new mandates, and it tells each of our States how to hold elections. It doesn't read, ''States, you do it.'' It tells the States how to do it. These aren't just any mandates. These are radical leftwing mandates that people in my home State of Wyoming view as scary and say would make the elections less secure. This bill is so radical that an earlier version of it was felt to be too liberal even for the ACLU, and the latest version is even more liberal than that. I am just going to mention a few of the mandates in this bill.

H.R. 1 would force every State—force every State—to give the vote to convicted felons. This would not be a State choice but a Federal mandate. One group of Democrats even tried to give the vote to felons who are still in prison right now, but that amendment failed.

H.R. 1 would force every State to allow same-day voter registration, online voter registration, and even automatic voter registration. Automatic voter registration? Voter registration is something somebody should have to do, register to vote. If the bill were to become law, you would be registered to vote automatically, without even knowing it, and when the States automatically register you, you are not allowed to find out how they got your information. They can't tell you. In effect, voter registration would be a thing of the past. A thing that we all did as young people, register to vote, would be a thing of the past.

H.R. 1 forces States to count provisional ballots statewide. So, if you vote Democrat in one district and are from another district, they will count it as a vote for the Democrat in your district. Mistakes like this shouldn't happen, let alone should your vote be able to be changed from the vote you actually cast.

The bill also doubles down on mail-in voting. The problems with that, I think people would agree, are obvious. Amazon—and many of us shop on Amazon, if not everyone—recently tried to restrict mail-in voting for a union election at one of its facilities. That is not because Amazon has conservative leadership; it is because they say it is harder to secure mail-in voting than it is to secure in-person voting. If you want an accurate vote, in-person voting is more accurate. The reason mail-in voting was expanded last year was because of the pandemic, but now the Democrats want to carve it into stone forever.

H.R. 1 would also take government funding and give it to political campaigns. The American people have some thoughts on that. The bill actually has a 6-to-1 match for campaign donations under $200. So, if you were to donate $100 to your favorite candidate, the Federal Government would take taxpayer dollars and give an additional $600 of taxpayer money to that candidate who just got a $100 check. Hardworking people would pay their taxes knowing that their hard-earned dollars would go to fund political activity, even activity that they would not necessarily agree with.

Like so many liberal government programs, this is a system that could easily be defrauded. We see that now with the coronavirus bill as well. The Democrats know that they would still get their big corporate donations in New York and in San Francisco, but now they would get an added bonus—a 6-to-1 match—from taxpayers.

H.R. 1 would also give government-funded vouchers for people to donate to political campaigns. Political campaigns do not need taxpayer subsidies. People can decide how they want to spend their own money. The government shouldn't be redirecting it toward the party in power. The Democrats complain about money in politics all of the time. The solution, in seeing H.R. 1, apparently, is for there to be more money in politics as long as it is the taxpayers' money.

H.R. 1 ends the equal balance between the Republicans and Democrats on the Federal Election Commission. It ends it. The Democrats want to politicize the Commission that enforces our election laws. They want to make it a partisan organization. That is just another idea that would make it easier to commit fraud.

H.R. 1 doesn't just politicize the Federal Election Commission; it politicizes the Internal Revenue Service, the IRS. The Democrats want to break down the guardrails that currently keep the IRS out of politics. H.R. 1 gets rid of any of the limits on the IRS when giving tax exemptions to nonprofits. Now, think about this. Remember the scandal at the IRS under the Obama-Biden administration—a scandal, headlines. People are well aware. Well, H.R. 1 enshrines that into law. H.R. 1 gives a big stamp of approval to Lois Lerner and her behavior in the way she worked the IRS. Every Democrat who votes for the bill is saying that he or she will endorse what happened at the IRS under President Obama.

There is more, a lot more. The bill goes on and on. It is 800 pages. It is hard to believe too many Democrats have actually read it.

The bottom line is this: H.R. 1 would not reform our elections; it would deform our elections, change them dramatically. H.R. 1 makes our elections harder to secure, easier to defraud, and will cast doubt on every election into the future. That is the last thing we need in this country.

This is no time to sow doubt about our elections. People want confidence in the elections. That is why I am joined with Senator SCOTT of Florida, Senator HYDE-SMITH, and Senator LUMMIS to introduce a better proposal. Our bill would make our elections safe and secure and fair. It would give people more confidence in our elections.

Our bill says: no automatic registration. The House bill repeals all voter ID laws. Our bill says, if you want to register to vote, let's make sure you are a citizen. We need to make sure of your identification. Let's make sure you have a Social Security number. Those are the sorts of things to provide integrity in the election process.

Under our bill, States can't just send out ballots in the mail based on old information, and that happened all around the country this year. You can still vote by mail. You just need to request a ballot so your information is up to date. It is the way we have done it in Wyoming. We send out requests to say, if you would like a ballot, apply for your absentee ballot, and people do. There is no question about the integrity of that system. It was in a number of States in which ballots were mailed out based on old information and without a request by a voter for that ballot that led to so many concerns about the abuse and fraud.

Our bill bans vote harvesting. It means you can't drop off somebody else's ballot.

The collection boxes they have need to be monitored. When you turn in your ballot to a ballot box, that ought to be monitored.

When votes are being counted, our bill makes sure that both sides are watching.

Our bill prohibits delays or pauses in ballot counting.

We require an audit of ballot counting systems within 30 days after the election.

Now, these are basic, commonsense measures to protect against fraud and error. You want it to be accurate. You want it to be fair.

The differences between our bill and the House's 800-page bill could not be more clear. The Republican bill makes it harder to commit fraud. The Democratic bill makes it easier to commit fraud. The Republican bill costs almost nothing. The Democratic bill costs billions. The Republican bill strengthens the protections of our elections. The Democratic bill weakens those protections and even gets rid of some of them.

This shouldn't be a partisan issue. We should all be against voter fraud. We should make it as hard to commit fraud as we possibly can. So I urge my colleagues to join me with Senators SCOTT and LUMMIS and HYDE-SMITH. Let us stand for integrity in our elections. Let us give every American citizen confidence and the peace of mind that our system works.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, this Saturday will mark 1 year since Congress passed our first response to the COVID–19 virus.

That legislation, you will recall, received overwhelming support. It passed by a vote of 96 to 1 here in the Senate and 415 to 2 in the House, and we know that it was not just a one-off. Each of the five pandemic relief bills that were

signed into law last year received overwhelming bipartisan support.

That is not to say that everybody was in perfect agreement about the size and shape of the bills. We had more than our fair share of disagreements along the way, but both sides of the aisle understood the most pressing challenges facing our country and the types of support that were needed to sustain that fight both when it came to public health and when it came to the economic fallout and recession that resulted: resources for hospitals and healthcare workers, support for the hardest hit families, assistance for small businesses, and, of course, the development, manufacturing, and distribution of vaccines. Not only did we agree on what should be in the bills, but we, actually, also agreed on what should not be in the bills.

We were all guided, I believe, by an understanding that the focus should remain on COVID–19 and that pandemic relief bills were no place to inject unrelated or partisan preferences, but now that our Democratic friends control the House and the Senate and the White House, they have tossed that principle in the trash.

The Democrats have drafted their so-called COVID–19 relief bill without the input, the ideas, or the support of a single Republican. Now, that is not because folks on this side of the aisle were unwilling. As I remember, there were 10 Republican Senators who met with President Biden at the White House and offered a $600 billion alternative that would enjoy broad bipartisan support. This partisan legislation was a choice, not a necessity—a choice, a conscious choice.

Last year, the House majority whip referred to this crisis as a ''tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision.'' That was Mr. CLYBURN. The Democrats knew that a bipartisan bill would limit the scope of discussions of policies that were actually relevant to the pandemic. So, rather than maintain that relevance to the pandemic, they chose to go it alone. This opportunity to restructure, as Mr. CLYBURN said, has been months in the making, and now that the Democrats have the numbers they need to make the law without having the support of anybody but their own party, they have tacked on an entire liberal wish list and tried to call it COVID–19 relief, but nobody believes it or should believe it.

You see, these are some of the things that are in the so-called COVID–19 relief bill of $1.9 trillion when hundreds of billions of dollars of money that we appropriated just in December haven't even been spent yet. Here is what is in the Trojan horse, otherwise known as the Democrats' COVID–19 relief bill: funding for climate justice. At a time when many Americans are asking ''When can I get the vaccine?'' and ''How long until my children can safely return to school?'' our Democratic colleagues are pushing funding to support President Biden's unilateral climate Executive orders.

And then there is the funding—the backdoor funding—for Planned Parenthood. It is responsible for the most abortions of any other organization in America. Now, that is a personal choice for people to make, but asking taxpayers to fund Planned Parenthood so it can perform more abortions is simply irrelevant to COVID–19 relief. It is exploiting another emergency for special interest purposes.

This bill expands the criteria for the Paycheck Protection Program, one of the most successful parts of the CARES Act that we passed last March. It was designed specifically to keep small businesses afloat, but now Planned Parenthood can take advantage of the funding—something they were precluding from doing under bipartisan agreement previously.

There is another big political ally for our Democratic friends that would be newly eligible for these small business loans—the labor unions. So now labor unions can apply for and receive money that was otherwise previously directed toward mom-and-pop businesses so they could keep their doors open, so they could keep their employees on the payroll. But now it includes labor unions.

Many of the labor unions' pension plans in particular have been in dire financial straits for years, long before COVID–19 even existed. Up until now, our Democratic colleagues have not been able to find a way to bail out these mismanaged pension funds. As you can imagine, using taxpayer dollars to cover the mistakes of union bosses is incredibly unpopular, and that is because it is wrong. But the authors of this bill have found a couple of workarounds which they have tucked into this so-called pandemic relief bill.

In addition to making labor unions eligible for the paycheck protection loans, the COVID–19 relief bill also creates a taxpayer fund to bail out underfunded union pension funds. That is not to help the public generally; that is to help labor union members, which is certainly their issue. I understand why it is important, but I don't understand why my taxpayers in Texas should have to bail out underfunded labor pension funds in other States. Union bosses who have mismanaged these funds and made bad choices will be rewarded with a taxpayer-funded check.

While there is a range of provisions to line the pockets of our friends on the other side of the aisle across the country, the authors of this bill also tried to sneak in more localized fixes, two of which have already been dropped from this bill.

In one of the most audacious examples of tone-deaf Washington politics, one of these was an underground rail system in the Speaker's home State of California—an underground rail system. That has nothing to do with COVID–19.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit expansion has been in the works for years, and Californians have raised concerns over the rising cost. In 2018, it was projected to cost nearly $4.7 billion, and that estimate has already jumped to $6.9 billion from $4.7 billion.

Despite the fact that this rail system has absolutely nothing to do with the pandemic and would serve only the people of one of the wealthiest areas in the country, our Democratic friends provided more than $100 million for this project in their so-called COVID–19 relief bill. Well, fortunately, not any thanks to our Democratic friends who wrote the bill, this completely unrelated project has now been removed from the bill because it violates Senate rules. You are not supposed to be able to appropriate money and authorize transportation projects in a budget reconciliation bill. That is why it is gone, not because our Democratic friends were embarrassed or had second thoughts after it was pointed out to them the hypocrisy of including that in the bill but because it violates the Senate rules.

Another portion of the bill would have provided money for a bridge from New York to Canada. Let me think for a minute which Senator would have stuck money for a bridge from New York to Canada in the bill. Well, there are two Senators, one of whom is the majority leader from the State of New York. Well, that has now been struck by our colleagues because it received so much blowback. It was such an embarrassing, irresponsible money grab that it is no longer in the bill.

Well, we will see if this trend continues and more of the completely unrelated partisan projects are eliminated because the long list of unnecessary spending does not end there.

This legislation also establishes a bureaucrat bailout, an exclusive paid leave fund just for Federal employees. If their kids aren't in school full time because of the pandemic, these employees could take home up to $1,400 a week in paid leave. That is roughly equivalent to $70,000 a year, all to stay home and not work. And these benefits would last for months. Federal employees could take home up to 600 hours of paid leave until September 30 even though President Biden said every adult who wants to get vaccinated will be vaccinated by the end of May. This benefit, this ridiculous money grab, would last until the end of September, long after people had gained antibodies and immunity from COVID–19 as a result of having been vaccinated.

Across the country, only about 35 percent of school districts have returned to fully in-person instruction. If the parents of children at the other 65 percent of school districts happen to work for the Federal Government, they can claim these benefits. Even if a school offers in-person instruction but maintains the option to learn virtually, the parent can still get paid to stay home and not perform any work. Well, parents in my State who don't work for the Federal Government

aren't receiving these same benefits. This is clearly cherry-picking to benefit Federal employees, to pay them not to work.

I respect the work that Federal employees do. I respect the work that all government employees do. But to give them preferential treatment in the midst of this pandemic by paying them not to work and using tax dollars from other States and other places that don't enjoy that benefit is simply grossly unfair.

Over the last year, countless numbers of parents have balanced the impossible: work and remote learning for their children. It has been hard. I understand that. Many parents turned their kitchen tables into makeshift offices and classroom spaces until their children were able to physically return to school. Today, less than 7 percent of the school districts in Texas are fully remote. Seven percent are fully remote, and two-thirds are fully in-person in my State. They have found a way to safely return to the classroom. There is no reason why the Texans who have made that tough juggling act, working and learning remotely, should now have to pay Federal employees who have not had to make that tough choice.

It is simply false advertising to call this a COVID–19 relief bill. It is deceptive and outrageously so. Only $160 billion dollars—8 percent of the total cost—is directly related to combating COVID–19. Eight percent. The rest of the bill, as I have tried to point out, is a variety of—it is a grab bag, really, of partisan priorities, wasteful spending, and counterproductive policy.

What is worse, this restructuring, according to Mr. CLYBURN's language, to fit the vision of the Democratic Party will cost taxpayers nearly $2 trillion. That is on top of the $4 trillion we already spent last year. Two trillion more.

Well, somebody is going to have to pay that money back, and I fear it will not be us because we will be long gone. It will be our children and grandchildren, and at this rate of reckless spending, our great-grandchildren will have to be the ones to pay the money back.

This bill is not the answer to the real challenges that face our country posed by the pandemic. We have shown our willingness to work together in a bipartisan way to enthusiastically support the need to provide real relief both from the public health consequences and the economic fallout associated with the virus, but this bill doesn't even attempt to do that.

Fortunately, as a result of the work we did last year, including last December—and by the way, only about 20 percent of the money that we appropriated just a few weeks ago—actually, a couple of months ago in December—has actually been spent. Only about 20 percent has been spent, and here we are being asked to appropriate $1.9 trillion more.

But the good news is, the money we spent last year is having real results. The money we invested in treatments and research and development of vaccines and now the distribution of vaccines—it is actually making a real difference. We are vaccinating roughly 3 million people a day in America. More than 70 million people have had shots in arms, and we are doing our best to try to get it in people's arms as fast as we safely can. President Biden said we will get that job done by the end of May. That is wonderful news.

The other wonderful news is that unemployment rates are going down and State revenue is going back up. School districts across the country have safely resumed in-person learning. One in five adults in America has now received a dose of the vaccine, and a third vaccine has now been approved, so that number will climb faster and faster and faster.

Every day we are moving closer to the light at the end of the tunnel, and now is not the time to squander the good will and trust that the American people have had in us to be good stewards of the public health and our economy by engaging in this sort of embarrassing partisan exercise.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The senior Senator from Pennsylvania.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I wanted to speak in particular terms about the American Rescue Plan and in particular about the provision of home- and community-based services. We know that when we speak of these kinds of services, we are talking about services that benefit seniors across the country as well as Americans with disabilities. We are also concerned as well for the heroic frontline workers who provide those services, most of whom—virtually all of whom have been underpaid and, frankly, underappreciated for far too long.

Let me start with the provision of these home- and community-based services in terms of the people who are benefiting from these services. Right now, about 4 million Americans receive home care and home health services in their own homes or apartments. Receiving these services at home reduces the likelihood that that older American will be infected by the virus.

Serving and supporting older adults and people with disabilities reduces pressure on nursing homes and other congregate settings. We know that these kind of services, the home- and community-based services, make sure that seniors and people with disabilities have a chance to continue to live where they want to live, as opposed to living in a congregate setting. In many cases, that means they will have more contact with their families, reducing the loneliness and social isolation that can be damaging to their mental health. So this American Rescue Plan includes temporary Federal funding to States to increase Medicaid home- and community-based services.

If the bill were to pass, an additional $9.3 billion would be made available to States to ensure that workers who provide these services have the protection and resources they need to provide the care and to provide the services.

More than 200 organizations from around the country wrote to Congress in support of these new dollars. For months, SEIU, one of the great unions in America representing workers—healthcare workers; the disability community, as well; advocates for older adults like AARP and others—have rallied around the need for this funding.

This funding can be used to increase wages for direct-service providers, the workers. It can be used to secure additional personal protective equipment and testing supplies for workers and those that they support. Home- and community-based funds can also be used to help people transition from congregate settings back to their homes. It can also be used to provide services for the 800,000 Americans waiting for this kind of help.

For example, Ira Hall from Westmoreland County, PA, just right in the southwestern corner of our State, next to Pittsburgh, in that county, Ira will continue to receive services, and he will receive that service from his direct service worker, Ray Williams. I was able to visit both of these individuals last May during a virtual home visit.

Home- and community-based services make it possible for Ira, who has a developmental disability, to live in his own apartment. Ray, who is his direct service worker, helps Ira plan his day and helps him throughout his workday and helps him find the resources he needs to meet his goals.

During the pandemic, Ray's support made it possible for Ira to remain in his home and to be safe from contracting the virus. The services Ray provides also helps Ira maintain his physical and mental health. We know that the American Rescue Plan makes it possible for services like those Ira receives and Ray provides. It will also mean the agencies providing these services will continue to operate and provide essential home- and community-based services throughout the public health crisis.

Passage of the bill would be a down payment on securing strong and comprehensive home- and community-based services infrastructure, but it is only a down payment. This pandemic has revealed a fragile home care and home health system. These funds