

I discussed it with my staff. I am in the last 6 months of my final term in the U.S. Senate. I would love to have more of my legacy items with my name on them, but I told my staff that it is more important that we get these bills done. I don't care if it is a House bill. I don't care if this has my name all over it. The important thing is that when we have good pieces of legislation put in front of us and that we worked hard in a bipartisan manner, in a bicameral manner, and it is good for the American people, that we move forward with those bills.

So I am disappointed today that my piece of legislation under the title of a House bill will not be moving, and I know that many of our constituencies will be greatly disappointed.

I do hope in the future that, between the Senate Republican leadership and the House Republican leadership, we can come together on these issues because it is not good for the American people when we have this infighting on good, solid pieces of legislation. We can do better.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

ECONOMY

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, the price of everything is up, and that is on purpose. It is on purpose because Donald Trump made it so.

We are not in the middle of a pandemic or a recession or a national emergency, but the President of the United States has decided that Americans should pay more for everything—food, gas, electricity, healthcare, housing, clothes, everything. So while he is busy lining his pockets with crypto schemes and insider-information subscription programs, regular people can't afford their lives.

Now, I say he is doing this on purpose because these are deliberate policy choices he has made. First, it was the tariffs that jacked up the prices of goods across the board. Tomatoes—tomatoes—went up 40 percent. Coffee went up by 20 percent. Clothes and car seats went up by 20 percent. Electronics shot up by hundreds of dollars. So it wasn't as if you could avoid the hit by not shopping at a particular store for a particular thing.

People in Hawaii are very expert at figuring out “OK, turkey is high; let's get chicken. Pork is high; let's get beef.” The difference now is that there is no escape. Literally everything is up. That is because the President of the United States has decided, through this Iran war, through the tariffs, through the energy bans, through the Medicaid and Medicare cuts, through the ACA cuts, through the nutrition cuts, to make literally every aspect of your life more expensive.

Then came the One Big Beautiful Bill where, in order to cut taxes for billionaires, Trump and the Republicans slashed subsidies for affordable healthcare and food assistance.

I want you to understand. This sounds like the kind of thing a partisan

would say, and it is, but it is also true that the way they paid for tax cuts for the wealthiest people and the wealthiest corporations on this planet—the way they literally paid for it—was to take away people's healthcare. Without the enhanced premium tax credits, ACA premiums went up by close to 60 percent. As a result, millions of Americans are living without healthcare this year. Millions of Americans are living without healthcare this year not by choice but by force.

I want to read some of what those people had to say about it.

A man in Texas said:

The prices are simply too high. I don't think we could afford our mortgage if I had to pay for health insurance. If I have a catastrophic health event, it makes more sense for me to just declare bankruptcy than it would be to be delinquent on other payments.

Here is another one—a 38-year-old from Alabama:

[I] can't afford insurance, [I] can't afford health care without insurance, so basically just hoping and praying I don't get sick . . .

People are having to gamble on their health so that the richest people to ever live can pay even less in taxes. And the price hikes aren't over yet because premiums are set to rise by double digits again next year according to proposals from insurers.

Aside from healthcare, the Republican tax bill also compounded Trump's ban on wind and solar energy. They are banning wind and solar energy, which is not only clean and helps us to address the climate crisis, it is just the quickest and cheapest energy that we could possibly get on the grid. It is not like we are in 1970 and we are arguing with the climate crisis versus the price that people pay on their utility bills.

The way to address the climate crisis is to do a lot more wind and solar, and the benefit is that it is the cheapest form of energy. Yet, this President has banned wind and solar energy through their administrative actions, and that is spiking the price of utilities across the country.

This is all before you factor in the war in Iran. In addition to being a spectacular failure that has achieved very little of Trump's own stated goals, it has also caused gas and energy and food prices to spike everywhere. Gas is over 4 bucks, right now, nationally, and it is even higher in Hawaii at \$5.45. Diesel is \$1.60 more than it was a year ago, which means that we are all paying more at stores for deliveries and transportation. In Hawaii, electricity bills went up 20 percent in 1 month—20 percent in 1 month—because of skyrocketing oil prices. Food prices continue to climb everywhere as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz extends a global fertilizer shortage.

It is common for Presidents to have to deal with the problems related to the economy. Specifically, what can be a real political killer is the question of inflation, but this is very unusual, and it may be unprecedented in American history. You have a President of the

United States whose stated policy on tariffs, on energy, on Iran, on healthcare, and on food is to raise the price of everything. That is not a sort of accidental outcome of his economic policy; it is his economic policy to raise the price of everything.

People are going broke, and they are doing it to you on purpose.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I was never going to come out here and support Todd Blanche for a long list of reasons.

I do believe he is one of the most corrupt Justice Department officials in our country's history, for one. He was Trump's former personal lawyer, and it seems that he never quit. The only difference now is that taxpayers are signing his checks instead of Trump. He was the one who negotiated a \$1.8 billion slush fund to pay off violent insurrectionists and who cut a backroom deal to give the President and his entire corrupt family immunity from IRS investigations, not to forget that Todd Blanche is the guy who botched the Epstein file so badly that survivors had their names and faces exposed while the names of alleged abusers were hidden.

This is a man who wouldn't meet with survivors until Senators put him under a tremendous amount of public pressure. When the meeting eventually got on the books, the survivors made it crystal clear Blanche didn't listen to them. He was more interested in checking a box than in hearing their stories or bringing them justice.

All of that is, of course, absolutely unacceptable and disqualifying, but I come here today to sound the alarm on some of the most disturbing comments I have ever heard from the Nation's top law enforcement official. I guess Todd Blanche thought no one was listening because, on a private call with anti-abortion activists, Mr. Blanche told us all exactly what he plans to do if Senators confirm him. His goal was to make the Dobbs decision “permanent in every single state”—“every single state”—not just in Texas or Idaho. He wants to ban abortion in Washington State, in California, in New York—in every State.

He told them:

We will have victory, and victory will be soon, and it will be permanent.

Victory over what exactly? Victory over women who just want to make their own healthcare decisions? Victory over patients in States where abortion is legal—where voters have said over and over at the ballot box: Keep your hands off our rights?

A DOJ spokesperson tried to clean up Blanche's words, saying he was only focused on restricting access to medication abortion in all 50 States, as if that is somehow better.

I am here to say: I will believe the tape. I believe Todd Blanche's own words.

So let's be crystal clear about what this vote is. A vote to confirm Todd Blanche is a vote to endorse his fight to ban abortion in all 50 States. Whatever happened to this being a State's decision?

Every Republican who votes yes is voting for exactly that—his words, not mine—and any Republican who votes to confirm him will own that in every State, in every way. This isn't just a confirmation vote anymore; it is a roll-call vote in which Senators endorse banning abortion in all 50 States at the Federal level. I am voting no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here to take us into the upcoming vote, the Congressional Review Act vote, with respect to an EPA rule related to PFAS.

For those of you who aren't following this, PFAS is a dangerous and toxic substance that, I think, Republicans and Democrats alike see as a dangerous and inadequately regulated substance. Unfortunately, it is particularly prevalent in military installations, and particular exposure has been faced by veterans and also by folks who are in our emergency response community—firefighters. Airports get a lot of it because of the firefighting drills that they have to have. It is a very significant problem.

There was a rule that required the reporting about PFAS use. Manufacturers and importers just have to say: Here is what we are doing. But it is important to get that information out so that people can understand where the exposure is to these toxic PFAS chemicals. Well, just before—like 4 days before—that reporting window was supposed to open and require the reporting of PFAS exposure, Trump's EPA announced a new interim rule with a delay of the reporting requirement until next year. They delayed it once. That delay ran out. This is the second delay.

First of all, I don't think there is any need for a delay. Second of all, there is every reason to believe that the chemical industry is behind weakening PFAS protections during the delay period. That would be consistent with the Trump EPA's favoritism toward any pollutant and any polluter all the time.

So here we are with a deadline for reporting. This isn't regulation; this is reporting public information that is being scrapped and extended. I would hope because of the fact that the PFAS contamination danger falls across red and blue States alike that we could send a bipartisan message today, through this Congressional Review Act, back to the EPA, saying: No, you don't get a second delay. Start the reporting right now. If you want to come back and weaken the standard, we will fight you on that, but that is a separate fight. At least let's get the reporting on PFAS contamination out there.

So I urge my colleagues to support this Congressional Review Act.

I understand that the distinguished chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee would like to respond. So I ask unanimous consent that Senator CAPITO be recognized and that, at the conclusion of her remarks, I be recognized to go through the parliamentary steps necessary for the vote.

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

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Rhode Island for recognizing me but also for giving me a chance to talk about my opposition to S.J. Res. 187.

As he explained, this resolution would rescind Trump's EPA's extension of its start date for PFAS reporting under section 8 of TSCA. Yet, the CRA only does one thing about the rule, and that is as to the date that the reporting window opens. It would force the window to open months before the EPA's reporting system is even ready to receive submissions.

The EPA moved this date for a straightforward reason, which is that the infrastructure that is needed to support this reporting program is still being built. Companies will file this data through the EPA's electronic system, the Central Data Exchange. Across two administrations—that is the previous administration and this one—the EPA has moved this reporting window three separate times for this very reason, which is that the electronic platform that companies must use is just not complete. Both the Biden and the Trump EPAs have explained in detail the technical challenges associated with this reporting program: this rule's requiring of a collection of more than a decade of historic PFAS information from thousands of entities across a broad range of uses.

This CRA cannot make the EPA build the system faster, and it won't address contamination or pollution in the interim. The only real effect it will have is to force an unworkable deadline rather than to stand up a PFAS reporting system that works for the long term, and that is what we all want.

Consider what passing this would really mean. It would set a Federal reporting deadline that would be physically impossible to meet, putting both regulated entities and the EPA in a very difficult position. There is no finished system to file through, and there is no time left to assemble all of those years of data. It would do this while exposing small businesses and manufacturers to potential enforcement for failing to comply with the reporting requirement that the EPA itself has concluded cannot be met.

I have seen the impact of PFAS contamination firsthand in my home State of West Virginia. I think Senator WHITEHOUSE and I agree that this is an issue—an important issue—that we

need to address. I have led efforts to try to clean up legacy contamination in order to protect communities that did not cause this pollution, like our water utilities and our farmers, and to ensure that polluters bear the responsibility for the PFAS cleanup.

I have helped secure funding to address PFAS contamination in the communities that need it the most, and I have chaired hearing after hearing on PFAS cleanup, disposal, and liability. So I think my record is very clear on this.

So addressing PFAS should not be a partisan issue. Both parties, both Chambers, both of us, and two consecutive administrations have recognized: PFAS is a serious public health challenge that requires practical solutions.

But this does not make PFAS reporting more effective; it does not make the reporting system come online any faster; and it does not provide communities with better data.

So I would urge a no vote from my colleagues.

And with that, I yield back to Senator WHITEHOUSE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Well, I am sorry that we can't agree on this particular provision because we are working together on so many things so well. But I will have to confess I have real doubts about whether EPA is really trying to put this together, as deadline after deadline slips and slips and slips.

So perhaps we will see what happens. But if, for some reason, this CRA should fail, perhaps we can come back again after EPA slips the deadline again and perhaps has baked in some goodies for the PFAS industry along the way. And if we can't do it today, then soon send a bipartisan message to the EPA to knock it off and get about their business with PFAS.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, with that, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO "MODIFICATION TO THE START OF THE SUBMISSION PERIOD FOR PERFLUOROALKYL AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS) REPORTING AND RECORDKEEPING UNDER TSCA 8(A)(7)"—Motion to Proceed

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 532, S.J. Res. 187.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.