

work and a lot of twists and turns, we will pass KOSA and COPPA. KOSA and COPPA will be perhaps the most important updates to Federal laws protecting kids on the internet in decades, and it is a very good first step.

This was truly a bipartisan effort from the start here in the Senate. I am proud of the way both sides of the aisle came together on an issue affecting so many kids and so many families across America. The House should take note and follow the Senate's example by passing KOSA and COPPA when they return. After the Senate passes KOSA and COPPA today with a strong bipartisan vote, the House should do the same when they return in September. These bills have real bipartisan momentum. So we should seize the opportunity to send them to the President's desk.

As we all know, social media has many benefits, but we also know about the many risks social media can pose, especially to our kids. Too many kids experience relentless promotion of suicide or substance abuse material. Too many kids have their personal data collected and then used nefariously. With studies showing that kids today spend more time on social media than ever before, now is the moment to pass KOSA, pass COPPA, and instill guardrails that protect kids from these risks.

We have heard from so many parents whose kids, sadly, took their own lives—their own lives—because of what happened to them on social media. To their everlasting credit, these parents, instead of cursing the darkness, lit a candle. They turned their grief into grace—an amazing thing—and worked doggedly to help get this bill over the finish line so that what happened to their kids—their kids will never come back—but so that what happened to their kids doesn't happen to any others. I thank these brave parents and families for sharing their heart-wrenching stories.

And I thank my colleagues Senators BLUMENTHAL and BLACKBURN, MARKEY and CASSIDY, DURBIN and KLOBUCHAR, Chair CANTWELL, and so many others for championing these bills.

TAX RELIEF FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES AND
WORKERS ACT

Mr. President, now, 45 days after Joe Biden took the oath of office and I became majority leader, Senate Democrats passed a major expansion of the child tax credit, one of the signature policies of the American Rescue Plan. Every single Republican, down to the last Member, voted against this bill.

The child tax credit expansion was a stupendous success. It cut child poverty in America in half—in half—but it sadly expired after a year. During that year, parents had money to pay for good food for their kids, to pay for school supplies, to pay for clothing and the things that so many parents can't afford to do. It made the kids so much better. But, of course, it did expire because it was passed just during COVID.

This week, the Senate has a chance to do it again, to pass another expansion of the child tax credit to help get more kids out of poverty. This is just one of the many reasons—one of many reasons—the Senate should take up the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act.

Last night, I filed cloture on this important piece of legislation, and Senators should expect to vote on this measure Thursday.

Now, on the day Democrats assumed the majority in 2021, I promised my colleagues that I would always try my best to work first in a bipartisan way to get things done in this Chamber. I have always said bipartisanship is preferable because it is the best approach to achieving results. The Senate's record over the last 3 years bears this out. Democrats and Republicans have come together again and again to pass historic bills like infrastructure, Chips and Science, Ukraine and Israel aid, veterans' healthcare. And we have even passed bills on more difficult issues like gun safety and marriage equality. And, of course, together we avoided default and shutting down the government, which would have wreaked such havoc in our economy and hurt so many millions of families.

Now, just today, we are getting another bipartisan bill done through KOSA and COPPA. We want to continue the productive streak this week with a vote on the tax bill, though, because it will deliver so many benefits for families. This should be bipartisan. It passed in a bipartisan vote in the House, and I hope Republicans here in the Senate choose to join us.

But I have also always been clear that Democrats would not shy away from moving forward on important issues when necessary to give the American people a chance to see where their elected representatives stand. Putting Senators on record is one way progress is made on important issues. It can bring important issues to the forefront. It is what we did on choice, IVF, contraception last month.

This week is a classic example of how we can do both in the Senate: pass bipartisan legislation to get things done for the American people, like KOSA and COPPA, but also put pressure on Republicans to show where they stand on important issues like the child tax credit, affordable housing, and R&D. So, this week, the American people will also get a chance to see which Senators, in reality, support tax relief for parents and businesses and housing, and who opposes it.

Now, over the past few days, some Republican Senators, like the junior Senator from Ohio, have claimed laughably that Democrats somehow oppose the child tax credit. This is plain old nonsense. Democrats do not oppose the child tax credit whatsoever. On the contrary, we strongly support it. We authored it and put it together back in 2021, and the child tax credit is one of the most significant achievements

Democrats have done under the Biden-Harris administration.

If anyone wants to know who actually opposes the child tax credit, they should go ask the 49 Republican Senators who voted against the child tax credit when we passed the American Rescue Plan.

Here is the truth: Democrats want to pass the tax package because it will help lift more kids out of poverty with another expansion of the child tax credit. Democrats want to pass the tax package because it will reward businesses that will invest in R&D and new equipment, which will mean new jobs and greater opportunity. Democrats want to pass the tax package because it makes progress on a subject I am passionate about, affordable housing. And this package, thankfully, includes an expansion of the low-income housing tax credit, one of the best tools we have for increasing the supply of housing.

Democrats are ready to go. The American people need tax relief. The big question right now is, Will Republicans join us, or will they stand in the way?

So let me just say it again because I am very proud of this Senate and, particularly, of our caucus. This week is a classic example of how we can do both in the Senate: pass bipartisan legislation to get things done for the American people, like KOSA and COPPA, with large bipartisan majorities, but also put pressure on Republicans to show where they stand on important issues like the child tax credit, affordable housing, and R&D tax credit for business.

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 called the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate is preparing to leave town for the August State work period, but there is no mistaking that our most important business here in Washington remains unfinished. Let's take a look at how the Senate has spent its summer so far.

In June, the Democratic leader called up a series of show votes, spending precious floor time on what Senate Democrats seemed to have thought would be political home runs. Instead, they gave Republicans the opportunity to reiterate our support for Americans hoping to start families.

In June, it was the month of fearmongering. July was the month of giving unqualified nominees lifetime promotions to the Federal bench.

Take Nancy Maldonado, unfortunately now a Federal judge on the Seventh Circuit. This is the judge infamous for letting her work pile up and blaming her clerks for lack of time management. It is particularly ironic that Senate Democrats chose to procrastinate on their most urgent responsibilities by confirming a nominee with a nearly unparalleled record of judicial procrastination.

Congress has real work in front of us, some of which really should be behind us by now—from the National Defense Authorization Act, to the farm bill, to annual appropriations.

Our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee reported the NDAA by an overwhelming bipartisan vote over a month ago, but so far, the Democratic leader hasn't come close to putting this must-pass authorizing legislation out here on the floor. Of course, urgent national security priorities won't fund themselves, either. The Senate hasn't cleared a Defense appropriations bill or any other government funding, for that matter. Well, at least the fiscal 2025 appropriations have been written. The farm bill that is supposed to help America's growers and producers succeed doesn't even exist yet. Apparently, it is just a twinkle in Chair STABENOW's eye.

The American people sent us here to do a job, and a show-vote summer can't hide the fact that Senate Democrats' majority isn't earning its keep.

VENEZUELA

Mr. President, on a different matter, as the Maduro regime continues its attempt to steal an election, the people of Venezuela are standing up forcefully against the predations of a hellish socialist dictatorship.

Across the country, working Venezuelans are protesting in the streets. They have torn down a statue of Maduro's socialist predecessor, Hugo Chavez. In at least one instance, security forces have removed their uniforms and refused to use force against the demonstrators.

The people of Venezuela are putting up an inspired resistance. Unfortunately, they are up against an authoritarian who will stop at nothing to retain his grip on power. After all, Maduro has learned from the worst—Moscow, Beijing, Tehran, Damascus, and Havana—and he has no shortage of useful idiots and fifth columns at his disposal.

Some of the same corners of social media that defended Bashar Assad, spun conspiracies about Ukraine, and demonized Israel are now laughably accusing the CIA—believe it or not—of masterminding Venezuela's unrest.

Meanwhile, supposedly mainstream media here in America are already hard at work whitewashing history. According to the New York Times, Venezuela's problem isn't the abject failure of socialism but the incursion of a supposed "brutal capitalism."

George Orwell would like a word.

Mr. President, the free world ought to have the courage to look evil in the face and call it what it actually is.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. President, on another matter, I have said frequently that the single most important, immediate objective of the free world right now is Russian defeat in Ukraine—I mean that—but not just for its implications on transatlantic security or our own economy; not just because helping degrade a major adversary's military strength is in America's interests; not just because the defense of Ukraine has ignited significant new investments in hard power here at home and among our European allies; certainly not just because of what the outcome will say about how the free world values sovereignty—no. The world we live in doesn't reward thinking compartmentally. Security threats don't exist in vacuums. Our credibility is not divisible. Our adversaries are working more closely together to undermine the American-led order, and allowing one threat to fester makes every other one a taller order.

This week, the final report of the independent, bipartisan Commission on the National Defense Strategy underscored this reality.

[The] new alignment of nations opposed to U.S. interests creates a real risk, if not likelihood, that conflict anywhere could become a multi-theater or global war.

A multitheater war—the sort of conflict America is simply not prepared to fight.

Too many in Washington seem to think America can just opt out of facing such a challenge, but our enemies get a vote too. We owe it to our servicemembers and the American people to plan accordingly.

As the NDS Commission report lays out, we have a lot of work to do and not much time to do it.

The PRC's military is already leaving little room for doubt about Beijing's willingness to use hard power to coerce its neighbors and to test American power and Western resolve.

Last month, the PRC's naval forces launched a violent confrontation in disputed waters that Beijing clearly hopes to turn into a Chinese lake.

The Philippines—America's longtime treaty ally—has maintained a lawful presence in an area just 100 miles off their coast known as the Second Thomas Shoal for decades. Its sailors peacefully man a grounded ship on the shoal, and they count on regular shipments of supplies. But in recent months, these shipments have come under brazen attack. Chinese forces have rammed Philippine resupply vessels, harassed them with water cannons, injured Philippine sailors, destroyed their navigation equipment, towed them out to sea, and left them for dead.

Thankfully, the most acute aggression appears to have subsided for the moment, but a fundamental reality still remains: Just as Russia is using force to redraw European borders and reassert imperial ambitions, just as

Iran is using force to sow chaos and threaten international shipping, the People's Republic of China is engaged in a concerted effort to expand its control over maritime commerce well beyond its borders and build a pretext for wider war, and the first target of that conflict may well be America's longest standing treaty ally in the Indo-Pacific.

Our adversaries have struck up a "no-limits" partnership, and the challenges they present us are as complex as they are urgent. We don't get to make neat, tidy, either-or choices about which threats deserve our attention—not anymore.

The Senate was right to pass a national security supplemental to equip vulnerable partners with American weapons and invest in expanding our defense production capacity earlier this year. The Biden administration was right to start directing more rhetorical attention to the challenge facing our Philippine ally. But to the extent that the administration is serious about backing up its frequent assurances to the Philippines with actual support, it is high time to do more to help our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific to reconfigure and strengthen their defenses against the PRC's maritime threat and to clear bureaucratic barriers so security assistance programs can move at the speed of relevance. More importantly, it is time for Congress and the administration to take our shared responsibility to provide for the common defense seriously.

So I will close today with another quote from the Coauthors of the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission. Here is what they said:

The Commission finds that the United States faces the most significant national security threats since the height of the Cold War, if not World War II. We are not prepared to meet those threats. The United States confronts the prospect of war against peer and near-peer adversaries simultaneously across multiple theaters—a war we could quite possibly lose.

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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday evening, in the tradition of another Democrat President and his infamous Court-packing scheme way back in 1937, President Biden announced a proposal to interfere with the Constitution's separation of powers and permanently politicize the Supreme Court. He dressed it up with appeals to permanent American values, but what it all boiled down to was this: Democrats don't like some of the Supreme Court's