

institution designed to be the world's greatest deliberative body, but, more than that, they worry about keeping their families safe and putting food on the table, and I expect they will vote accordingly.

CHINA

Mr. President, on another matter, I have spoken frequently about the welcome signs that America's European allies are waking up to the strategic challenge posed by the PRC and to the dangers of predatory Chinese influence in their own backyards.

Like America, our allies are watching the flaws of the Chinese statist economic model laid bare. They are increasingly wary to hitch their wagons to a totalitarian system that stifles innovation, discourages free thought, and complicates free enterprise.

They are hesitant to take risks in a system where the rule of law is trampled by the whims of the State and assets are subject to expropriation by the regime.

Encouraging progress, like a German security strategy that explicitly recognizes the Chinese threat, and efforts across the EU to reduce reliance on Chinese technologies, presents opportunities for the West to work closer together to secure supply chains and to lower barriers to cooperation among allies.

Unfortunately, this progress is not across-the-board. China may not be a safe business partner, but it is still an enticing one for far too many in economies, including, believe it or not, within the NATO alliance.

I have spoken before about Hungary's decade-long drift into the orbit of the West's most determined adversaries. It is an alarming trend. And nobody—certainly not the American conservatives who increasingly form a cult of personality around Prime Minister Viktor Orban—can pretend not to see it. Hungary's leaders are cozying up to Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran in private. They are doing it publicly and vocally as well.

The Orban government has welcomed China's view of a "European bridgehead" in Hungary as the perfect complement to its own declared policy of an "opening to the East," and it hasn't been shy about turning words into actions.

When Chinese state enterprise has said jump, Hungarian officials have asked, how high?

As European allies began to heed warnings from the Trump administration to reduce reliance on Chinese industry and technology, Budapest repeatedly blocked EU progress and welcomed a geyser—a literal geyser—of the Chinese Belt and Road investment. Included in the torrent of PRC influence was 500 million euros from a Chinese electric vehicle manufacturer to build a new facility on Hungarian soil and another 7 billion euro investment in a new EV battery plant.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister of a former vassal of Russian communism

has nothing but praise for the neo-Soviet imperialist responsible for the first major land war in Europe since 1945.

Viktor Orban describes the regime that has sacrificed tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of Russian lives and more than \$200 billion in military force for its unprovoked—and thus far unsuccessful—aggression against Ukraine as "hyper-rational." But this NATO Prime Minister doesn't just admire Putin, he helps him. His government runs interference for Moscow, gumming up European and trans-Atlantic efforts to combat Russia's unlawful aggression at every turn.

European allies are providing more assistance to Ukraine than the United States is, but Americans who complain the EU isn't doing more to help Ukraine should look no further than to Budapest's efforts to block additional EU assistance for the answer.

Then there is Budapest's relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hungary's Foreign Minister has bemoaned that ongoing international sanctions make it "really challenging to build effective economic and trade cooperation" with the world's most active state sponsor of terror.

I have little sympathy for Hungarian companies that struggle to profit from their ties to the genocidal regime in Tehran. Of course, that hasn't stopped Hungarian firms from committing tens of millions of dollars to financing joint nuclear projects with Iran.

It didn't stop a national Hungarian university from inviting a former Iranian President to a conference on—listen to this—"common values in the global environment."

"Common values" with Tehran? And here I thought it was American conservatives who claimed shared values with Hungary's ruling party. Has the Orban government forgotten its adoring fans on this side of the Atlantic?

No, Hungary's leaders have made no secret of their conviction that the future is one of American decline. The future is one of American decline—that is the Hungarian view. They are not hiding the ways they are preparing for American weakness and betting on our failure.

There is nothing tough about bowing to autocrats, and there is nothing for American leaders to gain by praising those who do. Subservience to revanchist powers is not an American value. But far more importantly, it is not in America's interests.

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. SCHUMER. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have good news this morning. Before the day is done, the Senate will pass a temporary extension of government funding, avoiding a painful and unnecessary shutdown next week. The agreement we locked in last night allows for no poison pill amendments.

Americans can breathe easy that because both sides have chosen bipartisanship, Congress is getting the job done. We will keep the government open. We will prevent vital government services from needlessly coming to a halt. We will give appropriators more time to fully fund the government before the end of the year. And I am especially pleased we are getting the job done with some time to spare.

Now, none of this would have happened without bipartisan cooperation.

For the information of my colleagues, later today, the House is expected to take up the CR and pass it on suspension. Once the Senate receives the House bill, we will immediately move to its consideration. We hope to vote early this evening, with final passage set at 60 votes. So if all goes well in the House, the Senate should be sending President Biden a bill before the end of today.

This is a good outcome for the country. There will be no shutdown because, finally, at the end of the day, our colleagues in the House decided to work with us.

So thank you to my colleagues on both sides for their work. We aren't quite done, but we are now on a clear glidepath to getting the CR across the finish line.

I hope the House will have learned its lesson that, once again, listening to the hard right on these vital issues, funding the government, avoiding default, cannot lead to anything that is useful or constructive. In fact, I hope this positive outcome of bipartisanship can set the tone for more constructive bipartisan work when we return in the fall.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. President, now on the Senate session, a little over a month from now, the American people will exercise the most precious right that could ever exist in a free society. I will not get into the back-and-forth of campaigns here on the Senate floor, but as we prepare to depart for October, let us take a moment to look back at the work of the Senate these last few months and these last few years—last 2 years.

We had lots of obstacles to getting things done this year. The Republican House was replete with disarray throughout the last 2 years, almost paralyzed. And there was much Republican intransigence in both Houses on issue after issue that prevented many good proposals from moving forward, despite our offers for compromise. Despite that, there is still a good amount we have gotten done.

First, Senate Democrats continue to bring balance back to the Federal

bench by confirming over 210 judges to lifetime appointments. These judges are the most diverse group of nominees the bench has ever seen. Nearly two-thirds are women, two-thirds are people of color. And we have confirmed more Hispanic, Asian, and Native women and more LGBTQ judges to the Federal bench than under any other President's full time in office.

These judges come with many backgrounds, not just partners in big law firms or prosecutors—as worthy as those professions may be. They come with civil rights backgrounds, public defender backgrounds, and more.

We also passed a landmark national security supplemental package to protect America's interests around the world, to stand up to Putin in Ukraine, to help Israel defend itself, and to provide humanitarian assistance for innocent civilians around the world.

The Senate provided this historic funding to help Ukraine defend their homeland with more ammo and javelins and stinger missiles and more equipment for training. And we made clear to the world that in the fight between freedom and autocracy, America will never forget where she stands—on the side of freedom.

Despite, again, a lot of standing in the way because of extraneous amendments proposed by some of our Republican colleagues, it took longer than it should have, but the most important fact is that it got done.

I am proud that the Senate stepped up at this historic moment and thank Leader McCONNELL for joining me in that regard.

Tomorrow, Leader McCONNELL and I will proudly welcome Ukrainian's President Zelenskyy to a meeting here at the U.S. Capitol to reaffirm our support and hear from him what his country may need in the future.

Separately, we also worked to keep our kids safe online by passing KOSA and COPPA with overwhelming bipartisan support. I thank my Republican colleagues for working with us on these landmark bills. They would be the first major updates to kids' safety on the internet in decades, and I am proud to have joined with parents and families of deceased loved ones to get it done. I urge Speaker JOHNSON in the House to get KOSA and COPPA done as soon as possible.

Finally, despite the hard right's intransigence, we prevented the government from defaulting last year. That would have been catastrophic. And then several times this year, as well as last, we prevented the government from shutting down, as I said, despite rightwing wishes that it happen.

And on the nonlegislative front, we have continued implementing our accomplishments of the last 2 years to help lower costs. This isn't legislation but rather working with executive Agencies to implement our policies, and that has continued to lower costs. Democrats in the Senate caucus spent a lot of time with Cabinet Secretaries

and others making sure that the bills have been implemented, and they are showing great results from one end of the country to the other.

Around the country, Senate Democrats have been hard at work turning our bills into action, implementing our agenda through new bridges in States like Pennsylvania and Ohio, high-speed rail in Nevada, and never-before-seen investments in chip manufacturing in New York, Arizona, Ohio, and elsewhere. These are creating jobs. These are lowering costs. These are helping America get prosperous.

Now, there are a lot of things we tried to get done this year but couldn't because of Republican intransigence, such as protecting a woman's right to choose and reproductive freedoms, securing our southern border, and expanding the child tax credit. So we will keep working when we return. It has been a difficult road in divided government, but progress is possible. We have made that clear again and again and again throughout this 118th Congress.

BUFFALO NITE

Mr. President, now, another thing: Buffalo Nite. Tonight is one of my favorite nights on Capitol Hill—Buffalo Nite, when Western New York comes to share wings, beef on weck, sponge candies, and, of course, especially after Monday night, nonstop talk about the Buffalo Bills. But this year is special. Tonight, we will honor Buffalo News's own Jerry Zremski with the Charging Buffalo Award.

I have known Jerry for decades. Rain or shine, tragedy or triumph, Jerry has been through it all with Western New York. Jerry's reporting and investigative journalism has touched the lives of tens of thousands in Western New York and millions across America. His work has shaped legislation, exposed wrongdoing, and given a voice to the voiceless.

It is no secret that I know a lot of reporters. So trust me when I say that Jerry Zremski has always been one of the best in the business. What a great guy. And he is such a decent, caring human being as well.

Western New York can be very proud to call Jerry one of their own, and I am very proud to have gotten to know Jerry over the many years. Jerry's indelible legacy is sewn into the very fabric of New York, and we are all eternally grateful for his great work.

I look forward to celebrating Buffalo Nite with Jerry and so many others from Western New York this evening.

Finally, and most importantly: "Go Bills!" Maybe we will win the Super Bowl this year.

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. 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.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, when the history of the Biden-Harris administration is written, I suspect it will be defined by the historic inflation crisis that has characterized almost all 4 years of this Presidency. And it started almost right away. Eager to begin implementing their big spending visions, Democrats seized on COVID as an excuse for a massive, partisan \$1.9 trillion spending spree, the so-called American Rescue Plan Act.

Democrats were warned by Democratic economists that their bill ran the risk of setting off "inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation." But they proceeded anyway. Vice President HARRIS cast the deciding, tie-breaking vote in the Senate to ensure that this massive government boondoggle would become law.

And within weeks of its passage, inflation began climbing—and kept climbing and climbed more and more. By 2022, inflation had reached its highest level in 40 years—40 years—and Americans felt the consequences. As the price of everything from gas to groceries shot up, Americans dipped into their savings to make ends meet or put essential items on their credit cards. They took on second jobs. They visited food banks. They put off home repairs or family vacations. They skipped necessary medical care.

And even as the rate of inflation has finally—and I say "finally"—slowed, Americans continue to suffer as prices remain elevated. Today, Americans are paying 21 percent more for groceries than they were when President Biden and Vice President HARRIS took office. They are paying 37 percent more for energy, 45 percent more for gasoline, 22 percent more for shelter—and the list goes on.

Today, a typical family needs to spend an additional \$13,202 per year to maintain the same standard of living it enjoyed when President Biden and Vice President HARRIS took office—\$13,202 per year. Just think about that for a minute. How many lower and middle-income families do you know that can easily absorb an extra \$13,000 a year? How many families out there have had to lower their standard of living as a result of the Biden-Harris administration's policies? How many missed vacations or missed braces or missed extracurricular activities or missed car repairs or home projects does that \$13,000 represent?

And in addition to the staggering price hikes of the past few years, Americans have had to contend with additional economic pain as a result of the rate hikes the Federal Reserve was forced to impose to deal with the Biden-Harris inflation crisis. Those rate hikes drove up credit card interest rates. They drove up rates for car loans. They drove up mortgage rates. And so Americans who, for example, have had to charge things to their credit cards to deal with high food or energy prices are now facing increased challenges in paying off that debt.