

paychecks rose, prices were in check, and poverty fell at record rates. America was energy independent. Gas prices were affordable. Our border was safe and was secure.

None of that is true today, not under this administration or these policies of the Biden-Harris administration. Democrats and this administration at this time in our country will always be known as the party of high prices and open borders.

Most Americans believe that our country is on the wrong track. And I believe most Americans are right; we are on the right track. There is good news, and that is that America can get back on track. We can get back on track with commonsense policies—policies that work, policies the American people are asking for.

Senate Republicans have solutions to the most pressing problems that are facing the American public today. First, we are going to address the No. 1 issue facing Americans. Americans will tell you what the No. 1 issue is they are concerned about, and that is the economy, the cost of things.

We are going to make life more affordable for all families, and that starts with making us energy dominant again and lowering the cost of energy. The Republicans will put a stop to Democrats' punishing political regulations that are just coming at us like a tidal wave since the day this administration began.

We will end America's dependence on Communist China; we will strengthen American manufacturing; and we will put American workers and businesses first.

Republicans also have solutions that will make our communities safer. Republicans will secure the border. We will finish the wall. Republicans will restore a program that worked called Remain in Mexico. This will stop the flood of illegal immigrants and the flow of deadly drugs.

Republicans support our police officers, and we stand against the deadly "defund the police movement," the very movement that KAMALA HARRIS and Democrats proudly support.

KAMALA HARRIS actually came into this Chamber to break the tie for radical nominees by this administration, the number of whom support defunding the police. That is the stand and that is the policy of the Biden-Harris administration.

Abroad, Republicans will restore America's commitment to peace through strength. Here in the Senate, Republicans will protect our institutions and protect the rule of law. We firmly reject Democrats' plans to pack the court and rig the elections.

These are solutions that unite Americans. Joe Biden is leaving behind a catastrophic record of ruin. We cannot afford 4 more years of these policies.

Yet what we see is Vice President HARRIS and Democrats want to nationalize the dangerously liberal policies of San Francisco Democrats. That is what

she is, a very liberal, dangerous San Francisco Democrat. That is her history.

That is how her voting record had been in the U.S. Senate, voted the most liberal Member of the U.S. Senate, more liberal than BERNIE SANDERS, the most liberal of 100 U.S. Senators.

What we see is that as Vice President, and now Presidential nominee, she wants to bring the California nightmare of high taxes, high crime, and no accountability to every household in America. These policies would crush the middle class.

What do Americans want? Lower prices and secure borders. What are the Democrats? The party of high prices and open borders.

Senate Republicans will lower Democrats' wallet-wrecking high prices. Senate Republicans will work to secure our wide open border and will work to keep Americans safe, at home as well as abroad.

There is no question that Republicans are committed to get America back on track.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO JULIE KITKA

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, you know what time of the week it is, and I think our pages are learning. But it is a special time of the week here in the Senate because it is Thursday, and Thursday is when I usually come out and talk about the Alaskan of the Week.

Now, look, the press—where are they? I am not sure they are around right now, but they love this speech. They call it probably the most important speech of the week in the Senate, regardless of what is going on. The Presiding Officer is a big fan and the pages are because I like to tell stories about what my constituents are doing back home to earn them this very prestigious title—very prestigious, by the way—the Alaskan of the Week.

I like to begin this speech, as you know, talking a little bit about what is going on back home in Alaska.

Here in the Senate, we are all getting ready to go on a recess work period, we call it. We are all going to be going home, seeing our constituents. Speaking of things in Alaska, I just happened to host our Senate lunch. On the Republican side of the Senate on Thursdays, one of the Senators hosts lunch every Thursday. Today was my day to host, which is kind of exciting.

I am not going to brag, but I think a lot of the Senators like it when Senator MURKOWSKI or I host because we bring in great salmon, halibut. So we had a feast for lunch today. My wife Julie was here, which was really special.

We brought in peonies. A lot of people don't know Alaska is now becoming a huge peonies flower producer. I didn't even know what a peony was a couple of years ago, but now we are big into that. So if you saw these peonies all

over the Senate today, they were from Alaska.

What I like to do at the lunch is talk a little bit about Alaska. I have this fact sheet with these great facts about Alaska. And during the lunch, we have a video cam going, literally a live feed video of what is happening in Alaska in the Katmai National Park, Brooks Falls. That is the real famous place in Alaska where all the big brown bears gather by the falls because the salmon are trying to jump up through the falls, and the brown bears are literally catching them in their mouths and eating them right there. So that is a live feed in the lunch that we just had, dozens of bears. It is awesome.

If you are interested in watching it, just go on Brooks Falls, live feed. It is awesome to watch. So there is a lot going on in our State.

It is kind of dangerous right now. One of the things that I showed to my colleagues is this slide. It is going to be hard to see, but this is a slide of Russian and Chinese strategic bombers—not good. That is a Bear bomber, Russian. That is a Chinese bomber. It is the first time in history they were working together to push into our airspace, Alaska airspace—Russian-Chinese strategic bombers coming into Alaska airspace. Our brave military men and women in Alaska jumped them. Over 10 fighters, fully armed to the teeth, said: Hey, China, Russia, get out of our airspace. Go back to your countries.

So up in Alaska, we are on the frontlines of a lot of this great power competition. These authoritarians are on the march pushing. We are not going to let them push in our State. So there is a lot going on. And I was talking about that at lunch.

By the way, I was talking about this, too: My wife Julie and I were recently up in Utqiagvik, Barrow. That is the highest point of North America. These are too hard to tell, but we were able to see some polar bears, beautiful polar bears in the wild. We took some photos—magnificent, beautiful animals. So there is just a lot going on.

I always like to make the pitch to people watching here in the Senate or on TV: Come up to Alaska. You will have the greatest trip in the world. It is an incredible place, a lot of fun. Especially now, it is beautiful. You would just love it.

So a lot happening there, as I was talking about to my colleagues at lunch today. But I want to talk about the people.

Today, we have a really great Alaskan of the Week who I know super well. I just want to talk about what a great job she has done. Her name is Julie Kitka. She has been, for over three decades, the president of a really important organization in Alaska called the Alaska Federation of Natives—the Alaska Federation of Natives, AFN, as we call it, in Alaska.

I also want to give a shout-out to Ben Mallott. He is actually related to my

wife. He is going to be the next president of AFN.

So great job, Ben.

He has already been working at AFN for a long time. But what we really want to talk about is Julie Kitka's legacy and what she has done to help literally tens of thousands of people in our State.

Now, I have talked about this a lot in my speeches here, but the history of Alaska is very epic. But one of the big elements of our history is who owns our lands, who manages our lands. Sometimes it is a fight, sometimes it is cooperation, but it is a really important issue.

One of the largest, most important parts of that history, after America purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867, was what rights to the lands would the Native people have? By the way, it was their lands to begin with, right? So what kind of rights do the Native people of Alaska have to lands?

This question has been going on since the purchase in 1867 of Alaska from Russia.

(Ms. HIRONO assumed the Chair.)

And believe it or not, Madam President, this issue is still in limbo into the late 1960s, when the Alaskan Native people from across the State organized and formed the Alaska Federation of Natives—AFN, as we call it—to push for the rights to their lands.

This fight got turbocharged in the late 1960s when oil was discovered on Alaska's North Slope during a crisis in terms of a worldwide shortage of oil. And the Congress was like: We need to produce energy in Alaska, and we need to produce energy fast.

Well, wait a minute. The Native people are saying: Hey, these are our lands. What about the settlement?

So Congress came together and passed a lot of really important legislation relating to these issues in Alaska. One was called the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Act, the TAPS Act; but the most important was in 1971, and it was called the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act—ANCSA, as we call it back home.

This is the largest and certainly the most innovative indigenous land settlement in U.S. history, probably in the history of the world, to be honest. It is no exaggeration to say that: 44 million acres of land going from the Feds and the State to the Native people to own it—fee simple, by the way. Very innovative. Very different from what happened in the lower 48 with Indian reservations, a very different system. Congress did that.

And it created AFN, the Alaska Federation of Natives. Actually, if you look at the AFN symbol, it has kind of a three-ring symbol that has Aleut, Eskimo, Indian—the symbol of everybody working together. And, trust me, in Alaska, the history of different groups wasn't always so cooperative. There was a lot of conflict between different Native groups.

And AFN came together. As a matter of fact, at lunch today, I was telling a

story about Alaska. I even told a story about my mother-in-law, my wife's mom, Mary Jane Fate, who is a great Alaska Native civil rights leader. She was one of the leaders, when AFN was being formed, who came to Congress and lobbied Senators on ANCSA. And she actually got a very conservative Senator, James Buckley, a great Senator from New York, to be a cosponsor of ANCSA because it was so innovative: a private sector approach to Native ownership of land that created Alaska Native corporations—all done right here in the U.S. Senate. And the AFN, Alaska Federation of Natives, pushed that and made it happen. Great leadership.

So now AFN represents about 140,000 Alaska Natives, hundreds of Alaska Native corporations. And for 34 years, Julie Kitka has been leading AFN—such an important organization to our State—and Julie has done a great job. Now she is stepping down. We are going to miss her. I am going to talk about that.

But let's talk about Julie's life. She is the second of five children, born to a Chugach Native father and a Kansas German mother. Growing up, she alternated between living in Cordova, AK, her father's hometown, and Washington State, where she started college at Western Washington University in 1971.

By 1973, Julie returned to Cordova to work in a cannery there and later was hired by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, their enrollment office and their adoption division. By the way, she processed over 12,000 adoption applications for Alaska Natives during that time.

And it was during this time she first became acquainted with the Alaska Federation of Natives, which, again, as I mentioned, was pretty new. Julie began taking grad school classes. She is very smart. Like I said, I have known her for many, many years. And she later dropped them to help take care of her sick daughter.

And then AFN said: Hey, this woman is really smart. We are going to hire her in kind of an accounting-bookkeeper position. They saw her really smart brilliance when it came to her business acumen and her business degree. And that was in 1984, just 6 years before she would begin her tenure as the AFN's longest serving president. So AFN made an early, very smart investment in Julie Kitka.

She moved up the chain quickly. She sat in on meetings with intelligence, curiosity. She was hired as a special assistant to the president. And Julie remembers the next few years at AFN as one of huge possibilities.

As I said, Madam President, this was an amazing settlement. Congress did great work—the House, the Senate—very innovative, hundreds and hundreds of pages. And Julie said: "There were [enormous] opportunities left and right. During those first meetings," after ANCSA was passed, "folks would show up with briefcases like 'business

people,' and they'd be full of smoked salmon and seal oil."

That was Julie talking about the early days.

While unprecedented, the structure of Alaska Native corporations—again, created by this body, Congress of the United States—through ANCSA, opened up incredible possibilities for the State. Julie said: "It is beyond our imagination how successful things turned out" with that legislation.

Now, look, it wasn't perfect. We are always trying to amend it and fix it.

She goes on to say: What Congress did by doing this settlement, land settlement experiment, with ANCs gave us a pathway to engage with the economy, to strengthen self-determination. The corporate model was an innovative tool which could be modified easily.

Now, pivotal changes began to happen at AFN. Workshops, conventions began to roll out across the State to help people prepare to implement this really far-reaching legislation.

And part of the legislation said: All right, this is going to pass in—it passed in 1971. Twenty years later, the Alaska Native corporations would essentially be open to the public, enabling outsiders to buy into ANCs. And this, to be honest, Madam President, was a challenging time. It was a scary time.

Julie remembers it as challenging and scary. A lot of corporations back in those days—ANCs—were losing money. This legislation, after a 20-year period—the 20-year period in 1991 really loomed large.

So she and the other Alaska Natives, working with the Congress and the Senate, worked hard to ensure continued Native ownership of ANCs. This was really important work. And they did this work. Julie came to Congress in Washington, DC, with AFN many, many times to serve as a lobbyist, advocating for ANCs in this legislation, this period in the early—late 1980s and early 1990s.

And with the help of her great persuasive talents, AFN was able to include key provisions in legislation here in the Congress that have resounding impacts today, including land bank protections preventing the taxation of undeveloped Native lands, special benefits for our Alaska Native elders, and the designation of ANCs as small or disadvantaged businesses.

Madam President, as you know, these relatively small changes grew later into really, really important changes for our ANCs and have created important legacies for the success that we have seen in so many of these Alaska Native corporations.

By January 1990, Julie had done such great work that AFN said: Hey, you are going to be our president. You are going to be our leader.

And she has done that for 34 years. She presided over AFN. By the way, the Alaska Federation of Natives Conference, the AFN convention, as we call it, every year in October in Alaska, is the biggest, largest meeting of indigenous Americans each year in the country. And, by the way, it is a great

event. It is a great event. I love going every year. It is a lot of fun. So many Alaskans, Native and non-Native, are there. It is fantastic.

So Julie has built all of that. AFN is one of the most important organizations in our State.

Thirty-four years later, Julie talks about some of the seminal programs and initiatives created during her time. AFN helped establish the Job Corps center, which is still thriving in Palmer, AK—a beautiful campus there—training Alaskans in their jobs. It is fantastic work they do.

AFN worked to establish Alaska Native education equity, the growing recognition and importance of Tribes.

Julie Kitka also did a great job working with our military and Alaska Natives and AFN. Alaska Natives, like Native Hawaiian and lower 48 Indians, serve at higher rates in the military than any other ethnic group in the country. Special patriotism, I like to call it. That is what they do.

Julie Kitka did a great job focusing on those issues and forming dozens of joint Federal and State partnerships that have lasted for decades. Julie said that none of this would have been accomplished without bridge building:

It was always about partnerships—nothing was ever done alone. We had conferences all the time to break down barriers and self-limiting silos.

Partnerships—what a great way to focus on leadership, Madam President. That is what she did.

So after 34 years as the president of AFN and 40 years as an employee of AFN, Julie has now decided to step down. What a career. What an impact on Alaskans.

And, by the way, she shows no sign of slowing down yet. This April, the full Alaska congressional delegation, myself included, selected Julie to lead the Denali Commission, an independent Federal Agency, to work on economic development and infrastructure issues in rural Alaska. So we certainly have not seen the last of her incredible work or work ethic on behalf of Alaska and all of our fellow Alaskans.

Julie, to you, congratulations. It has been an honor working with you on some of these critically important issues. I know that everybody at AFN, all Alaskans, Native and non-Native, send their congratulations. You have built an incredible legacy. You have worked so hard for our State and our communities. And now you have received one of the most prestigious awards in Alaska: being our Alaskan of the Week. Congratulations on a job well done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, before I start, it is an unfortunate position speaking after the Senator from Alaska. I want to thank him formally for his “Alaskan of the Week.” I am very far away in New Jersey, but I do enjoy that I often get to preside when

he speaks about the extraordinary Americans. I know they are Alaskans, but they are extraordinary Americans. I have appreciated that on a regular basis.

I do not understand why the Gallery is not full of journalists, but your colleagues do recognize the wonders of the people of your great State, and I want to thank you for that, in all seriousness.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Madam President, I rise today with a lot of hurt and anguish. I start with these words:

Please don't hurt me.

“Please don't hurt me.” Those were the first words that Sonya Massey said to the officers who knocked on her door on July 6. She had called 9-1-1 for help. She dialed those digits out of distress. She thought there might have been a possible intruder at her home.

Two officers responded. They were supposed to help. Less than 5 minutes later, she was dead, with a bullet to the head. The officer who killed her stopped the other officer at the scene from rushing forward to render aid by saying these words: “Nah, that's a head shot, dude,” he chuckled, “She's [dead].”

Sonya Massey's words: “Please don't hurt me.”

Her words: “Please don't hurt me.”

Four words: “Please don't hurt me.”

Sonya Massey was a mother and a daughter. She was a friend and a neighbor. She was young; she was just 36 years old. This African-American woman was in her home and needed help. She should be alive today.

We all grow up being taught in school that when we need help, police will be there. We know and are taught that they are to protect and serve. All across America, there are extraordinary stories of officers who do just that. I know it intimately. Some of the bravest people I have ever encountered are men and women who serve as law enforcement officers. They do keep our communities safe. I believe overwhelmingly that the overwhelming majority of American officers are not just good people, but they are good people who do great things in times of extraordinary distress.

I have had such incredible experiences and forged incredibly close bonds with many police officers. As mayor of New Jersey's largest city, I actually oversaw a police department. I sat with officers for countless hours—hundreds of them—in patrol cars. I went out with them in patrols in some of our more challenged neighborhoods in the late hours of the night. I watched them put themselves in harm's way. I watched them intervene in life-and-death situations.

I know countless police officers who report to work day in and day out and carry out their oath to protect and serve faithfully and professionally, often going above and beyond the call of their duty. Yet I also know a small

fraction of those officers, from some of the worst tragedies that this country has had to witness too often—I know there are people that should not be officers, that have not merited those badges, should be kept away from the profession. I have seen some of it in attitude, in conduct, and behavior of people that view it as an “us versus them.” They don't see themselves as guardians of the community; they often see themselves as warriors. They don't know the neighborhoods they are serving or respect them. There are some—a very narrow, small fraction of a percent—of our officers who don't do their job, who are quick to jump to conclusions, who often see people of color or poor people or homeless people or those suffering from addiction as threats.

We are a nation that must do better. There are people that somehow get onto our police departments in America that are unfit to serve.

The officer that killed Sonya Massey should never have had a badge and a gun. While we still do not know all the details, here is what we do know: We know that he had worked for six different police departments in less than 4 years. He was discharged from the Army for “serious misconduct.” He had pleaded guilty to two charges of driving under the influence. He also failed to obey a command while working for another sheriff's office in Illinois and was told that he needed high-stress decision-making classes.

Unfortunately, this officer is not the only one who has managed to go from department to department, escaping scrutiny and accountability. This is because in the United States of America, we have no real system to keep bad officers from simply jumping over to the next town if they are fired.

Think about this: So many of our local communities have police departments. They have people that apply for those jobs. And there is no national system or database that they can check to see if that officer came from a different State or a different city and was bounced out of their job for misconduct. In one of the most important roles in American society, this is often the difference between life and death.

Where you have the power and the capacity to fire weapons, where you have to operate and act under high-stress situations, we have no national way, no database that departments can check to see if the officer they are hiring has shown, in other jurisdictions, behavior and conduct unbecoming of an officer.

Sonya Massey should not be dead. This could have been prevented. We have known this is a problem in our country because of past tragedies.

This November will be the 10-year anniversary of a little boy's death. His name was Tamir Rice. Tamir was 12 years old, doing something that I did in my childhood, that I imagine lots of kids have done in their childhoods—play with toy guns. A 12-year-old was