President Biden wants to literally make millionaires out of people who have violated Federal law.

What could be more unfair and unjust to law-abiding, tax-paying American citizens?

And talk about yet another massive incentive for more and more people to come here illegally: On President Biden's watch, we have already seen an alltime high in illegal border crossings, combined with a decade low in arrests in the interior.

So Democrats have already created a major border crisis, and now they want to cut seven-figure checks to illegal border crossers?

Democrats are already trying to send monthly welfare payments to people who are here illegally. That is in the reckless taxing-and-spending spree they are putting together behind closed doors.

But who needs $300 a month when President Biden wants to send these folks $450,000 per person?

That is four and a half times the payment that the Department of Defense sends to the survivors of servicemembers who were killed in action. Fallen troops' families get $100,000 from the Pentagon. But the Biden administration wants to give illegal immigrants $450,000?

This is an especially extreme example of a big error that Democrats continue to make over and over again.

The left mistakenly thinks that a compassionate border means a weak border. They think compassion requires weakness—weak security, weak enforcement, weak on upholding the rule of law. And now, apparently, we are a cruel country unless we hand out a million dollars per family to illegal immigrants who sue America.

But the entire concept is dead wrong. It is not compassion to lure people from all over the world through dangerous journeys with the promise of open-borders socialism. In fact, the government paying out six-figure sums that multiply with every additional child in tow will only incentivize the riskiest and most dangerous kinds of illegal immigration. We will be guaranteeing that even more children are dragged along the dangerous journey.

Honestly, this absurd idea feels like a satirical policy proposal that Republicans would have invented to make a parody out of the radical left. Oh, and the next thing you know, they will be sending out million-dollar checks to illegal immigrants. But this is literally what the Biden administration wants to do, according to reports that they have not denied.

Out in the real world, American families already have enough reasons to worry about the administration's spending habits. The inflation kicked off by Democrats' springtime binge has wiped out wage gains and made family budgets even harder to square.

One recent report on soaring food prices included this quote from a shopper out in Indiana: ''You have to pick and choose. Before, you didn't have to do that. You could just go in and buy a week or two's worth of food. Now, I can barely buy one week's worth.''

That is a sobering reality that too many Americans are dealing with, and it isn't limited to the grocery store. Folks in my hometown of Louisville have seen gas prices jump a full dollar in the past year. Feeding a family is getting harder. Filling up the tank is getting harder. Even heating a home this winter is shaping up to be 30 percent more expensive than last year.

Even during a time of calm and prosperity, writing million-dollar checks to illegal immigrants would be an insult to American families, but it is 10 times more insulting at a time like this, when Democrats' policies are forcing so many households to tighten their belts.

These are the same Democrats who are putting finishing touches on yet another multimillion dollar—multitrillion dollar reckless taxing-and-spending spree. So in the days and weeks ahead, when the far left tries to sell America on historic inflationary spending, historic tax hikes, and more micromanaging of American life by politicians, just remember, these are the same politicians who have proposed giving millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to people who broke Federal law to enter our country.

The same people who think that is a great idea want license to transform our entire economy.

Look around. I am not sure how much more of this transformation American families can stomach.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Jonathan Davidson, of Maryland, to be Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

NOMINATION OF TOBY J. HEYTENS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Toby Heytens to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

He is an accomplished appellate advocate, with a depth of experience and a fair-mindedness that would make him an asset to the Fourth Circuit. He started as a clerk on the Third Circuit, completed a prestigious fellowship at the Justice Department's Office of the Solicitor General, and then he clerked for Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Not a bad resume.

After a few years in private practice, Mr. Heytens rejoined the Justice Department as an assistant to the Solicitor General. Most recently, he was Solicitor General for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

He is a distinguished academic—taught at Cornell Law School, joined the faculty at UVA Law School, co-directed the Supreme Court Litigation Clinic.

Mr. Heytens has personally argued 10 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court—there aren't many people who can say that—and handled the briefing in more than 50 other cases before the Court, and the breadth of these cases is impressive.

With such credentials, it is not surprising he enjoys the strong support of Senators KAINE and WARNER.

He has been unanimously rated ''well qualified'' by the American Bar Association, and his nomination is supported by leaders in the legal community, including three former Republican Solicitors General under President George W. Bush.

He is a dedicated public servant. I will be voting for him, and I hope my colleagues will join me.

COVID–19

Madam President, on another matter, this weekend saw the happy return of a tradition in many neighborhoods.

Last night, my senatorial assignment was to be at the front door of my home in Springfield, IL, and pass out candy to the trick-or-treaters.

After a year off because of COVID, Halloween was back. We had at least 80, maybe 100, kids show up, and they were all having a great time, as we all remember our own youth.

What a difference vaccines can make. Slowly but surely, we are putting this pandemic behind us. And after a difficult year-plus of remote learning, kids are going back to school across America.

Three days ago, we received some long-awaited news that will enable parents to breathe another sigh of relief and allow children to be safely vaccinated. The FDA authorized Pfizer vaccinations for kids between ages 5 and 11.

While it is true that healthy children generally are at lower risk from this virus, they are not immune, and testing had to take place, and it has taken place. The new lower-dose COVID vaccine can protect our kids—and grandkids, I might add. And I want to do everything I can to make sure that happens.

I usually tell the story, which dates me, but I know the reality of my impression on those who are watching. I have been around a few years, and I remember in the 1950s, when we were scared to death of polio, and along came Jonas Salk—God bless his memory—with a new vaccine, and we all lined up, rolled up our sleeves, and got

a shot, and there wasn't a question asked.

We saw the ravages of polio—the iron lungs, the crippled children, and some who lost their lives—and we did what we should do: we followed our parents' guidance, got the vaccinations. We virtually eliminated polio in America as a result of it.

We have got to do the same thing, when it comes to COVID, for children.

The new COVID vaccine for young children is just the latest proof that President Biden's leadership and efforts are working.

Not one Republican, I might add, not one, could see their way to vote for President Biden's American Rescue Plan. It was that same rescue plan which set up the program across America to administer vaccines.

Where would we be today if we were still struggling to do that?

I want to thank the Biden administration for that leadership. We are starting to see good results, despite the Delta variant. And I think that we can see at least the possibility of putting this pandemic behind us. But I hope more people will get vaccinated so that that will happen sooner rather than later.

Every week—and I have noticed—some of our Republican colleagues, including their leader, come to this floor to propose undercutting commonsense vaccine policies that exist to protect our Nation. These Senators, to my knowledge, have all been vaccinated; yet, when it comes to the mistruths and distortions about vaccinations, they are strangely silent. I think we know why.

Apparently, they think pitting Americans against each other is good politics, but it may be good politics one day and bad public health for a long time. It is corrosive to our public spirit. America is strongest when we are united.

We will no doubt hear our Republican colleagues cheer on the small minority of police and firefighters in cities like New York and Chicago, who continue to refuse to get vaccinated, despite mandates.

Here is a number that we should keep in mind, those of us who say, and I count myself as one, that we respect law enforcement and want them to be strong and safe—last year, five times more law enforcement officers died of COVID than died of gun violence.

Let me repeat that. Last year, five times more policemen died of COVID than died from gun violence.

COVID is the No. 1 killer of law enforcement officers in America today. And so when we talk about being on the side of the police, and you want to save their lives—I sure do. I want them to be safe on the job, but I also want them to be vaccinated so that they don't succumb to the illnesses that follow when they are not.

If you care about police safety—if you really care about police safety, put this pandemic behind us once and for all and get vaccinated, and speak up when people decide, on FOX TV and others, to peddle this anti-vax quackery that we see too often.

THE ECONOMY

Madam President, on a related matter, when I listen to our Republican colleagues' rail on the economy, I am reminded of the old saying, attributed to H.L. Mencken, that: ''For every complex problem, there is an answer that is simply easy—and wrong.''

Four years ago, Republicans used the Senate's reconciliation rules to pass the Trump tax cuts. They didn't get a single Democratic vote.

Why? Because those tax cuts benefited the wealthiest people in America and the most profitable corporations.

So did it cost us anything? Did we make money on that as a nation?

It cost us $1.9 trillion over 10 years. That was Republican reconciliation 4 years ago. That is more than President Biden is now proposing for his entire slate of programs to ease the financial squeeze on working families and create millions of good jobs and protect our Nation from the dangers of climate change.

All the wailing and gnashing of teeth we are hearing from Republicans about deficits and debt? Where in the heck were they during the Trump years, when the debt went up 36 percent?

They were all voting for it.

Of course, now that President Biden is onboard, they are really deficit hawks. They have changed overnight. Well, you should have heard them during the Trump years, if they are sincere and honest.

Our Republican colleagues moan on and on about inflation. All Americans are concerned about that. The Senator from Kentucky pointed out the reality.

I filled my truck up with gas over the weekend. It is more expensive.

What is causing all that?

Well, part of it is we have no control over the price. The OPEC nations and others are determining what the price levels will be. And other things are part of it as well, yes.

Heating bills are going to go up this winter. When I talk to the people in the natural gas industry, they talk about the problems that they had. When the economy slumped during the pandemic, the production of natural gas went down, the storage of it went down, the price went up, and that is what we are paying for today.

So the pandemic itself has had an impact on our economy, which we cannot and should not ignore.

The pandemic closed down the global economy and sent demand for many products soaring. Getting back to normal is just going to take some time, and it will take thoughtful action, not political potshots.

To our Republican friends: If you are really concerned about the economic strain on middle-class and working families, you have got an opportunity to prove it this week.

President Biden's Build Back Better agenda is moving forward. A vote to give 35 million families enhanced child tax credits will help them meet the cost of living and save them hundreds, maybe thousands, of dollars a year.

A vote for good, free, early childhood education for every kid in America will put hundreds, even thousands of dollars more back in the hands of parents.

And unlike the Trump tax cuts, the Build Back Better agenda is paid for. That is right. We pay for it. We are not adding to the deficit, and no one earning less than $400,000 a year will face higher taxes to pay for the Build Back Better agenda.

And then there is the issue of climate change. I am joining a group that hopes we can go to Glasgow, Scotland, for this climate conference the President is attending today, and we hope that a bipartisan group delegation from the Senate can go at the end of this week, and I am looking forward to that possibility.

We are paying so much money out, almost on a weekly basis, for weather-related disasters. Hurricane Ida, this year, cost us $100 billion in damage. One storm cost roughly twice as much as we proposed to spend the whole year in reducing the harm of climate change for all America.

We need to work together to create a win for the American people and for our planet, and wouldn't it be nice if it were bipartisan for a change?

IMMIGRATION

Madam President, let me say a word about Senator MCCONNELL's comments. I sit here and wonder: What can he say next?

Well, today, he took the cake. Apparently, he was suggesting that we have a plan to give every undocumented person in America—was it a million dollars or a half a million dollars?

It is laughable to hear that kind of suggestion.

Remember when the caravans were bringing thousands and thousands and it didn't happen?

Now, there is some notion by the Senator from Kentucky that Joe Biden has a plan to give every undocumented person a million dollars. I mean, you would say to yourself: Did you keep a straight face when you said that? Apparently, he did. And I will just tell you that the plans I have been supporting would put these people to work in America, paying taxes—paying their fair share of taxes, and that is important if we want to get this economy straight and get the workers we need back on the job.

So I would suggest to the Senator from Kentucky, a million dollars for an undocumented person in America? I think you have gone a little bit beyond the pale with that comment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

CYBER SECURITY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, earlier this month, Senator ERNST and I sent a letter to Secretary Mayorkas asking the Secretary to address the