

So I am hopeful that soon we will have an agreement for keeping the government open beyond Friday's deadline. We will keep working very diligently today. And I ask my colleagues to stay flexible and be ready to act quickly when the time comes.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, on Ukraine, the meeting I had yesterday with President Biden and congressional leaders over Ukraine was one of the most intense discussions I have ever had—or witnessed—in the Oval Office.

Every single one of us yesterday understood the basic facts: The situation in Ukraine is getting increasingly dire. Russia has made a major advance by taking the city of Avdiivka, which they did simply because Ukraine was running short of ammo and long-range artillery basic equipment. It wasn't the lack of the will of the fighters. It wasn't the lack of plan. It was, simply, that they ran out of ammunition. Imagine being a brave soldier fighting for freedom, fighting for your country, and you no longer have the ammo.

Without more aid from the United States, Ukraine will lose. In fact, one American leader over there told me that he wouldn't be surprised if Russian tanks were on the Polish border if we didn't give any aid. What kind of legacy would that leave for the House Republicans who seem to want to stall that aid? It is not all of them, of course, but too many.

Everyone in the room, with the exception of the Speaker, agreed that Congress must finish the work on the supplemental ASAP because the future of Ukraine and the West is at stake. Speaker JOHNSON said he wants to continue to think it over.

I was candid with the Speaker that I hope he gives it careful thought because the eyes of history are upon him.

I said to the Speaker: If you are the one stopping Ukraine aid, then no matter what the consequences may be in the short term, you will regret your decision 2 years from now and could potentially regret it for the rest of your life, because this will be remembered as a turning point in America for our strength, our credibility on the world stage, for our national security.

If we don't provide this aid, every year the United States could lose out to its enemies: the autocrats of the world, the Putins, the Xis, the heads of North Korea, and Iran. We could lose out economically, militarily, diplomatically, politically because of a shortsighted decision not to provide the much needed aid.

The Speaker has a legacy-defining decision to make on Ukraine. If he lets this bill move forward, he can go down as a fierce defender of America's core values. But if he shrinks from the importance of the moment, it will be the greatest gift Putin, other autocrats, and enemies of our country could possibly ask from the American Congress.

ALABAMA IVF COURT DECISION

Mr. President, on the Alabama IVF decision, after last week's stunningly

radical decision by the Alabama Supreme Court jeopardizing IVF access, the United States has become an embarrassment to the world when it comes to reproductive freedom.

Even sadder, this didn't happen in a vacuum. The hard-right MAGA Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* opened the floodgates for Republicans to force their anti-reproductive freedom—their anti-women agenda—down the throats of all Americans.

The decision by the Alabama Supreme Court is as cruel as it is enraging. There are countless people today who have the joy of children because of IVF. But now, families have to worry that this option could be taken away.

Make no mistake, Republicans own the consequences of the Alabama Supreme Court's decision. Republicans know it. That is why Republicans are scrambling, desperate, to backpedal and try to sound reasonable and supportive of IVF all of a sudden, because they see what they have done.

Republicans in Alabama—even a conservative State like Alabama—are now trying to save face by introducing legislation they claim will protect IVF providers. Even they know how the American people are reacting to this terrible decision—even in Alabama.

Republicans in Florida are now trying to save face by postponing the consideration of anti-abortion legislation. This is the State that said no abortions after 6 weeks, when most women don't even know they are pregnant. And, by the way, the popularity of the Governor has dramatically dropped after he passed that legislation, because Floridians don't like it.

Even Republicans here in Washington are trying to save face by putting off the introduction of national abortion bans because they recognize the mess they have gotten themselves into.

And, of course, they are not fooling anyone. Republicans are like the arsonists who set the house on fire and then said: Why is it burning? Amazing, confounding, perturbing, and sad.

Let me be clear: Republicans spent decades calling for a national abortion ban. Republicans spent decades packing our courts with hard-right MAGA reactionary judges. So Republicans deserve zero benefit of the doubt now that the consequences of their agenda are sinking in and even spreading.

Republicans can do and say all they want to try and run away from the truth, but the American people are not buying it. They are not buying it today. They won't buy it tomorrow. They won't buy it come November.

Democrats remain absolutely committed to doing everything—everything—we can to protect women, families, reproductive freedom.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRADY BILL

Mr. President, back when I introduced the Brady bill, I was a House Member representing Brooklyn and Queens. I knew firsthand the terrible toll of gun violence because the streets of my district—and so many other dis-

tricts—were witness to it. So I jumped at the opportunity to work alongside two brave and stalwart people, Jim and Sarah Brady—two American heroes whose lives, of course, were forever changed by gun violence—to help write and pass the Brady Law.

Looking back at the legacy of the Brady bill after three decades, there is no doubt it has saved countless lives. There is no way to count because you don't know who didn't get the gun who would have, but it is going to be a number with many, many zeros. And it paved the way for future gun safety legislation, like the bipartisan bill we passed 2 years ago.

The bipartisan gun safety legislation we passed in 2022, in fact, was the most significant and comprehensive action on gun safety since the Brady bill. And just like its predecessors, it, too, is already saving lives.

But it shouldn't take an assassination attempt against a President or a mass shooting among these innocent children in elementary school for elected leaders to make change happen. Gun violence is one of America's greatest ills. But it shouldn't have to be that way. And so our work, thinking of Jim and Sarah hovering over us, is far from over.

Democrats remain committed to combating gun violence and making our communities safer. And we will keep pushing. We will keep fighting. We will never let the grief of parents and kids and neighbors and teachers—and all of those who have been scarred by gun violence—to recede to the back of our memories.

Again, a salute to Jim and Sarah Brady and what they have done for America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been a month since the Biden administration announced its de facto ban on new export permits for America's abundant stores of natural gas; 1 month since the President chose to bring growth in a critical sector of our economy, with massive, global consequences, to a screeching halt.

At the risk of understating things, the condemnations of President Biden's decision were swift and full-throated, and it is not hard to understand why. With the stroke of a pen, the President threatened the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Americans, from Texas to Pennsylvania, who produce and transport natural gas.

From the outset, the administration tried to cast the freeze as an effort to look out for American consumers, but the facts tell a different story. By the Energy Department's own analysis, the United States has more than enough natural gas to meet both domestic and export demand.

In fact, if the Biden administration was really concerned about access to one of the Nation's most abundant, reliable, and affordable energy sources, they would release their stranglehold on domestic energy exploration and energy infrastructure. Millions of Americans live near massive natural gas reserves but can't reap the benefits because the President is afraid of upsetting climate activists by investing in safe and efficient energy infrastructure.

Some of the most scathing criticism of the President's decision has come from his own former Democratic colleagues. As former Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana observed last month, the administration's so-called "pause" on LNG export permits was like "throwing a match in a bale of hay."

America's allies and partners already doubt our resolve to deter common adversaries, but now the world wonders why the Biden administration just handed them a gift.

Just last week, a German state-owned energy company confirmed that it would actually keep an LNG supply contract with Putin. But it gets worse. The company had a contract in hand to begin purchasing American LNG instead until the administration announced its freeze last month. In other words, the President of the United States essentially told a NATO ally to keep on enriching the dictator responsible for the first major land war in Europe since 1945.

To make matters worse, it is increasingly clear that President Biden's decision had another adversary's fingerprints all over it. Leftwing activists have been in the driver's seat of the President's energy policy since day one. That much is not news, but his top climate advisers taking private meetings with influencers on a Chinese-owned social media platform or the campaign to ban LNG permits being driven by a private foundation invested heavily in China's funds—that is news.

LNG exports are one of the only areas of U.S.-China trade in which the PRC is reliant on the United States. Beijing would be all too happy for an excuse to buy less clean U.S. energy and more of what President Biden's Energy Secretary called "the dirtiest form of natural gas on Earth"—Russian LNG. Well, it appears that President Biden has given our top strategic adversary precisely such an excuse.

It is hard to understand the President's decision as anything other than a compulsive, shortsighted grab for more fleeting praise from his activist base. Clearly, it makes no strategic or economic sense. As one expert analyst

and Deputy National Security Advisor under the previous administration put it, "Our partners and allies are baffled and [our] adversaries are pleased. That's never a good formula."

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. President, on another matter, 3 days ago, a member of Harvard's anti-Semitism task force stepped down over concerns the university would not actually implement the group's recommendations. Unfortunately, if recent events are any indication, this professor's concerns about the unchecked wave of hate on campus are well-founded.

A few weeks ago, multiple Harvard student groups circulated a blatantly anti-Semitic cartoon of Muhammad Ali and former Egyptian President Nasser being hanged by a hand bearing a Star of David with a dollar sign at its center. True to form, the university's response amounted to a sternly worded letter.

Not to be outdone on this backslide into brutish hate, fliers were found on Columbia's campus depicting an Israeli flag in the shape of a skunk. A Columbia Law School student senate rejected a proposal from fellow students seeking to form a club to combat anti-Semitism.

By now, it is also painfully clear that the moral failures of campus administrators go well beyond weak responses to student behavior. Rutgers recently hosted an event with a professor who described the events of October 7 as "awesome scenes . . . witnessed by millions of jubilant Arabs." City University of New York tried to schedule a panel titled "Globalize the Intifada."

As the glaring moral rot on college campuses invites scrutiny, even further evidence of decline has emerged. Not only are some of the Nation's most elite institutions breeding grounds for the world's oldest form of hate, they are also infested with academic misconduct.

Last month, Harvard's chief diversity officer was found to have copied her husband's work extensively without citation, and perhaps even more shockingly, a top neuroscientist at Harvard Medical School was found to have falsified data in 21 different papers—profoundly unserious behavior at a university that professes world-leading academic caliber.

So it is no surprise to see donors continue to vote with their checkbooks. Another prominent billionaire and longtime donor to Harvard announced last month that he would end his support. He said that until Harvard got back on the right track and focused on educating future leaders, he said, "I'm not interested in supporting the institution."

For their part, American families are right to reconsider whether an Ivy League diploma is worth the cost—or, for that matter, the hate.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration isn't making it any easier for students and parents to make informed

decisions. Beginning with the failure to launch last fall, the Department of Education was slow to post the Free Application for Federal Student Aid online. Now, months behind schedule, prospective students and parents are stuck with incomplete information on the cost of attending college.

But while the Department is slowing down and muddling the financial aid process, they are simultaneously speeding up their student loan socialism scheme rollout. It is almost as though the Biden administration wants more young people to incur excessive debt so that they can turn around and force taxpayers to foot an even larger bill to bail them out.

Not only has the Supreme Court ruled President Biden's student loan socialism unconstitutional, the scheme is also profoundly bad policy, and it won't help American families struggling to afford college. Heaping billions of dollars of student loan debt on taxpayers will only drive up tuition prices at universities that are failing miserably at their most basic responsibilities.

So perhaps—perhaps—it is time the government followed the lead of parents and business leaders and stopped providing taxpayer subsidies to institutions that have clearly lost their grip on reality.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Republican whip.

FARM BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, America needs farmers and ranchers. We need the men and women—and often entire families—who are willing to do the hard work to feed our country and the world. In places like my home State of South Dakota, farming and ranching are just part of our way of life.

But this important work involves a great deal of risk. Few jobs, for example, are as subject to the whims of the weather and fluctuations of the market. So, for almost 100 years, Congress has regularly passed a farm bill to back agriculture producers with programs and policies that mitigate risk and help them to keep going through the tough times.

And with the 2018 farm bill expiring last year, Congress needs to take up this important task once again. And while I am glad Congress passed an extension of critical farm bill programs through the 2024 growing season, a temporary extension is no substitute for a full, updated bill.

I have been able to help craft four farm bills during my time in Congress, and, for me, the process always begins and ends with farmers and ranchers. In