

where the President's own Treasury Secretary used to sit on the board, had this to say:

Including the Biden administration's new student debt cancellation plan, we estimate all recent student debt cancellation policies will cost a combined \$870 billion to \$1.4 trillion. That's more than all federal spending on higher education over the nation's entire history.

That, again, is a quote from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Let me just repeat that last line:

That's more than all federal spending on higher education over the nation's entire history.

And "the vast majority of this debt cancellation," the committee goes on, "was put in place through executive actions under President Biden."

So the staggering cost of President Biden's giveaways is one major problem, especially when you consider another major problem, which is that the President's giveaways will do nothing to fix the actual problem, which is the cost of higher education. In fact, they could very well make things worse.

For one, there is reason to fear that his student loan giveaways could actually encourage colleges to raise their prices. And, of course, the President's giveaways will do nothing to encourage students to only borrow what they can afford. Indeed, there is a good chance students will increase their borrowing as a result of the President's plans.

President Biden's student loan schemes will cost a massive amount of money, while doing nothing to solve higher education costs.

But the problems don't end there. To start with, there is the question of whether or not what the President is doing is even lawful. Last summer, the Supreme Court struck down the President's original student loan forgiveness plan because the President lacked the statutory authority to forgive student loans, and there is reason to wonder whether his SAVE Plan or these latest measures could be struck down in the courts as well.

Of course, on top of all of these issues, there is also the fundamental issue, and that is the unfairness of asking taxpayers who never went to college or worked hard to pay off the full balance of their student loans or who worked their way through school to avoid a heavy loan burden or who covered the costs of their education by enlisting in the military and risking their lives for their country to shoulder the massive cost of all this loan forgiveness. Why should someone who never went to college be taking on the burden of loan forgiveness for borrowers making in excess of \$300,000 a year?

Then, of course, there is the troubling message sent to students when we teach them that they can expect to be bailed out for the debt they take on, even though they agreed to repay it.

I could go on.

The President announced his first student loan forgiveness scheme 2

months before the 2022 congressional elections. I don't think there is a coincidence about that, and I suspect it is no coincidence that he expects to implement his latest student loan giveaway this fall before the 2024 election.

Last week, I joined Senator CASSIDY and Congresswoman FOXX on a bicameral letter to the Secretary of Education, urging him to withdraw this latest plan. But, unfortunately, I suspect that the President and his administration won't be withdrawing anything that they think could win them a few votes in November. So the American people will, once again, have to endure yet another disastrous Biden administration spending plan.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Vermont.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 8369

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I was in the Chair and objected in my capacity as the Senator from Vermont to the unanimous consent request of the Senator from Arkansas. I would like now to have an opportunity to explain the basis of that.

First, the Senator from Arkansas essentially said that President Biden is appeasing pro-Hamas voters in imposing an arms embargo on Israel and, also in that assertion, suggesting that President Biden is not fully supportive, as he has been throughout his political life, to Israel.

Let me start by saying what I believe represents the unanimous points of view of this U.S. Senate, and that is that the attack by Hamas on Israel, the taking of hostages, the sexual assaults, the murder of so many innocent Israelis are condemned by each and every one of us. No one condemns it more than President Biden, who went to Israel on his own to show his solidarity and empathy for what happened to the Israeli people.

Second, I believe that every Member of the U.S. Senate supports the Jewish, democratic State of Israel.

Third, while the Senator from Arkansas suggested an "arms embargo," the U.S. Congress—without my support, by the way, for reasons I will explain—has sent billions of dollars in aid with the supplemental appropriations bill.

The fact that the President is raising questions about how best to secure the long-term status of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State in the context of this conflict in Gaza is in no way a suggestion of lack of support.

There is serious debate within Israel about the war plan that is being prosecuted by the Netanyahu government. In fact, a member of the war cabinet has indicated that he will leave the war cabinet if, in fact, the Prime Minister does not come up with a plan for what happens after the cessation of hostilities in Gaza.

Is there going to be an occupation by Israel? Is there going to be a joint Arab force that will be peacekeeping? Will there be an effort to constitute a Pales-

tinian Government that has the support of its people?

None of these plans envision Hamas having a role, and they can't have a role. But the President is asking responsible questions that are being asked by seriously engaged military, political, and security folks in Israel.

So to suggest that the President is raising questions because he is looking over the horizon and saying that adding to the 35,000 casualties in Gaza—half or more women and children—to suggest that the President, when he says Israel should not invade Rafah because of the catastrophic consequences of more humanitarian losses, to suggest that when the President says 2,000-pound bombs that would be dropped on the most densely populated couple of square miles in the world, without massive civilian casualties, is not showing support for Israel, I dispute that. I disagree with that.

This effort requires judgment, and the President has been given authority by this Congress to send arms to Israel. He has made a decision that 2,000-pound bombs should not be included in that. And he is not alone. There are many in Israel raising the question about the wisdom of how this war is being prosecuted.

We know that in order for there to be peace between Israel and the Palestinians, we must have a two-state solution. That is not just the policy of the Biden administration; it has been the policy of the Obama administration, the Bush administrations, and the Carter administration. Two states for two people where the respective rights of those people for self-governance and the renunciation of violence toward one another has got to be the long-term goal.

We have a situation right now where our ally Israel—and the current government Israel—disagrees with that two-state solution approach. And, in fact, the Netanyahu government position is that there should be one state.

And what we are seeing right now is the escalation of violence by extreme settlers in the West Bank that is causing more instability. So the President, as our Commander in Chief, must be given some latitude about how best to distribute whatever munitions have been authorized by the U.S. Congress. And in the President's judgment, 2,000-pound bombs to Rafah are the wrong munitions at the very wrong time.

All of us have enormous heartbreak for what has happened to those Israelis and their families, to those Palestinians in Gaza who are being used by the vicious Hamas as human shields. But the President is committed, as I am committed—as I believe all of us are committed—to peace and security in the Middle East, and we believe—most of us—that that requires a two-state solution where there is an independent, democratic Palestinian state—self-governing, respectful of Israel's security—and where there is an Israeli state that reciprocates toward the Palestinians in Gaza and in the West Bank.

And it is for those reasons, Mr. President, that I stood in opposition and objected to the unanimous consent request of my colleague from Arkansas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask consent that I be allowed to complete these remarks before the rollcall begins.

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

JUDICIAL CONFIRMATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the past 3 years, something profound has happened on the floor of the U.S. Senate. We have been building one of the most important accomplishments of the Biden-Harris administration: the confirmation of highly qualified, independent, evenhanded judges to the Federal bench.

Today, the Senate will confirm the 200th lifetime judge since President Biden took office. This is an extraordinary slate of judges, who are ruling with reason and restraint. These judges respect the rule of law; adhere to precedent; and, above all, answer only to the Constitution.

I have served on the Senate Judiciary Committee for more than two decades, including as chair for the past 3 years. During that time, I have been called on to evaluate and vote on over 1,000 judicial nominees that the committee has considered and have been brought to the Senate floor. In my opinion, the record is clear: President Biden's nominees to the Federal bench represent the best in our judiciary. They are highly qualified. Not a single one of these nominees—these 200—have failed to be found “qualified” or “well qualified” by the American Bar Association. That is a departure from the previous administration's record.

I have heard some of my Republican colleagues extolling the quality of those nominees in the previous administration as compared to those of President Biden, so I want to set the record straight as clearly as I can. For each judicial nominee that comes before the Senate, the American Bar Association conducts a nonpartisan peer review that ranks their qualifications. The qualifications are based on integrity, professional competence, and judicial temperament.

During the Trump administration, Senate Republicans confirmed eight Trump nominees whom the American Bar Association found unqualified to serve on the Federal bench. Compare that to President Biden's record. Under this administration, not one of the 200 judges we have confirmed received an unqualified rating—not one. When there was a suggestion that one might receive that rating and they asked me whether we should move forward, I said: The answer is clearly no.

So when I hear some of my Republican colleagues reminisce about the former President's nominees, I have to wonder: Which ones are they talking

about? Are they talking about several nominees who had never tried a case? How about the district court nominee in the previous administration who challenged the legal basis for both surrogacy and in vitro fertilization or the Sixth Circuit nominee who likened abortion to slavery? And who could forget the Ninth Circuit nominee in the previous administration whose colleagues called him “arrogant, lazy, an ideologue, and lacking in knowledge of the day-to-day practice of law.”

Yet some Republican Senators have relied on increasingly absurd criticisms in an attempt to criticize President Biden's nominees. In a new low, some of my Republican colleagues have gone so far as to falsely claim that a historic nominee, who would be the first Muslim American to serve on the Federal appellate court, is anti-Semitic and anti-law enforcement. As I have said previously, these bigoted attacks are false and should not stand.

Something that stands out about President Biden's nominees, aside from their qualifications and integrity to the rule of law, is the professional and demographic diversity they bring to the bench. We have made history, confirming more Black women to the Federal circuit courts than all prior Presidents combined. Of course, we have confirmed the first ever Black woman to serve on the Supreme Court: Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. And we have confirmed historic numbers of Asian American, Latino, and LGBTQ judges.

As we celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, I want to take a moment to recognize that President Biden has appointed more AAPI judges than any previous President. This includes several “firsts” to the Federal bench: the first ever Asian-American judge in the Third and Seventh Circuits, the first South Asian judge on the Ninth Circuit, and the first Asian-American judge in Virginia.

Beyond this demographic diversity, there is recordbreaking professional diversity. In the past 3 years, we have confirmed more public defenders as circuit judges than all prior Presidents combined. In addition, we have confirmed State court judges, Federal magistrates, bankruptcy judges, and prosecutors who have made significant contributions to this country's justice system. We have confirmed jurists with experience protecting the rights of voters, the rights of workers, civil rights, women's rights, and LGBTQ rights.

Another notable aspect of this record is that the vast majority—nearly 90 percent—of these confirmations have been bipartisan—nearly 90 percent. This includes over three-quarters of the appellate nominees.

In addition, I want to thank a number of my Republican colleagues who have worked in good faith with the White House, with me, and with the committee to fill vacancies in their States. This focus on qualified, consensus nominees will go a long way to-

ward restoring trust and faith in our judiciary.

The American people deserve Federal judges who not only look like America but understand the American experience from every angle. We have accomplished this during the longest evenly divided Senate in history and now with a narrow majority. We celebrate these 200 judges, but we should not stop here. We will continue elevating jurists who are qualified, principled, and committed above all to protecting the Constitution. The American people deserve nothing less.

Mr. President, let me close by saying it has been an honor to serve as chairman of the committee, but our success in bringing these nominees to the floor really belongs to the members of the committee—10 Democrats and 10 Republicans. Those Democrats in particular have dutifully come to the committee hearings and to the votes and waited patiently for the opportunity to vote and bring these nominees to the floor. We wouldn't be here without them. I salute them and their dedication to the rule of law and our responsibility on the Judiciary Committee.

NOMINATION OF ANGELA M. MARTINEZ

Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Judge Angela Martinez to the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona.

Born in Tucson, AZ, Judge Martinez received both her B.A. and J.D. from the University of Arizona.

After clerking for the late Judge John M. Rolle on the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, Judge Martinez began her legal career in private practice as an associate at Lewis and Roca, LLP, where she litigated employment and commercial matters. She then joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, where she represented the United States in illegal immigration prosecutions, alien and drug smuggling offenses, and hostage taking and international kidnapping cases. She later returned to private practice as an associate at Farhang & Medcoff PLLC before serving as a law clerk for Judge Jennifer G. Zippas on the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona. Judge Martinez returned to the U.S. attorney's office for nearly a decade before she was appointed to serve as a U.S. magistrate judge on the same district to which she is nominated.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Judge Martinez “well qualified,” and she has the strong support of her home State Senators, Ms. SINEMA and Mr. KELLY. Judge Martinez's deep ties to the Arizona legal community, combined with her courtroom experience, will make her well-positioned to serve on the Federal bench with distinction.

I thank my colleagues for supporting her nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.