

It is long overdue for Congress to finally, finally amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, RECA, to include the Trinity downwinders, to include all Americans who were directly impacted from our nuclear tests and program, and to include the uranium workers who were exposed to radiation in service to our national defense. That is what we are voting on this week in the U.S. Senate. Today, we have a chance to finally deliver justice for the Trinity downwinders and for all Americans who were exposed to radioactive nuclear materials.

I want to thank especially the Presiding Officer as it has been one of the honors of my career to fight alongside him for this expansion of RECA for our entire congressional careers.

I want to urge all of our colleagues to stand with us on the right side of history today and to support this legislation.

AGRICULTURAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, I rise now as the chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. For the better part of 9 months, I have been negotiating a bipartisan agricultural appropriations bill. My singular goal was delivering a bill that invests in rural communities, supports our farmers, and delivers for America's children. That is what our agricultural appropriations bill does. I am proud to have gotten us here, alongside Ranking Member JOHN HOEVEN and his great staff and with the immeasurable leadership of Chairwoman PATTY MURRAY.

Our bill will help farmers produce healthy food. It will support economic development in rural communities and help working families put food on the table.

As we went through the negotiations, I had to stand particularly firm to protect the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children—what most of us know as WIC. I can't think of a more important program and a more important constituency in our country than one that delivers food to babies and toddlers.

My constituents in New Mexico agree. Dr. Laurence Shandler is a pediatrician back home. As he put it in a letter to my office, the impact of delivering this support goes way beyond the food itself. Dr. Shandler shared how "children who receive WIC have improved birth outcomes, increased immunization rates, better access to healthcare, reduced healthcare costs, and better referrals to social services for families." He said:

Now is not the time to scale back on WIC.

I couldn't agree more.

I am proud to say that despite House Republicans' best efforts—and, believe me, they tried—we have fully funded WIC.

This is a major win for families across the country. We are ensuring that none of the 7 million women and

children who depend on this nutrition will be put on a waiting list or denied assistance outright.

I am also proud that we have fully funded SNAP—a program that helps 42 million Americans put food on the table each month. In doing that, we also blocked House Republicans' attempt to impose new redtape and ineffective restrictions on eligibility for Americans who count on SNAP, because what working families need right now is a government that will fight for them, not one that will make their lives more difficult.

Our bill fully funds Child Nutrition Programs—like the School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the summer EBT program—to ensure that children don't go hungry.

Our kids should be able to focus on learning in the classroom, on growing, and on making new friends, not worrying about where their next meal will come from.

We also are maintaining our strong support for the agricultural producers who grow our food. I know how much that means to the Presiding Officer. That includes maintaining support for vital agricultural research and our Nation's next generation of researchers through funding for both the Agricultural Research Service and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

These funds support scientific discovery at land-grant universities and research centers all across our country, including New Mexico State University in my home State.

Our bill also delivers investments to help our Nation's farmers and producers make their operations more resilient to an ever-changing climate. Farmers in New Mexico are grappling with dryer conditions, dwindling water supplies. And they are not alone. I know that farmers and producers are eager to improve the long-term health of their working landscapes. They just need effective tools to improve soil health, conserve water, conserve energy, and manage their natural hazard risks.

Speaking of managing risks and improving safety, our bill also supports the Food and Drug Administration's critical mission to protect the safety and the security of our Nation's supply chains for food and for medicine.

Our bill will also deliver important economic development investments to revitalize rural communities all across America. That includes support for the Rental Assistance Program at USDA that ensures Americans living in rural areas have access to safe and affordable housing.

We also delivered vital investments in public safety for our rural communities. I was very proud to secure millions of dollars of Federal funding that will help communities all across New Mexico. From Taos County to Anthony and Portales to San Juan County, we were able to fund fire engines and ambulances and build new emergency response facilities.

Finally, at a time of mounting international conflict and global food insecurity, we are reaffirming America's moral leadership in fighting hunger worldwide. Maintaining our support for international food aid programs not only demonstrates our Nation's commitment in the fight against hunger, but it helps us build new markets for our agricultural exports.

As we drafted this bill and steered it through negotiations with the House, we had to make some very difficult decisions on how to best invest taxpayer dollars. We had to stay within the very thin margins for topline funding levels that were agreed to last year by President Biden and House Republican leadership. But I am very proud of where we landed in this comprehensive, bipartisan legislation.

I especially want to thank the staff on the subcommittee for all the work they did to land this bill. I would just urge all of our colleagues to support these investments that will make a real difference for working families, for farmers who produce our food, and for rural economies.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MANCHIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

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. 506, Adrienne Jennings Noti, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Charles E. Schumer, Gary C. Peters, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jeanne Shaheen, Tammy Duckworth, Tina Smith, Christopher A. Coons, Chris Van Hollen, Mark R. Warner, Amy Klobuchar, Elizabeth Warren, Alex Padilla, Brian Schatz, Mark Kelly.

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 Adrienne Jennings Noti, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 74 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—2

Britt Sanders

(Mr. KING assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 46, and the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and proceed to the consideration of S. 3853, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3853) to extend the period for filing claims under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and to provide for compensation under such Act for claims relating to Manhattan Project waste, and to improve compensation for workers involved in uranium mining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today in the hours before President Biden's State of the Union address to discuss the reality of the past 3 years and the current circumstances of our

Nation. Together, my colleagues and I are here to speak on behalf of the American people who have been forgotten and left behind by President Biden, those who know the true consequences of his administration's policies and who are really feeling the pain by the continued failures that have defined President Biden's time in the White House.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have been guided by my eternal optimism. I feel like I can see beyond the gloom and push toward a brighter future. However, it is clear that this is not the perspective that is felt in communities across our country, as Americans realize that the state of our Nation is not as strong as it should and could be. They continue to battle economic challenges that are making the American dream unaffordable.

There is a continued assault on American energy, which started by canceling the Keystone XL pipeline and now, just several weeks ago, the disastrous halting of the construction of the LNG export terminals.

They see the unmitigated flow of illegal crossings at our southern border, and they face the threat of rising crime, and they see the weakened state of Americans standing on the global stage.

President Biden remains the common denominator across each of these issues, and he continues to prove—and this is harsh—that he is just not up to the task of leading our country in a time when it is needed most.

Perhaps the most consistent issue that has defined President Biden's tenure in the White House—and one that I hear constantly about back home—is the state of our economy and the persistence of high interest rates and inflation. Despite President Biden's claims, inflation has not cooled and price hikes have worn down consumers over the past 3 years, making necessities like food and housing nearly unaffordable. The price of food at the grocery store—anybody who is listening to this that has been to the grocery store knows this better than anybody. The price of food at grocery stores and in our restaurants increased 2.6 percent just in the last year, but this is on top of the staggering 10 percent that food prices rose over the last year. So what used to be \$100 worth of groceries in 2019 now costs \$125. And just last week, it was revealed that food costs, compared to income, have hit a 33-year high with American consumers spending over 11 percent of their disposal income on food. That means that the last time Americans paid this much for food “Terminator 2” was in the movies. Michael Jordan had just won his second MVP award, and HP had introduced the first color scanner. That is how long ago this was.

Adding to this, U.S. home prices are at an alltime high. Housing costs have now become unaffordable for a record number of U.S. renters, and that is according to a recent Harvard study.

Make no mistake, this is the economy that President Biden campaigned on, and it is the economy that his policies of reckless spending and high taxes were destined to create.

The President has gone even as far as establishing a strike force—I don't know if we are going to hear about it tonight—a strike force on unfair and illegal pricing, which is nothing more than a cover so he can blame others for the effects of his policies.

Another issue that will forever define President Biden's tenure is the historic crisis we have seen at the southern border—something we have all addressed on the floor repeatedly—and the devastating consequences it has created. The most recent data shows over 176,000 crossings along the southern border this past January. This marks the worst January on record and the sixth consecutive month where a record was being set. That brings us to a total of 9 million—9 million—illegal border crossings under President Biden's watch. Additionally, there were another 7,000-plus migrant encounters at the southern border on Monday, marking the fourth day in a row of over 7,000 encounters.

While the White House remains committed to their message of no Executive action can alleviate this crisis, they fail to mention the Executive actions that they took literally hours after President Biden was sworn in. These Executive Orders on day one of Biden's administration dismantled the effective immigration policies of President Trump.

The truth is, President Biden can take basic steps and end this chaos, but in some situations—and far too many of them—it may already be too late. The barbaric murder of Laken Riley is a national tragedy and was completely avoidable.

The catch-and-release policies of President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas have allowed the catastrophe at our southern border to impact every community in our country and every State.

Crime is all too familiar to this administration, especially right here in the President's backyard. While the administration is touting a drop in crime across other cities, violent crime right here in Washington, DC, is up a staggering 39 percent. Multiple members of Congress have been recent victims of crime in this city, as have multiple members of my own staff.

We must remember that President Biden owns this issue more than he would like to admit. Last May, he vetoed bipartisan legislation to overturn police reforms right here in Washington, DC.

Speaking of ownership, another issue that President Biden owns is the recent weakness that America has displayed on the international stage. We are living in a time where our Nation faces the most dangerous global threats that we have seen in decades. Yet President Biden has proven to be a President of