



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024

No. 83

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray. Eternal Father, thank You for this day, for a land of spacious skies, bountiful grain, majestic mountains, and fruited plains. We accept this day as a gift from Your bounty, and we will use it for the glory of Your Name.

As our lawmakers strive to do what is best for this great land, lead them with Your might. Guide them by Your higher wisdom and help them know the constancy of Your presence. Lord, give them the greatness of being on Your side and the delight of knowing they are doing Your will. As they seek to be responsive to Your leading, keep our Senators' hearts riveted on You. Make them stewards of the blessings You daily provide.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 14, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

CHINA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, President Biden announced he is taking new steps to protect U.S. workers and put the Chinese Communist Party on notice with a new round of tariffs on goods vital for America's economic future.

I commend President Biden for standing up for American workers and making it clear to the CCP that they will face the consequences for their trade abuses. Fighting the CCP's unfair trade practices is something I have cared about for a very long time. It was one of the very first issues I focused on when I first visited Upstate New York as a Senator and saw for myself jobs leaving the shores. The CCP has shown that they will stop at nothing to steal our intellectual property and undermine our economy.

When I met with President Xi during my codet last fall, I pointedly confronted him about the Chinese Govern-

ment's history of trade abuses and said we need to create a more even-leveled playing field.

Today's tariffs are thus a good step towards reversing America's trade imbalance and protect U.S. production of everything from batteries to solar cells to semiconductors to steel and aluminum.

I am particularly pleased that President Biden's tariffs will boost American EVs and clean energy manufacturing. With all the investments we Democrats made in the Inflation Reduction Act to boost EV manufacturing—something I care a lot about and worked hard for—it would be terrible for America's roads to become saturated with EVs made in China, and these tariffs will help prevent that. We have taken major steps to reverse the ossification of U.S. manufacturing with the infrastructure law, the IRA, and Chips and Science, but the President's tariffs are also a critical part of the solution.

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on FERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission might not sound like the flashiest Agency in the world, but, yesterday, they had a lot of flash. They made a game-changing announcement that can only be described as dramatic change and help for the American people and for a clean environment.

Yesterday, after years of planning—and after I called FERC to take a strong action last summer and was pushing FERC repeatedly to do this—the Commission announced a pair of rules that will revamp America's power grid. FERC's new rules will require both long-term transmission planning and establishing a way for States to split the bill for big transmission projects.

These sound esoteric, but they are huge. The result, in the long run, will

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S3671

help clean energy compete on equal footing with fossil fuels and result in lower energy costs and increased reliability.

Nearly 2 years ago, Congressional Democrats, led by the Democrats in the Senate, made history by passing the Inflation Reduction Act, the largest downpayment for clean energy production the United States has ever seen. Our bill, which I was proud to lead in the Senate, provided hundreds of billions to boost U.S. production in solar and wind and other forms of clean energy, and it is hugely successful. All the programs are being oversubscribed. Many more people are in line—companies, et cetera—to build solar and wind production and other forms of clean energy.

But it was only half the battle. It matters little if we build lots of solar panels and windmills if we don't have a way of transmitting all that clean energy to communities that need it most. And, frankly, transmission was tied in knots.

What good is it having a lot of wind offshore or solar energy throughout our more sunny areas if you can't get that energy to the people who need it and want it, to the people whose costs it will lower?

And so it was really important to me that we do something about transmission. Unfortunately, we were not able to get that done when we tried to do it here in the Senate. Our Republican colleagues were not amenable. So we had to find another way. According to one study, without more transmissions, the United States could squander up to half the climate benefits of the IRA—what a colossal tragedy.

We all see what global warming is doing. You look at the weather reports every day. All of these tornadoes and everything else, where the heck are they coming from if the weather is not changing?

So that is why Senate Democrats tried to include transmission reforms in the IRA. And after that, when that didn't work—the Parliamentarian knocked them out—we tried to work them with Republicans, but they blocked our efforts.

So I had to find another way, and I was very eager and almost desperate to find another way because we so needed to bring this clean energy to people's homes and reduce their costs. So, last summer, I wrote a letter to FERC to help provide a remedy, because I knew that FERC could strengthen the rules—and they did. They could strengthen rules so we could more quickly build transmission lines and ensure clean energy could compete with fossil fuels on an even footing.

I spent months working with my team and with one expert after another to quietly but forcefully fine-tune what FERC needed and change our letter on how the Agency could make the most of this opportunity.

Well, hallelujah, this is a major change that people are not paying at-

tention to, but it will have dramatic effect. FERC's rule contained almost all of my requests.

The result of yesterday's announcement: more clean energy going to people who need it, lower costs, increased reliability. We are unlocking the clean energy revolution along the way.

So let me say this—this was a major announcement—yesterday's announcement from FERC was a turning point in the effort to transition the United States to a clean energy economy. I am very pleased with FERC. I salute their leadership for doing what they did, and I thank my staff, who worked so long and hard to make this happen.

It is great news for the environment, great news for the electricity consumer, great news for America and our globe.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on the border, it has been 97 days since Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans blocked the strongest, most comprehensive border security bill America has seen in a generation, and they still have zero plan to actually fix the problem.

President Biden, meanwhile, is taking action to secure our border. Last week, the President began announcing a series of administrative actions to go after bad actors in Central America and to use whatever powers he can from the executive branch.

Here in the Senate, we have not walked away from the table. We know we need to fix the border. The American people demand we fix the border, and we call on our Republican colleagues, once and for all, to join us in taking real, bipartisan action.

Democrats agree that the status quo on the border cannot continue. We want to pass border security in Congress by working in a bipartisan way, and so, 3 months ago, we brought to the floor a comprehensive border security bill, months in the making—a bill that didn't just talk the talk about border security but walked the walk. It updated asylum, had more money for border agents and judges, and was supported by conservatives like the Wall Street Journal editorial board.

Our border bill was not a messaging bill. It was the result of bipartisan negotiation—Senators MURPHY and SINEMA and LANKFORD, with input from a wide range of stakeholders from both sides. If both Chambers would have had a chance to vote on our border security bill, it would have passed and become law.

Well, 3 months later, we are not walking away from trying to resolve the problems at the border. We hope Republicans will change course and join us. Instead of just making a lot of speeches, pointing a lot of fingers—blame, blame, blame—let's get something done. It is right within our grasp—a bipartisan bill that, when it was shown to many Republicans, they

said, "Wow." It wasn't until Donald Trump said, "I want the border to remain in chaos so I can win election," that Republicans backed off. What shame—that is not what the American people want, and we are going to make sure they know it.

BUFFALO, NEW YORK, SHOOTING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 2 years ago today, barbarity descended upon the "City of Good Neighbors." My heart, my soul, and my spirit are with the people of Buffalo, NY, today, as they observe the second tragic anniversary of the shooting at the Tops supermarket. In the span of just a few minutes, 10 precious lives were extinguished in a senseless act of hatred from a White supremacist.

Racism is America's original sin. Our work will never be done until we do everything to rid our society of this vicious evil.

May God watch over the souls of those who died 2 years ago today. May those of us who remember them find strength and courage and the will to prevent tragedies like this in the future.

America has tragically endured many more senseless shootings since the massacre in Buffalo. Gun violence is one of America's gravest societal ills, and it seems to be increasing.

But 2 years ago, we also learned that the situation is not entirely hopeless, because after the advent of what happened in Buffalo, in Uvalde, and in some other places, Democrats and Republicans actually joined together to pass the first gun safety bill in 30 years—the first since the Brady bill, which I offered way back, a long time ago, when I was in the House. This is the first one since then.

Later this month, the administration will bring into effect one of the key elements of our bill by expanding background checks and closing loopholes for online sales and gun shows. Our rule expanding background checks shows change is possible when both sides work together, even if progress is hard and halting. A few years ago, the announcement would have been unimaginable.

We are never going to be able to fully heal the harms unleashed by gun violence, but we can honor those we lost by continuing the work to make mass shootings a thing of the past. We have a long way to go, but, today, as we remember those who tragically died in Buffalo, let us recommit to keep going, no matter what it takes.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 7109

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows: