

by the SEC that hampers the deployment of new digital financial technologies.

And in the coming days, we will also vote on Senator CRUZ's resolution to ax a new Department of Energy rule on gas furnace efficiency standards that threaten to drive a huge share of existing residential furnace models out of the market and hike costs for seniors, small businesses, and low-income households.

As always, I am grateful to our colleagues for leading these efforts, and I urge the Senate to pass each resolution.

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. DURBIN. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week marks the 70th anniversary of one of the most important Supreme Court decisions of all time. It is part of our march toward justice.

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court announced its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, unanimously—unanimously—declaring the racist legal doctrine of “separate but equal” unconstitutional.

Today, we celebrate this historic anniversary and how far we have come as a country since the dark days of Jim Crow. Thankfully, we have made substantial progress in addressing racial disparities in education. However, significantly, systemic disparities do still exist today. More work needs to be done to promote racial equity and end discrimination inside and outside the classroom.

When the Supreme Court announced its decision in 1954, the demographics of American school-aged children were significantly different than they are today. At that time, the school-aged population, according to The Century Foundation, was roughly 85 percent White, 12 percent Black, and less than 4 percent other races. Contrast that with today. America's school-aged population is much more diverse: 48 percent White, 27 percent Hispanic, 15 percent Black, 6 percent Asian, 1 percent American-Indian, and 4 percent multi-racial.

Yet, even with this increase—dramatic increase—in diversity, America's schools too often remain segregated by race. As of the 2018-2019 school year, one in six public school students attended schools where more than 90 percent of their peers had the same racial background. Illinois has 3 of the country's top 11 most segregated urban school districts. This lack of racial diversity in our schools is caused in part by unfair, exclusionary zoning policies

that keep low-income families out of schools in wealthier communities.

Education can play a significant role in helping to close the wealth gap between families, but unfortunately, due to modern-day segregation, many Black and Brown students often cannot access the same high-quality education as their White peers.

If you look at data from U.S. public schools going back to 1967, you will see that the segregation between Black and White students has increased by 64 percent since 1988 in the 100 largest school districts. While school segregation is not at pre-Brown v. Board of Education levels, it is still high and has been rising steadily since the late 1980s, and because where you go to school depends on your ZIP Code, students from poor neighborhoods in segregated cities are often trapped in underperforming schools.

Dismantling segregation has become more difficult now than it would have been 70 or 80 years ago, but we cannot ignore the challenge. Unless we focus on desegregating America and its neighborhoods, Brown's promise of integrated education will remain an unattainable goal.

The Brown decision was supposed to be the first step in a long march towards Americans' equality. It helped set the stage for challenges to other Jim Crow policies, such as barriers to fair housing, equal employment, voting rights, and public accommodations.

Unfortunately, today, the forces of intolerance are working to turn back the clock. Just last year, the Supreme Court struck down decades of precedent by ruling that affirmative action policies at two universities were unconstitutional. The attack on affirmative action threatens not just opportunities in education but also equal access to employment and contracts for minorities. The decision rewinds the clock and recreates barriers to entry for young minority students looking to pursue a degree in higher education and advance beyond college.

Quality education should be a right in our country, not a privilege. As a country, we still struggle to fulfill that promise. Public schools and many other elements of society remain separate and unequal, diminishing opportunities for millions.

Congress must focus on enacting policies and using resources to provide every student—Black, White, Brown—with the tools they need to learn and thrive in America. We must advocate for all students of every race and every place to have these resources to learn without limits.

As we celebrate 70 years since this historic decision, we honor the brave individuals who fought hard to bring it to reality. Those of us here today must honor their determination and sacrifice by continuing their mission for fairness.

On this 70th anniversary, I urge my colleagues to continue working toward equality within our education system

and society. It is long overdue for us to repair the broken systems that no longer serve our children, our grandchildren, and our country.

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. THUNE. 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.

INFLATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this morning's inflation report shows just how stubborn President Biden's inflation crisis is.

For the 37th month in a row, prices have risen by more than 3 percent, and there is still no end in sight. Overall, prices are up 19.9 percent since President Biden took office. Grocery prices are up 21.3 percent. Car repairs are up 30.2 percent. Rent is up 20.8 percent. And the list literally goes on and on.

As Americans turn on their air conditioners this summer, they can contemplate a grim report from the Wall Street Journal, which notes that electricity prices have gone up 13 times faster under President Biden than they did in the previous 7 years.

All told, it costs a typical family more than \$1,000 a month just to maintain the standard of living it had when President Biden first took office—more than \$1,000 a month just to tread water.

So it is shocking to hear President Biden say things like he did last week when he suggested that people “have the money” to pay higher prices. But that is the kind of disconnect we have come to expect from the President, who claimed inflation would be “temporary” and who has persistently downplayed and denied the painful economic reality Americans are experiencing thanks to Democrats' reckless spending.

That pain is real. As one working parent in Connecticut said:

Every time I look at my bank account, it's always going down.

Luis, a truckdriver in Pennsylvania said:

I can do my living, but compared to what I used to have, I need to work extra to get what I used to have before.

And a family farmer in Missouri described his input costs as “ridiculous.”

They are not alone; 48 percent of voters say their personal financial situation is getting worse. Half of voters say they are worse off since President Biden took office. And 80 percent of voters say high prices are one of their biggest financial challenges.

Meanwhile, the cost of dealing with inflation is adding to Americans' financial pain. Many Americans have had to turn to their credit cards to cope with higher prices. And with the Federal Reserve having to keep interest rates elevated to fight inflation, paying off that debt has gotten harder.

High interest rates have also helped put the American dream of owning your own home increasingly out of reach. Prospective home buyers need to earn nearly twice as much to afford a typical home today as they would have 4 years ago. Half of renters under age 50 don't think they will be able to afford to buy their own home.

For Americans pursuing their dream of owning their own business or running the family farm or ranch, inflation has created serious challenges. More than a third of small business owners identify inflation as the biggest single threat to their business. Higher input costs and higher borrowing costs have forced small business owners to grapple with unwelcome prospects like raising prices and pulling back from investing in their businesses.

As bad as things have been over the past 3 years, it could get worse. The budget President Biden proposed in March contained a staggering—staggering—\$5 trillion in job-killing tax hikes. And just recently, the President said that if he is reelected, he would let the 2017 tax cuts expire.

Democrats may not like to acknowledge this, but the 2017 Republican-led tax reform legislation cut taxes for the majority of Americans. And if those rate cuts are allowed to expire, a typical family is looking at a \$1,600 tax hike in 2026.

That money may not matter to someone like the President, but I am sure working families have better uses for \$1,600 than sending it to the IRS, especially when you consider how much President Biden's inflation crisis is already costing them.

On top of that, the President wants to allow other tax reform measures in the 2017 bill—measures that brought benefits to hard-working Americans—to expire. So Americans could be looking at a future of higher taxes plus fewer jobs and opportunities.

The American people can't afford any more of the President's misguided economic policies; but, unfortunately, the President never seems to learn.

Let's hope the American people don't have to endure a second term of Bidenomics.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 467

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, everyone here—everyone here—everybody in the audience, everybody watching on C-SPAN has a loved one or knows of someone whom they have loved who has either overdosed or died, actually, from an overdose of fentanyl—an incredible scourge on our society right now. Drug overdose is the leading

cause of death among young adults 18 to 45, and synthetic opioids like fentanyl are 75 percent of the cause, if you will, of U.S. overdose deaths.

Fentanyl continues to kill almost 200 Americans a day—200 Americans a day. Like, today, 200 Americans will die from a fentanyl overdose—an entire generation, dying. Illegal fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances are flooding into our market from the southern border in unprecedented amounts, with the bulk of it originating from a handful of manufacturers in Wuhan Province, China. By the way, you can't help but point out that this is worsened by the Biden administration's complete failure to secure the southern border.

Currently, fentanyl-related substances are classified as schedule I under the Controlled Substances Act. This classification provides law enforcement with the tools necessary to combat this emergency, going after the criminals who, again, are flooding our communities with these deadly drugs. But schedule I classification expires at the end of the year, and that is less than 8 months away.

Now, for years, Congress has not made this classification permanent, and every day we get closer to this deadline, we risk losing this essential law enforcement tool. If we don't act, the chemical manufacturers in China, the cartels, and the criminals who exploit our communities are emboldened, and we must not allow this to happen.

That is why today I am calling on the Senate to pass the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act, or the HALT Fentanyl Act, to permanently classify fentanyl-related substances as a schedule I controlled substance. Now, the bill is not controversial. There are no poison pills. All it does is codify current law, ensuring we don't lose tools we need to confront the fentanyl epidemic. The House—with as many problems as the House has had passing legislation—passed this bill on a strong bipartisan basis last year.

And the legislation removes barriers that impede the ability of researchers to conduct studies on these substances and allows for exemptions if the research provides evidence that specific analogs of fentanyl have a valid medical purpose. So we give law enforcement tools, but we also give the scientists, the medical scientists, tools to establish whether one of these analogs is worth having for medical purposes.

Now, it is important to note that this week is National Police Week. We honor police officers and their service to our communities. Now, these officers are on the frontlines of the fentanyl crisis, holding criminals accountable, saving lives by preventing the spread of drugs, but at times giving drugs like Narcan to reverse an overdose.

I am proud to say that we have a letter from 11 national law enforcement organizations supporting the HALT Fentanyl Act. And by passing this legislation, we will send a strong message

to law enforcement: We have your back. We have your back as you battle the scourge of deadly drugs in our communities.

The clock is ticking. Failure to act puts Americans in harm's way. We must pass this bill and get it to the President's desk for signature.

Mr. President, now, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 467 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the HALT Fentanyl Act would permanently classify fentanyl-related substances as schedule I substances under the Controlled Substances Act.

The fentanyl epidemic is ravaging communities across the United States. We are losing more than 80,000 Americans to overdose every year from opioid overdose. With deaths reaching this level, we do need every tool at our disposal to combat illicit fentanyl, but reclassification of fentanyl-related substances as schedule I substances would limit the government's ability to research overdose and addiction treatment medications, override critical public health considerations in scheduling decisions, and extend the policy approach of the failed War on Drugs.

Schedule I drugs are difficult for scientists to research. Fentanyl's potency and danger demand that we study it and its analogs to combat overdose and addiction. A permanent, blanket schedule I category for any fentanyl-related substance would create barriers to vital research.

This punishment-only categorization for fentanyl-related substances would eclipse the longstanding public health approach to Controlled Substances Act scheduling. The Controlled Substances Act authorizes the administration to consider concrete scientific factors when determining which scheduling category should apply to a drug, and that approach is absent here.

Finally, this bill would bring the United States back to the approach of the failed War on Drugs where we criminalized drug use while ignoring the underlying issues that animate abuse and addiction. Prosecutions under this expansion will continue to disproportionately target people of color. A punishment-only approach will not reduce drugs in our communities.

I have spoken to people on the frontlines of this epidemic: people with substance use disorder, families who have lost a loved one, and healthcare providers. They are the ones on the frontlines when people die from fentanyl. They are the ones who lose their lives or lose their patients,