

Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act, which I was happy to champion in a Democratic Senate as I was majority leader.

But statics and data tell only part of the story. Today, I am honored to welcome five inspiring New Yorkers and one brave Ukrainian soldier as my guests for the State of the Union. These six individuals show better than any statistic how America is made stronger by the policies of the Biden administration and a Democratic Senate.

You can look at the example of Andrii Chevozorov, a 25-year-old Ukrainian soldier who has risked his life and limb on the battlefield. After losing his leg in a mine explosion, he came to New York in January for prosthetics and rehabilitation treatment at Staten Island University Hospital.

It is an honor to welcome Andrii, and the Senate thanks him for his sacrifice. He reminds us all about the stakes of the war in Ukraine, of the importance of passing the supplemental. And I will continue working as hard as I can to make sure we get it done. It is a historic moment for America. We cannot turn our back on Ukraine and our other allies and the menaces that we face in the world.

You can also get a look at what is at stake through the story of Kate Farley of Hudson Valley, who is expecting her second child through in vitro fertilization. Without IVF, Kate could have never gotten pregnant. And it is both heartbreaking and enraging that extreme Republicans have made people like Kate worry this vital service will be curtailed. I am honored to welcome her today.

I am also honored to invite my friend Kevin McCaffrey of Suffolk County, the proud president of Teamsters Local 707, as well as Deborah Hartman, a retired UFCW member who used to work at Tops supermarket.

Kevin, of course, is the Republican leader of the Suffolk County legislature, but it didn't stop him and I to work to deal with the pensions that members of his local, Local 707, might have lost. Like many Americans, both Kevin and Deborah and their fellow workers faced the unthinkable prospect of their pensions drying up just a few years ago. Some workers had pensions cut by as much as two-thirds. People who put in money every 2 weeks, hoping, knowing, relying on the fact that their retirement would be secure—it wouldn't make them rich, but would make them secure—saw the rug pulled out from under them. And with Kevin from one end of my State and Deborah from the other, we were able to save those pensions. Republicans refused to offer relief. Democrats had to do it on its own.

Thanks to the reforms in the American Rescue Plan, millions of our union brothers and sisters across New York and America have seen that critical pension relief. These workers who have saved their whole lives to retire with

dignity have seen their dignity restored, something all Americans can be very proud of.

I am also proud of New Yorkers like Van Robinson, who I have known for decades and have partnered with to combat gun violence, increase affordable housing, and reduce lead poisoning for underserved communities. Van has been one of the leading voices reconnecting communities divided by highways and for tearing down I-81 in Syracuse; and thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure law that I led in Congress, we are getting it done.

Finally, I am delighted to welcome Kim Spica, an equipment Engineer Technician at GlobalFoundries. Kim's story shows what the future can look like for so many New Yorkers. She got her job after finishing a registered apprenticeship program at Hudson Valley Community College.

Recently, GlobalFoundries received the largest preliminary award from the CHIPS and Science Act to date: over \$1.5 billion, which will help them build a second chip fab for New York's capital region and create thousands of good-paying jobs like Kim's.

I was proud to lead the way on CHIPS and Science because I knew what it would mean for New Yorkers like Kim in the form of new jobs, greater opportunity, and a more decent life.

So if you want to see how far we have come as a country, these New Yorkers are a good illustration. These guests are the reason our Democratic majority fought so hard to pass the American Rescue Plan, pass infrastructure, pass CHIPS and Science, and pass the Inflation Reduction Act. I knew it would make an enormous difference for New Yorkers like the people who are joining me tonight.

Democrats' agenda, of course, is paying off in other ways. Americans are paying less for insulin. Prescription drugs for seniors on Medicare have been capped. Student loan borrowers have seen hundreds of millions of debt forgiveness.

So, tonight, the difference between the parties will be as clear as night and day. Democrats are focused on lowering costs, creating jobs, and putting money in people's pockets, but the hard right, which too often runs the Republican Party in the House and now increasingly in the Senate, is consumed by chaos, bullying, and attacking things like women's freedom of choice.

The Republican front runner for President has made it abundantly clear that he is not running to make people's lives better but, rather, on airing his personal political grievances. Donald Trump's cynical power grab even destroyed the best change at border security that Congress has seen in decades—a bill that even a Wall Street Journal poll from this morning shows that Americans clearly supported. Americans wanted bipartisan border security. Congress had bipartisan security ready to go, and Donald Trump

and his MAGA Republican followers are at fault for killing it in its tracks. That is shameful cynicism that once again hurts Americans.

Ideologues cannot run the show here. We have to fight these things.

So I thank President Biden for his leadership. The road hasn't been easy. The work is not yet done. But we have come far. We have overcome so much. And there is still so much on the line for American families, American values, and America's future. It is imperative we stay the course and finish the job we began 3 years ago.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on the appropriations bill, well, last night, the House passed the six appropriations bills with an overwhelming bipartisan vote—339 to 85.

Last night, the Senate took the first step to advance the appropriations bill via voice vote, which I hope portends more bipartisan cooperation moving forward. The watchwords for the Senate will be "cooperation" and "speed" as we work to pass these appropriations bills before tomorrow night's deadline.

It is noteworthy that a majority of both parties in the House—a majority of even the Republicans—supported this legislation.

Of course, the process is never easy in divided government, but with hard work, cooperation, and persistence, good things can happen if we put working together before other extraneous and often destructive issues.

The Senate will continue our work on these appropriations bills today so we can finish the package before tomorrow night's deadline. We are close to the finish line, but it will take bipartisan cooperation to get us there.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, finally, on the FAA, last night, the Senate, I am glad to say, unanimously approved a temporary extension of FAA funding until May 10. This extension will give Chair CANTWELL and the Commerce Committee the time they need to resolve the differences between FAA legislation in the House and the Senate. I am committed to moving an FAA reauthorization bill passed and signed into law as soon as we can so we can keep the United States one of the safest nations in the world for air travel.

Getting FAA reauthorization done will mean more safety inspectors at manufacturing plants, more traffic controllers, better customer service, and mandatory refunds for flight disruptions.

I am glad the Senate also preserves the 1,500-hour rule, which I have insisted—aided by the families in Buffalo—I have insisted it cannot and must not and will not be weakened.

Thank you to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for continuing work on the FAA, and I look forward to bringing FAA reauthorization to the floor and sending it to the President's desk.

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.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, well, tonight, President Biden will deliver the last State of the Union Address of his term. For the past 3 years, these speeches have served as mile markers but not of any meaningful progress toward a more perfect Union. Instead, each year, the American people tuned in to see just how far the President's own version of his record is from the reality of their lives.

For 3 years, the President, who campaigned as a moderate, has governed like an activist from the furthest fringe of the Democratic Party.

The Biden administration's agenda has meant pain at home and weakness abroad. It didn't have to be this way. President Biden took office amid strong tailwinds—from an economic recovery that was already restoring the record-setting prosperity we saw before the pandemic to a historic modernization of our military that was well underway. He inherited everything he needed to point our Nation toward further security and prosperity, but he chose weakness and invited danger instead.

Today, nearly two-thirds of voters say our economy is worse than it was 4 years ago. Not even one in four thinks our country is on the right track. Barely a quarter of the country expects our economy to improve in the coming year. But that hasn't stopped President Biden from trying to convince working Americans to take his word for it and ignore their own shrinking paychecks. He has literally taken a victory tour to tout his disastrous economic record. His administration has declared Bidenomics "the word of the year."

Meanwhile, American consumers are shelling out a bigger portion of their income on groceries than at any point in the last 30 years. A food pantry in Northern Kentucky is reporting "more and more demand for . . . enough food to make people's income stretch." Across the board, consumer prices are nearly 18 percent higher today than they were when President Biden took office. This is what "Bidenomics in action" really means?

At kitchen tables tonight, working families will probably wonder whether the President has any regrets, whether he wishes he hadn't ignored his party's top economists and rammed through trillions of dollars in leftwing spending, which brought on the worst inflation in 40 years, or whether he wishes

he hadn't declared total war on our most affordable sources of domestic energy, along with the jobs these American industries support. On President Biden's watch, overall energy prices are up nearly a third.

Time after time, when given the choice to lead or to outsource his work to leftwing activists, President Biden has chosen the latter. He has handed his base a blank check for a wish list of social engineering and left the American people to foot the bill.

Meanwhile, he has poured gasoline on the fire of leftwing, pro-criminal, anti-police rhetoric across the country. The Biden administration has packed its Justice Department full of leftwing activists working overtime to tear serious crimes right out of the Criminal Code.

A couple years back, a district attorney in Massachusetts declared she wouldn't prosecute crimes like breaking and entering or drug possession with intent to distribute. President Biden rewarded this behavior by making Rachael Rollins one of his first U.S. attorneys. Across the country, on this President's watch, leftwing prosecutors have turned repeated offenders into the streets—repeatedly. In President Biden's America, violent criminals have learned that they won't face serious consequences, and, of course, they are acting accordingly.

At the same time, leftwing activists bent on attacking the Federal judiciary have found an ally in the Biden White House. The President has tried to give life tenure to a judicial nominee who identified himself as a "wild-eyed leftist," another with a history of supporting terrorist sympathizers, and even one who had worked to undermine a teenage girl's claim of sexual assault. President Biden hasn't just tried putting the wrong people in our Nation's institutions, he spent 3 years undermining the institutions themselves. His Attorney General slow-walked urgent security measures to protect the Supreme Court Justices and their families from angry mobs, and his administration even stood up a commission to explore Court packing—a terrible idea that hasn't gotten any less terrible since it was killed back in the 1930s.

So the rule of law is less stable on President Biden's watch. The streets of our major cities are less safe. And, of course, our borders are less secure.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, 3 years ago, illegal immigrants arrived at our southern border in shirts wearing his campaign logo insisting, as one put it, that "Biden promised us that everything is going to change"—that everything is going to change.

Well, they were absolutely right. Since President Biden took office, nearly 10 million people crossed our southern border illegally. His administration has abandoned CBP and ICE to contend with the highest daily, monthly, and yearly totals of illegal arrivals on record.

As soon as he took office, the President tore up commonsense authorities he could have used to maintain the secure border. Instead, he spent years pretending that functionally open borders didn't amount to a crisis.

The only campaign promise President Biden appears to have kept is the one he made on the campaign trail to people hoping to cross our borders illegally: "We immediately surge to the border, all those people who are seeking asylum."

By contrast, it is difficult to think of a pledge the President abandoned more completely than his campaign promise to restore respect for America on the world stage. Today, the credibility of our commitments is in serious doubt. The West is confronting the most dangerous moment since the fall of the Berlin wall, and our Commander in Chief's first instincts appear to be hesitation and self-deterrence. President Biden's failures pose embarrassing questions for America and our allies and partners.

Are we safer after his disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan? Do allies still take our word? Did the President's self-proclaimed fear of escalation force Putin to back down from his own brutal escalation in Ukraine, or did it give the Ukrainians the critical weapons they needed when they needed it most? Does America's closest ally in the Middle East feel like they can count on America's total support in its existential fight against genocidal terrorists? Did the world's most active state-sponsor of terror think twice before targeting Americans like the Georgia guardsmen killed, the Kentucky soldiers injured in the Tower 22 attack in Jordan? Does Iran hesitate to sic its proxies on Israel or threaten commercial shipping? Did the Biden administration's climate diplomacy with Beijing close any meaningful gaps in strategic competition with our top adversary? Did it reassure our allies and partners in the region that we understood the importance of hard power?

The answer to all these questions is a resounding "no."

President Biden's 3 years in office have left American leadership a weaker brand and our resolve a less fearsome asset, and we will be dealing with the consequences of his failures for years to come.

Around the Biden administration's 100-day mark, I warned the President that it wasn't too late to change course and start governing as the moderate he promised he would be. Needless to say, he certainly didn't take my advice.

And he didn't take the American people's sterner counsel either when they demanded change at the ballot box the following year. Well, this fall, the voters have a chance to issue a further course correction, one with a bit more finality.

Tonight, we will hear from a President who has failed in the most basic responsibility of government. He will come to the Capitol with record historic inflation, surging crime, open