very high expectations of what this Congress is going to be able to accomplish, and they also have high expectations for this administration. What they are doing is looking there, and they are saying: Politics and politicians are not what this is all about. They don't necessarily matter. Policies matter.

And, as my colleague is saying, maintaining the filibuster rule in the Senate allows robust, respectful debate so that we arrive at a sense of compromise and we do what is best for the American people.

Today, I was talking with one of our Tennesseans, and they were talking about that it doesn't matter what is being said on social media—on Twitter or Facebook or Parler or any of the social media platforms—that when you strip it all away, good policy is good policy, and that is what matters. Good policy is good policy. It is good for the people, and that is where the emphasis should be.

So when I say they have high expectations, I don't only mean that they want good policies; they want this to focus on them. They want it to focus on their concerns, their communities, their schools, their right to feel secure, their right to enjoy free speech, their right to pursue their happiness, their American dream, and their right to celebrate and protect life. It is about them, not politicians, not politics. It is about the American people.

From their perspective, we can spend hours debating the budget or immigration reform or data privacy—which I will talk more about later this week—as long as at the end of the day, whatever compromise we reach not only meets their needs but recognizes that the people are the most important part of this entire equation—the people.

Every Member of this body understands that when the balance of power shifts, sometimes that means that the guy across the aisle is going to get the upper hand. Things change, but it would be a mistake for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to assume that that means we are willing to set our priorities and our principles aside.

It doesn't mean that we are going to submit to their agenda. It doesn't mean we are going to conform to their agenda. It means we are going to stay true to our principles, represent our States, and work—work diligently—for what is going to be best for the people.

We may have had a changing of the guard here in Washington, but it doesn't mean that any of us has set aside the promises that we have made to the people we represent, and that is why I came out so strongly against the Biden administration and the President's Executive order that really crushed the jobs and the potential for energy security that came with the building of the Keystone XL pipeline.

This was a project that had achieved bipartisan support, and what are we seeing now? Lost jobs, lost livelihoods, more money being taken out of the taxpayers' pocket.

For similar reasons, I came out in opposition to rejoining the Paris climate accords and reversing our course on the departure from the World Health Organization.

For me, this is isn't about politics. It is about the policies this new administration has decided to unilaterally say yes to—without consulting Congress, without including the people in the discussion.

And just so we are all aware, President Biden said yes to more unilateral policy changes on day one than any President in our Nation's history—more than any President in our Nation's history.

The Biden administration looked at those new policies and decided that the result—achieving that outcome—was worth whatever it would cost the American people to get it.

So over the next few weeks, we will also be examining the President's Cabinet picks to get a sense of the tradeoff they will be willing to make.

Safety is at the forefront of everyone's mind back home in Tennessee—not just safety from COVID but from the bad actors and the foreign adversaries who continue to show us just how far they are willing to go to undermine us on the world stage. Back in Tennessee, we have a saying: When somebody shows you who they really are, you better believe them.

And I will tell you that they are paying attention, and I will tell you that they are not very impressed right now with some of the so-called soft talk that they are hearing on proposed policies toward Iran and the communist regime in China.

This is why I chose not to support the confirmation of our new Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines. I also had some pretty tough questions to ask Secretary of State Nominee Blinken about some of these same issues dealing with Iran, dealing with China. Many of the proposals that I am hearing from them have sounded strangely familiar from years gone by.

We don't have to look overseas to find some very real policy differences between what Tennesseans have said they expect and what the Biden administration is signaling that they want to deliver.

In his hearing before the Commerce Committee, Transportation Secretary Nominee Pete Buttigieg signaled to the panel that he would put the administration's environmental goals ahead of some very basic changes to Federal policy that would lighten the regulatory load on the county and city mayors trying to get their transportation projects off the ground.

As I told him, many times the regulations at issue don't just slow the projects down, they kill the project and that town's prospects for growth, for a better life, for people in the community. Hopefully, he is going to keep in mind what it means to these mayors the next time he is asked to consider the benefits of removing unnecessary redtape.

These tradeoffs many times are just too destructive to say yes to. I would encourage all of my colleagues to look at the compromises the President is asking each and every one to make, not just in terms of what we stand to gain but what is going to be the cost.

What is the monetary cost?

What is the cost of freedom?

What is the opportunity cost that will be delivered to the American people in order for the administration to have their way, to get their income? That is the question we should each ask: What is the cost to the American people in order to protect them, in order to meet the expectations that they have? We should be listening to the people. These policies are about them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF JANET LOUISE YELLEN

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, it is a pleasure tonight to be making the case for Janet Yellen, former Chair of the Federal Reserve, to be the next Secretary of the Treasury. It is an awfully easy case to make.

Chair Janet Yellen deserves to be in the Senate confirmation hall of fame. She has already been confirmed four times for key economic positions. Tonight, the Senate can deliver an especially important economic judgment: Confirm Janet Yellen a fifth time and know that she will work with every single one of us to get our workers, our small businesses, and all Americans, from sea to shining sea, back on solid economic footing.

Tonight, I am going to spend just a few minutes discussing several important matters we learned from Chair Yellen's confirmation hearing. First, Chair Yellen is an exceptional economist who has a rare gift. She can take complicated economic theories and put them into understandable language, all while showing a real heart for the millions of Americans who are hurting through no fault of their own.

I asked Chair Yellen at her confirmation hearing: What will give Americans the most bang for the economic recovery buck? And Chair Yellen simply walked through the priorities, particularly going to bat for our small businesses. I come from a State where we have only a handful of big businesses. We are an overwhelmingly small business State. At her confirmation hearing, she spoke clearly about those small business needs, and she talked about the concerns she has for innovative and important approaches to expanding unemployment benefits to make sure that we are meeting the needs of our people. She also focused on reducing hunger and approaches that will help stretch anti-hunger dollars.

Second, Chair Yellen knows that it would be a big mistake for the Congress to go small on economic relief. She is acutely aware of what happened in 2009, when the government took its foot off the economic gas pedal too

soon, and recovery was compromised as a result. She also understands that emergency economic relief, like unemployment compensation, needs to last as long as the emergency. It cannot be tied to arbitrary expiration dates, where potential political agendas come before human needs. There is a reason why the Finance Committee approved her nomination unanimously on Friday morning. I touched on some of those factors, and I am going to amplify a little bit.

For example, nobody deserves more credit than Chair Yellen for the longest economic expansion in American history. It lasted until the pandemic hit. As Federal Reserve Chair, she led an important change to the status quo in economic policy. Previously, there had been too great a focus on inflation and deficit. Chair Yellen said: Let's zero in more on unemployment, income, and inequality, and she believed that the economy could run a bit hotter. The record shows that the Yellen approach was right on. Unemployment went down, wages went up, and a lot of people were better off than they were before. That is exactly the kind of thinking America needs again because confronting the COVID economy is hammering working families, in particular. Again, another clear reason why Janet Yellen is the right pick to be the next Treasury Secretary.

The most recent economic data shows that 1.4 million people nationwide had filed new claims for unemployment benefits in the last full week of the previous administration. So it is not hard to figure out what that means. It is an economic catastrophe. It is more than twice the highest figure from any single week in the great recession. That means 1.4 million people—so, so many working families—are suddenly walking on an economic tightrope every single day, balancing the food cost against the fuel cost, the fuel cost against the rent bill, worried about finding a new job, getting a badly needed shift at work, falling behind on rent or the mortgage, feeding their kids, paying the electric bill, paying medical bills—worried that the economy is headed in reverse and worried about whether the Congress will be gridlocked.

The country lost 140,000 jobs last month. My home State lost more than 25,000, in part because the Senate, in something that just defied common sense, waited around for the recovery to peter out before passing any more relief. Thousands and thousands of neighborhood restaurants and bars and mom-and-pop businesses have been shuttered. Nearly 11 million workers are out of a job. Another 4 million Americans have fallen out of the labor force entirely since this time last year. Unless the Congress acts boldly and quickly with more relief, the damage from the COVID economic crash will long outlast the pandemic itself. That must not be allowed to happen.

The key, of course, is for the Senate to get down to work, and one of the best ways you can do it is to confirm someone who is eminently qualified, Chair Janet Yellen, to be Treasury Secretary.

As I touched on, we are looking at working with her on a host of key economic issues. As I have said as the new chair of the Finance Committee, my first priority will be to make sure that this Congress does not commit again the mistake of 2009.

In 2009, the sense was, well, maybe we are getting there on economic recovery. We will be able to come back later if maybe we didn't do enough. Well, we all know that a missed opportunity is a missed opportunity, and, in 2009, the Congress said, All right. We can take our foot off the gas now. It was too early, and there wasn't any next effort to make up for the damage. I am committed to making sure that doesn't happen again. Suffice it to say, it took 7½ years for the unemployment rate in Oregon to return to its prerecession levels.

This time around, the Congress has been warned. The warning I am giving about making sure that Congress doesn't take its foot off the economic relief pedal too soon is not the first warning. Chair Powell, for example, made it clear that the biggest danger lies in not doing enough.

Increasing relief checks to $2,000 is key. The Congress needs to increase and extend unemployment benefits for the entirety of the COVID crisis, and you do that by, in effect, tying the benefits to the real world, to economic conditions on the ground. That has been my proposal for some time. Other colleagues have long advanced similar ideas. It is not a revolutionary proposition to say that emergency relief should last as long as the emergency. Simply stated. And it should not be held hostage by the arbitrary political agendas of Members of Congress.

If you don't do it, dysfunction and gridlock in Congress creates still more havoc for people who have done nothing wrong and just need help. A decade ago, that help went away too quickly because benefits expired arbitrarily, and Congress did not keep up with extensions. The Congress needs to do better, and I believe that should include important upgrades as well to unemployment insurance, which was created in the last century. I don't think it is too much to say we at least bring this critical safety net program into the relevant century.

Now, sometimes these programs look a little rusty in the modern economy. Sometimes it is because of outright sabotage. But workers suffer, particularly Black and Hispanic workers. So there are steps that need to be taken, in addition to modernizing the benefits, increasing base benefits, bringing all workers into the system, and ensuring it can hold up in a crisis.

Finally, Chair Yellen had some important comments on fixing America's broken Tax Code. I will tell you, Madam President, I start with the proposition that a nurse who is treating COVID patients and paying taxes with every single paycheck should not find themselves in a disadvantaged position when compared to billionaires who, in effect, do no such thing and can postpone and postpone and postpone paying their taxes.

Now, there is a lot of work we need to do to repair the 2017 bill. The previous administration actually increased the incentives for corporations to ship jobs overseas. I want to fix that mistake. I want to work with Secretary Yellen on energy policy because so much of it deals with the Tax Code.

Suffice it to say, those are just some of the challenges Chair Yellen will face when, I believe, she is confirmed tonight as Treasury Secretary. She is supremely qualified—a member, in my view, of the Senate Confirmation hall of fame—and a proven economic policymaker.

Finally, I say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, it is long past time to have a woman lead the U.S. Treasury Department. Chair Yellen has my full support.

As colleagues come for this vote—and it is a significant economic policy vote, make no mistake about that—I would just ask my colleagues to reflect on the fact that Chair Yellen was approved by the Finance Committee 26 to nothing. Sometimes I say about this place—I have questions about whether you can get a simple decision like ordering a sandwich decided on a 26-to-nothing. She was approved unanimously because she gives public service a good name.

I urge my colleagues to support Janet Yellen for Secretary of the Treasury when we vote in just a few minutes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

TRIBUTE TO RYAN D. MCCARTHY

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I want to visit this evening on the Senate floor and take this opportunity to recognize a public servant, a leader, our former Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Ryan D. McCarthy. Secretary McCarthy led our Nation's Army from September 30, 2019, to January 20, 2021, and during that time, he made it a more modern, agile, and lethal fighting force.

We have worked together on a number of projects for Kansans and those who serve or have served our Nation during his tenure as Secretary, Acting Secretary, and Under Secretary of the Army, and I have grown to consider him a good, solid friend.

One of my most memorable experiences in the Senate was visiting the 1st Infantry Division soldiers in Germany and Poland—soldiers who come from Fort Riley, KS—with the Secretary, followed by our trip to Afghanistan to meet with troops on the frontlines in the global War on Terror. Those visits marked the beginning of our friendship, and since then, I have appreciated his guidance and his support during his