I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, if a budget is a set of priorities, here are the President's: an expanded Federal Government, a diminished national defense, higher gas prices, and an open border. Those are the priorities reflected in the budget the President released last week, which contained pretty much what you would expect—more taxes, more spending, more borrowing, and, in all likelihood, more inflation as a result.

Big taxes and big spending have been the agenda for President Biden since he took office. After signing a $1.9 trillion spending spree in March of 2021 that helped create the worst inflation in 40 years, President Biden spent much of last year pushing for still more spending to fund his vision of an expanded Federal Government.

In his 2023 budget, it is just more of the same. The President's budget would increase average yearly spending by 66 percent as compared to the average of the last 10 years. Sixty-six percent—that is a staggering spending increase. Yearly Federal spending under the Biden budget would average $7.3 trillion. To put that in perspective, the total average spending in 2019 was $4.4 trillion.

How is the President going to pay for this, if he even can? Taxes, a lot of taxes—''the biggest tax increase in history in dollar terms,'' according to Bloomberg.

The President, of course, attempts to sell the tax hikes he is proposing as something that won't affect ordinary Americans. That couldn't be more wrong.

That corporate tax hike that he keeps pushing—one study estimates that 31 percent of the corporate tax is borne by consumers. Another big portion of it is borne by labor, otherwise known as ordinary, hard-working Americans.

Higher prices, fewer jobs, lower salaries—we can expect to see all that and more if the President hikes taxes on companies. And I haven't even mentioned the fact that a corporate tax hike may end up hurting private pensions in the value of American's 401(k)s.

Then there are the tax hikes on conventional energy companies, the companies that produce the oil and gas that Americans use to heat their homes and to drive their cars. Increasing taxes on fossil fuel companies to the tune of tens of billions of dollars is pretty much guaranteed to discourage the additional energy production we need to drive down gas prices. Ironically, the proposals to go after traditional American energy production come from the same administration that is releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to deal with high gas prices. You can't make this up.

Then there is inflation. Democrats helped create our current inflation crisis by sending a lot of unnecessary government money into the economy via the so-called American Rescue Plan. The President's budget would essentially do the same thing, which means our already serious inflation crisis could get even worse.

I mentioned the big spending increases in the President's budget. But what I actually meant are the big nondefense spending increases because, while on paper it may look like the President is hiking defense spending, his supposed funding increase would be effectively canceled out by inflation.

When you take into account Democrats' historic inflation, it turns out President Biden's supposed defense spending increase could actually turn out to be a spending cut. Even in the best-case scenario, his budget would leave defense spending essentially flat, which would leave our military dangerously underfunded. That is a big problem.

In a rapidly evolving threat environment, the last thing we can afford is a self-inflicted defeat from underfunding our military. Given Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and threats to NATO, an increasingly aggressive China, Iran's nuclear ambitions, North Korea's uptick in missile tests, and the Taliban taking over in Afghanistan, among other things, President Biden should be taking national defense spending at least as seriously as domestic spending, but he is not.

The Biden budget proposal would leave the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Space Force underequipped and undermanned and put our defense planning on a dangerously insufficient trajectory.

The President's budget also fails to adequately address border security and immigration enforcement.

Almost since the day the President took office, we have been experiencing an unprecedented flood of illegal immigration across our southern border. In fiscal year 2021, the Border Patrol encountered more than 1.7 million individuals attempting to cross our southern border, the highest number ever recorded. We have had 12 straight months of border encounters in excess of 150,000, and the surge is likely to even get worse now that the President has rescinded the title 42 border policy to immediately deport individuals illegally attempting to cross the border.

What is the President's answer?

Well, $150-million cut to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement next year. That is right. We are experiencing an unprecedented surge of illegal immigration, and the President's budget would cut funding to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Perhaps the most outrageous thing about the President's budget is the way he misrepresents it. He is now trying to portray himself as somewhat fiscally responsible, as if a 66 percent higher yearly average spending than the last 10 years could be considered fiscally responsible. The President is talking a lot about deficit reduction—both the deficit reduction he has supposedly created and the deficit reduction his budget will supposedly produce.

But the actual numbers will, again, tell a very different story. The deficit reduction the President would like to take credit for is partly the result of the end of temporary COVID spending measures, which were scheduled to end whether the President lifted a finger or not. Our current deficit would have been a lot lower if the President hadn't decided that we needed a partisan $1.9 trillion spending spree last year, a spending spree entirely—entirely—made up of deficit spending.

When it comes to the President's 2023 budget, the administration claims ''deficits under the budget policies would fall to less than one-third of the 2020 level the President inherited.''

The key phrase there is ''the 2020 level the President inherited.'' And 2020 saw a huge but temporary surge in government spending to deal with the onset of the COVID crisis.

As a result, it is grossly deceptive to take the 2020 deficit as a baseline. A more honest assessment of the prospects for deficit reduction under the President's budget would look at pre-COVID deficits as a baseline and compare the President's future deficits to those, but that wouldn't suit the President's purposes.

Now that it has become apparent that the American people are not, in fact, thrilled by far-left Democratic governance, the President is eager to portray himself as a moderate—hence his inflated claims of deficit reduction.

It is the same reason the President is touting his supposed spending hike on national defense while conveniently omitting the fact that when you figure in real inflation, the spending hike may actually be a spending cut.

No matter how the President tries to dress it up, his fiscal year 2023 budget is more of the same far-left priorities—more taxes, more unnecessary spending, and more economic pain for the American people.

And I hope, I hope my Democratic colleagues will think twice before foisting this budget onto hard-working Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I rise to speak in support of the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve as an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. When confirmed, Judge Jackson, who currently serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the