

safety and provide a check on the railroad industry. I will continue working with them to move it forward.

H.R. 1

Mr. President, now, on the House Republicans' H.R. 1, today, House Republicans are rolling out a partisan, dead-on-arrival, and unserious proposal for addressing America's energy needs that they have laughingly labeled H.R. 1. It is a nonstarter in the Senate.

Republicans' so-called energy proposal is as bad and as partisan as it gets. H.R. 1 will lock America into the most expensive and volatile dirty sources of energy and will set America back a decade or more in our transition toward clean, affordable energy.

Even a brief glance at the House GOP proposal is enough to show it is not a serious package. The package is a wish list for Big Oil, gutting important environmental safeguards on fossil fuel projects, while doing none of the important permitting reforms that would help bring transmission and clean energy projects online faster.

Considering America's serious energy challenges—and not to mention the disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine—it is bewildering to see House Republicans waste time on a Big Oil wish list, instead of taking our energy needs seriously, and ignoring clean energy as they do.

Thankfully, many Democrats and Republicans understand that the only way we will pass a genuine energy package this Congress is through bipartisan cooperation. I am glad that there are good-faith talks underway right now between both parties in both Houses to figure out what sort of permitting deal is possible.

I strongly support these efforts because Americans should not have to go broke just to meet their daily energy needs. We should work on a comprehensive, bipartisan permitting package that can secure enough votes to pass the Congress and reach the President's desk.

Any serious permitting package must also focus on the needs of the future. As America transitions to clean energy, we need to take steps in Congress to ease that transition and ensure clean energy is reliable, accessible, and, most importantly, affordable. That includes efforts to expedite the onshoring and construction of industries critical to our economic and national security, like work we did in CHIPS and Science. Permitting reform is an essential step toward laying the foundation for a clean energy future, and Republicans must work with Democrats on a package that meets this challenge, if we are going to get anything done.

What House Republicans have come up with, in the meantime, is something that falls pathetically short.

RUSSIA

Mr. President, on Russia, on the same day Russian aircraft intercepted and forced down a U.S. surveillance drone in the Black Sea, it was trou-

bling to hear some on the hard right not condemn Putin so much as excuse him—the hard right, excusing Putin, not even daring to condemn him.

One Republican Governor, in particular, said yesterday that defending Ukraine and opposing Putin is not of vital national interest. He called Putin's illegal and unprovoked invasion of another sovereign democracy a "territorial dispute." He basically thinks the United States is wrong to support Ukraine as they fight and die to protect their democracy, and he is certainly not alone in thinking that on the hard right.

I have to wonder what he would have thought if he was around in the 1930s. We know what happened then, when many refused to stand up to aggression—a world war resulted.

Sadly, these remarks are not unique within the GOP. For years, an isolationist fever has been surging within the hard right, propagated night after night on networks like FOX News. The hard right's isolationism is dangerous. It is un-American, undemocratic, and it is woefully blind to the lessons of history.

It is ironic that many on the hard right, which historically opposed communism and authoritarianism, now openly flirt with autocrats like Putin.

These MAGA isolationists are making America less safe. They are making our troops less safe, and they are severely undermining American leadership on the world stage. This desire to excuse and validate Putin's goals is one of the many terrible legacies of Donald Trump, and it is as good a reason as any why he and those who think like him should never ever come near the Oval Office ever again.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Mr. President, finally on AUMF, yesterday, we took a very important procedural step to set up a vote tomorrow on legislation officially—and finally—repealing the Iraq AUMF of 1991 and 2002.

I want to thank Senators KAINE and YOUNG for leading this bipartisan legislation and Chairman MENENDEZ and Ranking Member RISCH for moving it through the Foreign Relations Committee.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Every year we keep these AUMFs on the books is just another chance for future administrations to abuse or misuse them beyond their original intent.

War powers belong squarely in the hands of Congress. That is what the Constitution says. It means it is our responsibility to reassert our constitutional duty and prevent future Presidents from exploiting these AUMFs to bumble us into a new Middle East conflict. It is important.

The Iraq war ended over 10 years ago. The authorization passed in 2002, under entirely different circumstances and in a different world. It is no longer necessary nor relevant in 2023. Repealing the AUMF will in no way hinder our

national defense nor will it impact our relationship with the people of Iraq.

Americans are tired of endless wars in the Middle East. We owe it to them and we owe it to our veterans and their families to repeal the Iraq war AUMF and turn the page on this chapter of our history.

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.

BUDGET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, inflation numbers for February came out yesterday morning, and they confirmed what every American knows: We are still squarely in the middle of Democrats' inflation crisis, with no end in sight.

Overall, inflation was up 6 percent in February compared to a year ago and a staggering 15 percent since President Biden took office—15 percent. Grocery prices were up 10.2 percent in February compared to a year ago and 20 percent since President Biden took office. Electricity prices were up 12.9 percent. Utility gas service was up 14.3 percent. Rent prices were up 8.8 percent. And the list goes on. Overall, energy prices have increased by 37.2 percent since President Biden took office—37.2 percent.

Again, there is no end in sight to this crisis. Digging out of an inflation crisis like this isn't easy, but there are things we can and should be doing to help, like restraining government spending, unleashing American energy production to help drive down energy prices, and growing the economy. These are the things President Biden should be pursuing. But, as the President's budget last week made clear, the President hasn't learned anything from the last 2 years. President Biden and congressional Democrats helped create our current inflation crisis with their \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan spending spree. And what does President Biden have planned in his budget? More reckless government spending—a lot more reckless government spending.

Our last Federal budget before the pandemic was in 2019. That year, total Federal spending was \$4.4 trillion. Over the last 3 years, COVID and then Democrats' profligate spending pushed up the size of the Federal budget to levels in excess of \$6 trillion. So \$4.4 trillion in 2019 before the pandemic, \$6 trillion at the conclusion of the pandemic, and two big reconciliation bills passed along party lines by Democrats. But the need for extra COVID dollars is long over.

Given the economic havoc Democrats' reckless spending has created, you would think Democrats would be looking to return the budget to somewhere approaching pre-COVID levels,

but you would be wrong. President Biden wants to take the inflated budgets of the past 3 years as his new baseline, and then the President is proposing \$6.88 trillion in spending next year—a 54-percent increase over 2019 levels. And then—and then—he is proposing increased spending every year until the Federal budget reaches an eye-popping \$10 trillion in 2033—\$10 trillion in 2033.

Again, let me just remind people that the entire Federal budget in 2019—just a few short years ago—was \$4.4 trillion. President Biden wants to more than double that—\$4.4 trillion to \$10 trillion.

This level of spending and the accompanying level of debt would present a serious danger to our financial stability going forward. The President's budget all but ensures that the size of our national debt would be larger than the size of our economy. In other words, we would owe more money than our entire economy produces. These levels of spending could easily prolong our inflation crisis for years to come.

But the economic dangers of the President's budget don't end there. At the same time the President is essentially ensuring an unsustainable level of debt going forward, he is also planning to load up the economy with \$4.7 trillion in tax hikes, and that is not counting some of the tax hikes that would result from allowing provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to expire. He plans to undo much of the good work done by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which helped grow our economy and improve opportunities for American workers.

Under the Biden tax plan, American businesses would become less competitive in the global economy, investment would be discouraged, and Main Street job creators and family-owned businesses would face a higher tax burden, which would make it more difficult for them to grow, expand, and create jobs.

I said earlier that one of the things we could do to ease our inflation crisis and drive down prices is increase American energy production. Well, President Biden's tax plan would discourage American energy production by hiking taxes on oil and gas companies, and not for the first time during his Presidency. Instead of lowering energy prices, the President's plan would likely drive them up even further with all the new taxes.

The problems with the President's budget go on and on. While the President has no problem driving up spending to a staggering \$10 trillion per year by 2033, somehow very little of that money gets put toward priorities like securing the border and defending our Nation.

For next year, the President is proposing an increase in defense spending that fails to keep pace with current levels of inflation, meaning that his supposed defense spending increase would actually be a defense spending cut.

The Department of Homeland Security would see an outright spending cut

next year. Despite the security and humanitarian crisis wreaking havoc at our southern border, the President is proposing barely any additional funding for U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement next year, but somehow—somehow—the President managed to find a 15-percent increase in funding for the IRS. Think about that. That is from the 2023 enacted budget for the IRS, over and above the \$80 billion funding increase the IRS got just last August. Think about that. Last August, the IRS got \$80 billion and 87,000 new employees. Yet, this year, under this President's budget, they are not only going to get all that funding and a massive influx of new employees but a 15-percent year-over-year increase in spending on the IRS at a time when defense spending is going to be 3.2 percent below the rate of inflation. You can't make it up.

It doesn't stop there. The President's budget would also provide an additional \$29 billion to the IRS to "continue [Inflation Reduction Act]-funded enforcement and compliance initiatives."

I guess maybe what the President is thinking with respect to all of this is that he will need more IRS agents to administer all the new tax hikes that are included in his budget proposal. It is extremely disturbing that the President's tax-and-spend agenda is taking precedence over the national security imperative of securing our border.

President Biden's budget is the wrong prescription for our country. It would shrink our economy, prolong our inflation crisis, and essentially guarantee unsustainable levels of debt.

The American people had a rough couple of years under the Biden administration, and the President's budget would be almost guaranteed to prolong their economic pain well into the future. I hope Democrats, as well as Republicans, will recognize this and quickly consign the President's budget to where it belongs, and that is to the dustbin.

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. KAINÉ. 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 remarks of Mr. KAINÉ pertaining to the submission of S. 801 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. KAINÉ. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 30 minutes prior to the scheduled roll-call vote. I do not think I will have an issue, but out of an abundance of cau-

tion, I ask unanimous consent for that, please.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I do appreciate Senator KAINÉ's remarks. He has highlighted a serious problem for many Americans. We don't completely understand it. I have every confidence in our medical community and our research and development community that we will figure it out, but in the meantime, there are a lot of Americans suffering, some silently, and I appreciate Senator KAINÉ highlighting this issue.

BANK FAILURES

Mr. President, I want to talk for a few minutes about President Biden's bailout of the three banks that went under.

When I ran for this office in 2016, I observed at that time that one of the problems in America was that we had too many undeserving—I emphasize "undeserving" because I don't want to paint too broad of a brush—we had too many undeserving people at the top in America getting bailouts, and we had too many undeserving people at the bottom getting handouts, and the rest of America—most of America in the middle—was getting the bill, and I didn't think that was fair. Apparently, it is still the case today, and I still don't think it is fair.

Now, President Biden chose to bail out three of our banks. It was a bailout. You can pretty it up any way you want to, and you can put perfume on a pig, but it still smells like a pig. This was a bailout. It was a bailout for two reasons. No. 1, except for the people who own the stock in the banks and their unsecured creditors, President Biden and his regulators guaranteed that nobody affiliated with these banks would have any losses. And he said that is not a bailout because money is not being provided by the American people; it is being provided by all the other banks in America.

Well, Mr. President, you know as well as I do there is no money fairy. There isn't anything free. Anything free, somebody had to work for.

By taking the hit—all the banks in America, now, I am referring to—banks are taxpayers. That is point one. But point two, those banks—all the banks in America that are going to have to pay for the President's bailout—they are just going to pass on those costs, including but not limited to their depositors. And, the last time I checked, most depositors and banks in America were taxpayers as well.

The second reason President Biden's bailout is a bailout—and this is in the fine print—is that he has set up, I think it is, a \$25 billion fund that other banks that are in trouble can borrow from. And this fund, he says, does not come from the American people. It came from the banks. Once again, the costs of it will be passed on by the banks to the depositors, to the taxpayers.