

is that Rich has always centered everyday Americans in his work. From serving as a State rep back in Ohio, to becoming their first ever solicitor general, to taking office as the State's treasurer and then its attorney general, Rich proved each and every day to the people of Ohio that their government could work for them. When he came to Washington, he always made sure that people all across America knew he was working for them. Whenever he traveled, wherever people reached out to him, Rich would listen. He would sit down with people, hear their stories, hear how they were cheated by a big bank or on a student loan, and then he would set about making things right.

Rich, the American people owe you a great debt for your work on their behalf. When our country needed you, you answered the call. You are a true example of public service and one of the most fearless leaders I have ever known. It is an honor to know you and an even higher honor to call you a friend.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

IVF

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, in vitro fertilization—or IVF, as most of us call it—has brought beautiful babies to so many families. IVF is a wonderful thing that enables so many Americans struggling with infertility to have children and start a family.

For me, it is personal. My youngest daughter has been undergoing IVF treatments to grow her family. But she is just one of countless Floridians and Americans using IVF to grow their families and bring life into the world.

While IVF remains available in all 50 States and there isn't any credible threat to it, I believe it is important for the Senate to make clear our unwavering support for current and aspiring parents using IVF to start and grow their families.

We ought to celebrate Americans trying to grow their families. I am proud to lead a resolution in the Senate doing just that. My resolution affirms the desire of parents trying to conceive a child to start or grow a family; expresses sympathy for the millions of parents experiencing infertility issues as they strive to start or grow a family and recognizes the immense physical, emotional, and psychological toll of pursuing medical assistance for infertility, including IVF; cherishes the millions of children born through the use of medical assistance to overcome infertility, including through IVF; recognizes that medical assistance for infertility, including IVF, is and remains legal in all States and territories in the United States; affirms that laws enacted by Congress should promote the sanctity of human life and support the development and growth of families in the United States; encourages further clinical research to improve outcomes for parents seeking medical assistance

to overcome infertility as they strive to start or grow a family; and supports State, legislative, and regulatory actions to establish health, safety, and ethical standards for medical facilities offering assisted reproductive technologies, including in vitro fertilization.

Now let me take a moment to clarify a few things about the bill the Democrats are pushing this week.

First, let's be clear, there is not a single State in the country that has outlawed IVF or has expressed any interest in outlawing IVF. This is just empty fearmongering by Democrats who would rather push unnecessary bills like this than take meaningful action to secure our border, improve our economy, or hold the radical members of the Biden administration accountable for their lawless conduct.

I think everyone here supports IVF, which is great because Democrats are typically advocating for unlimited abortion, not more babies, which is what we get with IVF.

If a State takes action against IVF, I will be the first to condemn it, but that isn't happening.

This is ugly politics at its worst.

I have the resolution I just outlined. I appreciate the work that Senators CRUZ and BRITT have done on this important topic.

Republicans support IVF, and the Democrats know that. But when we vote against this unnecessary bill, that is exactly what they will say when they attack us.

We will not accept this gross purity test from the radical left. The American people, who are much smarter than Democrats hope they are, see right through this.

Let's get to work solving real problems, like our wide-open southern border and the skyrocketing inflation crushing American families. That is the important work the Senate should have been focused on these last 2 weeks instead of taking political show votes for Democrats to shamelessly lie to the American people and themselves.

But if Democrats insist on taking action that impacts the ability to undergo IVF treatments, I have a proposal for them. We should help individuals and families better plan and pay for medical expenses, like IVF, by decoupling health savings accounts from high-deductible health plans, increasing the current contribution limits on HSAs, and demanding more upfront price transparency and outcome data from providers to allow families to easily shop for services to drive down costs through market forces.

I am working on a bill right now to allow every individual and family to better plan and pay for medical expenses, such as IVF, by expanding eligibility for health savings accounts and increasing the current contribution limits on those HSAs.

Helping folks financially plan as they try to expand their families is smart and the type of commonsense action

that families in all of our States expect from Washington, DC. They want action, not partisan politics or fearmongering, and the legislation I am drafting will be hugely beneficial to current and aspiring parents looking at IVF as a way to grow their families.

I hope Senator SCHUMER and every Democrat will commit to working with me on this and passing a good bill that will truly help countless families hoping to bring more babies into this world.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

azerbaijan

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak out against Azerbaijan's unlawful detention of Armenian prisoners of war and alarming record of rampant human rights violations.

On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan launched a large-scale military attack against Nagorno-Karabakh to gain full control over the territory, causing a mass exodus of more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians—virtually all of the region's ethnic Armenians—as well as the regional government to capitulate.

Azerbaijan then falsely denied that it forced people to leave and insincerely promised that it will peacefully reintegrate the region and guarantee the rights of ethnic Armenians.

Instead, even after their surrender, Azerbaijan punitively arrested and detained leaders of the former Karabakh Government, including former State Minister Ruben Vardanyan, who is here as he is being arrested by Azerbaijan military officials.

Also, ex-Presidents Arkadi Ghukasyan, Bako Sahakyan, and Arayik Harutyunyan, Foreign Minister David Babayan, Parliament Speaker Davit Ishkhanyan, and former generals, Levon Mnatsakanyan and Davit Manukyan. These eight former officials have been held in pretrial detention for more than 8 months. And just last month, Azerbaijani authorities extended the detention with another 5 months—without a trial, without due process—and Azerbaijan has routinely resorted to hostage diplomacy, prolonging unlawful detention and using prisoners of war as bargaining chips to impose its demands on Armenia, in clear violation of international law.

In fact, Azerbaijan is still holding dozens of Armenian prisoners of war and civilian political prisoners that it took captive during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. And, additionally, widespread reporting—including from Human Rights Watch, the International Federation of Federal Rights, and the U.S. Department of State—calls attention to the terrible treatment of political prisoners by Azerbaijan.

Former State Minister Ruben Vardanyan alone has faced punitive extended stays in solitary confinement, poor prison conditions, denial of water and clean clothing, and orders that require him to stand for hours on end. He

was also cut off from his lawyer and family for several weeks. Others are subjected to physical abuse, humiliation, and cruel and inhumane treatment.

Despite its clear pattern of committing human rights violations, Azerbaijan has incurred few costs from the international community for its egregious abuses against ethnic Armenians and illegal detention of political prisoners. The Aliyev regime thinks it can continue acting in flagrant violation of international and U.S. law, which is why it is incumbent upon Congress to speak out and say no to Azerbaijan; no to hostage diplomacy and Azerbaijan's taking of political prisoners; no to subjecting political prisoners to cruel and inhumane punishment; no to denying the rights of ethnic Armenians in the region; and no to Azerbaijan delaying the release of the political prisoners even 1 more day.

Azerbaijan must cease all of its abuse of political prisoners. It must release all political prisoners and prisoners of war, and that is why I sent a letter to Secretary Anthony Blinken urging the State Department to prioritize the release of Armenian prisoners held by Azerbaijan and the right of Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians to return to their homes in ongoing peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan says it wants peace, but what it really wants is to act with impunity and still be rewarded by the United States and the international community, including with the privilege of hosting the next United Nations International Climate Conference COP29 later on this year. You cannot, on the one hand, be saying you want to host the world and then simultaneously say but ignore our human rights violations. Ignore the fact that we just arrest the political leaders of another nation and pretend that somehow or another we are still worthy of hosting the climate summit for the planet.

I urge both Congress and the White House to insist, in all interactions with the Governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia, that the release of political prisoners must be a prerequisite to any concessions, awards, or peace deals reached. We must say no to Azerbaijan's violations of international law and human rights and ensure those responsible are held accountable.

This is the perfect time to be having this conversation. Azerbaijan is getting ready to host the climate summit of the world. We must ensure that we take this opportunity to put the spotlight on all of those political prisoners who are being held wrongly by the Azerbaijan Government. It is strictly a violation of international human rights, and I call upon our government and I call upon the world to put a spotlight on these political prisoners so that they are released before the climate summit is held at the end of this year.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is Tuesday afternoon. The Senate has its first vote of the week coming up in a few minutes, and I am experiencing a sense of *deja vu*—as Yogi Berra said, “*Deja vu all over again.*”

This week, the majority leader has teed up three votes on President Biden's nominees followed by another partisan show vote, this time on in vitro fertilization. It is another made-up controversy.

In vitro fertilization provides hope for couples across the United States who are struggling to grow their families and has helped millions of babies enter the world. I support IVF, which has been a solution for millions of families struggling with infertility.

But there is no nationwide threat to the availability of in vitro fertilization, and I am deeply disappointed—but not surprised—that Democrats are trying to politicize something that enjoys such widespread support. There is no controversy over access to in vitro fertilization. After all, this is the third partisan show vote we have had recently.

Last week, the Senate voted on a handful of nominees and held another show vote on a nonexistent threat to contraception access. There is no threat to access to contraception. But the majority leader who schedules votes on the floor, who runs the agenda, decided he wanted to create a controversy out of thin air where there was none.

The previous week included votes on several nominees, and this time another show vote on a partisan border bill that the majority leader knew would fail but decided to have a show vote anyway.

Considering the many challenges our country is facing, this is hardly what the Senate should be doing. Families are grappling with high prices as a result of 40-year high inflation rates exacerbated by unchecked spending—throwing trillions of dollars on the inflation fire only to see it get worse and worse. The Federal Reserve has done what it can do, which is raise interest rates to try to slow down the growth of inflation. But the fact is, as Congress continues to shovel money out the door, it just makes things worse.

And people on a fixed income and people who have a modest earning are being hurt the most. The Wall Street Journal recently ran a story saying that a cart full of groceries that cost 100 bucks before the Biden administration came into office, or when it did come into office, now costs \$136. That is a 36-percent increase in inflation. Wages haven't kept up that much.

So what are people supposed to do when the government continues to make their quality of life and standard of living worse this time because of reckless spending?

The American people are concerned by crime and public safety in their

communities, and they are terrified by the spread of fentanyl, which is now the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 18 and 45. We know where the fentanyl comes from: The precursor chemicals come from China; the cartels then import them into Mexico where they are then transformed into a look-alike pill that is actually a counterfeit pill. But unbeknownst to the person who takes that pill, it is contaminated with fentanyl, and they lose their life.

I have been with numerous families who have lost their high school students to fentanyl poisoning. Their kids were full of potential, came from loving families, only to lose their life as a result of this deadly drug that comes across the border from Mexico.

So along with the millions of people that are flooding across the border, the drug cartels take advantage of the diversion of resources by the Border Patrol to move the drugs into the United States only to be spread throughout the country.

And, yes, Americans are concerned about the border crisis, the growing national debt, and American's weakening influence on the world stage. Given these and countless other challenges facing our country, it is indeed sad to see the Senate spending its work period—its limited resource—doing virtually nothing other than show votes for partisan political gain.

The issue isn't limited to how the Senate is spending its time but actually how little time we are actually in session. During the entire month of June, Senator SCHUMER, who sets the agenda, has the Senate working 9 days—9 days out of June.

Of course, many of those shouldn't really even count as a full day, like today, where the first vote is at 5:30 in the afternoon. Today, the Senate convened at 3 p.m. We will finish our work by dinner. We will be in session a full day tomorrow, and I imagine we will wrap up the workweek by after lunch on Thursday. That is what passes for a full workweek in the U.S. Senate under Senator SCHUMER's leadership.

We are supposed to be doing important work. That is why all of us who ran for office and have the privilege of holding office, representing our States here in the U.S. Senate, that is why we are here, but the schedule is barely enough time to be considered a part-time job. No American working out in communities across the country works half time for full-time pay, only the U.S. Senate under Senator SCHUMER's leadership.

The lack of action on the Senate floor is just part of the problem. It is really just scratching the surface. Committees, which is where most of the work gets done when the Senate is in session, clearly don't have much time to meet these days. And there are two committees that are working on absolutely critical and time-sensitive legislation right now, but when we are in session 2½ days a week, it is hard for them to get their work done.