

Donald Trump hopes people forget, he himself is on record supporting a national abortion ban when he was President.

So, unsurprisingly, Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans are now trying to hide their antiabortion records because they know how dangerously out of step their views are with the public. But they can't help themselves, as the President's speech showed 4 days ago. Again, he had to repeat that he was responsible—the one responsible—for the abolition of Roe.

Make no mistake, that is what they will do. And, make no mistake, Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans will have to answer to the American people for what they have done to fundamental liberties in this country—today, tomorrow, and in November.

#### MAYORKAS IMPEACHMENT

Mr. President, on impeachment, as we enter the height of the spring season, there is a lot on the Senate's agenda. We continue to confirm more judges and nominees. We must ensure FISA authorities are renewed during this work period.

Off the floor, we continue to work on a host of issues, like lowering the cost of prescription drugs, increasing travel safety, and AI, and so much more.

As busy as we are, one issue the Senate will soon have to address is the House vote to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. As everyone knows, yesterday, Speaker JOHNSON announced he is delaying transmitting the articles to the Senate until sometime next week.

Our plan over here has not changed. The Senate is ready to go whenever the House is. We want to address this issue as expeditiously as possible.

And, as I said yesterday, impeachment should never be used to settle policy disagreements. That sets an awful precedent.

So, when the time comes for the Senate to receive the Articles of Impeachment from the House, we will be ready. In the meantime, we are going to keep working on legislation that matters to the American people and do it in a bipartisan way whenever we can. The American people demand, expect, and deserve nothing less.

#### CAPITAL ONE AND DISCOVER MERGER

Mr. President, now, on the proposed merger of Capital One and Discover, earlier this week, I sent a letter to Capital One and Discover asking for more information about their plans for a multibillion-dollar merger. If history has taught us anything, it is that, when big financial institutions get even bigger, it can have serious consequences for consumers and small businesses alike. Higher interest rates, bigger fees, diminished competition—these can all be at stake. So my letter asks some questions to both Capital One and Discover that the American people deserve to have answered before this merger goes forward.

We need to know about market shares in this industry. We need to

know about potential increases in fees. We need to know if any workers will be laid off. We need to know how consumers are being made aware of this planned merger. Capital One and Discover are two of the largest credit card-issuing institutions in America. If this merger continues as planned, the new company would likely become the largest credit card issuer in the United States of America, with over 400 million customers.

So, before these two companies merge, the American people deserve answers to these questions to be sure they won't receive the short end of the stick.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on the supplemental, not a generation ago, the thought of any American political party, much less the party of Ronald Reagan, spreading the gospel of Russian propaganda was deemed unthinkable. But, today, the apple has indeed fallen very far from the tree.

Today, a growing contingency within the hard right is corroding their party from within, turning the party of Reagan, little by little, into a messaging arm of the Kremlin. Two months ago, former President Donald Trump, the presumptive Presidential nominee of the Republican Party, said he would encourage Russia to “do whatever the hell they want” to the countries of NATO.

Let me say that again.

The things that come out of President Trump are really frightening about the future of America, if, God forbid, he should ever get back in power. I hope and believe he won't. But here is what he has said, again. Two months ago, Donald Trump, the presumptive Presidential nominee of the Republican Party, said he would encourage Russia to “do whatever the hell they want” to the countries of NATO—unbelievable, unbelievable.

In the House of Representatives, pro-Putin radicals say we should reward Russia's violent invasion with a peace treaty, instead of standing with Ukraine as they fight for their survival. Sadly, we hear similar things every now and then coming from the fringes of this Chamber—arguments that the war in Ukraine is hopeless, that Ukraine should cede their territory, and that we should cut a deal with Putin, as if he would be satisfied with any deal.

These modern-day Neville Chamberlains ignore the warnings of history. Autocrats have insatiable appetites. If you give an autocrat a little land, he will seek to take a country. And if you give an autocrat a country, he will seek to take a continent.

So the stakes of the war in Ukraine could not be higher. It is not just the war between two nations, but it is a struggle between two conflicting ideals, between democracy and autocracy. As the greatest democracy in the world, the United States has been called on to take a stand.

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.

#### NATO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last week, the strongest and most successful military alliance in the history of the world marked an impressive milestone. Seventy-five years ago, at the dawn of the Cold War, with decades of superpower competition on the horizon, the founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization convened here in Washington to formalize a commitment to collective security.

In the years since, NATO has grown from 12 to 32 allies. The transatlantic alliance has always required management. Alliances always do. But, as Churchill observed, the only thing worse than fighting alongside allies is fighting without them.

While we have experienced periods of pronounced tension within the alliance, today is not one of them. Nations on both sides of the Atlantic have increasingly concluded that common threats are best met with shared resolve.

Most recently, of course, the alliance has been proud to welcome Sweden and Finland to our ranks. With highly capable militaries and advanced economies, our newest allies were already taking their own defense seriously. In the face of Putin's brutal escalation in Ukraine, they decided to share the burden of collective security.

But Russian aggression hasn't just expanded the NATO alliance; it has also prompted longtime allies to take their treaty obligations more seriously. Just last week, the Norwegian Government confirmed that it would meet the NATO 2-percent defense spending target this year and that it would nearly double its defense budget over the next 12. For a wealthy country like Norway, with one of the highest per capita GDPs in the world, this is a big deal. Across the alliance, members are making historic new commitments to strengthen their militaries and expand their defense industrial capacity. European allies have contracted to buy 600 cutting-edge American F-35 aircraft to add to their arsenals. On the whole, they are already meeting the 2-percent target, and NATO leaders expect more individual members to reach it by the July summit here in Washington.

There is still work to be done. Not every ally is taking its treaty obligations seriously enough. One of the most concerning laggards isn't even a European country, but it is our neighbor to

the north. Like America, Canada is at once an Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic nation, and it is time for Ottawa to take its obligations to NATO, to NORAD, and to its own defense more seriously.

That said, for our European allies, the holiday from history really is over. Their greater investments in collective defense also include growing contributions to Ukraine's defense. In fact, 18 countries are making larger relative contributions to helping Ukraine resist Russian aggression than the United States. Of course, this doesn't absolve America from playing a leading role. America is the glue that keeps the alliance together. We are a critical catalyst of allied contributions. Nations all over the world look to Washington for guidance.

From before Russian forces even advanced in February of 2022, I have urged the Biden administration to quit its hand-wringing and hesitation over delivering Ukraine the lethal tools it needed to defend itself. The President's unfounded fear of escalation deprived our friends of the advanced, long-range capabilities they needed to make a more decisive stand against Putin sooner. Avoidable supply shortages continue to prevent Ukraine from taking the fight to Russia across the frontlines.

The conflict is at a critical moment, and it is exactly the wrong time for folks on our side of the aisle to imitate and compound the timidity and shortsightedness of our Commander in Chief, which he displayed from the outset of the conflict.

The vast majority of armed conflicts end in negotiated settlements, but whenever and however this particular conflict is resolved, it is in America's interests that Ukraine operate from a position of strength.

Our own security, the security of our closest allies and most important trading partners, the credibility of America's commitments—none of these interests are served by withholding assistance to Ukraine or withholding urgent investments in the sort of industrial capacity and capabilities that both our friends and our Armed Forces need.

Starving Ukraine of needed capabilities wasn't the smart way for the Biden administration to avoid escalation, and neither is it a political masterstroke by some of the administration's Republican opponents. It is strategic and moral malpractice that risks dooming Ukraine and undermining our own national interests.

From Europe, to the Middle East, to the Indo-Pacific, the world is watching to see whether the United States still has a will to lead the West and preserve the international order responsible for our own prosperity for the better part of a century.

So I will continue to urge our House colleagues to take up and pass the national security supplemental without delay.

H.J. RES. 98

Mr. President, now on a different matter, I have spoken before about the effort led by our colleagues, Senator CAPITO and Senator CRAMER, to block a coercive, one-size-fits-all mandate from the Federal Highway Administration that would force States and localities to build transportation infrastructure the way the bluest coastal cities do. I am glad our colleagues will have a chance to support this resolution. I am grateful to our colleagues from West Virginia and North Dakota for their leadership.

The Senate will also vote today on a resolution to overturn the administration's latest attack on small businesses and consumers. President Biden's Big Labor allies at the NLRB have issued a new rule that would expand the definition of an employer in a way that would make employers liable for other business employees whom they don't even directly oversee.

Known as the joint employer rule, the new standard amounts to more regulatory redtape, threatening the very existence of small businesses—especially those that follow the franchise model.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of the American dream. As many of our colleagues who own small businesses know, it requires a tremendous amount of hard work, long hours, and sleepless nights to own and operate a business. The Biden administration's regulatory state is already putting that dream out of reach for many hard-working Americans, but this new labor rule would add even bigger headaches and turn small business owners—including many in my home State of Kentucky—into middle managers.

One such Kentuckian wrote me a letter saying that this rule has the potential to kill his small, independent marketing organization. Here is what he said:

I implore you to stop [them] from killing many small businesses like mine. . . . This government overreach has got to stop. We are no longer a country that supports small businesses.

I have always been a proud supporter of small businesses in this country, and I have spent years fighting the joint employer rule. I am glad to join Senator CASSIDY and Senator MANCHIN in leading the CRA to block this rule.

One Federal court has already put this rule on ice. As the appeals take their course, I would encourage each of our colleagues to join us in rejecting the radical NLRB's new rule.

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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

## FEDERAL AGENCIES

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, despite President Biden begging bureaucrats to

return to work, government buildings remain largely abandoned, and Washington, DC, is a ghost town. Heads of Agencies have mysteriously disappeared without a trace. Even the White House was left in the dark when the Secretary of Defense vanished for days.

I am hearing from folks in Iowa who tried calling Federal Agencies for help but didn't hear boo. A nonprofit serving vulnerable, disabled, elderly, and other Iowans in need contacted my office, frustrated by the growing delays that organization is experiencing dealing with the Social Security Administration. The executive director tells me that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the response time from the local Social Security office was just a few days at most but that now it takes weeks and even months to get a call back. Some of the folks the nonprofit serves have gone without benefits as a result of unreturned phone calls. Approvals to provide support to others seeking assistance are also being delayed.

The agency's executive director says the lack of communication "is having an impact on the clients we serve and our ability to provide quality service" and that "they are running us out of business."

While the Social Security Administration's headquarters is nearly empty, with just 7 percent of its office space being used, these folks serving Iowans in need are showing up. Because the support they provide is being threatened by the Social Security Administration's unresponsiveness, I called on the Agency's inspector general to investigate.

And folks, well, that seemed to do the trick. Almost immediately, the phone finally started ringing, and the Social Security Administration is once again working with this agency to make sure my Iowans are being taken care of.

Another Iowan who worked for the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Services tells me his former colleagues describe working from home as "like being on vacation. Very little work was assigned and all they had to do was be available by phone."

But according to another whistleblower within the Department who contacted me, it is even difficult to get in touch with coworkers. Here is some direct quotes from this particular whistleblower:

On occasions I have gone to USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. . . . it resembles a ghost town.

As a supervisor, I can tell you that full-time remote work and extensive telework are negatively affecting productivity, efficiency, and cooperation.

And yet another:

Remote work and telework employees are often unreachable and do not respond to simple email questions for hours.

When I questioned the USDA Secretary recently about these claims, he