

new military contracts and cause immediate and immense uncertainty and cost increases for the old ones.

So I urge Speaker Johnson to set aside this CR proposal and try again. We have already lost 1 week in this 3-week work period. We all know what we need to do if we want to ensure the government does not shut down: We need a bipartisan bill, a temporary extension. The Democratic leader in the House and I are ready and willing to work with the Speaker, as we have done before.

INFLATION

Mr. President, now on inflation, yesterday Americans got another piece of excellent news in the fight against inflation. According to the Department of Labor, the consumer price index was measured at 2.5 percent in August compared to a year ago. This floor chart illustrates just that: 2 years ago, 2 years after we passed the Inflation Reduction Act and Chips and Science, inflation has now slowed to a 3-year low. Here is what it was in 2022; here is what it is right now. It went from 8.3 percent when the Chips and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act were passed to 2.5 percent today. Let me repeat: 2 years after the Inflation Reduction Act and the Chips and Science Act, inflation has slowed to a 3-year low.

Republicans claimed investing in America would make inflation skyrocket and drive our economy into a recession. Instead, the United States has had the strongest post-COVID recovery in the world. Manufacturing, construction at an alltime high, nearly triple its peak during the past administration, and inflation continues to trend lower. And inflation has slowed, despite Senate Republicans trying to block and derail so many of the bills we have pushed in this Chamber to lower costs and make life easier for American families.

Remember, when Republicans had a chance to vote for lower prescription drug costs for seniors, they voted no. When Republicans had a chance to cap insulin at \$35 a month for Americans on Medicare, they voted no. When Republicans had the chance to dramatically expand the child tax credit and cut child poverty in this country in half, they voted no. And when Republicans had the chance to invest in rebuilding America and bringing advanced manufacturing jobs back to our shores and open new factories for EVs and solar and chips, many of them still voted no—though, then back home, they tried to take credit for these jobs. For 3 years, Republicans have proudly been the party of “no”: no solutions, no plans, no attempts to fix our country’s problems.

But today’s report shows that the Democratic agenda is working. This is dramatic. And despite Republicans’ best efforts to derail our country’s recovery, we have moved forward in a very positive way. We have a lot of work still to do. People still need a lot

of help to make ends meet and save for retirement and provide for their families, but we are on our way. We are on our way, as this chart shows.

PROJECT 2025

Mr. President, now on Project 2025, the more people learn about Donald Trump’s 2025 agenda, the more they realize how devastating it would be for our country. Later today, I will join with my Democratic colleagues to shine a light on this revolting MAGA agenda.

On its surface, Project 2025 proposes the most conservative, most radical, most unhinged collection of policies in modern history. Let me say that again: Project 2025 proposes the most conservative, the most radical, the most unhinged collection of policies in modern history.

And when you dig even deeper, Project 2025 is even worse than that. It reads like a hard-right wish list for some of the nastiest, most harmful policies you can imagine. Project 2025 would devastate American education by abolishing the Department of Education and eliminating Head Start for 2.9 million students.

Republicans claim they care about families, but eliminating Head Start means Republicans want to kill a program that studies show makes it far more likely that low-income kids will graduate high school, attend college, earn more money, and lead healthier lives. That is what Republicans would eliminate by killing Head Start.

Project 2025 would send the cost of healthcare and prescription drugs soaring, repealing the \$35 cap on insulin for seniors on Medicare that Democrats enacted into law. The \$35 cap on insulin for seniors was a lifesaving reform—literally, a lifesaving reform. It will help ensure seniors won’t go broke trying to manage their diabetes. But Project 2025 callously, cruelly would kill that measure and tell seniors who struggle to afford insulin that they are on their own—utter cruelty.

Project 2025 would also intensify the GOP’s war on reproductive freedom by laying the groundwork for a national abortion ban, pushing States to monitor women’s pregnancies. Let me repeat that: Project 2025 pushes States to monitor women’s pregnancies.

This is what they call freedom? Give me a break.

Project 2025 would betray our veterans by cutting disability benefits for veterans and defunding VA hospitals, including the only VA on Long Island. The Northport VA could potentially, given their cuts, be defunded.

And, finally, 2025 would make it harder for Americans to own a home by privatizing Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, causing dramatic spikes in mortgage rates.

Owning a home is a hallmark of the American Dream. We shouldn’t make it harder for people to own homes, and that is precisely what 2025 would do.

So let me be clear: Project 2025 is the Trump agenda. Its staff reads like a

who is who of the first Trump administration, and many of them would be part of a second Trump administration and be in charge of writing policy. So make no mistake, America, if Donald Trump returns to the White House, Project 2025 will be the playbook his staff will use for implementing the policies of his new administration, and we are all in danger should that occur.

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 proceeded to call 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to begin by reminding our colleagues of a report released before the August State work period. It is a report Congress commissioned in the fiscal year 2022 NDAA, produced by a panel of experts that Congress appointed—the bipartisan Commission on the National Defense Strategy.

The Commission was tasked with reviewing the Biden administration’s national defense strategy and conducting an independent assessment of the threats and requirements of our common defense.

Any of our colleagues who haven’t yet taken a close look at this report should. But I would like to reiterate a few of its conclusions that I discussed just last month as the Appropriations Committee finalized defense spending legislation for the coming year.

This ought to grab our attention, from the report:

[T]he U.S. military lacks both the capabilities and the capacity required to be confident it can deter and prevail in combat.

[T]he U.S. defense industrial base . . . is unable to meet the equipment, technology, and munitions needs of the United States and its allies and partners.

[T]he U.S. public are largely unaware of the dangers the United States faces or the costs (financial and otherwise) required to adequately prepare.

The report doesn’t flinch in assessing the full scale of the threats posed by major adversaries: Russian victory in Ukraine would make Moscow “an emboldened and likely stronger power, requiring NATO to build and deploy additional forces, potentially at the expense of other locations where these resources could be applied.

China is outpacing the United States and has largely negated the U.S. military advantage in the Western Pacific through two decades of focused military investment.

And, perhaps most alarmingly, the growing partnership and collaboration between our adversaries “increases the

likelihood that a conflict with one would expand to multiple fronts, causing simultaneous demands on U.S. and ally resources.

It is a sobering assessment with some urgent recommendations to go along with it. The question now is what we are willing to do about it.

Congress has a constitutional duty to provide for the common defense. We have a responsibility to align resources with our requirements and our strategy to provide funding adequate to ensure American military superiority.

Unfortunately, this is work Congress must do without help from this administration. And as one Commissioner, Roger Zakheim, has observed, President Biden's 2022 NDS mentioned neither "budget," "funding," nor "dollar."

But after a week back in Washington, Congress is no closer to delivering full-year top-line defense spending than we were back on August 1. The critical increases Vice Chair COLLINS secured over the President's anemic budget request are no closer to becoming law, neither is the National Defense Authorization Act, which the Democratic leader has yet to schedule for floor time.

So it is one thing to request expert analysis; it would be quite another to do the urgent work that analysis rightly prescribes.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. President, on another matter, one of the few details Vice President HARRIS has shared about her governing agenda is a pledge to implement price controls at the grocery store to end so-called price-gouging.

The eerie echoes of Marxist propaganda in that talking point have already attracted attention. But we don't have to dig too far back in the history books to find an example that she may be drawing from.

The Biden-Harris administration itself has used similar language to describe another socialist-inspired price control scheme: the one to combat supposed price-gouging in the market for lifesaving pharmaceutical treatments.

And so far, prescription drug socialism is not working out too well. According to a recent study, nearly 3.5 million beneficiaries are expected to pay higher—higher—out-of-pocket costs as a result of the administration's proposed scheme.

But that hasn't stopped them. Last month, the administration released the maximum fair price for the first 10 medicines selected for its coercive negotiation program. Of course, when you dig into the details, the scheme sounds less like a negotiation than a shake-down.

If the dictated maximum fair price is not feasible, drugmakers have two choices: They can pay an exorbitant excise fee or they can withdraw entirely from participating in Medicaid and Medicare.

Now, remember, the real losers from this misguided policy are the vulner-

able patients who are left with fewer lifesaving cures.

Roche and AstraZeneca have indicated that they will be discontinuing certain drug trials or considering delaying launching cancer medications due to the financial penalties from the Inflation Reduction Act, and yet Biden and HARRIS seem largely unbothered.

Last month, President Biden went on the road to celebrate the results of the Cancer Moonshot Initiative, an accomplishment I was proud to partner with him on. But he hasn't reckoned with estimates that the Inflation Reduction Act could eliminate nine times the amount of funding for cancer research that the Cancer Moonshot created.

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Vice President HARRIS, similarly blinded to the consequences of her work, has recently bragged about her role in passing the Inflation Reduction Act.

I can't imagine that Americans facing rare disease diagnoses are as proud of that record as she is.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there was a time not that long ago when families had a similar challenge across America: what to do with mom and dad. At that time, there wasn't much to turn to. If you were fortunate, your parents, during the course of their lifetime, saved up enough money to take care of themselves.

But in my family and many others, it was common to have that spare bedroom for grandma and grandpa because there was no place else to go. It was part of American family life. It caused some hardship. The kids had to double up in the bedrooms, and some of the activities in the family were limited. But you did it because you loved them and they needed help and they couldn't take care of themselves.

In 1939, that started to change. A President named Franklin Delano Roosevelt thought, It is time for us to give some relief to these families, to give dignity to seniors in their retirement years. And he created a program called Social Security—now one of the most popular programs in the United States.

You don't hear many candidates for President standing up and saying, "I am going to cut Social Security benefits," do you? It is worshiped and venerated and respected and followed by families across America. But the critics in the creation of Social Security called it socialism. Socialism: Too much government, leave us alone; let mom and dad live in that spare bedroom; don't give them a separate savings account they can accumulate during their lifetime. If they do it, fine. If they don't, fine too. Socialism.

Fast forward to the 1960s. Now we have a new concern: How are we going

to pay for the healthcare of seniors now that they are living longer because of Social Security? What are we going to do about it?

There was a concern in Washington that the cost of medical care—surgeries and treatment—was just too expensive for the average person. And so President Lyndon Baines Johnson created Medicare. Medicare was a health insurance program for senior citizens across America.

When it started, it ushered in a dramatic change in healthcare in America. The construction of hospitals started expanding their pace across this country. Medicare made a big difference.

What did they say about it in criticizing it? Socialism: Too much government trying to provide healthcare for senior citizens. Of course, Medicaid came on its heels, as well, to take care of low-income individuals facing the same challenge.

"Socialism"—we hear that time and again. This morning, the Republican Senate leader criticized efforts to lower pharmacy drug costs across America. He called it prescription drug socialism. Here we go again. Any effort to help the average family who is trying to get by and trying to make ends meet that involves the government is criticized as socialism. The argument was made by the Republican leader that this socialism, this lowering of prescription drug prices, is ultimately going to stifle research and competition. He failed to mention one or two things.

First, he failed to mention that virtually every single prescription drug that is now making a difference across America started with government research. The National Institutes of Health—the premier medical research Agency in the world—did the basic research for virtually every single one of these drugs. As much as I admire the private sector—and I do—and as much as I wish the pharmaceutical industry well, the fact is, if they are honest about it, they are simply bargaining with the government that helped them get started to find profitable products.

The second thing I want to note that the Republican leader did not mention this morning is that, for decades now, we have allowed the Veterans Health Administration to negotiate drug prices. In other words, what we are now doing in Medicare, we have been doing for veterans. Our theory was our veterans deserve the best, and we have got to be able to afford it as a government, and they have to be able to afford it as individuals. So we negotiated these drug prices. I didn't hear any screaming and hollering about helping our veterans, because it was the right thing to do.

Doing that for veterans is virtually the same thing that is happening in other countries. Why are exactly the same drugs that are made in the United States sold in Canada for a fraction of the cost? Because the Canadian