

White House denies this economic reality. And President Biden proved that he was completely disconnected from the suffering American families. Earlier this month, he said Americans have “the money to spend.” I am not sure whom he is talking to, but that is not the case across America, and it is not the case of my home State of Wyoming.

Democrats are completely out of touch with the economy because they are out of touch with American voters, the citizens of this country. Rising prices have plagued Americans for the last 3 years. Everyday life costs more and more and more. Under Joe Biden, Americans are squeezed; they are stressed; and they are struggling to get by.

More than half of Americans will tell you that the economic conditions that they see day in and day out are poor—poor—for them personally. More than 80 percent of Americans say that high prices are their No. 1 concern. That is what Americans are suffering from today. President Biden’s policies are not the cure for inflation in our economic anxieties. Joe Biden and the Democrats’ policies are the cause of our economic struggles.

Joe Biden and the Democrats in this Chamber and in the House of Representatives at a time when NANCY PELOSI was Speaker approved more than \$3 trillion—\$3 trillion—in wasteful Washington spending. The President added more than \$1 trillion additionally on stifling and punishing economic regulations.

He launched a war on American energy, hiked energy costs for families, gas prices went up, electricity prices went up. Because of failed Bidenomics, Americans are paying over \$12,000 more a year—this year—than they did the year that he came into office just to buy the same things that they could buy the day he came into the White House. It is over \$1,000 a month. That is what the American people are seeing today. A \$100 cart of groceries in 2019, the cost now for that same cart of groceries—not very full—is \$137. A gallon of gas in 2021 was \$2.38. Today, in many of the battleground States—Nevada, Arizona, Pennsylvania—it is approaching \$4 a gallon.

Now, of course, high prices aren’t the only problem. Interest rates are at the highest level in 23 years. High interest rates are a bitter fruit of Bidenomics. People are suffering when they have to take out a loan. This is causing significant affordability crises all across the country and in all age groups.

Under these failed policies of the Biden administration, younger people— younger Americans—are being demoralized. They are delaying life’s biggest moments. Homeownership is slipping clearly out of the reach of most young married couples and young people trying to start a family.

Young Americans are facing the costliest housing market ever. Borrowing costs have soared. When Biden took of-

fice, they were 2.7 percent. Today, they are over 7 percent. Home prices today are nearly six times higher than the average household income. That is a record ratio—six times higher than the average household income. Other costs—utility costs, insurance costs—all costs are climbing, and they are all caused by the amount of spending we have had under this administration.

Younger Americans are having trouble buying a car. The price of car loans has gone way up as well as the price of automobiles themselves.

Younger Americans are also forced to rely on credit cards more and more. They are developing mounting debt, which is going to continue to saddle them in their future. Young Americans will tell that you they are overextended and they are distressed and they are begging for relief. Today’s high prices and high interest rates are going to create tomorrow’s troubles.

Now, President Biden has failed to protect the American dream. We now have an entire generation of young Americans who can’t afford to buy a home, can’t afford to start a business, can’t afford to begin a family, and certainly can’t afford to begin to grow any savings that they may have.

Americans are absolutely fed up with big-spending, high-price Democrats. People are financially exhausted by Joe Biden’s high prices. People are ready to move beyond Bidenomics and beyond Joe Biden.

It is time for a change. Senate Republicans are ready to put America back on track. We are fighting to lower costs. That is what we are hearing every weekend at home: Get down the prices of things that are up under Joe Biden; stop the wasteful Washington spending; and please unleash American energy. That is the solution to the problems facing America today. This is how we can help make life more affordable for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

RECRUIT AND RETAIN ACT

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, in 1969, the city of Montreal, Canada, discovered what it is like to live in a world without police. For 16 hours on October 7, the city’s full police force went on strike. What ensued is now called Montreal’s “Night of Terror.” The city rang out with gunshots, glass shattering, and flames erupting.

Just 3 hours after the strike began, the first bank was robbed. Robbers stormed nine more before the police returned. Thefts, vandalism, and mob violence took the city by storm. There were 450 break-ins and over 30 armed holdups. A crowd 800 strong overturned a bus and sent vehicles ablaze.

The government sent Provincial police and army officers into the city. But by then, the chaos was already in full force. A sniper shot one officer, killing him. The result of Montreal’s “Night of Terror” was two dead men, dozens of injuries, over 100 arrests, and close to \$3 million in property damage.

Less than a day without police was a nightmare for Montreal.

Here in America, we often take our strong police force for granted. We enjoy the safety and protection of law enforcement, sometimes without even realizing it. But if trends continue, we will inch closer to living the nightmare of a world without police.

In 2022, almost 50 percent more officers resigned than in 2019. Almost 20 percent more officers retired. The number of police officers nationwide decreased by 4,000 between 2020 and 2023.

A study in 2023 found that over the prior 2 years, at least 12 American towns completely dissolved their police departments.

I have been speaking with law enforcement in Nebraska and around the country about growing staffing challenges for years. I greatly respect the State and local control of law enforcement agencies so I always ask them how I can make existing Federal tools more supportive of their work. Based on those conversations, I introduced the Recruit and Retain Act, which the House passed last week.

I am thankful to the Nebraska officers and sheriffs who collaborated with me to craft legislation with bipartisan appeal. As retirements increase and new applications decline, departments are shrinking, burdening the officers who are trying to keep them afloat. Understaffed departments are doing their best to keep up, but they don’t always have the resources to hire all the officers that they need.

The Recruit and Retain Act offers them better access to resources to reverse this trend. My legislation improved the Department of Justice’s community-oriented policing services, or COPS, a hiring grant program. The bill expands COPS grants for specific onboarding expenses like background checks and psychological evaluations.

It also provides clear guidance to the understaffed agencies applying for this funding, and it alleviates administrative burdens that come with those applications. These changes will allow departments to consider more applicants and hire more officers.

Recruit and Retain also establishes the Pipeline Partnership Program to promote student interest in law enforcement careers. Departments and local schools will work together to launch mentorship opportunities that give young people an inside look at law enforcement work. This will not only create a hiring pipeline for police departments, but it will also strengthen community relationships with law enforcement.

Finally, my bill directs the Government Accountability Office to investigate the causes of recent recruitment challenges and those effects on public safety. We see some of these causes and effects already: Anti-police movements like far-left “defund the police” that has demonized our law enforcement. We have seen rising crime levels in places like Portland, in Minneapolis, in

New York City after they cut funding for their police departments. Nonetheless, we haven't seen comprehensive studies that evaluate all levels of law enforcement in agencies of all sizes across the country. To address staffing issues, we need to have the data on exactly what is causing these problems and how they are compromising the safety of our communities.

These are practical changes that take our law enforcement a step forward in rebuilding their departments, a goal that will serve officers, will serve local communities, and it will serve our Nation as a whole. Our police and other law enforcement officers do the essential work to keep us safe and secure. Choosing not to support them is to choose chaos, lawlessness—a nightmare.

But by passing my bill, the House and the Senate have both chosen to support our police as they face these staffing challenges. I urge President Biden to do the same by signing the Recruit and Retain Act into law.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

HOUSTON STORMS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last Thursday night, as I was sitting on my airplane scheduled to go into Houston, TX, a severe storm slammed the entire southeastern portion of our State, bringing heavy rains, roaring winds, and flooding to millions of people in the area.

Now, Houston and Southeast Texas are no strangers to hurricanes and natural disasters, but this was something altogether different. Madam President, 100-mile-per-hour winds ripped through the region, tearing windows out of skyscrapers in downtown Houston and toppling transmission towers, power lines, and uprooting trees. Homes, businesses, roads, and vehicles were damaged by the storms, and, sadly, at least eight Texans have lost their lives.

Shortly after the storm, more than 1 million Texans lost power, and it is starting to get warm in Texas as we approach the summer, and some 200,000 homes remain without electricity or air-conditioning. Today, more than 50 campuses across the Houston Independent School District are closed due to power outages.

As I said, the Houston region is no stranger to storms, and Texans did as they always do: They immediately mobilized to support those who suffered the worst impact. I want to commend the brave first responders and volunteers and just the good neighbors who supported the emergency response over the last several days as well as the crews who are working to clear debris and restore power even as I speak.

As we move from rescue to recovery efforts, my team and I are prepared to help in any way we can to help those communities rebuild.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, we know we are about 6 months out from the next elec-

tion, and as President Biden campaigns for another term, he seems desperate to convince the American people that America's economic troubles aren't his fault and are somehow a figment of their imagination.

Last week, he said inflation "was at 9 percent when I came in and it's now down [to] 3 percent." This marked the second time in only a handful of days that the President made this claim, and it would be great if it were true. The fact is, under President Biden's economic policies, inflation has reached a 40-year high and is stubbornly resisting efforts by the Federal Reserve to bring it down.

In reality, inflation was at only 1.4 percent when President Biden took office, and under his leadership, Washington Democrats went on a crazy spending spree that sent inflation skyrocketing to the highest in 40 years.

I know we are all familiar with the Federal Reserve and its role to try to bring down inflation by making money tighter, and they do that by raising interest rates. But that is not without a cost, and the ability of hard-working Texas families and other Americans to buy a car, buy a house—obviously those have been negatively impacted. If you went to the grocery store and filled up a basket with groceries the day President Biden took office and then did it again recently, you would see that your grocery prices went up 36 percent thanks to President Biden's policies.

Mainly what that is—it is not about the Federal Reserve; it is about all the spending our Democratic colleagues have done here—about \$2.7 trillion of partisan spending bills, which are like gasoline on the inflation fire.

Finally, as a result of tight money policies by the Federal Reserve, inflation has cooled somewhat, but prices remain unbearably high for most families, and inflation is still more than double what it was when President Biden took office.

This may be the President's latest attempt to try to divert attention and misrepresent his record, but it certainly isn't the only one.

Last month, the President tweeted this. He said:

Donald Trump was very proud of his \$2 trillion tax cut that overwhelmingly benefited the wealthy and biggest corporations and exploded the federal debt. That tax cut is going to expire. If I'm reelected, it is going to stay expired.

Well, forget for a minute that President Biden has misrepresented who benefited from the tax cut and bringing more foreign investment back to the United States by bringing our corporate and business tax rates in line with other democracies around the world. As a matter of fact, before COVID, the economy was about the best it has ever been in my adult lifetime because the economy was roaring back, in part because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act bill that we passed in 2017.

First, this is an interesting time for the President to start paying attention to the national debt—something he has forgotten about entirely for the last 3½ years. On his watch, our national debt is now approaching \$35 trillion. As I said, he and congressional Democrats spent nearly \$2.7 trillion in less than 18 months on things like handouts for union bosses and money for something they called climate justice, whatever that is. But apparently tax relief for working families is where he draws the line.

But the second issue that I can't ignore is this: Allowing the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to expire would raise taxes on virtually everybody, including working families.

The Wall Street Journal recently took a look at this. This was 10 days ago, May 10. They looked at data from the Tax Foundation and determined that "if the tax cuts expire," which is something President Biden said he would see to, "about 62% of households would pay more, 9% would pay less and the rest would be largely unaffected," according to the Tax Foundation, as I said. So based on President Biden's tweet that he would let the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act expire, 62 percent of households in America would pay more taxes.

Given the financial pain mainly caused by inflation that families are already feeling, a larger tax burden is the very last thing American families need, but that seems to be the path on which President Biden is headed. It would be salt in the wound for the families who are already struggling to cover their basic living expenses, like that basket of groceries that costs 36 percent more now than it did 3½ years ago.

Another thing to note is that this would actually break President Biden's marquee promise to never raise taxes on households making under \$400,000 a year. Once that was pointed out, the President's team quickly shifted into damage control and said: Well, the President really doesn't want all of this law to expire—just the portions that affect people making more than \$400,000 a year.

But it is hard to know whether the President is coming or going when he makes these statements, and every time you take him at his word, his political team comes in and does cleanup and says: No, he really didn't mean that.

But the President already made his statement in the clearest of possible terms. The tax cut will expire unless extended, and if he is elected, he said it will stay expired, raising taxes on 62 percent of households.

Of course, it is no surprise that President Biden would allow tax increases on working families. After all, his Presidency has been defined by giveaways for unlikely winners.

First, there is the handout for wealthy electric vehicle purchasers. The horribly misnamed Inflation Reduction Act included massive handouts