the Obama-Biden administration as well, and now we are seeing it in the Biden-Harris administration; that suddenly pipelines are bad news.

Well, when the Colonial Pipeline went down a couple of days, the whole East Coast panicked because they couldn't get fuel when one pipeline went down. We shouldn't be talking about how to not build pipelines; we should be talking about how to build pipeline redundancy to make sure that if a pipeline goes down, we are not trapped, as Americans, with no fuel in the situation that we are in right now.

But in the middle of this, to be able to please the environmental left, the President of the United States shut down the Keystone Pipeline, and the company finally gave up and said: We are not going to invest any more money on something that we can't finish.

Now, will that change America's use of oil by one drop? No, it won't. America will use the exact same amount of oil that it used before. But what it will do is make it more expensive to be able to move oil from the northern part of the United States to the southern part of the United States to raise prices on all consumers.

We will still have a use of oil; it will just raise prices. And the oil that moves will now move on a train or on a truck, which uses more carbon, which is more dangerous than using a pipeline. I have seen this movie before.

In the middle of canceling out the Keystone Pipeline, the President lifted sanctions on a Russian pipeline, the Nord Stream 2, which will cut off the United States from selling natural gas to Western Europe because that was Western Europe's alternative. They can either buy natural gas from us or buy gas from Russia.

The Trump administration had put sanctions on that pipeline, and so the pipeline had stopped construction. President Biden lifted sanctions on that so now we won't sell American natural gas; now Western Europe will be dependent on Russian natural gas.

How does that help the stability of Europe? How does that help American jobs? How does that help our future? I have no idea.

In the ''I have seen this movie before,'' I was fascinated this week to be able to see President Zelensky of Ukraine, when he found out about this pipeline shift, which, by the way, dramatically affects Ukraine, when he read about it in the press because the State Department and the administration didn't notify him that the pipeline that skips Ukraine and cuts them off, our administration—the Biden administration—approved.

President Zelensky stated to the press he has reached out over and over to President Biden to get a meeting with him and can't get a meeting with him.

When I read that, I had to laugh. I sat in this seat during an impeachment proceeding on President Trump because he wouldn't give a meeting to President Zelensky. President Zelensky is screaming in the media: I am trying to get ahold of President Biden, and he won't meet with me, and he is benefiting Russia and cutting off Ukraine—and everybody just yawns.

It is quite remarkable to see the difference in how our media and how individuals treat everyone.

And in the category of ''I have never seen this movie before,'' let me give you one. Today, I had the opportunity to be able to meet with our Secretary of HHS, Xavier Becerra. We were talking about the budget that he has presented for HHS, which is enormous. In fact, the President's budget is larger than any budget any President has ever given—not even close—in the overspending. The deficit total in it is epic, almost $2 trillion in deficit just from the budget, not including everything else this year.

But in my conversation with Xavier Becerra, I asked him a simple question: I noticed in your budget proposal you have changed the term that I am not familiar with. You have added a term, and the term that you put in your budget is you refer to some people as a ''birthing person.'' I said: I have to tell you, I don't know that term ''birthing person.'' What does that mean?

And he said: Well, I think it describes itself, is what he said.

I said: What is that? Is that a mom?

And he said: Well, yes, that describes itself. It describes the function.

I thought, the function? That is a woman. That is a mom. That is not a birthing person.

My simple question was: It sounds like you are trying to be politically correct here to be able to appease someone, but do you think it might possibly be offensive to some women and some moms to not be referred to as a woman or as a mom but to be referred to as a ''birthing person'' instead?

And he just said: I will look into it.

Just when I think it can't get weirder around this town and the terms can't get stranger, that is a new one on me.

I look forward to next May, when I walk down the aisle at a Hallmark store to look for the ''Happy Birthing Person Day'' card that I can send to my mom. What an odd statement to make.

What a demeaning statement to make to moms, to refer to them as a ''birthing person.'' What is wrong with just calling a mom a mom? It is a pretty great term that Americans are most certainly used to. And if it is the intent of Xavier Becerra to retrain Americans to stop calling their mom a mom, to call them a birthing person, I hope that he loses that one big time.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last year, our friends across the aisle painted a picture of doom and gloom of what governing with a Republican Senate minority might look like. They forecasted unprecedented obstruction, endless stonewalling, and the inability to get anything done.

Now, there is nothing more popular than the myth that Congress is unable to get anything done. It is pretty popular. The press, uncritically, reports it, even when it is demonstrably false. But it is safe to say the vision painted by our Democratic colleagues of doom and gloom with a Republican Senate minority of unprecedented obstruction, endless stonewalling, and inability to get things done—well, that hadn't come to pass.

Actually, I feel like I am doing a Washington Post fact check. But over the past few months, Republicans and Democrats have actually worked together to make progress on a number of issues.

One, I am sure the Biden administration would confirm that we have been able to confirm a number of nominees for high-ranking positions in the Federal Government with broad bipartisan support.

We extended the popular Paycheck Protection Program that was part of the CARES Act, which was the major COVID–19 relief bill that passed overwhelmingly last year on a bipartisan basis. We did that because we all recognized the importance of small businesses continuing to take advantage of this lifeline until they could safely reopen.

We took action, on a bipartisan basis, to combat the increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans. We provided States with additional resources to upgrade their drinking and wastewater infrastructure.

And this week we passed historic legislation to improve the way we counter the threat from the Chinese Communist Party, the so-called Endless Frontier Act. It included a $52 billion emergency appropriation to make sure that we weren't dependent on imports of semiconductors, which are so essential to our economy and to our national security.

That is not all. The Environment and Public Works Committee advanced a bipartisan surface transportation bill. That is actually the second time—first under Republican leadership, now under Democratic leadership—that the Environment and Public Works Committee has advanced a bipartisan, unanimously supported surface transportation bill.

The Judiciary Committee that I serve on unanimously has approved three bills to support our men and women in blue. And two committees, the Rules Committee and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, just released a bipartisan report—127 pages long, if I am not mistaken—on the events surrounding January 6.

You would be hard pressed to count the number of bipartisan bills that have actually been introduced in the

last few months, just in 6 months of the Biden administration: legislation to bring down prescription drug prices, enhance cyber security, which is an increasingly scary and frightening issue, especially with the Colonial Pipeline, the JBS hack, and the SolarWinds hack by the Russians.

We also know we need to improve our electric grid infrastructure, which we have bills doing that. And then we also have even a bipartisan bill to address the humanitarian crisis on the southern border—bipartisan, bicameral.

These are some of the bills that I have introduced, and when you add to it the work being done by other Members of the Senate, you have a long list of opportunities for us to work together on behalf of the American people. I believe this is the type of results and consensus that the American people had hoped for after the last election because, the truth is, neither party got a mandate after the last election.

I know President Biden won the election, but we have a 50–50 Senate, and Speaker PELOSI has a very slim majority in the House. And we have a President who, I think, inspired all of us when he started talking about healing the separations in our Nation and appealing to a promise of unity.

I can tell you one thing, that 2020 wasn't a mandate to pass a radical agenda. It was a call for us to work together. I don't know any other way you can interpret a 50–50 Senate. And I believe there is no better time for us to get work done on behalf of our constituents in the Senate.

There is, perhaps, the apocryphal story of George Washington, who told Thomas Jefferson that the Senate was meant to be the saucer to cool House legislation, like how a saucer apparently was used at the time to cool hot tea. There certainly is a lot of hot tea in the House these days, and the filibuster, I believe, and the 60-vote requirement to cut off debate is core to the Senate's ability to perform its constitutional function—to cool off the debate and to talk about the greater good and to force us to do something that maybe we don't do naturally, which is to force us to work together.

The Founders understood that if you passed legislation on a purely partisan basis, well, the next 2 years after the election, the next 4 years after a new President, the new majority, the new President, could simply undo it. And we have seen a lot of that, unfortunately—admittedly, on both sides of the aisle.

But when you have to get 60 votes in the Senate to pass legislation that impacts the lives of 330 million Americans, it strikes me that is a pretty commonsense way to force us to do, again, maybe what might seem unnatural to us but we have to do for the benefit of the American people. It forces us to pass bipartisan bills and makes passing partisan bills impossible.

Now, I know both parties. There is a reason why people are Democrats and a reason why people are Republicans. We have different ideas, different priorities, different ways of going about doing things, perhaps to achieve a result that we would all agree on, a different means to an end. But the fact of the matter is, notwithstanding our preference, perhaps, to have our policies succeed over those of our Democratic colleagues, that is not always necessarily in the best interest of the American people. What is in the best interest of the American people is to have us work together.

Just 4 years ago—it is amazing how time flies and how much people's positions change depending on where they sit. Well, 4 years ago, now-Majority Leader Senator SCHUMER, the Senator from New York, said we should ''build a firewall around the legislative filibuster.''

Believe me, that 60-vote requirement looks a lot better when you are in the minority than it does when you are in the majority. As a matter of fact, when President Trump was in the White House and we had a Republican majority in the Senate, I can't tell you how many times he pressed on Leader MCCONNELL to eliminate the filibuster because it was an impediment to him getting what he wanted done. But he wasn't looking at the long game or the long-term consequences of doing that. Senator MCCONNELL, on the other hand, having been in the Senate a long time, understood that short-term gain was not worth the long-term pain.

But Senator SCHUMER called it the most important distinction between the House and the Senate, this consensus-building mechanism known as the filibuster. But, today, Senator SCHUMER perhaps has succumbed to the temptation, once you are in the majority, to say: Anything that gets in my way, any impediment to getting what I want, like the 60-vote requirement, we need to do away with it. So he has done a complete 180. Clearing the way for a radical agenda is priority No. 1.

I understand the political pressures that come within our political parties, and it is pretty clear to me that the pressure on our friends in the Democratic Party is from the progressive left, who want to push the party farther and farther to the left. But that is not a reason for us to give up our previous convictions or principles.

Apparently, our Democratic colleagues—not all, but some of our Democratic colleagues—apparently have abandoned the long-held belief that the filibuster is a vital stabilizing force, and they are on the warpath to eliminate it. You can tell by the language that is being used. Some have called the filibuster a ''weapon of mass destruction,'' ''a death grip of democracy.''

And here is perhaps the most despicable description when, I think it was, President Obama himself, who spoke at John Lewis's funeral, called the filibuster a ''Jim Crow relic,'' essentially suggesting that anybody who supported this vital stabilizing mechanism was a racist. And he gave tacit permission to other people to play the race card when it comes to the filibuster.

Well, it hasn't even been a year since our Democratic colleagues used this ''Jim Crow relic'' to block an anti-lynching bill. This was part of the police reform bill that Senator TIM SCOTT led that was filibustered by our Democratic friends.

I still remember being on the floor when then-Senator KAMALA HARRIS and CORY BOOKER, who were the chief advocates for this anti-lynching provision in the police reform bill, were part of the core of Democrats who filibustered that bill. They filibustered their own anti-lynching bill. So when somebody wants to play the race card and say that this is used for improper purposes, their own actions demonstrate the hypocrisy of that argument.

The inconvenient truth for our Democratic colleagues is that they have filibustered bill after bill when they were the minority party over the last 6 years. But I know memories are short around here. The impulse to get something done today may cause people to do things that they later would regret. We certainly have seen that in the George W. Bush administration when then-Leader Reid decided to raise the bar for judicial confirmations to 60 votes for cloture and blocked a number of George W. Bush's judges.

Of course, we know how that story ended. Ultimately, we got back to the status quo ante after we went through years of fights, gangs meeting and coming up with tentative compromises. And then, ultimately, with the use of the same precedent setting or the appeal of the ruling of the Chair, that then was used to bring the number back down to 51, where it had, in essence, been forever, when Neil Gorsuch was confirmed. So it is important for us to remember that what goes around comes around here, and what might seem expedient today may prove to be pretty painful tomorrow.

Well, we know our Democratic colleagues have used this so-called Jim Crow relic—and, again, I think that is completely inaccurate to use it that way. This is how the Senate functions. Our Democrats are within their rights when they employ the filibuster to kill countless pieces of legislation, whether it is pandemic relief, government funding, pro-life legislation, or police reform. The list goes on and on.

Again, I don't particularly like it when the minority filibusters legislation I would like to see passed, but what that means is it is an invitation and, really, a command to us to roll up our sleeves and work harder to try to find common ground. Really, if you think about it, eliminating the filibuster is a lazy way of legislating because it means you don't have to do the hard work. You don't have to build bipartisan consensus. You don't have to worry about stabilizing our laws so

that they don't change dramatically every 2 years or every 4 years depending on who is in charge.

So we don't have to wonder how our Democratic colleagues felt about the filibuster when it was of benefit to them because they made countless statements and even put their feelings in writing. When Republicans held control of the House and the Senate and the White House, our Democratic colleagues were afraid the filibuster would be eliminated. They were afraid we would do what we did not do but that which Leader SCHUMER and others are advocating now, which is to eliminate the filibuster so we could get—they were worried that we would eliminate the filibuster to get what we wanted rather than have to work together on a bipartisan basis.

So the shoe is truly on the other foot now that Democrats have a nominal majority in a 50–50 Senate but with the tie-breaking vote of the Vice President. That is why Senator SCHUMER gets to be the floor leader even though he doesn't command a majority of Senators.

Back then, when Democrats were in the minority and they were worried about eliminating the filibuster, 33 of them—33—signed a letter insisting that the filibuster be preserved. Among them was the now Vice President, then Senator KAMALA HARRIS.

Senator MCCONNELL, being an institutionalist at heart, agreed, and he never wavered to pressure from anyone, even President Trump, to eliminate the filibuster. But now the tables have turned, and so have many of our colleagues' views on the filibuster.

Instead of resisting pressure to blow up the rules of the Senate and perhaps change it forever, Leader SCHUMER has gladly accepted his marching orders from the radical left, and he is trying to dismantle the longstanding rules of the Senate, what makes it exceptional, as he said, different from the House—way back when.

Senator SCHUMER banked on Republican obstruction to justify going nuclear. He is trying to set up a series of votes in order to justify going nuclear to change the Senate into the House, to eliminate the bipartisan command of that 60-vote requirement.

So he engaged in a lot of doom-and-gloom forecasting to predict that Republicans would willy-nilly filibuster Democrat legislation, but it hasn't come to pass. So now he is trying to orchestrate a series of votes that are designed to fail. And they are just that—designed to fail—because they don't represent the kind of hard work that goes into building bipartisan consensus in the Senate.

We kicked things off earlier this week with a vote on a bill that would exploit the cause of pay fairness to line the pockets of trial lawyers.

We will soon vote on the Democratic Party's attempt to seize authority from the States to run elections. This is a bill so extreme that a number of Democrats have said they will not vote for it.

Who knows what might be next, whether it is packing the Supreme Court, making Puerto Rico or Washington, DC, a State with two Democratic Senators each, or whether they will try to use this to erode the constitutional rights of American citizens, for example, under the Second Amendment. But blocking these bills isn't an example of Republican obstruction; it is a destructive act of political theater.

Well, thank goodness there are enough Democrats who are opposed to eliminating the filibuster, apparently. So it appears that Democrats don't have the votes to make this horribly miscalculated rules change. Two of our colleagues have made clear in their statement that they have the courage to stand up for what they believe is right, despite the pressure they are receiving from the far left.

Senators MANCHIN and SINEMA have repeatedly said they will oppose efforts to eliminate the filibuster. They won't accept the short-term gain for long-term pain. Unlike the rest of their conference, their caucus, they recognize the inherent dangers of making this strictly a 51-vote majority institution. They seem to be following the advice of what then-Senator Barack Obama gave back in 2005 when then-Senator Obama said:

> If the majority chooses to end the filibuster . . . then the fighting and the bitterness and the gridlock will only get worse.

The American people deserve better than that. Chipping away at the right of the minority may seem expedient now, but Democrats would be sure to regret those changes one day, just as they now regret the day that Harry Reid cleared an easy path for hundreds of conservative Federal judges.

In two years, Republicans could win the majority in either or both of the Chambers. In 4, a Republican could win the White House, as well. How would our Democratic colleagues feel then when their rights as Members of the minority are disparaged and ignored? Would our Democratic colleagues support their rule changes then? Would they then believe the Senate minority should be silenced and made irrelevant, as apparently some believe now?

Well, I find it hard to believe that that would be the case. The thing about power in Washington is it is never permanent. Majorities and Presidents change. And there is a reason why the rules should stay the same. If Democrats had the votes to eliminate the filibuster, our country would face a tidal wave of changes: defunding the police, election law hijacking by the Federal Government over the States and local jurisdictions, tax hikes as high as the mind can conceive, restricted rights under the Constitution. You get the picture.

But when the tide inevitably turns, which it will at some point, then the temptation would be on the part of the Republicans to reverse all of those changes. The economy, the government, the average American family would be in a constant whiplash.

The requirement to get 60 votes to close off debate in the Senate is designed to protect our country from the relatively rapid changes of majorities and Presidents, and eliminating it would do serious, irreparable harm, as many of the quoted comments by distinguished Democrats have stated in the past, if not today, at least in the past. So I agree with what Senator SCHUMER said 4 years ago: We should build a firewall around it.

But in the meantime, there is still a lot of bipartisan work being done here in the Senate, even under the current rules, without the thermonuclear device of blowing up the 60-vote cloture requirement known as the filibuster. But every day that the Democratic leader wastes on political theater, which he knows is not going to succeed, is a day we have wasted in passing bipartisan legislation that will benefit all of the American people, not just a partisan majority.

This is the world's greatest deliberative body. It may be one of the last ones in existence. I don't know any other place in our country or around the world where Senators can come down to the Senate floor and express their views no matter how unpopular, no matter how politically incorrect, but engage in actual debate and exchange of views, which ultimately give the American people the best opportunity to make up their own minds about what policies they agree with and who they trust to protect their welfare.

This is the world's greatest deliberative body. There are far more important ways to spend our time than on political theater.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 118, 125, and 126.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Leslie B. Kiernan, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Commerce; Adrianne Todman, of the Virgin Islands, to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; and Nuria I. Fernandez, of California, to be Federal Transit Administrator.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote en bloc on the nominations without intervening action or debate; and if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the