

happen, allow their next-door neighbor—whose own charter calls for genocide—to commit this kind of brazen and indiscriminate violence.

To this day, Hamas continues to fire rockets at Israel, target their civilians, and hold women and children hostage. That is all in violation of international law. They also continue to use protected civilian structures for its operation, endangering its own people.

There is no question that our world has dramatically shifted since October 7, as we can clearly see that Israel's security is directly related to our own national security here at home.

Unfortunately, since the beginning of the attacks on Israel, President Biden has not displayed the strength that is needed for our Nation at this critical junction. His administration, beginning on October 7, made their fears of an escalating conflict crystal clear.

Secretary Blinken said on October 22 that "This is not what we want. . . . We don't want escalation."

This widely broadcasted fear of escalation prevented them from taking action to stop this violence spreading beyond Israel's borders.

Now the Iran-backed Houthis have launched hundreds of drone and missile strikes against ships transiting the Red Sea, one of the most important waterways in the world. We have conducted multiple airstrikes in Yemen but with no clear indication that the Houthis have been deterred. And most especially sad, we lost two Navy SEALs, some of our most elite members of the Armed Forces who made the ultimate sacrifice while halting the shipment of more advanced weapons to this group.

Adding to this, there has been a staggering increase in attacks by Iranian proxies on our troops and bases in the region.

I think we have heard earlier, there have been over 165 attacks on our men and women in uniform in the Middle East since October 7, with minimal response from this administration. This has led, sadly, to another loss of our American soldiers. We lost three heroic Americans in one of these attacks, with dozens more wounded.

Less than 3 weeks ago, on January 12, when asked if he had a message for Iran, President Biden said:

I've already delivered the message to Iran. They know not to do anything.

That message was clearly not delivered and has put our Nation and servicemembers in an unacceptable situation.

What does all of this aggression in the Red Sea and these attacks on our Armed Forces have in common? It is all funded and supplied by Iran. For far too long, this nefarious nation has been pulling strings behind the scenes that are inciting terror and creating chaos in the Middle East.

The Iranian regime stands in direct opposition to what we as Americans represent and our values. Their hatred for America is made more obvious by

the company they keep and the continued closeness they are cultivating with adversaries like Russia, China, and North Korea.

China is Iran's biggest oil customer and provides a revenue stream to support Iran's aggression. Russia continues to purchase Iranian drones, using them in their unjust war against Ukraine. North Korea has remained Iran's leading partner in destabilizing actions and nuclear proliferation.

Iran's malign influence and its disdain for America and our ally Israel is unmistakable.

It is past time to reestablish deterrence against Iran with a decisive response to these unacceptable actions. This is something my Republican colleagues recognize and something we continue to urge President Biden and his administration to take seriously.

Secretary Blinken himself said just this past week that the Middle East has not been this dangerous since 1973. This comes, of course, after President Biden's National Security Advisor announced that the region was quieter than it had been for decades as we were approaching the October 7 date.

We can all see now that this is an increasingly important moment with incredibly high stakes. We must take this opportunity to lead with strength, to lead in the ways that only the United States can lead. While our adversaries are attempting to divide us, we must come together.

The future of our Nation depends on our ability to support our allies, like Israel, in their time of need; to protect vital American interests, like our shippers; to defend our troops overseas; and to secure the homeland of our own country.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to remain committed to the security of the United States and our ally Israel. This Chamber must display the American leadership that times of crisis require. We have done it before, and we must do it again.

NOMINATION OF JOSEPH GOFFMAN

Madam President, I rise today in strong opposition to the nomination of Joe Goffman to lead the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air and Radiation.

Mr. Goffman has been the Biden administration's leading political appointee in that office now for over 3 years without Senate confirmation. He also spent all 8 years of the Obama administration in the same EPA office. Rarely do we have such a robust record to draw on in evaluating a nominee. And I say this with great disappointment: Rarely is the record so damaging.

Mr. Goffman's actions, marked by Federal overreach and job-killing regulations, have been a disaster for our country. Under President Obama, Mr. Goffman was a chief architect of the Clean Power Plan. This rule aimed to close down coal- and gas-fired powerplants, especially those in my own home State of West Virginia, but it

was a direct shot at American energy production.

In 2022, the Supreme Court confirmed what we all knew: The original Clean Power Plan was illegal. Unfortunately, before this rejection, mines were shuttered, workers were laid off, and communities were left behind. Yet this has not fazed Mr. Goffman. Recently, in his current position at the EPA, Mr. Goffman has proposed the second iteration of the Clean Power Plan.

Many of us have warned a lot about the lawlessness and the danger of this regulatory plan, and I appreciate my colleagues on both sides of the aisle speaking truth to the EPA in recent letters about what this would do to our economy and to our energy sector. But you don't have to take it from us. Here is what our Nation's grid operators, which are nonpartisan groups responsible for ensuring our electrical system is reliable and affordable, said about the Clean Power Plan 2.0:

Without firm proof of the commercial and operational viability of these technologies, proceeding with these requirements could place the reliability of the electric grid in jeopardy. In short, hope is not an acceptable strategy.

Despite these concerns, Mr. Goffman is intent on implementing this part of a misguided climate agenda regardless of what the law says or its disastrous consequences on the reliability of the grid or the affordability of energy.

I have also spoken before about the Biden administration's rapid push toward electric vehicles despite warning signs and lack of a plan to deal with the inevitable increased electricity demand. Compliance with the EPA's current policy would require two-thirds of new cars to be electric by model year 2032, and now California wants to push the auto industry even faster, requiring that all new cars must be electric by 2035. And important to note, since Senator SCHUMER last filed cloture, Mr. Goffman's office has agreed to formally consider this request by California to ban sales of all new cars with internal combustion engines within the next decade. Well, we saw what happened with our electric vehicles during the cold spell we just had.

Meanwhile, automakers have sounded the alarm that Americans simply aren't buying EVs at rates that would match this pace and have scaled back previously announced investments. So the EPA is trying to force Americans to buy expensive electric cars—and they are more expensive—that they can't afford, at a rate they do not want. And this is all at Mr. Goffman's direction.

Already in 2024, we are seeing the courts working to correct the regulatory confusion created when the EPA Office of Air and Radiation oversteps its legal authorities. As an example, the EPA's so-called "Good Neighbor" regulation would remove the authority States have to manage their environmental policy under the Clean Air Act.

Initially, Mr. Goffman's rule targeted 23 States, and—you are right—one of

them was mine, but just in the last week, his office proposed to expand the rule to 5 more States, which now include Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, New Mexico, and Tennessee. This has caused the Supreme Court to step in once again and consider pausing the program while litigation proceeds.

We are also expecting Mr. Goffman's office to finalize an unattainable, unnecessary air regulation that would threaten manufacturing jobs and projects across the country. That rule is expected any day now.

So, to sum it up, from his more than 10 years at the EPA, we know this is what Joe Goffman stands for because he has shown us this time and time again. His record is one that consistently kills American jobs, threatens our electric grid, and violates the law. That is why I continue to strongly oppose his nomination today, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do the same.

I yield the floor.

(At the request of Ms. LUMMIS, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I rise to oppose the confirmation of Joseph Goffman for Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

My opposition is not about a person. My opposition is about a poisonous idea. The idea of total government control. Mr. Goffman wants to control what Americans can drive, where Americans can work, and what Americans can buy. Mr. Goffman wants to do this by imposing political, punishing, and penalizing regulations. These regulations will cost Americans their future and their freedom.

From energy to the environment, Mr. Goffman's record is radical and extreme. Mr. Goffman is one of the main architects of the so-called Clean Power Plan. This was such an extreme overreach that it was struck down by the Supreme Court. Mr. Goffman is also a champion of Joe Biden's out-of-touch, electric vehicle mandates. Mr. Goffman is one of Joe Biden's top generals in Democrats' war on affordable, reliable, American-made energy. By the EPA's own estimates, the regulatory costs imposed by Mr. Goffman's department already exceed \$500 billion. Mr. Goffman is determined to keep pushing Democrats' job-killing, radical, out-of-touch, environmental agenda.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly shot down the EPA for overreaching in its authority. Mr. Goffman doesn't care what the Court says. He wants to defy its rulings, including the landmark case *West Virginia v. EPA*. Mr. Goffman had the audacity to tell the *New York Times*, "This case does not take anything off the menu."

President Biden has chosen another unelected, unaccountable, heavy-handed, Washington bureaucrat who believes the rules don't apply to him. If confirmed by the Senate, Mr. Goffman will not moderate. He will not change. He will not stop.

If you want an EPA that is more aggressive, more out-of-touch, and controls more of your life, then vote for Mr. Goffman. But if you want to lower costs, unleash American energy, and protect American jobs, then vote no.

Energy-producing States such as Wyoming have been in Mr. Goffman's crosshairs for years. We should not allow him to have his fingers on the trigger.

The Senate must reject his nomination. •

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I rise today in support of Joe Goffman's nomination to serve as Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation.

At the end of last year, I joined several of our colleagues to discuss our recent delegation trip to Dubai for the annual United Nations climate conference, known as COP28. While on the ground, our message to the world was clear: The United States is again leading the global effort to attack the climate crisis.

That leadership is thanks in no small part to the Biden administration's work to implement the unprecedented climate and clean energy investments that many of us here on this floor helped to enact into law. It is also thanks to the historic action by the Environmental Protection Agency to rein in climate pollution in a way that supports economic growth and job creation.

Still, meeting our Nation's climate goals, reducing harmful air pollution, and supporting good-paying, clean energy jobs requires having the right leadership in place.

As I have said before many times on this floor, the Office of Air and Radiation has an outside impact on our lives, and the American people deserve someone leading this office who is committed to carrying out its mission. That includes reducing climate pollution, while also improving our vehicle emissions standards and protecting public health—all of which go hand in hand with economic growth and job creation.

Mr. Goffman has proven that he is up to the task. Under his direction, the EPA has made significant progress in implementing many of the programs that we secured in the Inflation Reduction Act. That includes programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to help lower energy costs for all Americans.

From the earliest days of his career serving on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, which I am now privileged to chair, to his time at EPA under President Obama and now President Biden, Joe Goffman has dedicated his life's work to cleaning up the air that we breathe and protecting our one and only planet. He is thoughtful, he is principled, and he is humble. I know those things because Joe has

served as chief counsel of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which I am now privileged to chair.

Importantly, he has followed and continues to follow the law, and he does so in a way that also provides certainty and predictability for the industry.

Joe Goffman is also committed to fair outcomes, and that is because he cares about doing things the right way while listening to the concerns of all who might be impacted by changes to our Nation's clean air standards. Don't just take my word for it. Over 50 groups representing a broad coalition of interests, from—oh my, what a wide group, and I will mention them in a minute—they voiced their support for Joe Goffman's confirmation to serve as EPA's Assistant Administrator.

Here is just a sample of the breadth of the groups that are supporting his nomination: National Resources Defense Council, the League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the National Wildlife Federation. That is to name a few. Just as importantly, though, key industry partners, such as the Edison Electric Institute and the Renewable Fuels Association, support Joe Goffman's nomination. Finally, Joe Goffman's nomination has the support of some of our Nation's largest labor unions, and they include the AFL-CIO and the United Steelworkers. Even the United Mine Workers of America, our Nation's largest union of coal miners, has voiced its support for Mr. Goffman's nomination. A coalition this broad does not happen every day and certainly not on this floor, and it bears testimony to Joe's character and his commitment to doing what is right.

Let me close, if I could, by saying that Joe Goffman, I believe, is the right person to lead EPA's Office of Air and Radiation during this critical time for our Nation. I am confident that he will excel in this important role, in part because he is already doing the job. I do not doubt that Joe will be considerate, he will be courteous, and he will be inclusive as he develops EPA's rules to reduce harmful pollution, clean up the air we breathe, and protect America's health and well-being.

With that, I want to urge our colleagues to join me and to join us, I hope, in supporting Mr. Goffman's nomination so that he can continue serving the Nation. He will not disappoint us in the confidence we have placed in him.

With that, I yield the floor.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote occur immediately.

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

VOTE ON GOFFMAN NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Goffman nomination?

Mr. CARPER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?