

I come to the floor today because at 3 o'clock this afternoon in the house chamber in Raleigh, there is a veto-override. There was a veto by Governor Cooper for a disaster relief bill that the people of Western North Carolina need.

Now, I understand there are provisions in there that have to do with a legitimate disagreement about the scope and the role of the executive branch, but this is not the time for us to rethink whether or not we should be sending every signal we can to the people of North Carolina that help is on the way.

I am doing my part here in this Chamber to make sure that our Members stay focused on providing \$100 billion in relief before we get out of this Congress. I need my colleagues in Raleigh to vote to override that veto today so that we can be sure that North Carolina knows that every Republican and every Democrat—we are not Republicans or Democrats; we are North Carolinians trying to provide desperate help to a land mass the size of Massachusetts that has experienced more than 100 deaths, thousands of businesses impacted, thousands of people out of their homes.

So I just come to the floor today to encourage any member who may have one reason or another to not sustain this veto-override in the house chamber in Raleigh to set that aside today and go do right by the people of Western North Carolina.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

ECONOMY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday, President Biden delivered a speech on the economy—a last attempt to rescue his dismal economic record. Incredibly, during the course of the speech, he repeated a phrase that he has often used about growing the economy from the bottom up and the middle out. I am not sure how that phrase continues to get past White House fact checkers because if there is one thing that President Biden has failed to do, it is to build an economy from the bottom up and the middle out.

Thanks to President Biden's signature economic legacy—an inflation crisis of historic proportions—today, a typical family has to pay an additional \$13,375 per year to maintain the same standard of living it enjoyed when the President took office—\$13,375 per year, more than \$1,000 per month. And who do you think that affects the most? Not billionaire Democrat donors or Hollywood stars. No. It affects the bottom and the middle the most—the people who don't have a spare \$13,000 lying around and who have had to cut back on extras or, in many cases, essentials to survive in the Biden economy.

CBS News exit polling in November found that two-thirds of voters described the economy as bad, and 45 percent said their financial situations were worse than they were 4 years ago. And it is no wonder. President Biden likes to talk about giving families

breathing room, but his economy took away breathing room for a whole lot of Americans. Working Americans paying 22 percent more for groceries and 31 percent more for gas and 28 percent more for electricity and 23 percent more in rent than they were when President Biden took office are not seeing a lot of breathing room for their budgets.

The President likes to pretend, as he did in his speech yesterday, that he came in and saved the economy after COVID, but the truth is, the economy was already well on its way to a healthy recovery, and his massive, ill-advised, supposed COVID relief legislation helped kick off an inflation crisis whose reverberations are still being felt today in family budgets around the country. President Biden can give all the speeches he wants touting his economic record, but his economy has been the very opposite of a boon to lower and middle-income families.

The good news is that the days of President Biden's disastrous economic policies are numbered. In January, President Trump will take office, and Republicans will have control of the House and the Senate. Expanding economic opportunity and increasing growth and Americans' wages will be a top priority. That means taking action via reconciliation to preserve the tax relief that Republicans delivered during the first Trump administration—tax relief that improved take-home pay for millions of hard-working Americans. It also means targeting onerous regulations choking our economy, like the thousand-plus Biden-Harris regulations that have already cost Americans well over \$1.5 trillion. It means things like unleashing American energy and restoring American energy dominance, which will benefit both the economy and our national security.

President Biden's energy policies have jeopardized the future of our already shaky electric grid and set us up for future supply problems, but his war on American energy ends next month, and a better future is in sight. It won't take long now.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state. The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 783, Lauren McGarity McFerran, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring December 16, 2029. (Reappointment)

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Mark R. Warner, Jeanne Shaheen, Martin Heinrich, Jon Tester, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Maria Cantwell, Gary C. Peters, Ben-

jamin L. Cardin, Ron Wyden, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Brian Schatz, Sheldon Whitehouse.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Lauren McGarity McFerran, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring December 16, 2029 (Reappointment), shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 320 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Bennet	Hirono	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schiff
Booker	Kelly	Schumer
Brown	Kim	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lujan	Tester
Casey	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warnock
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Durbin	Ossoff	Welch
Fetterman	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	
Heinrich	Rosen	

NAYS—50

Barrasso	Graham	Ricketts
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hagerty	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rounds
Britt	Hoeben	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Collins	Lankford	Sinema
Cornyn	Lee	Sullivan
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Cramer	Manchin	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Tuberville
Cruz	Moran	Vance
Daines	Mullin	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Marshall

(Mr. SCHATZ assumed the Chair.)

(The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 50.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

CLOTURE MOTION WITHDRAWN

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the cloture motion with respect to the Ditelberg nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Marzano nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Matthew James Marzano, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years expiring June 30, 2028.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
DISASTER RECOVERY

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, we are running out of time. We have just over a week left before Congress goes home for the holidays, and we cannot leave town without passing long-term disaster relief.

People have waited and waited and waited and waited for help to arrive, and every day that we don't get this done is another day that survivors can't start to get back to life as they knew it—going to work, going to school, dropping their kids off at basketball practice, getting together with friends and neighbors.

For the people in Lahaina, help cannot come soon enough. Almost a year and a half after the tragic fires, it is as hard as ever to make ends meet. Housing is scarce. Prices are going up. Jobs are hard to come by. People are doing everything they can to get by and to help each other out. So it is not for a lack of trying; it is that they were never meant to confront this recovery alone.

When you have lost everything, when you are still mourning friends and loved ones, when you are 16 months into a recovery and normalcy still feels so far away, you need help, and getting that help is the difference between people being able to stay on Maui or leaving. People are leaving the only place they have ever called home. Those are the stakes. They are not theoretical. This is happening to hundreds of families in West Maui.

Lahaina is not the only community that has been devastated by a disaster. Communities in 40 States are building back from a disaster of some kind—a flood, a wildfire, a hurricane—and more than 25 States are relying on long-term Federal assistance to get survivors back on their feet. No one is asking for charity. What they are asking for is the kind of aid that has helped to restore so many communities across the country over many, many years. This is what Congress is supposed to do—Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina, New York and New Jersey after Hurricane Sandy, Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, California after the 2018 wildfires, and more than a dozen States nationally as recently as 3 years ago.

The Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program—known as CDBG-DR—works. It has supported millions of Americans struck

by disaster over the last 30 years by giving them flexible, long-term assistance. So to fail to do this now for people in Lahaina and across the country would be quite unusual and shameful.

We have a simple task here: to help our fellow Americans in their hour of need. I want to be perfectly clear. We cannot and we will not leave town without passing disaster aid.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Indiana.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. BRAUN. Madam President, it has been the honor of my lifetime to represent Hoosiers here in the U.S. Senate.

When I said I was going to do this back in 2017—I didn't have much of a political legacy—to leave my business that I had spent 37 years running and that I wanted to run for the U.S. Senate, everybody said: a fool's errand—it couldn't be done.

But there were a lot of Hoosiers wanting the system to be shaken up a little bit. When I interpreted, I think, what politics was doing back in 2015 and 2016, I crafted that unusual idea that it could be done even when you have made most of your life in the trenches in the real world.

I was told when I got here: Freshman Senators are not to be heard, may be seen. Sit back; learn the ropes.

Well, that wasn't going to work for me because I had already put myself into a corner because I said I wouldn't do it more than two terms. That is unusual. Everyone says it, they get amnesia, and then you know the rest of the story.

I have been so proud of what we have done here in these 6 years, what we have done for Hoosiers. And when I tell you about some of the things that can be done, I think you are going to be amazed.

I put together a staff that came here mostly from Indiana, and their goal was to get things done, to get it across the finish line. And, sure, I was proud to have been named the most effective first-term Republican Senator and the sixth most effective in our caucus, generally, in the last Congress, and probably close to that again in this one. But all of us here know that we get the credit for it and it is your staff that does all the heavy lifting.

This 2021 freshman Senate office got more bills across the finish line than any other—it is amazing—and 37 in the span of 6 years. Again, that is why the Center for Effective Lawmaking singled out our office as being most impactful in areas like healthcare, education, and agriculture—all the stuff I bumped into in so many ways in the real world before I got here.

I want to tell you about a few of those wins. Incoming Senators will hopefully get inspired by it.

Imagine, as a Republican, when one of your biggest pieces of legislation has the word "climate" in it. So I will get to how that happened in the first place,

but, being a conservationist, one who knows that is an issue that we, as Republicans and conservatives, have to be involved with, we actually crafted a bill called the Growing Climate Solutions Act, which was a landmark bill for farmers that matched up their good stewardship with offset markets that were already there but government was making it too difficult for them to take access of it, especially small farmers. Imagine it passing in the U.S. Senate 92 to 8. That is darn near a miracle.

How did that happen in the first place? I was here maybe 6 or 7 months, and Senator CHRIS COONS from Delaware had been trying to find one Republican to engage in the discussion, which we know how big a discussion that has been. Of course, we are always going to disagree on policy, but he had probably asked so many others over the last 2 years that he was going after a rookie Senator.

He didn't realize that he ran into somebody that had to think on his feet a lot in the real world and made decisions fairly quickly based on what you really know. And I said: I will do it.

I think the rest of the conversation was: Will it be more than a committee of two of us?

Give me a month.

I got six other Republicans. And it is still an issue of contention in terms of what it is about, where it is going. Some are absolutely certain about it; some have put no credence to it. Obviously, it is somewhere in between.

That, to me, was the first moment, being here after just 6 months, that said: If you do certain things and think out of the box, you can get a lot done.

And that has probably put me in front of more discussions now that energy is the biggest issue at the State level. Demand for it was flat up until 2 years ago. And now, in Indiana, one of the best places to have a business, all the data centers want to come there. And we only produce 20 gigawatts of electricity. Each one of them needs one gigawatt. And what is going to be the right mix between baseload, intermittent, green, traditional? I intend to have Indiana at the leading front of that discussion.

Veterans—that is an issue in many different ways. Those who serve our country still have trouble getting basic benefits, especially as it relates here in the Federal Government, where most of them come from. They told us back home in Indiana that to get claims information through the mail or driving to a regional location was clumsy, even through the mail, and logistically impossible when you had to travel sometimes 2 hours to get a basic checkup. That was a real burden for disabled veterans.

We wrote the Wounded Warrior Access Act to streamline the claims process with an online tool. It was signed into law last year.

I came here most proud of fixing healthcare back in my own business in