by the Republicans. Senate Republicans were ready to let go of the steering wheel and swerve into oncoming traffic with the debt limit. Right up until the eleventh hour, they wanted to use the filibuster to block Democrats from addressing the debt, the limit of the debt. Do you know when that debt was incurred? It was incurred during the Trump administration, with many of these same Republicans voting for the spending that stands behind it.

Now the minority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, has once again pledged that Republicans refuse to lift a finger to deal with the debt limit when it expires in the first week of December. Think for a moment what defaulting on the debt would mean to American families. It is fodder for even more inflation.

So don't come to the floor with your posing for Holy pictures on the issue of inflation and then turn around and say: I don't care what happens to the debt limit. Americans will pay more each month because of that for their mortgages and credit card bills and student and car loans. Fifteen trillion dollars in household wealth and retirement savings would be wiped out if Senator MCCONNELL and the Republicans have their way in the first week of December.

If our Republican colleagues are truly concerned about the economic well-being of America, work with us to put together a sensible response to the debt limit. Senator SCHUMER and the Democrats have said to the Republicans: If you won't lead, if you can't follow, then get the heck out of the way. Democrats, with a majority vote, will enact a new debt limit. We understand our responsibility to this Nation.

BUILD BACK BETTER

Mr. President, ''denial,'' incidentally, seems to be the watchword on the Republican side. Certainly it is when it comes to climate change. Some of our Republican colleagues insist, despite all of the evidence, that climate change is a phony, fake news, a hoax. Others acknowledge it is real but say we just can't afford to do anything about it. In fact, what we can't afford to do is nothing. Climate change is here, and the cost of it is disastrous.

One in three Americans live in a county that has been hit by an extreme weather event this summer—one in three—with family homes consumed by wildfires, farms ravaged by unprecedented droughts, and lives lost in floods of Biblical proportion.

Last year, our Nation was hit by 18 climate disasters costing at least a billion dollars each—18. The total tab for climate-related disasters that year was $95 billion. This year is worse. Remember Hurricane Ida? It caused $100 billion in damages. Think about that. One storm: $100 billion.

And don't believe that that is just a matter of private citizens contacting their insurance companies. You can bet that the Federal Government and many State and local governments will be investing heavily to overcome the damage that has been done.

Climate change is the gravest threat to our economy, bar none—not to mention our children's and grandchildren's future. We have waited too long. Climate change must be addressed today. Tomorrow is too late. Delay and denial would not make it disappear. They will only increase the damage and lessen the opportunities for solutions that we might consider.

America is the world's can-do Nation. We are the Nation who looks at problems and says: We can fix it. And here is something that our Republican colleagues either don't get or won't admit: Dealing with climate change has the potential to be the biggest job creator in generations. We have an opportunity to put millions of Americans to work building a sustainable, resilient future for our country.

Let me give you a recent example from last week. I had a chance to meet with the public transit officials in Champaign-Urbana, IL. Of course, Champaign-Urbana, IL, is home to the University of Illinois. They were there to showcase a new zero-emissions bus and a charging infrastructure that is cutting edge. You see, these buses run on hydrogen fuel cells powered by solar energy. They will save tens of thousands of gallons of diesel fuel and prevent more than 130 tons of greenhouse gas emissions every single year.

Imagine if every city in America followed the lead of Champaign-Urbana, reconstructing their public transit system, making them sustainable and dependable. Think of all the Americans we could put to work assembling buses and trains, building charging stations, training workers to maintain and repair these fleets.

That is what President Biden's bipartisan infrastructure bill will help do. It is the largest infrastructure proposal in decades, and it will invest billions in green transit alone.

And, for the record, the previous President, Republican President Donald Trump, had no transportation package. He talked about it in the campaign, and for 4 straight years he delivered nothing.

President Biden's Build Back Better agenda is also an investment in our future. If you are worried about our worker shortage—and you should be—the Build Back Better plan will enable parents, especially mothers, to return to work by making safe and affordable childcare resources and senior care available for every family in this country. And it is a blueprint for America to win the 21st century and boost every family's economic security by investing in schools, education, and first-class job training.

Continuing to do nothing while China and our other competitors pass us by is a strategy for finishing in second place, which appears to be the Republican strategy. Our Republican colleagues say: We just can't afford to invest in America's workers, families, and economic potential. Boy, are they wrong. What we can't afford is to do nothing—nothing.

That is what they did when it came to the American Rescue Plan. Not a single Republican would support our efforts for the American Rescue Plan to address the COVID–19 crisis.

The vaccination program, which has vaccinated most of Americans and continues to do even more, was funded by that program. Money was in that program to help businesses get back on their feet after the pandemic. It was a real investment in the future of America. Unfortunately, it did not have support from the other side of the aisle.

NOMINATION OF TANA LIN

Finally, Mr. President, on another matter, this week, the Senate is going to vote to confirm Tana Lin to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of the State of Washington.

Ms. Lin is an accomplished litigator whose credentials, skills, and decades of experience have prepared her for this assignment. If confirmed, she would be the first Asian American to serve on a Federal district court in the State of Washington.

She graduated from Cornell University and New York University School of Law and began her career here in DC as a public defender. She then continued defending the rights of the most vulnerable as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.

Following her time there, she moved to my home State of Illinois to work in the Chicago district office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She litigated cases under title VII of the Civil Rights Act, age discrimination cases, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Today, Ms. Lin works as an attorney in private practice, where she primarily litigates cases involving antitrust, consumer protection, the environment, and labor and employment issues. And as a pro bono civil rights attorney, she has combated racial discrimination, advocated for religious accommodations in the workplace, and helped protect our elections from political interference.

Her nomination is another example of the Biden administration and Senate Democrats working together to advance highly qualified judicial nominees.

Ms. Lin received a unanimous—unanimous—rating of ''well qualified'' from the American Bar Association, and she has the strong support of her home State Senators, MURRAY and CANTWELL.

I urge my colleagues to support Ms. Lin's historic nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Alaska.

REMEMBERING CHUCK BUNDRANT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, this afternoon I come to the floor to recognize the life and the contributions