vote in the history, in the history of Presidential impeachments.

And, of course, the Democratic majority in the Senate passed the most sweeping Federal recovery effort in decades, the American Rescue Plan.

Again, despite several unprecedented obstacles, not only did we get a late start on our work, a result of the runoff elections in Georgia, we have had to contend with the aftermath of an armed insurrection at the Capitol, an impeachment trial, and the difficulty of navigating an evenly divided Senate.

Let's take a quick look at the scoreboard.

Economists project that the American Rescue Plan could double economic growth while cutting child poverty in half—the biggest anti-poverty effort in a generation.

We have made the single largest investment in American education and Native Tribes ever.

Experts have called the American Rescue Plan the most significant legislation for Black farmers since the Civil Rights Act.

The American Rescue Plan provides a lifeline to Main Street businesses from one end of the country to the other. Companies are already scaling back layoffs.

In less than 100 days, the Biden administration and Democratic majorities have helped deliver more than 100 million shots in people's arms and 100 million checks in people's pockets. As a result, the American people are more optimistic than at any time over the past year, and for the first time since the COVID–19 pandemic began, a clear majority of Americans believe our country is back on track.

Just this morning, the jobs report showed that applications for unemployment benefits fell by nearly 100,000 people—a sign that businesses are reopening and Americans are optimistic about getting back to work. After one of the most difficult years in American history, the country is finally turning the corner, and the Senate is off to a fantastic start.

Now looking forward, of course the job certainly isn't done yet. Now that we have passed the American Rescue Plan, the Senate must continue to make progress on other issues facing the American people. When the Senate returns to session, our agenda will be no less ambitious than it was over the past few months.

We will focus on three areas: one, voting rights, civil rights; two, economic recovery and jobs, with an emphasis on climate change and building back better; and three, health and gun safety.

This Senate will once again be the forum where civil rights are debated and historic action is taken to secure them for all Americans.

Last week, the Judiciary Committee held the first-ever hearing on the Equality Act, landmark legislation that would enshrine as a matter of law that no American shall be denied justice based on their gender or sexual orientation.

In the coming work period, the Democratic majority will also seek to repeal a Trump administration rule that gives employers an unfair advantage over workers when settling discriminatory claims.

At the same time, the Judiciary and Rules Committees have started their work responding to the concerted, nationwide, despicable attack on voting rights. In one State after another, new restrictions on the franchise are taking aim at communities of color in ways we haven't seen since the days of Jim Crow.

Yesterday, I attended the Rules Committee hearing on S. 1, the For the People Act, and I listened to my Republican colleagues try to defend these outrageous voter suppression laws. One member on the committee told us not to worry about them because many are just proposals and won't become law. Later that day, the same day, the Montana State Senate advanced a bill to end same-day voter registration.

Another member on the committee defended limits to early voting on Sundays—a day when many African Americans go to vote after church—by quoting the Bible and the Commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. I don't know where to begin with that one, but I will start by reminding my colleagues of the separation between church and state, and, frankly, the Bible passage she talked about comes from the Old Testament, when the Sabbath was on Saturday.

This is getting beyond ridiculous. Across the country, the Republican Party seems to believe that the best strategy for winning elections is not to win more voters but to try to prevent the other side from voting. That is not America. That is not democracy. And this Senate will take action to protect the voting rights of tens of millions of Americans. The Senate will vote on the For the People Act.

We will also keep a laser focus on our economic recovery. In the coming months, the Senate will consider legislation to rebuild our infrastructure and fight climate change, boost research and development and domestic manufacturing, reform our broken immigration system, and grow the power of American workers. Finally, the Senate will address health and gun safety.

When the Senate gavels back into session, we will vote on Senator HIRONO's COVID hate crimes bill, which my colleague GRACE MENG has sponsored in the House. It will give the Department of Justice and our local police departments crucial tools to fight the wave of racist violence we have seen against Asian Americans.

I have also committed to put a bill on expanded background checks on the floor of the Senate.

On the health front, we will take aim against the former administration's decision to roll back limits on methane emissions from oil and gas production—gases that pack a much greater punch than carbon dioxide when it comes to our climate. Senators HEINRICH, KING, and MARKEY have been working very hard on this issue. I applaud them. The Senate will take up a Congressional Review Act measure to reinstate the commonsense regulation of methane emissions to fight climate change.

The bottom line is this: The Senate of the 117th Congress has accomplished a lot in its first few months, but we have a lot of work left to do. The challenges our country still faces are immense, and there is no reason both sides cannot work together on issues that will affect our country and our children's future. We won't agree on everything, but we must agree that inaction is unacceptable. The Senate must help the country finish the job against COVID while continuing to build a more equal economy and a more just society.

I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PPP EXTENSION ACT OF 2021—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to H.R. 1799, a bill to amend the Small Business Act and the CARES Act to extend the covered period for the paycheck protection program, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, all postcloture time for the motion to proceed to H.R. 1799 has expired, and the motion to proceed is agreed to.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

PPP EXTENSION ACT OF 2021

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1799) to amend the Small Business Act and the CARES Act to extend the covered period for the paycheck protection program, and for other purposes.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the crisis on our southern border continues to escalate. CBP is tracking the largest surge in migrant apprehensions in 20 years. Unaccompanied children are literally piling up in close quarters. It turns out when politicians spend a 2-year campaign advertising amnesty, people actually listen. As one senior CBP official said, there is ''no end in sight.'' No end in sight.

The administration still refuses to even admit there is a crisis, much less address it. We keep hearing strange mixed messaging from the White House