

this front aren't for lack of effort from Ranking Member CRAPO, and I am grateful for his dedication to addressing Republican concerns.

Today's vote doesn't seem to be intended to produce a legislative outcome. In fact, the Democratic leader himself admitted this week that even losing the vote would still be a political benefit for vulnerable Senate Democrats running for reelection. Well, I am not so certain the American people are impressed by message votes, and I don't think they give out points for incomplete work.

NDAA

Mr. President, on a different matter, today, the Appropriations Committee is considering defense funding for the coming year. From the outset, colleagues who take seriously our obligation to provide for the common defense knew that they had their work cut out for them.

This spring, the President sent down a fourth straight defense request that would cut funding for the national defense after inflation. The request was grossly insufficient when it went to print; it is even more so today.

Then, this summer brought our closest allies and partners here to Washington, underscoring the importance of American leadership by example.

Just a few days ago, a final report of the Commission on the National Defense Strategy put an even finer point on the stakes of the growing and interconnected threats to our national security. As I discussed earlier this week, the bipartisan expert panel behind the report delivered a grave warning. Here is more of what they said:

The U.S. military lacks both the capabilities and the capacity required to be competent it can deter and prevail in combat.

The American public have been—again, according to the report—“inadequately informed by government leaders of the threats to U.S. interests—including to people's everyday lives—and what will be required to restore American global power and leadership.”

They went on further:

Very little progress will be possible without Congress, where a relatively small number of elected officials have imposed continual political gamesmanship over a thoughtful and responsible legislating and oversight.

Goodness.

It is past time to prioritize our national security. It is totally obvious to all of us that this needs to begin. Just take the pacing threat from China, for example. Plenty of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle like to talk about outcompeting the PRC, but not as many seem to recognize that winning this competition, preserving American primacy, and protecting America's interest are first and foremost about investing in hard power.

As the Commission put it, China has “largely negated the U.S. military advantage in the Western Pacific through two decades of focused military investment. Without significant change by

the United States, the balance of power will continue to shift in China's favor.”

But the vast majority of supposed counter-China policies that folks in Washington like to talk about won't do much to arrest this shift, and neither will pretending that the pacing threat is the only threat we face. It is naive to believe we can ignore or assume away threats in other regions.

Anyone who believes our security and prosperity don't require urgent investments in hard power, in alliances and partnerships, and in our defense industrial base clearly doesn't know what they are talking about.

So I am grateful to my friend Vice Chair COLLINS and to colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, who recognize the urgency of the task in front of us, for fighting hard to negate as much of the President's real-dollar cut to national defense as they could. The bill in committee right now exceeds the President's request by nearly \$19 billion. This is less than the additional \$25 billion authorized by the Armed Services Committee.

Senate Democrats refused to spend more on defense without adding funding for nondefense discretionary programs. However, thanks to our colleagues' efforts, this bill secures crucial steps forward on a number of urgent priorities.

The bill includes the largest ever appropriation for shipbuilding, with hundreds of millions in new resources for growing and retaining the critical shipbuilding industrial base.

It tackles maintenance backlogs head-on and invests in enough spare components to bring 500 more aircraft to full readiness than the President's request accounts for. It goes \$3 billion beyond his request for overdue investments in expanding the defense industrial base and provides for modernizing ammunition and vehicle production facilities, from Iowa and Missouri to Ohio and Tennessee.

It delivers important downpayments on critical munitions, from the long-range and precision strike capabilities needed in the Indo-Pacific to the naval interceptors required to defend U.S. personnel and global commerce from terrorist attacks in the Red Sea.

But let's be absolutely clear. When it comes to rebuilding our stockpiles and preparing our Armed Forces to deter and defeat threats, there is much, much more work to be done. There is no serious reading of post-World War II history that doesn't trace the preservation of Western peace or the growth of American prosperity to an order underpinned by American strength.

The U.S. military is the reason our neighbors back home sleep in peace. It is the reason our communities reap the benefits of global trade. It is the weight behind our leader's words. We cannot afford to shortchange it, and I cannot make the stakes of the task before us any more clear.

VOTE ON SHEA NOMINATION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, The

question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Shea nomination?

Mr. DURBIN. 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 executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted “nay.”

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 229 Ex.]

## YEAS—59

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Budd	King	Shaheen
Butler	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cantwell	Lujan	Smith
Cardin	Manchin	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Sullivan
Casey	McConnell	Tester
Collins	Merkley	Tillis
Coons	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warnock
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Durbin	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Graham	Paul	Wyden
Hagerty	Peters	Young
Hassan	Reed	

## NAYS—34

Barrasso	Daines	Moran
Blackburn	Ernst	Mullin
Boozman	Fischer	Ricketts
Braun	Grassley	Risch
Britt	Hawley	Rubio
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tuberville
Cramer	Lee	Wicker
Crapo	Lummis	
Cruz	Marshall	

## NOT VOTING—7

Fetterman	Romney	Warner
Hoeven	Scott (SC)	
Menendez	Vance	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). 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

## TAX RELIEF FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES AND WORKERS ACT OF 2024—Motion to Proceed—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 7024, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 349, H.R. 7024, a bill to make improvements to the child tax credit, to provide tax incentives to promote economic growth, to provide special rules for the taxation of certain residents of Taiwan with income from sources within the United States, to provide tax relief with respect to certain Federal disasters, to make improvements to the low-income home housing tax credit, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

## INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in a couple of weeks, we will mark the second anniversary of one of President Biden's signature measures, the so-called Inflation Reduction Act. I am sure the White House will be celebrating, but Americans shouldn't be because Democrats did the country no favors with this legislation. In fact, the bill reads like a roster of bad Democrat policies.

It is hard to know where to even begin: Perhaps with the bill's misleading—really—outright deceptive title. Democrats called the bill the Inflation Reduction Act, yet even before the bill had been signed into law, the nonpartisan Penn Wharton Budget Model was noting the bill's impact on inflation was "statistically indistinguishable from zero." In other words, the Inflation Reduction Act would do nothing—nothing—to reduce inflation.

President Biden confirmed this fact a year later when he noted—this is President Biden speaking:

Well, we've put ourselves in a position where we passed the most comprehensive environmental piece of—it's called the Inflation Reduction Act. It has nothing to do with inflation.

That is President Biden. Let me just repeat that, Mr. President.

It's called the Inflation Reduction Act. It has nothing to do with inflation.

President Biden's own words.

Why Democrats chose to name it that when it had nothing to do with reducing inflation is a good question. Perhaps it was to try to convince the American people, falsely, that Democrats were doing something to stem the historic inflation crisis they had created, or perhaps it was to disguise the substance of what Democrats thought might be otherwise an unpopular bill.

But moving on.

Another Democrat selling point for the bill was the claim that it would reduce the deficit. But that claim has proved to be just as hollow as the bill's

title. The cost of the bill's Green New Deal provisions has grown to such an extent that the bill will not only not reduce the deficit, it is now on track to add to it. That is right. A bill Democrats touted for its deficit reduction is now predicted to actually add to the deficit.

And speaking of the bill's Green New Deal provisions, as the President himself admitted last year, the so-called Inflation Reduction Act was really a chance for Democrats to impose their Green New Deal fantasies. So the bill contains things like \$1.5 billion—billion, I might add—for a grant program to plant trees; \$1 billion for zero-emission, heavy-duty vehicles like garbage trucks; \$3 billion for the U.S. Postal Service for zero-emission delivery vehicles; \$1.9 billion for things like road equity—whatever that is—and identifying gaps in tree canopy coverage; and at least \$30 billion in climate slush funds allocated for climate-related political activity. Yes, Mr. President, climate-related political activity because, clearly, families struggling with high grocery prices and high energy prices in the Biden-Harris economy are eager to see their tax dollars going to Green New Deal activism.

Then, of course, there are the tax credits the bill provides for well-off Americans to purchase new electric vehicles.

And there is much, much more. All told, the climate- and energy-related provisions of the bill are now projected to cost American taxpayers in excess of \$1 trillion.

I mentioned tax credits for electric vehicles. Perhaps the Biden administration's signature environmental measure has been attempting to force the widespread adoption of electric vehicles.

The Inflation Reduction Act tax credits are one part of this crusade. Others include the final emissions rules the Biden administration released this spring that will have the practical effect of forcing car and truck companies to electrify a huge portion of their sales lots.

And the big problem here is that the President is attempting to force the adoption of his electric vehicle fantasy at a time when our electric grid is barely keeping up with current demand.

An article in the Washington Post this March entitled "Amid explosive demand, America is running out of power," noted "Vast swaths of the United States are at risk of running short of power as electricity-hungry data centers and clean-technology factories proliferate around the country, leaving utilities and regulators grasping for credible plans to expand the nation's creaking power grid."

And that is our situation right now as we speak, without the incredible burden that would be added to our grid by a vast increase in the number of electric cars and trucks on the road.

If the President is successful in imposing a rapid and widespread increase

in the number of electric vehicles, we are likely to be facing a situation where there is simply not enough power available to keep up with demand, with higher prices, electricity rationing, blackouts, and brownouts as the inevitable result.

I could go on for a while here about the strain the President is attempting to place on our electric grid, even as he seeks to weaken the already creaky grid even further with burdensome new regulations. And I could go on about the Inflation Reduction Act. I haven't even talked about the incredible amount of money Democrats funneled to the IRS through this legislation—the majority of it earmarked for increased audits and enforcements to help fund Democrats' Green New Deal fantasies. Nor have I talked about the tax hikes on energy, which are doing no favors to Americans already beset by high energy bills in the Biden-Harris economy.

Then there are the bill's price controls for prescription drugs, which will curtail medical innovation and the development of new medications. When the Biden administration originally proposed this policy, research from the University of Chicago projected that price controls of prescription drugs in Medicare would result in 135 fewer new drugs available to patients. We have already seen those projections beginning to come to fruition as multiple drug companies have halted research into new treatments as a result of the Inflation Reduction Act.

I will stop here, Mr. President. Suffice it to say that Democrats' so-called Inflation Reduction Act is a catalog of bad Democratic policies from unrealistic Green New Deal measures to costly tax hikes, to irresponsible spending.

Unfortunately, if we end up with a Harris administration next year, this legislation is likely a grim preview of more bad bills to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

## TAX RELIEF FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES AND WORKERS ACT OF 2024

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise today with deep antipathy and disappointment for the persistent political games being played in this Chamber. As a pastor, I am particularly bothered when those games are played with children.

Today, by all accounts, the Senate will fail to pass legislation with strong bipartisan support that will make a serious difference in the lives of everyday Georgians and their children. We are on track to do the right thing by our children.

But, once again, politics—as we enter the silly season of politics—is getting in the way of extending the expanded child tax credit. It is not only the right thing to do morally, it is the smart thing to do economically.

I have to say that I find that often that is the case with our public policy.