

There is a security crisis at the border that my colleague from North Dakota talked about a moment ago—rising crime rates across our communities, some of which come from gang members who transit our southern border and then go on to commit crimes of violence against innocent Americans all across the country; the drugs that took the lives of 108,000 Americans last year alone; and then America's weakening role on the global stage.

I believe there is a reason why the threats that confront our country and world peace are at the greatest level they have been since World War II. It is because the tyrants, the autocrats, the dictators—the people like Vladimir Putin, President Xi in China, Kim Jong Un in North Korea, and the Supreme Leader in Iran—perceive weakness, and weakness for them is a provocation; it is an invitation for them to take action and threaten stability and peace.

President Biden's policies have made Americans' lives harder, not easier. Nowhere is that more evident than in the high prices that are clobbering family budgets. I know the occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is doing just fine. He is not feeling the impact of higher prices at the gas pump, at the grocery store, in rent, and all across our economy. It doesn't affect him, and it doesn't affect many of us, but for people on a fixed income and people who are of lower income—seniors, retired individuals—it is degrading and undermining their standard of living and their quality of life.

Since President Biden took office 3½ years ago, consumer prices have risen on average 20 percent. That means a dollar that you spent on consumer products—whatever they may be—3½ years ago now only buys 80 cents' worth of value. That is a hard leap for many families to absorb, and for those living on fixed incomes or tight budgets, it is virtually impossible. Families are paying 21 percent more for groceries, 41 percent more for energy, and 54 percent more for gasoline. When you add in price hikes on clothing, car insurance, and even a visit to the dentist, you are looking at a mountain of expenses that cost more today than they did when President Biden took office.

America has experienced a 40-year high in inflation as a result of the reckless spending policies of the Biden administration's by throwing \$2.7 trillion of reckless partisan spending on the fire of inflation, making it much, much, much worse. Of course, then the Federal Reserve has to try to raise interest rates, which they have done, in order to dampen that fire, in order to put out the fire. But that doesn't erase the fact that American consumers—our constituents—have experienced a 20-percent increase in their cost of living across the board.

An average household in the State of Texas is spending more than \$1,000 a month more today than they did 3½ years ago. That is more than \$12,500 a year. Texans don't need that sort of

data, though, to know that their lives have been impacted negatively, because they have felt the impact themselves for 3½ long years. They have seen the effect of Biden's policies reflected in their bank accounts and on their credit card statements.

Credit card debt is at one of the highest levels it has been in all time. People who can't meet their monthly bills, if they have access to a credit card, may likely charge it and say, "Well, I am trying to get by today by borrowing on my credit card," but of course they end up having to pay that back as well at some point. Meanwhile, they are charged a lot of interest costs, which, again, increase their cost of living.

Many Americans have scrapped family vacations and have settled for more affordable, local activities. Sometimes it is a matter of convenience. Sometimes it is a matter of life or death, such as deciding whether to fill a prescription or pay your air-conditioning bill.

I can tell you, right now, in the wake of Hurricane Beryl, many Texans are without electricity and are experiencing 100-degree heat and 99-percent humidity.

Many Americans who can't afford to pay their utility bills are having to cut back on things like air-conditioning. Many people, during the heat of the summer, particularly vulnerable Americans and the elderly, are suffering as a result.

What is President Biden's response when you raise these criticisms? It is to say: Well, it is somebody else's fault. He tries to blame his predecessor for the sticker shock that Americans are experiencing on a daily basis.

A couple of months ago, President Biden claimed that inflation was at 9 percent when he took office. Now, that is not the only time that President Biden has misstated the facts. It might be a compelling point if it were actually true. When President Biden took office, inflation was only at 1.4 percent, and under his leadership, inflation has soared to a 40-year high of more than 9 percent.

Fortunately, thanks to the policies of the Federal Reserve, which are painful enough because they raise interest rates, which costs consumers more on the debt they owe on their vehicles or when they buy a house, inflation has slowed, but high prices remain.

President Biden's policies have sent prices through the roof, and that is where they have stayed. No matter what the level of inflation is currently, those high prices are cumulative, and with election day less than 5 months away, voters are asking themselves a very important question: Has my life gotten better or worse since President Biden took office?

Thanks to President Biden's policies, families are struggling to cover the costs of gasoline, groceries, rent, insurance, and just about everything else, and high interest rates, which are a result of the Federal Reserve's tight-

ening of access to credit, continue to make dreams like owning a home or opening a small business out of reach for many Americans.

As I said, Texans are now paying more than \$1,000 per month more thanks to President Biden's policies. If President Biden manages to win another term in the White House, I worry about how much higher my constituents' monthly bills will continue to climb.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON WAGNER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Wagner nomination?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 210 Ex.]

#### YEAS—55

Baldwin	Hassan	Peters
Bennet	Hawley	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Rosen
Booker	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Butler	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kelly	Smith
Capito	Kennedy	Stabenow
Cardin	King	Sullivan
Carper	Klobuchar	Tester
Casey	Lankford	Van Hollen
Collins	Lujan	Warner
Coons	Manchin	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Cramer	Murkowski	Welch
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Fetterman	Ossoff	
Gillibrand	Padilla	

#### NAYS—37

Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Rounds
Boozman	Hagerty	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Schmitt
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Budd	Johnson	Thune
Cassidy	Lee	Tillis
Cornyn	Lummis	Tuberville
Cotton	Marshall	Vance
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Ricketts	

## NOT VOTING—8

Cruz	Mullin	Scott (FL)
Markey	Romney	Sinema
Menendez	Sanders	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM FOR WOMEN ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 4554, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 420, S. 4554, a bill to express support for protecting access to reproductive health care after the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision on June 24, 2022.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Mississippi.

## FARM BILL

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, we are now well into the month of July and less than 3 months away from the current Farm Bill extension expiring. As such, I would like to bring renewed focus on the framework proposed by my colleague and Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. I commend my friend Senator BOOZMAN from Arkansas for presenting us with a framework that answers the call of farmers, ranchers, stakeholders, and taxpayers across the country.

For the greater part of 2 years, we have heard time and time again from those who elected us to be here: "In the next Farm Bill, Congress must"—and these are some of the things they say we must do: Strengthen the farm safety net—ARC, PLC, disaster assistance, and crop insurance, among other important safety net mechanisms; enhance conservation programs, especially those designed for our working lands, such as the CSP and EQIP programs; provide greater opportunities for U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace; ensure that our domestic food assistance programs serve as a hand up and not a handout; offer better access to credit and financing, particularly for young and beginning farmers; dedicate adequate resources to our rural communities, which are built around agriculture; invest more in agricultural research, in which America is currently lagging behind our competitors and adversaries, despite having the brightest minds in the world and a storied history of innovation; modernize existing policies pertaining to forestry, energy, and horticulture among many others. In short, put more farm in the Farm Bill.

The farm bill framework released by our Senate Agriculture Committee

ranking member would achieve all of these things and in a bipartisan, fiscally responsible manner.

It is our responsibility in Congress to listen to those who know best about what they need to make a living so they can continue to feed our Nation and the world. When the Subcommittee on Commodities, Risk Management, and Trade conducted a hearing last year on producer perspectives of the farm safety net, a producer described the current farm safety net as being "two inches above the concrete." That is insufficient in today's farm economy, where producers face extraordinary volatility, historic inflation, record high input costs, catastrophic natural disasters, and geopolitical tensions that disrupt markets.

Times are changing. New challenges and threats to rural America emerge every day. This is why Congress revisits this important multiyear legislation: to keep what is working, fix what is not, and eliminate what is no longer necessary.

I commend the House Agriculture Committee for advancing a strong, commonsense farm bill proposal out of committee, and I commend our Senate Ag Committee chair for all of her efforts throughout this process.

But the bottom line is it takes time to move away from partisan disagreements. It is time to do that and, instead, work on finding common ground. It is time to graduate from concepts and proposals and, instead, start advancing actual legislation. Simply put, it is time for Congress to enact a new farm bill, one that our farmers, ranchers, and rural America have been asking for, for quite some time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Arkansas.

## REMEMBERING JAMES M. INHOFE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, it is with a heavy heart that I come to the floor to pay tribute to former Oklahoma Senator Jim Inhofe, a dear friend who honorably served the people of the Sooner State.

Senator Inhofe led a life of public service, first as a soldier in the U.S. Army and then in several other roles in elected office at all levels of government. It was evident how much he truly loved leading and representing his community, the people of Oklahoma, and our country.

I had the honor and privilege of serving with Senator Inhofe and developing a relationship based not just on our shared responsibilities and interest but also on our faith and our values. We originally met when I was a Member of the House of Representatives and had the opportunity to join one of his congressional delegation trips.

As someone I grew to deeply respect and admire, his encouragement for me to run for the Senate was a very important part of why I chose to launch the campaign, and I consider it a blessing that I got to work alongside Senator Inhofe for 12 years together in this Chamber.

He was a leader on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee when I was a junior member, and I learned so much from simply observing him. But he was also gracious enough to view me as a partner.

A decade ago, I invited the Senator to Fort Smith, AR, my home town, a community bordering Oklahoma, and he took me up on the offer. Our States are neighbors.

So, naturally, we worked together on a number of initiatives. Those included advocating for infrastructure improvements, such as the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System and a future interstate designation from U.S. Route 412 in Arkansas to I-35 in Oklahoma, and the list goes on and on and on.

I often cited Senator Inhofe's leadership on the EPW Committee as a great example of bipartisanship. He and his counterpart, former California Senator Barbara Boxer, came from very, very different backgrounds and had different beliefs but found common ground and accomplished truly remarkable feats, like rewriting a chemical safety law and crafting the first long-term highway bill in a decade. That simply was not moving. Both of them had a tremendous sense of responsibility regarding infrastructure and believed very strongly. So they were able to overcome their differences and do what many felt like couldn't be done.

Another thing I learned about him while traveling together was that he maintained a very, very rigorous schedule while on congressional delegation trips—in fact, in every facet of his life. And they were usually whirlwinds. And there was more than one occasion when he set out on a morning power walk and only find his way back to the group—he is like me; he had no sense of direction at all—with the help of landmarks and locals who probably had no idea he was an influential statesman and dignitary.

I truly enjoyed traveling with him on multiple codels as we met so many American troops serving abroad, while learning more how to better support their needs and missions defending the interests of our country.

Knowing Senator Inhofe at all meant you understood that he and his wife Kay had a very special marriage, a very special relationship. They filled their home with love and family, and those priorities informed everything he stood for.

My wife Cathy and I will be forever grateful for Jim and Kay's friendship. Our prayers are with Kay and the entire Inhofe family as they honor the life and legacy of their beloved husband, father, and grandfather.

Senator Inhofe was someone that my former coach at the University of Arkansas Frank Broyles would describe as a giver, not a taker. There is no better compliment that we can pay him than that.

May he rest in eternal peace with our Lord and Savior.