

The President even released a video on Super Bowl Sunday lambasting snack companies for shrinking their packaging and “ripping off” consumers. It is a tactic that fits well with the President’s previous attempts to blame price gouging for higher prices, but these arguments are political spin and not serious explanations.

Jason Furman, an economist who served in the Obama administration, previously “described the focus on price gouging as a distraction from the real causes and solutions” of inflation, to quote one article where he was quoted. And the New York Times referred to the President’s focus on shrinkflation as “a blame-shifting message.”

I expect we will get more blame shifting from President Biden in the State of Union Address next week, as well as more of the same reckless spending proposals that helped create the crisis in the first place. Meanwhile, the American people will continue to suffer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

ISRAEL

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today in pursuit of peace in the Middle East. After nearly 5 months of war in Gaza, the human suffering must end. Just today, Americans woke up to the news that Israeli troops had opened fire on Palestinians desperate for humanitarian aid, killing dozens and adding to the more than 30,000 people in Gaza who have been killed during this conflict.

Hamas’s October 7 terrorist attack on Israel took more than a thousand lives. Israel, like every nation, has the right to defend itself and the right to prevent another terrorist attack like this one from ever occurring again.

Other rights are important as well. The people who live in the Middle East deserve a lasting peace and deserve to live their lives with dignity and self-determination.

For decades, the United States Government has supported a two-state solution to guarantee those rights for both Israelis and Palestinians—two states for two people. For years, I have spoken out against the diminishing prospects for a two-state solution. For years, Palestinians have been poorly served by their leaders, both in the West Bank and in Gaza. For years, even before October 7, Hamas’s governance of Gaza was a major impediment to peace. And also for years, I have believed that Israel’s long-term strategic interests were endangered by Prime Minister Netanyahu’s leadership.

Since October 7, it has only gotten worse. Prime Minister Netanyahu and his rightwing war cabinet have created a massive humanitarian disaster, pushing the region even further away from a two-state solution. Indiscriminate bombings in Gaza have killed tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, wiping out entire families and leaving

thousands of children orphaned. Nearly 2 million people have been displaced, and 45 percent of the residential buildings in Gaza have been destroyed. The Israeli Government’s refusal to allow adequate humanitarian aid into Gaza has left hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of starvation.

And still, more than 100 hostages are held by Hamas. The Israeli Government’s top priority should have been to bring those hostages home, but, instead, Prime Minister Netanyahu focused on revenge. He publicly invoked the plight of hostages to justify indiscriminate bombing that thwarts the negotiations that would bring them home. This is a betrayal of the families whose loved ones are still held hostage by Hamas.

Netanyahu’s opposition to a two-state solution is fierce and longstanding. For decades, he has undercut Palestinian independence. He has deliberately propped up Hamas to try to keep the Palestinian people divided. He approved Qatar’s payments to Hamas—payments that may have been used for Hamas’s military operations. He expanded settlements in the West Bank, turning the region into a patchwork of disconnected parts that undermine Palestinian hopes for a united homeland.

The result has been a vicious cycle of violence. That is why, for years, I have advocated that U.S. military aid should help Israel and Palestine move toward peace, not subsidize policies that move peace further out of reach.

Today, Netanyahu is doubling down on his opposition to peace. The Prime Minister has openly and directly rejected U.S. policy. He has promised he will not compromise and he will hold fast to his rejection of a Palestinian State.

Under his leadership, the Knesset has backed him to the hilt. The Prime Minister has also tried to pressure Egypt and other countries in the region to accept Gazan war refugees, raising the specter that his government is working toward permanently expelling Palestinians from their homes. He has insisted that Israel and Israel alone must control the entire area of the Jordan River, leaving no room for a Palestinian State.

And the fallout from his bombing campaigns is not limited to Gaza. He has given cover for Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other terrorist groups to expand the conflict.

The bottom line is clear: Netanyahu’s leadership in this war has been a moral and strategic failure that is in direct opposition to American policy and American values.

Netanyahu cannot bomb his way to the return of the hostages. Netanyahu cannot bomb his way to security in the region. Netanyahu cannot bomb his way to peace.

The only path to protect Israel’s long-term security and to ensure that Palestinians have equal rights, equal freedom, and the self-determination they deserve is a two-state solution—two states for two peoples.

This has been the stated policy of the U.S. Government dating back decades, and if this far-right Israeli Government does not share that goal, then it is our responsibility to make clear that the Netanyahu government does not get a blank check for U.S. aid.

That is why I have been fighting to condition aid to Israel and protect civilians in Gaza. Over the last few months, I have called for Israel to prevent harm to civilians and for accountability when U.S. weapons are used to target refugee camps and safe zones. I have challenged the administration’s decision to bypass Congress in approving arms transfers to Israel. I have worked with my colleagues, led by Senator VAN HOLLEN, on an amendment to condition aid to Israel.

Earlier this month, President Biden delivered a critical step, issuing a national security memorandum that makes clear that any country that receives aid from the United States must follow international law, including Israel. This is a good policy, but enforcement is crucial. Oversight of its implementation is necessary to ensure that it is a meaningful step and not just lip service.

Netanyahu has made clear he plans to launch a military offensive in Rafah, where more than a million Palestinians with nowhere safe to go are currently taking refuge. The administration has warned that expanding operations to Rafah would be a “disaster” that the U.S. Government does not support.

Meanwhile, humanitarian aid remains strangled and hunger and disease are sweeping Gaza.

Netanyahu is on dangerous ground. Every day that he continues, more innocent civilians in Gaza suffer and are killed, and thousands more Americans say “enough” and call on our government to end U.S. aid for such actions.

President Biden has indicated that we are on the verge of a cease-fire that would free the hostages and would allow desperately needed humanitarian aid in. I hope that is true, and it is a meaningful step toward an enduring peace.

But until then, the United States has a responsibility to ensure that our weapons aren’t used to target innocent children and families in Gaza. We also have a responsibility to ensure that our support is used to advance long-term peace and stability in the region.

We recognize that it takes two parties to negotiate a meaningful peace, and we should also urge the allies of the Palestinians to do the same. All nations should push in the same direction: Condition aid, return the hostages, resume the cease-fire, and advance peace through a two-state solution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, before I begin my remarks, in the Hawaii Legislature, there was a common custom to ask the presiding officer that the previous speaker’s remarks were adopted

as if they were my own. And although I didn't listen to the entirety—I am not prepared to do that because I only got the back end—I just wanted to commend the senior Senator from Massachusetts for her moral clarity about the conduct of the war in Israel and the fact that it is a strategic and moral failure, and that the Prime Minister of Israel must be held to account for the fact that so many people are suffering so unnecessarily.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Mr. President, overturning *Roe v. Wade*, as outrageous and devastating as it was, was never going to be the end for Republicans. They knew that, and we knew that because they weren't exactly keeping it a secret.

Except there was a set of sort of center-right and even center-left Republicans and pundits who swore privately that it wouldn't open the floodgates to an even greater assault on women's reproductive freedoms. They scoffed at even the possibility of the very kinds of outcomes that we are seeing playing out across the country today—like last week, when the Alabama Supreme Court effectively banned IVF and left people who are trying to start a family with nowhere to turn.

It turns out people were right to be worried, and one of the worst infirmities in this town is that somehow—somehow—you are considered savvy, thoughtful, a centrist, an institutionalist if you never, ever freak out.

"Everything is going to be fine."

Everything is always going to be fine. He is not going to try to overturn the results of this election. They are not going to go through with overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Every savvy person at every cocktail hour that I don't attend is always telling us to chill out.

But now it is happening. They went through with it. They repealed *Roe*, and all of the worst-case scenarios from all of the organizations that pushed for reproductive freedom were deemed right.

I still remember the great Senator from the State of Colorado who made as an emphasis in his reelection campaign women's reproductive freedom. Do you know what everybody called him on the Republican side? Not Mark Udall—Mark Uterus. They thought that was hilarious. Look at this weird focus on women's reproductive freedoms. And he sat there and said: But look, if the Supreme Court changes hands, then *Roe* is in peril.

Everyone was told to chill out. They made fun of this U.S. Senator for predicting the future.

People were right to be worried. Extreme Republicans are going after women and reproductive freedoms through every way that they can—in Congress, in statehouses, in the Supreme Court, and in State courts.

Gutting *Roe* was never going to be enough; it was a gateway to all-out war. Right now, millions of women in America are paying the price. They are terrified of what they can and cannot

do and what may or may not land them in prison. It is not a crime to start a family, but now it is. It is not a crime to dispose of a nonviable embryo in a lab, but Republicans have made sure that it is a crime.

Do you know how hard it is to do IVF? Everybody who is at least my age knows somebody who had a struggle getting pregnant, and that thing is emotionally and physically and financially exhausting. I have never thought of IVF through a partisan lens. I honestly hadn't. It didn't occur to me that they were going to go after people actually trying to get pregnant.

This is not about babies and life and families. This is about punishing women. This is about taking away their autonomy. This is their objective.

You know, 5 years ago, you might have come to me, and if I had made this kind of speech, you would have been like: Whoa, that is a little much, buddy. They are not going to do that.

They did that. They are still doing that. Republicans in Congress were quick to dismiss it. They even got a memo from their campaign committee to distance themselves from the very policies that they enabled for literally decades. They will try to on the one hand say they are for IVF but on the floor block legislation to enable IVF, and support fetal personhood legislation and block bills to protect IVF federally. They did it yesterday. So no one is fooled.

I know—and the Senator from Connecticut and I have been talking about this—sometimes it is very difficult to see through the fog on policy. On this one, it is not unclear who did what and what they are in the middle of doing. There is nothing pro-life about ripping away the only options available for someone trying to have a kid. There is nothing pro-life about jeopardizing a woman's life by forcing her to carry a nonviable pregnancy to term. That is not a principled belief; that is insanity. It is actively harming an innocent person.

In the wake of last week's decision, fertility clinics in Alabama are abruptly pulling the plug on IVF treatments because they are afraid of being prosecuted. That is leaving people wondering if they will be able to have a kid or not.

Not only can they not go through the process in Alabama, they can't even move their embryos because they are afraid of getting in legal trouble. They can't even move their embryos, right? Like, this was supposed to be—in the most optimistic scenario as well, laboratories of democracy, States can do whatever they want. You can't even take your own embryos and move them to another place where IVF is legal. Say you are a couple in Birmingham close to completing the IVF process. Suddenly, you can't continue it in your home State, and you don't have the ability to finish it somewhere else either. Overnight, these patients are left without options, with no notice and no recourse.

The human implications of the Alabama Supreme Court decision are as obvious as they are devastating, but it is also important to be crystal clear about how we got here politically, because this decision is not an anomaly. It is not a fringe view held by a few whacky judges in a single State. It is the direct result of a decades-long, organized, national effort by Republican hardliners to dismantle reproductive freedoms that were, until recently, the law of the land. They have shown zero restraint in going after people's rights, and there is no reason to believe that they are going to stop anytime soon. They will not. They did this, and they want more, and they have a plan. This is on them. This record is theirs to own.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, before I close, I want to briefly address the ongoing appropriations process. I am glad that we are avoiding a needless and harmful shutdown as we work to finalize the spending bills, including one from the subcommittee I chair overseeing transportation, housing, and urban development.

Our subcommittee, along with our House counterparts, worked on a bipartisan basis to deliver a bill that both adheres to top-line funding levels and provides resources for vital programs that millions of Americans rely on every day. That includes supporting affordable housing, helping to alleviate homelessness, improving roads and highways in communities big and small so that people can get around, and hiring air traffic controllers and rail safety inspectors to make sure our flights and our trains are safe and on time.

It is not a perfect bill. Everyone did not get what they wanted. But I can tell you that Democrats and Republicans worked in good faith and made the most of the funds we had available. I am glad we are near the finish line on our bill and really hope we can find bipartisan agreement on all of the bills so that we can finally fully fund the government. This funding cannot wait any longer.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

MR. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senators Stabenow and Wyden be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each prior to the scheduled vote.

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

BORDER SECURITY

MR. MURPHY. So here is a snapshot of what happened. Republicans said that fixing the border was their top priority. They appointed a hardline conservative, my friend Senator JAMES LANKFORD, to come up with a bipartisan bill to fix the border. They said that if Lankford can get the deal, they would support it.

We got that deal. If it had passed, it would have been the toughest border