

expand broadband access to every corner of the Commonwealth. It also empowers law enforcement with new resources to combat the opioid crisis that has devastated my home State and remains a top killer of young Kentuckians.

So I was glad the Senate finished the job on a major portion of our government funding responsibilities, and I was especially proud to deliver on some of my fellow Kentuckians' top priorities.

SWEDEN

Madam President, on another matter, last week, I was proud to welcome the Prime Minister of Sweden to the Capitol on a historic day in his Nation's history and a great day for America and fellow members of the transatlantic alliance.

Earlier today, the flag of Sweden was raised over NATO headquarters for the first time. Sweden is our newest NATO ally, and the Prime Minister's visit to Washington marked the culmination of a process that began more than 2 years ago. As Russian forces amassed on Ukraine's border in the winter of 2022, Putin's aggressive ambitions clarified the thinking of some of Europe's strongest security partners.

From outside NATO, Sweden and Finland had already built advanced economies, capable militaries, and impressive defense industries. But in the face of an axis of revisionist powers, our Nordic friends decided it was time to cast their lot with the most successful military alliance in history.

Their path to accession is a clarifying reminder that NATO has always been a defensive alliance. Its members first undertook the responsibility of collective security to defending against growing Soviet aggression. Central and Eastern European members pursued membership after the fall of the Iron Curtain to protect their newly reclaimed sovereignty and democracy.

NATO's expansion has always been linked to the threat posed by outside forces; and today, it is no different. I have been proud to walk with our newest allies at every stop of the process. I will never forget standing with them 2 years ago in Stockholm and in Helsinki on the very day the Swedish and Finnish Parliaments voted overwhelmingly to launch their NATO axis bills.

Russia's escalation in Ukraine has unified Swedish and Finnish leaders. In both countries, strong support for NATO and a willingness to share the burden of collective defense literally transcends party lines.

Today, America's newest treaty allies are poised to make significant, immediate contributions to the transatlantic alliance. With highly trained forces equipped with cutting-edge capabilities, their commitment to NATO is a tremendous vote of confidence in the enduring importance of collective defense.

With Sweden and Finland in our ranks, the West stands even more united against autocrats with imperial

designs. With two new frontline allies, America's interests are more secure.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Madam President, on another matter, this week, the Senate will get yet another chance to put the emergency brakes on a particularly harmful piece of the Biden administration's Federal regulatory state.

The Federal Highway Administration finalized a rule late last year that would force States and local planning agencies to set declining greenhouse gas emissions targets and require them to meet those targets. The idea is to make the entire country build its infrastructure the way the bluest coastal cities, like San Francisco, do. Subway stops, electrical vehicle chargers, and bike lanes in rural places like North Dakota? It is a one-size-fits-all mandate. In other words, it forces Middle America to say goodbye to urgent projects on the sort of transportation infrastructure that actually makes sense for them.

What is more, FHWA lacks the authority to implement this rule. Congress explicitly debated and rejected language to authorize this type of target during the lead-up to the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

So I am very grateful to my colleague Senator CRAMER for taking the lead on this CRA, and I would urge all of our colleagues to support him on the floor this week.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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.

COMMUNICATION OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate a communication from the Secretary of the Senate regarding a message from the President received during the adjournment of the Senate.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Dear Madam President, on Saturday, March 9, 2024, the President of the United States sent by messenger the attached sealed envelope addressed to the President of the Senate dated March 9, 2024, said to contain a message regarding the designation of funding as an emergency requirement in H.R. 4366, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024. The Senate not being in session on the day which the President delivered this message, I accepted the message at 12:05 p.m., and I now present to you the President's message, with the accompanying papers, for disposition by the Senate. Respectfully, Sonceria A. Berry, Secretary of the Senate.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S BUDGET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today, President Biden released his budget for fiscal year 2025. President Biden's budget can be summarized in three words: bold, optimistic, responsible.

President Biden's budget highlights the sharp contrast between the Democrats' positive, proactive vision and the Republicans' negative, regressive vision for our country.

Democrats are focused on growing the economy in a responsible way, while making smart investments in the American people and our future. That is why a centerpiece of President Biden's budget focuses on creating opportunity for working Americans by ending the reckless Trump-era tax scam, which overwhelmingly cut taxes for the wealthiest few and large corporations and added trillions to the national debt.

It was recently confirmed that the Republican tax law did not pay for itself, as we heard over and over again from our Republican colleagues. Democrats know that we can and must do better.

As the President pointed out during his State of the Union Address last week, a fair Tax Code is how we can better invest in things like healthcare, education, and economic opportunity for more Americans. President Trump's tax scam proved everything but fair. It rewarded the wealthy and well-connected, while leaving working families with the tab.

Time has shown that this tax scam was a dud for our economy and a political loser for the Republican Party because the American people saw it for what it was.

Republicans also talk a big game about lowering the deficit, but President Biden's budget actually proposes measures to do it. It proposes measures to reduce the deficit by nearly \$3 trillion over the next decade.

That budget will help improve the solvency of vital programs like Medicare and Social Security, which tens of millions of Americans rely on every single day.

It will reinstate the child tax credit we passed in the American Rescue Plan, which greatly reduced child poverty before expiring.

That is not all. President Biden's budget builds on the progress Democrats have made to help grow America from the middle out and the bottom up. From the infrastructure law, to the CHIPS and Science Act, to the Inflation Reduction Act, to the PACT Act, and more, Democrats made a lot of good investments that are already paying off for the American people. Inflation is cooling down. Manufacturing is surging. Consumer sentiment is growing. The cost of insulin and other drugs

is falling. We have created a record 15 million new jobs since President Biden took office. President Biden's budget will help ensure we continue to make good on the investments from our agenda and build an economy that works for everyone.

Here is the bottom line: President Biden's budget shows there are two clear choices for America's future and highlights Democrats' vision for a better America.

Democrats want to keep taxes low for middle-class families and make the ultrawealthy pay their fair share, while Republicans fight to make it easier for wealthy tax cheats to pay less than middle-class families. Democrats will protect Medicare and Social Security, while Republicans look to cut these hard-earned benefits. Democrats want to make investments so every American family can do better, while Republicans want those who have already done very well to do even better.

So I thank President Biden for releasing a bold, optimistic, responsible budget for the Nation.

HEALTHCARE CYBER ATTACK

Madam President, now on the healthcare cyber attack, after last month's devastating, unprecedented cyber attack on tens of thousands of hospitals, pharmacies, and doctors' offices in New York and across America, I am proud that last week HHS and CMS heeded my call to provide healthcare providers immediate relief to help get their systems back up to speed.

This weekend, we received more good news: CMS expanded its response to the cyber attack to include Medicare Part B providers. This new action by CMS will directly help our doctors on the frontline of this crisis continue to stay open and provide care for their patients. Because of the cyber attack, people weren't getting the dollars they had to expend to do their jobs. I commend CMS for continuing to heed my call for an all-hands-on-deck approach to this crisis.

For over 3 weeks now, providers—including hospitals, doctors, and pharmacies big and small—have all been unable to submit medical claims as a result of this cyber attack, leaving many facing imminent insolvency. I met with Rome Health in Rome, NY, and Cayuga Health in Ithaca, who told me they are losing hundreds of thousands of dollars a day and have stacks of claims nearly 2 feet high that they are unable to file.

The American people are feeling the pain of this cyber attack too. Many are struggling to refill prescriptions, some are having their care delayed or denied, and others are unable to use patient assistance programs they rely on.

Had CMS not stepped up to the plate, hospitals and pharmacies—especially the smaller ones that don't have large cash reserves—faced the risk of laying people off or even shutting down entirely because they were not being reimbursed.

So this new action by CMS to expand its response and include Medicare Part B providers in relief efforts is an encouraging step, but this crisis is far from over. I will continue working with the administration, my colleagues in Congress, CMS—I talked to the Administrator just a few hours ago—and others in the healthcare industry to get providers the relief they need and to protect our healthcare system from future attacks.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Madam President, now on the American Rescue Plan anniversary, today is the 3-year anniversary of President Biden signing the American Rescue Plan into law, which I was proud to lead here in the Senate.

After Congress passed the ARP plan, I said, "Help is on the way." That was the promise of the American Rescue Plan—to put shots in arms, to put money in people's pockets, and to propel our country out of the COVID crisis. Three years later, it is safe to say these investments have paid off and that the American Rescue Plan put America and our economy on a path toward the historic recovery we are witnessing today. Before the American Rescue Plan, job growth was unsteady, and millions were at risk of losing their jobs. Three years later, we have seen the strongest 3-year job growth in American history—in American history—over 15 million new jobs since President Biden took office.

Before the American Rescue Plan, the United States was losing manufacturing jobs by the day. Three years later, manufacturing investment—something that plagued America even before the pandemic—is near an all-time high, more than double its highest point during the previous administration.

Critics argued that the American Rescue Plan would cause excessive inflation. Well, 3 years later, inflation has cooled down to the lowest levels since the start of the pandemic, from 9 percent to just below 3 percent, meaning the prices of things like groceries, appliances, car rentals, and airfares have all come down.

In the American Rescue Plan, we secured significant pension reform through the passage of the Butch Lewis Act, which has helped millions and millions of American workers receive the financial security they earned through their labors.

I was proud to bring Deborah Hartman from Buffalo, NY, as my guest to President Biden's State of the Union last week. She called this critical plan "the best thing that has happened to labor in I don't know how many years." It means the world to working people.

We also included a dramatic expansion of the child tax credit, which helped millions and millions of families afford the cost of childcare and other needs. We provided billions in rental relief to help people keep a roof over their heads; billions in fiscal relief for

States, cities, and localities to help them stay afloat; billions for education and broadband access to help kids get back in the classroom; and much more.

The bottom line is this: Three years after President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan, it is proving to be a historic win for American families, workers, and the economy. And it is thanks to the American Rescue Plan and other landmark legislation we passed—like the infrastructure law, Chips and Science, and the Inflation Reduction Act—that today the U.S. economy is the envy of the world. Of course, our work is far from over, but we can look back and be very proud of what we accomplished in the ARP.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam 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.

SUNSHINE WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, every year, at this time of the year, Sunshine Week is held around the birthday of James Madison—not only a former President but one of our greatest Founding Fathers and the acclaimed "Father of the Constitution."

Sunshine Week is a critical reminder of the need for transparency and open government. And our government is not as open as it should be.

President Madison famously said that a great difficulty in forming a government operated by imperfect people was that you must oblige it—meaning the government—to control itself. Well, amen to what Madison said.

As a conservative, I have worked especially hard on Madison's challenge, making sure that the government controls itself. One way to do that is to limit the size and scope of the government. It is hard to control a government that does everything but make your bed and tuck you in to sleep.

Another check on out-of-control government is separation of powers—the same separation of powers when you study the essentials of American government. Congress doesn't execute laws. The President and the executive agencies shouldn't try to make laws. And neither should our courts.

To control a government as big as ours, it takes a lot of very bright light shining on every Agency and Office. And instead of 1 week called Sunshine Week, we ought to have 365 days a year in which we have sunshine on our government's operation.

I have long supported the Freedom of Information Act. And that act urges Agencies to be more responsive to record requests. That is essential to open government because it gives citizens access to information. As the old saying goes, knowledge is power.