

McConnell	Rubio	Tillis
Moran	Schmitt	Vance
Mullin	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Ricketts	Scott (SC)	Young
Risch	Sullivan	
Rounds	Thune	

## NOT VOTING—12

Cornyn	Hawley	Sanders
Cramer	Menendez	Sinema
Durbin	Murkowski	Stabenow
Graham	Romney	Tuberville

The motion was agreed to.

## MORNING BUSINESS

NATIONAL SECURITY, ENERGY,  
AND SHOP ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today, a joint session of Congress welcomed Japanese Prime Minister Kishida to the Capitol.

The importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance is front-and-center at a critical moment. As I said earlier this week, Japan is an essential partner in the security of the Indo-Pacific.

But its leaders also understand the global nature of the threats facing sovereign states, free societies, and free markets today. As the Prime Minister's office put it ahead of this week's visit, today's security environment is, "as severe and complex as it has ever been" and that "from the Japanese viewpoint, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not a faraway European question."

In other words, Japan understands that the challenges we face can't be dealt with one at a time. Last year, Japan approved the largest ever budget for its own self-defense forces. And it is in the process of acquiring nearly 150 fifth-generation F-35 fighters and investing in long-range counterstrike capabilities to enhance deterrence.

Meanwhile, Japan also provides significant economic assistance to countries across Asia who may otherwise be vulnerable to the PRC's coercion or aggression.

And at the same time, Japan was the third largest financial contributor to Ukraine last year.

Our ally is facing linked threats simultaneously. But Japan is not an anomaly. Across the region, America's closest regional allies like Australia and South Korea understand the PRC poses the greatest long-term strategic threat to a free and open Indo-Pacific. But they also understand that what happens in Europe or the Middle East in the near-term matters an awful lot to Asia.

To meet these growing security challenges, our Indo-Pacific allies are making substantial commitments to grow their defense budgets.

Similarly, as our European allies grow increasingly concerned about the PRC, their combined spending rose by 9.5 percent.

This is encouraging progress. But our allies still look to America to lead. And our own defense spending is not keeping pace.

Four times, President Biden has submitted defense budget requests that

would have amounted to net cuts after inflation. And even if Congress prevails in passing an emergency national security supplemental, a 1 percent growth cap on next year's spending will still constrain our ability to meet growing threats.

We have to be honest about the urgent requirements of replenishing stockpiles, expanding defense industrial capacity, and modernizing our forces.

Deterring linked threats isn't a task America has to face alone. But as we encourage our allies to continue their own modernization efforts, we have to lead.

That means deepening technology cooperation and trade with our most advanced allies—similar to what we have promised to do with AUKUS, an agreement that we must implement with urgency and sincerity.

It also means reforming our sluggish, bureaucratic foreign military sales process to help more allies upgrade their capabilities by buying modern American equipment.

But most of all, maintaining our influence and advancing our global interests means taking our own national defense responsibilities seriously.

Our fundamental constitutional obligation is to provide for the common defense. And it will fall to Congress in the months ahead—as we consider the NDAA and FY25 defense appropriations—to make the investments that sustained American leadership requires.

Now, on another matter, yesterday's inflation report did little to help working Americans make sense of Bidenomics. The 3.5 percent year-on-year jump recorded last month puts cumulative inflation since President Biden took office at 19.4 percent. Grocery prices are up 21.2 percent, gasoline prices are up 47.8 percent, and rent prices are up 20.4 percent.

And it is getting particularly difficult to keep the lights on. The latest 5 percent jump in electricity prices is just the latest bad news for ratepayers facing overall energy inflation of 38.8 percent since January 2021. And it is no wonder why: Working families aren't just up against Democrats' reckless inflationary spending. They are also facing the effects of the mountain of devastating regulations rolled out under President Biden's activist climate agenda.

He has ticked his way down a green activist wishlist from canceling job-creating pipeline infrastructure to freezing LNG export permits to micro-managing home appliances to imposing debilitating emissions standards on automakers and effectively requiring that two of every three vehicles manufactured for America in 2032 be electric.

Honestly, it feels like the Biden administration itself cares less about a grand green future than about making the entire country follow the consumption habits of deep-blue California. And that is particularly bad news.

As the administration races to conjure up a market for expensive electric vehicles, growing evidence suggests that its grand plans to leave the most affordable and reliable forms of American energy behind are pushing electric grids to a breaking point. And grid security experts are warning that "overly rigid" environmental policies are creating significant blackout risks across the country.

Whether you call it Bidenomics or the Green New Deal, Washington Democrats are presenting working Americans with some tough choices. Here's how one California retiree described it: "Food has been a worry, but now electricity is the worry. Unless you want to go to candles and firewood, we have no other choice but to bite the bullet and pay."

Fortunately, the Senate will soon have another opportunity to pull an emergency brake on the administration's runaway regulations: legislation from Senator CRAPO to overturn the President's disastrous de facto EV mandate.

The tailpipe emissions rule would effectively force American auto dealers to sell two EVs for every gas-powered vehicle, even at the inevitable expense of further reliance on Chinese supply chains. And with electric vehicles already piling up at dealer lots across the country due to low demand, it would force American consumers to buy vehicles they don't want.

What utter madness. I am grateful to the senior Senator for Idaho for bringing this legislation to the floor. And I will encourage our colleagues to join me in supporting this step to rein in some of this administration's worst ideas.

Now, on one final matter, yesterday, with my colleagues the junior Senator for Arkansas and the senior Senator for North Carolina, I was proud to introduce the SHOP Act, a comprehensive, nonpartisan solution to venue shopping in Federal courts.

As I have said before, the problem with venue shopping is not a judge in north Texas. It is a national problem driven by the ability of single judges everywhere to grant injunctions that are national in scope.

The SHOP Act would stop that, restricting the relief that judges in Texas and in California can provide to the parties in front of them or the geographic reach of their jurisdictions.

It also addresses the problem of venue selling in bankruptcy and patent cases. Venue abuse in those specialized areas of law comes less from litigants seeking advantage than from judges creating artificially attractive venues in order to enrich their friends in the local bar. The SHOP Act would impose uniform standards for where bankruptcy and patent cases should be heard to solve this problem.

Lastly, the SHOP Act addresses the practice of actual illicit judge shopping. Recently, the Southern Poverty Law Center and Lambda Legal engaged

in this practice in Alabama, going to great and unethical lengths both to get their case steered to a particular liberal judge and to strip it from a perceived conservative.

Importantly, when these leftwing groups were caught red-handed, it was none other than President Obama's White House Counsel himself who appeared in court to defend them in their disciplinary case. I can't think of a better example of the liberal attitude of "judge shopping for me but not for thee."

Well, the SHOP Act stops all of it. It applies everywhere regardless of ideology and addresses the root causes of the issue. And I invite my Democratic colleagues to join our bill and further strengthen public confidence in our Federal judiciary.

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I was absent for one rollcall vote April 11, 2024. On April 11, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the motion to proceed to Executive Session for the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 478 Ramona Villagomez Manglona, of the Northern Mariana Islands to be Judge for the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands for a term of ten years, rollcall vote No. 123.

#### 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF WACO DINER

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, in April of 1924, Nelson Watts and Ralph Colwell combined forces and syllables from their last names and opened the WaCo Diner in Eastport, ME. One hundred years later, the WaCo is still going strong as the oldest diner in the State of Maine, proudly serving great food and friendship in America's easternmost city.

The WaCo began life as a lunch wagon converted from a traveling photographer's studio. With Eastport hosting more than a dozen sardine factories, a deepwater seaport, and visitors arriving by sea and rail to enjoy the very best of Maine's rocky coast, the new establishment thrived, the wheels were removed, and the wagon was boxed in to make a permanent structure.

Under a succession of owners over the years, the WaCo has expanded from a narrow lunch counter to a lovely restaurant with a spacious dining room. From the outdoor deck overlooking Passamaquoddy Bay, patrons enjoy beautiful views of Canada's Campobello Island and a passing parade of marine activity, from cargo vessels, cruise ships, and fishing boats to whales, porpoises, and seals.

The current owners, Mike Del Papa and Matt Boyle, bought the WaCo in 2022, after Mike's dad Bob retired at the age of 83 after many years of operating and growing the business. Mike and Matt both brought restaurant operations, general business, and cus-

tomers service experiences with them, and have invested significant money, time and energy into the equipment and facilities to enhance the atmosphere and efficiency, while continuing to offer amazing meals and a great customer experience, led by server Tammy McPhail, a 20-plus-year veteran, and chef Steve Sonner. In addition to providing good jobs year-round, the WaCo brings back summer staff each tourism season.

The WaCo is a mainstay, not only in Eastport but also throughout the Downeast region, welcoming locals and visitors alike. Among the many themed evenings featuring special creations, a local favorite is the "Dry Fish Dinner"—prepared Robert Patterson's Way," a tribute to the late, beloved owner/chef of the New Friendly Restaurant in the neighboring town of Perry.

The WaCo is dedicated to supporting other Maine businesses. When possible, they source seafood locally. All draft beers are from Maine breweries, and potato chips are from Maine's Fox Family in Mapleton. Several recipes utilize Raye's Mustard, made in Eastport at the last remaining traditional stone-ground mustard in North America, while others use Wyman's wild Maine blueberries, harvested from the barrens of the surrounding countryside.

In addition to dedication to excellence, the WaCo carries on another great tradition of our State's small business community: giving back. Last year, the WaCo served a free Thanksgiving dinner to more than 150 people from the Downeast community and, at Christmastime, a free pancake breakfast with Santa for children. Through charitable events in 2023, the WaCo and its customers raised more than \$5,000 to support Sarah's House of Maine, a cancer hospitality house near the Lafayette Family Cancer Center in Brewer, saving rural patients and their families hours of travel for treatments.

The WaCo Diner in Eastport is a shining example of the entrepreneurial spirit and community pride that define the State of Maine. I congratulate the entire WaCo team on this landmark anniversary and wish them much success in the years to come.

#### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING THE TENNESSEE NATIONAL GUARD

• Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate the Tennessee National Guard on the opening of the Major General Terry M. Haston National Guard Armory in Morriston, TN.

Since its founding in 1887, the Tennessee National Guard has upheld the Volunteer State's distinguished record of military service, fighting to preserve our Nation's security, and aiding our State in times of emergency. The

Major General Terry M. Haston National Guard Armory—with over 30,000 square feet of space dedicated to administrative, training, supply, and storage functions—will do so much to honor this tradition by strengthening the Guard's capabilities for Federal missions and bolstering their capacity to respond effectively to local emergencies and disasters.

This facility honors a great Tennessean and a great guardsman. For nearly a decade, MG Terry M. Haston served as the 75th adjutant general for the Tennessee National Guard, strengthening the Guard's military readiness and operational efficiency. Among his many honors, General Haston received the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:43 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3250. An act to recognize the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum in Rochester, New York.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 2754. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2395 East Del Mar Boulevard in Laredo, Texas, as the "Lance Corporal David Lee Espinoza, Lance Corporal Juan Rodrigo Rodriguez & Sergeant Roberto Arizola Jr. Post Office Building".

S. 3851. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 90 McCamly Street South in Battle Creek, Michigan, as the "Sojourner Truth Post Office".

H.R. 3865. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 101 South 8th Street in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, as the "Lieutenant William D. Lebo Post Office Building".

H.R. 3947. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 859 North State Road 21 in Melrose, Florida, as the "Pamela Jane Rock Post Office Building".