The debt that we owe Capitol Police officers like Officer Evans can never be repaid, and the same is true for Capitol Police Officers Brian Sicknick, Howard Liebengood, Jacob Chestnut, and Detective Michael Gibson, and others who have been injured or lost their lives through their service. Our gratitude for their sacrifice cannot be captured by words.

This Tuesday, Officer Evans will lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda, where those whom he died to protect can pass by and pay their respects.

Every day it is incumbent for those of us who work in this building to remember this brave officer and to thank him and the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police, who have given so much to keep us safe.

(Ms. HIRONO assumed the Chair.)

FILIBUSTER

Madam President, on January 8, I think most Americans—most of the world, really—were still deeply shaken by what happened in this building on January 6, when the mob broke in.

January 6 was an assault on American democracy. It was an armed insurrection not just against this building but against the Constitution and the Government of the United States of America.

The violent mob was sent to this Capitol by a defeated President who tried to cancel an American election. That mob overran and ransacked this Capitol, smashing windows and doors. They built a gallows on the Capitol grounds and called for the Vice President to be hanged for following his duties under the Constitution, for refusing to join in the coup attempt.

People died that day in this building and on these grounds. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, whom I mentioned earlier, suffered fatal injuries trying to hold back the insurrectionist mob sent by the President. Two more officers who fought to save the Capitol died by suicide in the days that followed. More than 140 police officers suffered serious injuries. Many of them are still recovering.

But the insurrection at the Capitol, the attack on American democracy, wasn't what alarmed the dark-money special interests that came together for an all-hands-on-deck conference call just 2 days later, on January 8.

The conference call was organized by a group with the innocuous name ''Stand Together''—the group that is run by the Koch brothers' organization, well known to anyone who follows American politics. Among the participants on this private conference call was an adviser to the minority leader, Senator MCCONNELL.

We know these things because a recording of the conference call found its way to Jane Mayer, an investigative reporter for The New Yorker magazine, who has written a book on the Koch brothers and dark money in politics.

What alarmed the dark-money special interests on that conference call was not the violent insurrection in this building 2 days earlier. According to Ms. Mayer's reporting, the reason the special interests were frightened was because they could not find a way to turn the American people against a piece of legislation, S. 1, a bill known as the For the People Act.

The For the People Act is a democracy defense bill. It would limit the influence of dark money and special interests on our politics, and it would improve access to the ballot box for American voters.

We know that access is under attack today. In Georgia and 30 other States, efforts are being made to suppress the American vote.

The Koch brothers' group spends its money freely to insert political control. They sent the pollsters out before this conference call to test every attack they could think of against this bill. Nothing worked.

Let me read you a passage from Ms. Mayer's article. It is a bit long. So bear with me. This is based on a recording of the call.

''Kyle McKenzie, the research director for the Koch-run advocacy group Stand Together, told fellow conservatives and Republican congressional staffers on the call that he had a 'spoiler.' When presented with a very neutral description of the bill, people were generally supportive,'' McKenzie said, adding, ''The most worrisome part is conservatives were actually as supportive as the general public when they heard the neutral description. In fact, he warned, there is a large, very large, chunk of conservatives who are supportive of these efforts.''

As a result, Mayer wrote, ''McKenzie conceded the legislation's opponents would likely have to rely on Republican Senators, where the bill is now under debate, to use what they called 'under the dome' strategies''—legislative maneuvers such as the filibuster—to stop the bill, because turning public opinion against it would be incredibly difficult.

S. 1, the For the People Act, is a bill to stop billionaires from buying elections. You can see why Charles Koch, who has grown accustomed to using his wealth to influence elections and dominate the national agenda, wouldn't like that kind of a bill. And you can see why he and others, members of the dark-money power elite, would be alarmed that all the spin-doctoring that money can buy can't turn people against the bill. It can't even turn conservatives against the bill.

What is a poor billionaire to do? Well, they said it right there on the conference call. They can't debate the bill because they don't have a winning argument. Senator MCCONNELL is just going to have to kill it ''under the dome.'' Senator MCCONNELL is going to have to filibuster it.

One of the myths that defenders of the filibuster like to use is that it encourages debate and compromise. In reality, today's phone-it-in, remote control filibuster is used to make sure debate never even starts.

There is another myth the defenders of the filibuster would like us to believe. They say, and Senator MCCONNELL has repeated it, the filibuster has nothing to do with race. History tells us the opposite is true. The filibuster has always been more a creation of James Crow than James Madison. Segregationists used filibusters to block anti-lynching bills in 1922, 1923, 1924, 1935, and 1938. Segregationist Senators filibustered bills to outlaw poll taxes in 1942, 1944, and 1946. Segregationist Senators filibustered bills outlawing discrimination in employment, housing, and voting in 1957, 1960, and 1964. Every time segregationists used the filibuster to block civil rights measures, they spoke of the tactic as nearly a sacred principle passed down by our Founding Fathers.

Now, with voting rights under the broadest attack in more than 50 years, with hundreds of bills being introduced in State legislatures to make it harder for many Americans—especially people of color—to vote, we are once again facing a threat of a filibuster in a voting rights protection bill in the Senate. History repeats itself.

Largely under Senator MCCONNELL's leadership, today's filibuster has been transformed into a weapon of mass obstruction. In 2009, during the Great Recession, America was in a financial free fall, our economy teetering on the edge of another depression, millions out of work, and homes and life savings at risk.

Senator MCCONNELL said: ''My No. 1 priority is to make sure President Obama is a one-term President.'' And the No. 1 weapon he used to make good on his threat: the filibuster.

Now America has a new President. Senator MCCONNELL wasn't able to filibuster President Biden's American Rescue Plan because we used reconciliation. All 50 Democratic Senators, plus the Vice President, were prepared to vote and break the tie. Not one single Republican Senator would vote for President Biden's rescue plan.

Today, America is getting shots in the arm, and people are getting checks in their pockets because we passed that bill despite the intransigence of the other side of the aisle. We are beginning—just beginning—to break the back of this pandemic. There are still hotspots and worrisome reports, but we are beginning to break its back, and we are helping the millions of Americans who are hurting financially because of the pandemic shutdown.

Now the Senate is ready to start work on the next chapter of our national economic recovery. President Biden's American Jobs Plan is a bold plan to invest in climate change, job creation, and create the good jobs and the industries of the future here in America—not overseas, not in China, but here in America. That is President Biden's goal.

It would rebuild our roads, bridges, rails, ports, airports, and water systems. I learned during the break that,

until 1986, the city of Chicago mandated in its plumbing code that the service line from the water main to the home be made of lead—lead. We know lead is dangerous to everyone, certainly to children, and yet we have 23 percent of the lead service lines in America in Chicago and the surrounding area. That is a public health hazard. Some may not think that is infrastructure, but if you can't deliver safe drinking water to America, what else is important?

We need to rebuild our 5G broadband internet and expand it, renewable energy, and advanced research and technology. We need to create millions of jobs and to lay the foundation for American economic prosperity for decades to come.

Last night, on 60 Minutes, Chairman Jerome Powell spoke and was interviewed. It was a most encouraging report. He really believes we are right on the cusp of moving this Nation forward—dramatic increase in economic growth in this country. Isn't it about time? Don't we want a President who will invest in America to make that happen?

Senator MCCONNELL has already said he opposes President Biden's American Jobs Plan. Will our colleagues on the other side of the aisle really filibuster this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for America to lead the global economy of the 21st century? Will they really filibuster America's ability to compete and win against China in the competition for jobs and industries of the future? I hope not.

We are all sent to the Senate with a job, to fix the problems, not paralyze Congress. Despite what the dark money special interests might want, we should aim higher than killing good solutions with the filibuster. Let's talk, let's meet, and let's reason things out. Let's negotiate, and let's pass laws that protect America's democracy and our economic prosperity.

On January 6, hundreds of police officers risked their lives to protect democracy. Don't we owe them, for their courage and sacrifice, the respect of doing the work of democracy?

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

HONORING OFFICER WILLIAM F. EVANS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on Good Friday, the U.S. Capitol Police were subjected to another violent attack. Once again, our uniformed heroes wound up in harm's way, and Officer Billy Evans, a friend and favorite of many here on the Senate side and a faithful protector of the Capitol, was killed.

Investigators are still assessing what drove the perpetrator to attempt this attack on the Capitol and whether domestic, violent extremism played a role. He appears to have been captivated by the Nation of Islam—a racist, anti-Semitic, extreme group under the openly hateful leader, Louis Farrakhan.

His attack injured Officer Ken Shaver, and it stole away the life of Officer Evans from his children Logan and Abigail, his mother Janice, his entire family, and all of his friends and colleagues decades too soon.

Officer Evans was famous within the Senate for his friendly spirit and easy manner. He was the first face that many would see on the way to work here in the Capitol every day. His particular post often meant he was literally the first line of defense of the Congress—the interface between these grounds and the outside world. We could not have had a kinder and more likeable ambassador at this juncture or a more faithful protector to keep us safe.

It will be with tremendous grief, but tremendous gratitude, that we will welcome Officer Evans to the Capitol for a final time tomorrow where he will lie in honor in the Rotunda.

I think I speak for the entire Senate when I salute all of our U.S. Capitol Police officers for the heroism, courage, and resilience they displayed the Friday before last and which they display every single day. The Senate and the Nation are profoundly grateful for your selfless service.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, now, on a completely different matter, the Senate returns today from its State work period. We got to meet with constituents in our home States and hear firsthand about their most pressing concerns.

Unfortunately, back here in Washington, Democrats continue to roll out new reasons for the American people to worry. The week before last, the Biden administration unveiled their latest misleadingly titled legislation. This time, under the supposed veil of ''infrastructure,'' the White House has lumped together a motley assortment of the left's priciest priorities.

This plan would impose one of the biggest tax hikes in a generation when workers need an economic recovery. It would gut right-to-work protections for blue-collar workers. It would throw hundreds of billions at the far left's green fads. They even want to include a special State and local tax provision designed to overwhelmingly benefit wealthy residents of blue States. Less than 6 percent of this proposal goes to roads and bridges. It is not remotely targeted toward what Americans think they are getting when politicians campaign on infrastructure.

But instead of coming up with a better bill, Democrats have decided it is the English language that has to change. They are embarking on an Orwellian campaign to convince everybody that any government policy whatsoever can be labeled ''infrastructure.'' Liberals just have to believe in it hard enough.

These Trojan horse tactics have become a pattern. Many of our Democratic colleagues are trying to rewrite 50 States' election laws from here in Washington and mount a partisan takeover of the Federal Election Commission but call the whole mess a ''voting rights bill.''

The White House's claims about State election regulations keep getting disproven by fact checkers. But even so, some of the wealthiest and most powerful institutions in our country have bowed down to the fake narratives and decided to amplify the misstatements themselves.

So, look, I am as strong a supporter of the First Amendment and free speech as anyone in this body. I have been for many years. If people want to participate in debates through political speech, that is certainly their constitutional right, even if they fall for disinformation. But it is one thing to act like free speakers within a debate; it is very different to try to short-circuit the debate, to shut down the debate through economic bullying of American citizens.

BORDER SECURITY

Madam President, the last 2 weeks also brought more troubling signs from our southern border. Last month closed with Customs and Border Patrol reporting the highest total for migrant apprehensions in nearly two decades. But while Republican Senators traveled to the border, met with officials, and learned about the reality on the ground, the administration has preferred to inaccurately blame this recent spike on their predecessors.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Madam President, finally—finally—last week, the White House rolled out a new budget proposal. I have been a supporter of Secretary Blinken and other officials' tough talk with the People's Republic of China. With Putin again massing forces on Ukraine's border, administration officials have been right—right—to warn against further Russian aggression.

This budget outline was going to be one of the first real tests to see if the administration was prepared to walk the walk and put sufficient funding toward our military and strategic competition with China and Russia, both of which have invested heavily in military capabilities that threaten our forces. Unfortunately, for all the rhetoric, the President has asked Congress to break from the positive trajectory of the last 4 years and instead cut defense spending after inflation.

That is going backward on national defense. This would undermine recent bipartisan progress, put the modernization of American forces in jeopardy, and help China toward their goal of overtaking the United States as the world's preeminent superpower.