

harbor the notion that leaving Russian aggression unchecked would somehow enhance America's posture and strategic competition with China. Accelerating Russian defeat in Europe is precisely what will help ensure we don't wind up dealing with simultaneous aggression from adversaries in Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

Even as a global superpower, this is not a burden America should resign to bear alone, and, fortunately, we don't have to. Over the past 2 years, our European allies have taken a more serious and sober accounting of the requirements of a collective defense. They are now fast overtaking America's share of overall security assistance to Ukraine, and we already trail the contributions of 13 allies measured as a share of GDP.

This is certainly good news for collective defense and for the urgent demands that press upon American strength.

The United Kingdom, for example, just pledged to invest more than \$3 billion in Ukraine's fight over the next 2 years. This is on top of the tremendous leadership Great Britain has displayed since the earliest days of Putin's escalation.

Germany created a €100 billion special defense fund, enacted major military reforms, and continues to make progress toward NATO's 2 percent defense spending target.

Denmark is expanding its domestic industrial base and participating alongside U.S. forces in coalition operations in the Red Sea.

Smaller frontline allies like Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are continuing to make massive relative commitments to the cause. Estonia has pledged \$1.3 billion to Ukraine over the next 4 years. Just today, even the new, right-leaning Government of Slovakia expressed clear support for the Ukrainian cause in a visit to Ukraine.

More good news came yesterday. NATO is one step closer to admitting another strong and capable member to the transatlantic alliance.

I am glad that Turkey's Parliament voted to ratify Sweden's accession. Unfortunately, this step took far too long and created unnecessary friction within the alliance.

Sweden will bring major defense and technological capabilities into NATO on day one. The Swedes are increasing their defense budget and expanding their defense industrial capacity. This is not just good for NATO; Sweden's entry into NATO, just like Finland's before hers, is in our national interest.

I know colleagues on both sides of the aisle share my expectation that Hungary—the final remaining ally to approve Sweden's accession—will act soon to finish the job. Washington is watching.

These are promising developments. Allies are taking important steps toward greater burden-sharing, but we cannot mistakenly conclude from this progress that there is also declining demand for American leadership—quite

the opposite. The West's efforts to deter and defend against our adversaries in Europe, in the Middle East, and in the Indo-Pacific still require an engaged America. They require that we continue to invest heavily in new capabilities for our Armed Forces and in greater defense industrial capacity to meet soaring demand and sustain long-term competition.

This is what national security supplemental legislation would do: invest tens of billions of dollars right here at home and continue to bring new, cutting-edge capabilities—made in America by American workers—into our arsenal.

The Senate will very soon have a chance to restore our sovereignty at the southern border, to invest in our strategic competition with China, and to rebuild our credibility in the eyes of allies and adversaries alike.

#### ENERGY

Now, Mr. President, on another matter, when President Biden took office, the average approval time for liquefied natural gas—LNG—permits was about 7 weeks. Right now, it is about 11 months. But soon, wait times could actually become irrelevant.

At the behest of climate activists, the administration is now considering adding a climate test to the national interest analysis regulators conduct before approving new LNG projects—never mind that climate interests all too often run in the exact opposite direction of America's national interests. This move would amount to a functional ban on new LNG export permits.

The administration's war on affordable domestic energy has been bad news for American workers and consumers alike. Radical policies from the EPA are killing jobs in coal and auto manufacturing. Regulatory nudging is forcing automakers to produce a supply of electric vehicles for which there is insufficient demand. Now further limits to LNG exports will only send energy costs higher at a time that the West is trying to reduce its reliance on Russian energy.

This agenda is not just bad for Americans at home either; it is directly at odds with American interests on the world stage. From Russia to Iran to China, it is abundantly clear that our adversaries are not waiting for us to wake up from this experiment in green self-harm. Russia is building a new export facility for liquefied natural gas that is scheduled to be up and operating as soon as next year. Iran is also in the process of completing an LNG export facility to be ready next year as well.

It should go without saying that increasing global reliance on Russian and Iranian energy is not sound strategy. The Secretary of Energy herself has described Russian gas as the "dirtiest form of natural gas on Earth." China, for its part, increased its emissions last year by double the amount U.S. emissions actually declined.

Our allies in Europe are increasingly relying on us to keep their lights and

their heat running. It was LNG exports from the United States that allowed Europe to reduce its reliance on Russian energy in the wake of their attack on Ukraine.

So if the Biden administration is foolish enough to shut down our LNG exports or saddle their national interest analysis with Green New Deal schemes, I hope they understand which nations' interests they are advancing.

Choose our Nation's interests or blindly follow some green, radical scheme to empower our political rivals in China, Iran, and Russia. It is hard to fathom that this is even a question the Biden administration is contemplating.

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. TUBERVILLE. 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.

#### NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to express my very strong support for school choice.

Sunday was the start of School Choice Week. Tens of thousands of parents, students, and educators are going to celebrate the accomplishments of the school choice movement.

I spent 40 years in education.

I was a government school teacher—better known as public school—including in higher education. I was a coach. I was a mentor. For 40 years, I watched the school choice movement grow and change many, many lives. I have seen the changes that school choice has brought for students across our great country.

When I first started in education 40 years ago, there was no opportunity for school choice. Homeschooling was very, very rare. But our government schools were in better shape back then. Homeschooling today is practically like attending a small school. Today, there are about 2 million kids being homeschooled across our country. Homeschooling is the fastest growing form of education in America. It is growing because parents recognize that our schools are failing—I am going to repeat that: failing—our kids. It is time for lawmakers across this country at every level, including us, to recognize that our schools are failing.

Over the past 40 years, I have watched our education system decline with my own eyes. I have visited schools, parents, and principals in 49 States and American Samoa. What I saw sometimes was absolutely shocking. And, for today, it is the main reason that I ran for this seat here in the U.S. Senate. Education wasn't just a local problem; it was a national problem.

By now, it is undeniable that our K through 12 education system is in a crisis because of job protections and

teachers unions. We spend more money on education in the United States of America than any other country, but we are not in first place. We are not even close. And that is a shame.

Before the pandemic, we were 8th in reading, 11th in science, and 30th in math. You can't blame that on the pandemic. Some like to. This has been going on for a long time, even before the pandemic. It has been getting worse and worse and worse.

Last year, we had the worst ACT scores in 30 years. Let me repeat that. Last year, we had the worst ACT scores in 30 years. Nearly half of all of our students could not meet a single ACT benchmark—half. The most recent national report card showed a steep drop in reading and math scores in almost every State. These were the lowest scores in the last 20 years. Even Joe Biden's Secretary of Education called these test scores "appalling" and "unacceptable."

In some cities, there are entire schools—entire schools—where zero students can read or do math at the level that they are in. In Chicago alone, there are 55 schools where zero students can read or do math at grade level. Children in these schools are being robbed of their future. Our K through 12 system is failing. It is failing to prepare our kids for college or for life.

When I talk about education, I often hear my Democratic colleagues argue that we don't spend enough money. Their answer to everything is to spend more. We pay more than any other country in the world, and, again, we are not even in the top 10 with some of these countries that spend a lot less. We pay \$14,000 per student in this country in our public and government schools. In other developed countries, it is \$11,000 or less. So we are spending nearly 40 percent more money, but we are not getting 40 percent better test scores. We are getting a lot less. We are 26th in math in this country competing against other countries across the world—26th.

If you can't do math, you can't survive in today's world of technology. You can't pay your bills if you can't do math. How are we going to compete in a modern, high-tech economy if we can't do math? I don't think anybody has thought about that. We just keep going on down the same road.

According to the National Science Foundation, China graduated 1.2 million engineers in 2016. We graduated 130,000. One third of Chinese college students major in engineering. In America, it is 7 percent. How are we going to compete against our biggest adversary, China, if we are not educated? Kids in China are learning calculus, and this is in elementary school. Kids in China are learning calculus while our kids are studying pronouns and 50 genders and critical race theory. It is a disservice. We are cheating our kids. Frankly, it is a national security issue.

My Democratic colleagues need to remember that our education system does not exist for the sake of the teachers or principals and administrators, or even coaches. It doesn't exist for that. It is not about our teachers unions. It is about our students getting an education, learning to read and write, do math, preparing for a future. We forgot about that. Unfortunately, we forgot about that for a long time. It is about preparing kids for life—what an idea.

So what is school choice? School choice just means funding the student instead of the school building. That is what we do now: We send all of our money to these school buildings. We put it in teachers and administrators. The money is not going to exactly where it should be going—to prepare students for life.

It is the idea that the school was made for the student, not the student for the school. School choice brings the power of the free market, which is what we are supposed to be, to our education system. The results benefit everyone, even kids in the government or public schools.

Studies show that school choice means better test scores and better outcomes for students. When we talk about choice, my Democratic colleagues will say: If you are for school choice, then you are against public and government schools.

That is not true. That is not true. I used to teach in a public or government school. I was a member of the teachers union. I want our government schools to be the best in the world—the best—not 2nd, not 10th, not 20th, but the best. Our schools—our public and government schools—should be good enough to compete with our private schools, which are growing every day, but right now most of them are not. They are not competing against other schools. They don't have to compete because nothing is going on in the majority of our public schools. It is just a simple fact.

There is a laundry list of things we need to do about our public and government schools. But to make it better, what should be at the top of the list is competition, which is school choice—school choice to go where you want to go.

There are 20 studies—20 studies—that have shown that school choice improves our public schools. This is because school choice forces government schools to compete for students. And that is what this country is about. It is about competition. It is about the opportunity to do what you want, but it is all built on competition. Competition makes everyone better, whether it is in football, business, or just life. Competition makes us all better.

Kids deserve teachers, deserve teachers and schools that will compete for them, not for a teachers union but for them. The job is to make our students better, and we are failing.

A child's education should not be decided—should not be decided—on their

ZIP Code, where they live. Their education should not be decided on their family's income. That is not the way this should work. It should be decided by the people who know them best and love them the most—which is who? Their parents. Parents are a big part of the equation.

When I was a coach, I always told my players that this country owes you only one thing, and that is an opportunity. I didn't care who you were. When I coached, I didn't care whether you were rich, poor, Protestant or Catholic, Jewish. It didn't make any difference what race you were. I was hired to teach football and to win games. It is no different in a classroom. Everybody has that opportunity. And don't give me "Everybody doesn't have that opportunity." They do. You just have to take that opportunity and run with it.

So, at the end of the day, the key to unlock that opportunity is what? It is education. If you can't read and write in our country, in which we are struggling at almost every school—if you can't read and write, you can't make it. You are going to end up living off the government, and that is not what this country is about.

So our future is built on our kids. If we don't educate our kids, we won't have much of a future, and it has really declined. But if we unleash—and I know we have got a lot of problems going on in our world today, in our country, a lot of division. But if we unleash the potential of our young people, there is nothing that we cannot achieve.

So I urge my colleagues to support school choice in the upcoming budget process. Give them the opportunity to compete. Give them the opportunity for a better education. Put the pressure on our public and government schools. Make them compete to keep their students there. And the way you do that is you educate students. Get it to a point where we don't need school choice or homeschooling.

This should not be a partisan issue. This should not be about Republican and Democrat. This is about Americans. This is about Americans, giving them the opportunity to succeed and achieve. This is a huge American issue. We had better wake up and smell the roses. It is about basic American values—the values of education for all, opportunity for all, and letting our people live out their God-given potential, not keeping it locked up. Give everybody that opportunity.

I yield the floor.

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

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, since President Biden took office 3 years ago, Customs and Border Protection has encountered 6.7 million—6.7 million—migrants at the southern border. Just to give you an idea of how that compares to the Obama administration and