 of this year, I wrote a letter asking exactly that: What are the details?

My letter also sought to know what government Agencies are involved in this alleged oversight. What are the roles of the respective Agencies in this oversight? What enforcement mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance? How will the State Department be able to punish Iran if conditions of the \$6 billion is violated?

I also asked what components of the State Department are responsible for conducting this oversight, among other questions.

Almost a month past the 2-week deadline to respond, the State Department did finally send me a letter. That letter was very incomplete and a very insufficient response that failed to answer the essential question, using his words: What does "strict oversight" mean? The letter didn't deal with that, and it seems to be a pretty simple question.

The State Department letter meekly said: "The United States will have full visibility and will exercise strict oversight as to how and when the funds are used."

This isn't an answer; this is lip service. We are talking about billions of dollars accessible by a terrorist regime.

So as you would expect Senator GRASSLEY to do, on November 21, I sent a letter, a followup letter, to Secretary Blinken, informing him of his failed response and then again renewing my request for Congress and the American people to know and understand what the Secretary meant by the words he used of "strict oversight."

(Ms. CORTEZ MASTO assumed the Chair.)

The Secretary made these oversight promises publicly in an international setting, and the Secretary has an obligation to explain himself what "strict oversight" is. If the State Department is engaging in strict oversight, then say what it is and give us, the Congress, the response, the details of that. The taxpayers deserve to know exactly