

**A LEGACY OF INCOMPETENCE:
CONSEQUENCES OF THE BIDEN-HARRIS
ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY FAILURES**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
**COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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A LEGACY OF INCOMPETENCE: CONSEQUENCES OF THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY FAILURES

Thursday, September 19, 2024

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James Comer (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, Fallon, Donalds, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Greene, Boebert, Fry, Langworthy, Burlison, Raskin, Norton, Lynch, Connolly, Krishnamoorthi, Khanna, Mfume, Ocasio-Cortez, Porter, Brown, Stansbury, Garcia, Frost, Lee, Casar, Crockett, Moskowitz, Tlaib, and Pressley.

Chairman COMER. The hearing of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability will come to order. I want to welcome everyone here today.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Three-and-a-half years ago when Joe Biden and Kamala Harris took office, they promised to build back better. The fawning media told us that the adults are back in the room, but 3 1/2 years later, the economy is suffering, the border is broken, and crises continue to erupt worldwide. Everything Joe Biden and Kamala Harris has touched has failed. Americans are asking themselves, what is better? The evidence of President Biden and Vice President Harris' incompetent and weak leadership is seen and felt by Americans across our Nation.

Let us look at the economy. Vice President Harris has claimed repeatedly that Bidenomics is working and is a term we are proud of, yet Americans have faced 20-percent average inflation since Joe Biden and Kamala Harris took office. The price of everything has gone up. More Americans are now having to choose whether to pay their energy bill, pay rent, or buy food. How is this record something to be proud of? These price increases are not transitory at all, as one of Biden-Harris Administration official claimed. American households must now spend over \$11,000 more each year just to maintain the same quality of life.

Let us turn to our broken border. On their first day in office, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris immediately enacted policies that eroded border security, overwhelmed law enforcement, and left us vulnerable to terrorist infiltration. They ended the Remain in Mexico Program, stopped construction of the border barrier system, and gutted interior enforcement against illegal aliens. They signaled to the world our border was open. Finally realizing it was turning into an inconvenient problem, President Biden tapped Vice President Harris to examine the root causes of the border crisis that happened on their watch. Did she bother to examine her own Administration's policies fueling the crisis? Clearly not. In fact, since Joe Biden and Kamala Harris took office, over 7 million—7 million—illegal aliens were either released into the country or evaded apprehension entirely to make it here. And instead of being given swift due process and deportations, the Biden-Harris Administration flew these illegal aliens all over the country, paying hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to nongovernment organizations and to provide food, shelter, and other services.

Communities across our country are suffering from the Biden-Harris open border. Meanwhile, the Biden-Harris Administration grossly mismanages the very government programs they champion. Congressional Democrats committed \$5 billion in 2021 to build electric vehicle charging stations. Do you know how many the Biden-Harris Administration built? Eight. Not 8,000. Not 800. Eight. That is \$625 million per charging station. Forty-two billion dollars is spent on their Broadband Equity Access and Deployment program to connect Americans to high-speed internet. Over one thousand days later, this program is not connected to a single American to the internet. Not one. Forty-two billion dollars for internet, not a single American has been connected in that program. Meanwhile, American taxpayers who are already struggling with sky-high inflation are on the hook to pay for the Biden-Harris Administration boondoggles.

The Biden-Harris Administration's incompetence has extended to the world stage, contributing to chaos extending across the planet. Instead of the adults in the room, the American people continue to bear the consequences of weak and ineffective leadership on the global stage: the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, where a failure to plan created the conditions ripe for a terrorist attack that killed 13 service members and scores of Afghan civilians; the invasion of Ukraine by Russia; the emboldening of Iran and its proxies; and growing political warfare by the Chinese Communist Party. These are just a few examples of the Biden-Harris Administration's failed policies. Americans cannot afford more of them.

The Oversight Committee has been diligent this Congress to uncover what works, what does not, and how to move forward as this Administration has drifted from crisis to crisis. We know that border walls work because we heard it firsthand from border patrol experts and border patrol agents. We know the solution to inflation is to get spending under control and roll back overreaching and costly regulations that will only be passed on to consumers. We know that strong leadership on the world stage is necessary to confront aggression by foreign powers aligned with evil terrorists. The Oversight Committee looks forward to hearing from the witnesses

today on more solutions to the problems our country now faces because of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' failed policies, ineffective, incompetent, and weak leadership. Thank you to the witnesses appearing here today, and I now yield to the Ranking Member for his opening remarks.

Mr. RASKIN. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to the witnesses for joining us today for one of the Committee's last hearings in the 118th Congress with the extremely fitting title of, "A Legacy of Incompetence." The Majority has assembled a group of leading Project 2025 intellectuals for a Project 2025 coming-out party today. The witnesses will advertise their wares, which almost makes me a bit nostalgic, Mr. Chairman, for the days when our colleagues said that they were pursuing President Joe Biden for the worst Presidential crime in American history, a crime which, unfortunately, they were never able to identify, but which they now appear to have dropped completely.

So last week, my Democratic colleagues and I urged the Chairman to hold a hearing on a real issue. On the gun violence epidemic that is ravaging American communities. This Congress, our colleagues have refused to hold a single hearing about a single mass shooting, except for the one that involved former President Donald Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania. The security of the former President is absolutely critical. But doesn't the rest of the country count, too? Who is going to keep the rest of America safe from AR-15 attacks by disturbed people loaded up on hate and conspiracy theory? Don't all Americans deserve to live free of gun violence?

There have been more than 1,000 mass shootings, defined as at least four people being shot, that have claimed more than 1,000 lives since the start of this Congress. Just since the mass shooting and assassination attempt on the ex-President on July 13, there have been more than a hundred additional mass shootings that have claimed 88 more American lives. There were four other Americans who died that day on July 13 after the attack in Butler, and yet we are told by J.D. Vance that gun violence is a "fact of life" in America. *C'est la vie*. Nothing can be done about it. Of course, it is not a fact of life in England or France or Ireland or Canada or Japan or dozens of other countries. The NRA, the GOP, and the terribly weak Swiss cheese gun laws they insist upon have made gun violence a fact of death in America because they refuse to discuss the policy solutions favored by the vast majority of the American people of all parties: a universal, violent criminal background check, red flag laws, a ban on the sale of AR-15s and other military-style assault weapons.

So, we have a rate of gun homicide 25 times higher than people living in Europe, and gun violence is now the leading cause of death for children and teenagers in the United States of America. Yet instead of holding a hearing on gun violence, we have convened a panel of four witnesses with deep ties to Project 2025, the MAGA manifesto for a second Trump term, so they can audition for Mr. Trump's approval and land a spot on his Cabinet or sub-Cabinet, a fate not necessarily to be envied if you talk to former Vice President Mike Pence; or Trump's former Defense Secretary, Mark Esper; or his former national security adviser, John Bolton; or Cassidy Hutchinson; or more than a hundred other former Republican

officials declaring Donald Trump completely unfit for office. But here we are with these Project 2025 “luminaries” who have taken up the challenge to set forth the agenda on how to take America backward in every domain of public life.

A recently disclosed email from Steven Bradbury, one of Project 2025’s leaders, and Trump’s former Secretary of Transportation, says that, “Those who show real commitment and valuable contributions will be recognized by the leaders of the Project 2025, whose recommendations are likely to carry influence with the key personnel decisionmakers.” And today, two of our witnesses, Mr. Carr and Ms. Gunasekara, showed just that real commitment by authoring chapters of Project 2025. Press reports say Mr. Carr is vying to be Mr. Trump’s FCC Chairman, while Ms. Gunasekara apparently has her eye on becoming Mr. Trump’s next EPA Administrator. And I will stand corrected if you guys disclaim any ambitions for those offices, but that is what the press is reporting. The Majority’s other two witnesses also come to us from organizations that are right there on the advisory board of Project 2025.

So, we will hear from them, and we will discuss how they intend to implement the extremist Project 2025 game plan in a hypothetical second Administration for Donald Trump. It is a program that depends on sending in an army of Trump sycophants and loyalists to replace 50,000 professional civil servants. It is a program subordinating the people’s government to big corporations, and it tramples the civil rights and liberties of women to abortion, birth control, and IVF, which the Republicans just voted against yesterday.

It is a plan to upend democratic government as we know it. And it involves politicizing the Federal work force and gutting the professional civil service; weaponizing the Department of Justice against political rivals and the people; seizing political control of independent agencies, like the Federal Reserve Board and the FCC; eliminating overtime pay for millions of workers; denying the climate crisis and pulling the plug on environmental progress; ending reproductive freedom in every state; federally surveilling births and abortions; legalizing discrimination against LGBTQ Americans; organizing mass deportations and detention camps; deploying the military to quash free speech and protests; eliminating Head Start and the Department of Education; dismantling NOAA; and privatizing the National Health Service, limiting benefits for veterans.

Now, Donald Trump has half-heartedly tried to distance himself from this toxic and increasingly unpopular agenda, but you need only to turn the table of contents of this big book to realize it is the total product of Trump’s inner circle. The MAGA manifesto has 37 authors and contributors. Of those, 31 served in Trump’s Administration, 80 percent. Donald Trump has turned dodgy about his connection to Project 2025, despite the fact that he has praised it and commended its authors, because he knows it is way too extreme for the vast majority of the American people.

The Biden-Harris Administration has restored America’s place as a global leader and led an economic recovery that is the envy of the rest of the world. Project 2025 wants to reverse all the progress we have made, strip Americans of basic, fundamental rights and free-

doms that we have had for decades, and create a Federal work force loyal only to Donald Trump and not to the Constitution of the United States. Today, Mr. Chairman, we are going to try to get to the details from these Project 2025 experts that you have kindly assembled for us. Let us get specific today, and let us see if the American people really want to follow the dark vision for America that Project 2025 has set forth. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. OK. Today we are joined by excellent witnesses. The Honorable Brandon Carr is the senior Republican Commissioner on the Federal Communications Commission. He has been unanimously confirmed by the Senate three times and has extensive expertise in the private and public sector in communications and tech policy. Mark Krikorian is the Executive Director of the Center for Immigration Studies, where he has served since 1995, overseeing their work on research and policy analysis relating to immigration and border security topics, on which he is a nationally recognized expert.

Meaghan Mobbs is the Director for Independent Women's Forum Center for American Safety and Security, a graduate of West Point, former paratrooper and combat veteran, and current member of the Board of Visitors for the Virginia Military Institute. She is an expert on defense, national security, and public safety. Mandy—and I am going to do my best here—I think my counterpart may have butchered it too, and I am going to do my best—Mandy [Goon-a].

Mr. RASKIN. [Goon-a-sekura].

Chairman COMER. Gunasekara.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. [Goon-a-say-ka-rah].

Chairman COMER. Yes, and I am—

[Laughter.]

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Is former Chief of Staff at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Administrator Andrew Wheeler, where she set and implemented environmental policy priorities for the Trump Administration. She is an environmental attorney and has significant experience in both the legislative and executive branches related to energy and environmental regulations and policy. Finally, Skye Perryman is President and CEO of the nonprofit Democracy Forward. She was recently named by Washingtonian Magazine as one of the most influential people shaping policy in 2024.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), the witnesses will please stand and raise their right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony that you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

[A chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. Let the record show that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Thank you all. We appreciate so much you being here today and look forward to your testimony.

Let me remind the witnesses that we have read your written statement, and it will appear in full in the hearing record. Please limit your oral statements to 5 minutes. As a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you so that it is on,

and the Members can hear you. When you begin to speak, the light in front of you will turn green. After 4 minutes, the light will turn yellow. When the red light comes on, your 5 minutes have expired, and we would ask that you please wrap up.

I now recognize Mr. Carr for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BRENDAN CARR
COMMISSIONER
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

Mr. CARR. Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Raskin, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to testify. I have had the privilege of serving as a Commissioner on the FCC for over 7 years now. Before that, I served as the agency's general counsel after first joining the FCC as a staffer back in 2012. My primary focus has been ensuring that every American has a fair shot at next-generation connectivity.

In my view, there is no better way to do a job in Washington than to get outside the Beltway and see firsthand the challenges ahead. That is why I spent time in nearly every state over the past few years meeting with broadband builders, local leaders, and community members alike. Along the way, I have stood on top of 2,000-foot broadcast tower with tower crews. I have been a mile below ground to see a fiber build connecting an underground research lab. I have visited with crews stringing fiber along the Arctic Ocean in Utqiagvik, Alaska, America's northernmost point, and I have been on the Gulf Coast with teams as they restored service after hurricanes in Florida. In every community, I have heard about the opportunity that comes with a high-speed connection, and that is why I was pleased when a bipartisan consensus emerged to provide the support necessary to end the digital divide. And the most significant of those efforts is a \$42 billion initiative known as BEAD. But unfortunately, BEAD is a program that has gone off the rails. Here is how.

In 2021, Vice President Harris agreed to lead the Administration's signature \$42 billion effort to extend internet service to millions of Americans. It has now been 1,039 days since that program was enacted. After all of that time, not one person has been connected to the internet. Not one home, not one business, not even one shovel worth of dirt has been turned, and it gets worse. No infrastructure builds will even start until sometime next year at the earliest, and, in many cases, not until 2026. This makes Vice President Harris' \$42 billion initiative the slowest-moving Federal broadband deployment program in recent history.

With Vice President Harris at the helm, *Politico* recently reported on the "frustration and finger pointing" that defined the program's "messy, delayed rollout." One state broadband official described "a chaotic implementation environment, dysfunction, delays." She added that the Administration "has provided either no guidance, guidance given too late, or guidance changing mid-stream." The Administration, she said, is slowing states down. So, what has the Administration been doing over the last 1,039 days instead of connecting Americans? It has been advancing a wish list of progressive policy goals. The \$42 billion program, led by Vice President Harris, is being used to push a climate change agenda,

DEI requirements, price controls, preferences for government-run networks and rules that will lead to wasteful overbuilding. All of this will leave rural communities behind.

Frankly, it would not be the only time the Biden-Harris Administration has left rural America behind. In 2020, the FCC secured a commitment from Starlink to provide internet to 640,000 homes and businesses for about \$1,300 per location in Federal support. But the government revoked that award last year after President Biden gave agencies the green light to go after Musk. The Administration is now spending dollars on the penny to connect locations through its own initiatives. Senator Cruz released a report identifying entire projects where the Administration is now spending over \$100,000 per location for internet. So here is the bottom line: absent major reforms, Vice President Harris' \$42 billion program is wired to fail. It is time to correct course, get rid of all the extraneous political goals, and focus on quickly connecting Americans.

In closing, I want to thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. I now recognize Mr. Krikorian for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF MARK KRIKORIAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES**

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Thank you for the invitation to speak—
Chairman COMER. And mic, please.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Thank you for the invitation to speak before the Committee. I would like to assure the Ranking Member I am not, in fact, auditioning for a job.

Do not take this the wrong way, but with regard to immigration, at least the title of the hearing is a little bit misleading. The Biden-Harris record on immigration is the result of neither incompetence nor failure. The largest border crisis in the history of our country, probably the largest such event in human history, began on January 20, 2021, on purpose, not due to incompetence.

Since that date, there have been more than 10 million encounters of inadmissible aliens at our borders, millions of whom have been and continue to be unlawfully allowed to enter the United States. This did not happen because the Biden-Harris Administration and its impeached Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, made mistakes or miscalculations. That would have been bad enough and certainly a subject for—a proper subject for congressional oversight, but would be excusable because we all have shortcomings. We all make mistakes. Rather, the ongoing border crisis is the result of ideology.

There are only two ways of thinking about the immigration issue overall. Either no one in the world is allowed to come here, and then we make limited exceptions, or everyone in the world is allowed to come here with certain limited exceptions. So, no one gets to come in with exceptions, or everyone gets to come in with exceptions. The Immigration and Nationality Act, of course, is based on the former perspective. No foreigner has a right to move here, but we, the people decide there are specific grounds to admit a limited

number of people. Maybe they have a relative here or a job skill or what have you.

There are different opinions about how to do that, but they all are under one umbrella, basically that immigration is a privilege granted by the American people. This Administration's approach to immigration is based on the second view, the opposite view, that everyone in the world has a right to move here if they choose to do so, and the American people have no right to place limits on immigration apart from those related to basic safety. Terrorists, criminals, deadly diseases, and even those limitations are highly circumscribed.

Strictly speaking, this is not open borders, though that description may do as a shorthand. Instead, I would describe the Biden-Harris approach to immigration as one of unlimited immigration that holds that any limits on the level of immigration are morally indefensible, and circumventing those limits by any means available is a moral duty. This is fundamentally contrary to Federal law, of course, but also contrary to the Constitution and the very concept of sovereignty and consent of the governed. The fruit of that ideology is spelled out in detail in my written statement.

The most common pretext for subverting the will of the people on limits on immigration is asylum, and the chief practical means of achieving unlimited immigration are unlawful releases from detention and unlawful grants of mass categorical parole. This unlimited immigration perspective also requires an inversion of the proper role of the executive. The allocation of authority in the INA is that the President has the power to keep out anyone he thinks should be excluded, but can let in only those who have been specifically authorized by Congress for him to admit. Due to this belief in unlimited immigration, the Biden-Harris Administration's understanding is the precise opposite. They have acted for 3 1/2 years on the belief that the President may let in anyone he wants but may keep out aliens only for very narrow reasons.

Let me close with an example to illustrate this. The CBP One parole scheme seeks to funnel through the ports of entry inadmissible aliens who ostensibly otherwise would cross the border illegally. When this unlawful program was started in May 2023, DHS set the limit at 1,000 inadmissible aliens being given interviews per day. The next month, they increased the number of 1,250 a day. Later that same month, they increased it again to 1,450 a day, so it is more than 1/2 a million inadmissible aliens released into the United States. These numbers have no basis in law, nor did Congress even authorize the President to come up with his own number, as with refugee resettlement. The Administration has simply made up numbers for how many inadmissible aliens to admit, based mainly on how quickly they can be processed and released, and feels free to change those numbers at will.

This is illustrative of the Biden-Harris approach to immigration, which might be put this way: we can let in anyone we want, in any number, for any reason, and we dare Congress to do anything about it. This is not the way a self-governing people's immigration system should work. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. I now recognize Ms. Mobbs for her opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF MEAGHAN MOBBS
DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR AMERICAN SAFETY AND SECURITY
INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S FORUM**

Dr. MOBBS. Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Raskin, and Members of the Committee, thank you for your leadership in convening a hearing to discuss the policy implications of the current Administration.

Ranking Member Raskin, I would like to assure you I am not seeking an appointment, nor have I even read Project 2025, but the core duty of any government is to protect its citizens, yet over the last 4 years, the world has only grown more dangerous. We have witnessed the largest attack on a European nation in 85 years and the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust. History has been made by the number of full and partial U.S. embassy evacuations around the world, and the United Nations concurs that, "The world is facing the highest number of conflicts since World War II."

It is crucial to understand that these conditions were not simply imposed on us. Instead, reckless policies of appeasement embolden our enemies, giving them the power and confidence to act. When the world's most powerful democracy projects indecision, it invites aggression. Authoritarian states and hostile nonstate actors have sensed a window of opportunity to expand their influence and challenge American power and prestige. The clearest example of such overt aggression by a state actor can be found in Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A war that has entered its third year was presaged by a lengthy series of policy decisions by the Administration that strengthened Putin's position and demonstrated a provocative unwillingness to defend Ukraine. The end result of these policy choices was the greatest deterrence failure since the cold war. Once the invasion occurred, the Administration continuously slow-rolled critical military aid and a strategy for victory. The Biden-Harris Administration's chronic delays project weakness, dragging out the conflict, and escalating the economic burden borne by the United States and our allies.

It is no surprise that the failed execution of another key policy, the withdrawal from Afghanistan, was overseen by the same team. U.S. intelligence assessed the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan played a major role in influencing Putin's decision to invade. The Administration prioritized political timelines over on-the-ground realities. At State, they resisted early calls for a noncombat evacuation, believing it would signal failure. At the Department of Defense, operational mistakes, such as the closure of Bagram Air Base, severely hindered the U.S.' ability to conduct a secure evacuation. And despite credible intelligence warning of a terrorist threat, the DoD failed to prevent the deadly bombing at Abbey gate, which claimed the lives of 13 U.S. service members.

To this day, key figures across all agencies have avoided responsibility, and accountability has been notably absent across all levels. Not only did the U.S. Government leave behind \$7 billion worth of military equipment, which the Taliban just paraded in a celebratory event, but a January report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction noted since August 2021,

the U.N. has purchased, transported, and transferred \$2.9 billion in U.S. currency to Afghanistan. The report also highlighted that the U.S. remains Afghanistan's largest international donor. In short, the U.S. is sending money to the Taliban. Again, it is unsurprising that one of the chief architects of the withdrawal failure also touted that "The Middle East is quieter today than it has been in 2 decades," only 8 days before the multi-frontal attack launched by Iranian supported Hamas into Israel.

The Administration's efforts to revive the Iran nuclear deal have been disastrous. Once again, the shift from a maximum pressure campaign under the previous Administration to a conciliatory, appeasement-based strategy has shown to be catastrophic. In fact, most of Iran's nuclear expansion occurred after President Biden's election. Iran's increasing involvement in regional instability and its military support for Russia underscores the Administration's inability to curtail Iran's authoritarian expansion.

Just as the Biden-Harris Administration has failed to effectively deter other enemies, he is running the risk of failing to lead against our greatest threat, China. Now we have bolstered our alliances. We do have the AUKUS security partnership. We have concentrated bipartisan efforts, which are positive developments. Yet, the Biden Administration's hallmark embrace of this idea of diplomatic ease with authoritarian leaders, in this case China, runs the risk of tipping us into managing competition rather than winning. The U.S. is in a new cold war with China, and attempts to temper or tame that reality only increase the likelihood of an actual war.

When American foreign policy fails, women and girls often pay the highest price. The United Nations reported a 50-percent increase in verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence from 2022 to 2023. This violence has had far-reaching societal consequences, severely limiting women's livelihoods and restricting girls' access to education in many countries around the world. This is particularly true in Afghanistan, where, as one young woman described, "Women and girls have lost all their hope in the world."

Ladies and gentlemen, I do not enjoy sitting here reciting a litany of U.S. failures and a decline in America's power and presence on the world stage. I am a proud American who deeply loves her country. Unfortunately, many of the failures outlined here represent systemic breakdowns, from the White House to individual agency leadership. There has been a startling lack of accountability, and Americans have taken notice. When accountability is neglected, the consequences are clear and far reaching. Ultimately, the cost of ignoring accountability is not just organizational inefficiency. Without accountability, the price is eventually paid in the form of deteriorated systems, weakened institutions, deepened crises, and chaos.

Tragically, it is Americans who are bearing the burden of these costs. Therefore, it is altogether unsurprising that less than a quarter of the American people trust the government in Washington to do what is right. It is my hope effective and strong oversight can change that for the better. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. I now recognize Ms. [Goonasahray].

Ms. GUNASEKARA. [Goon-a-say-ka-rah]. Thank you.
 Chairman COMER. Say that one more time. It is going to—
 Ms. GUNASEKARA. It is all right. Gunasekara.
 Chairman COMER. That is what I meant.
 Ms. GUNASEKARA. That is what you all said.
 Chairman COMER. All right. Thank you. Sorry.
 Ms. GUNASEKARA. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF MANDY GUNASEKARA
 FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF
 U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Chairman Comer, thank you for being here today. Ranking Member Raskin, it really is an honor to be with all of you all and fellow Members of the Committee.

I have a prepared opening statement that I will get into in just a second, but, Ranking Member Raskin, you reiterated and have created a boogeyman that just is not there. I did author the EPA chapter on Project 2025, but in the course of that, I did not work with President Trump, with any of the people who work for him directly, or his campaign. And it is very misleading to suggest that there is any coordination there because I can personally tell you it did not happen. And I am not vying for a position in the next Administration. I have actually left D.C., and I have moved to a small town in Mississippi where I interact every day with people who live outside this bubble of gaslighting and misleading, and they actually are dealing with the consequences caused by policy decisions of this Administration that is not defined by progress, but defined by creating unnecessary hardship.

I understand why it is hard to think about the political realm prior to President Trump, but the Heritage Foundation has been very involved in pushing forward conservative policies for quite a while, and the mandate for leadership, the latest iteration, it is the 9th edition. This is a project that has been put out every few years since 1981. So, it has been around for quite some time and, again, is more committed to representing the position of the broader conservative movement than any one candidate or person. And I understand why there is the creation of this boogeyman because your leading candidate is the one running away from policy actions she has taken that make Americans' lives much more difficult.

In fact, Vice President Kamala Harris was recently asked on national television the following question: When it comes to the economy, do you believe Americans are better off than they were 4 years ago? She said a lot of words, but she did not answer the question because the reality is most Americans are not better off. Most Americans are struggling to deal with expensive gas, expensive electricity, and high-cost goods and groceries that have created financial burdens that Americans have had to deal with throughout the Biden-Harris Administration. Their day one energy policies are a key driver behind Americans' increasing financial distress. From President Biden's promise to end all fossil fuels, alongside Vice President Kamala Harris' commitment to ban fracking, Americans have suffered under their radical agenda. From the energy perspective, this has included locking up development of resources and de-

monizing industries, mainly coal, oil, and natural gas that still provide 80 percent of our daily energy needs.

A recent report from the Institute of Energy Research has been tracking these actions, and they have found that since January 2021, President Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, and congressional Democrats have taken over 250 actions that make it harder to produce energy in America. This has included stopping construction of the Keystone XL pipeline that immediately cut 11,000 domestic jobs, including thousands of union jobs; issuing a moratorium on new oil and gas permits on Federal lands; greenlighting Putin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline while shuttering the development of U.S. pipelines along the East Coast; rejoining the disastrous Paris climate agreement that is squeezing out U.S. jobs; and increasing the regulatory burden on American companies; launching a war on household appliances that are now 34 percent more expensive than 15 years ago; blocking the Twin Metals mine; shuttering U.S. steelworker jobs in Minnesota; and cutting off access to critical minerals that we need more and more of.

And instead, this Administration is making us more and more dependent on China; slowing permits for LNG facilities from an average of 7 weeks to 11 months, then completely halting permits for new LNG facilities altogether; mandating that Americans drive electric vehicles, despite growing market resistance; infrastructure shortfalls; and a preference for more affordable and reliable gas-powered vehicles. Americans are dealing with the consequences of these actions every time they put gas in their car, pay their electricity bills, or go to the grocery store. Now, this is not necessary for purposes of protecting the environment or saving future generations from climate change. I know this because during the Trump Administration, we were able to grow the economy, create jobs, reduce emissions, and address legacy environmental issues. The reality is that America needs more energy, and with the right policies in place and a pragmatic mindset from our leaders, we can build a strong economy that delivers lower cost for consumers, protects the environment, and reverses the negative financial consequences of the past 3 1/2 years.

Again, thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman COMER. Very good. Thank you. Now I recognize Ms. Perryman.

**STATEMENT OF SKYE PERRYMAN
PRESIDENT AND CEO
DEMOCRACY FORWARD**

Ms. PERRYMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member. Thank you for the invitation to testify here today. My name is Skye Perryman. I am a lawyer and the President and CEO of Democracy Forward, which is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes democracy and progress through litigation, regulatory engagement, policy, education, research, and commitment to the rule of law. Democracy Forward has had the privilege of representing clients that make up the very fabric of this country and across the Nation, including parents, teachers, workers, small businesses, scientists, veterans, voters, and many more. Our team is

committed to our country's founding idea that our government does derive its power from the consent of the governed, and we are dedicated to bringing about our democracy's promise that the government must work for all people.

American democracy is at an inflection point, and it is in a crisis that threatens our freedoms. In the months following an attempt by extremists to disrupt the peaceful transition of Presidential power, on January 6, 2021, the United States was added to a list of global backsliding democracies by the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance. The report noted, "The United States, a bastion of global democracy, fell victim to authoritarian tendencies." Myriad factors have contributed to this, including the rejection of an election result by an incumbent President, scholars have noted, and an attempted insurrection against this legislative branch. Last year, 13 of our Presidential libraries in the United States, from President Hoover's Library to President Bush's Library to President Obama's Library, warned of the fragile state of United States' democracy.

These threats to our democracy and freedoms enjoyed by the American people are not academic, and they are not hyperbole. In 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed a Federal constitutional privacy protection that had been recognized for nearly 5 decades, leaving women of reproductive age in the United States with fewer rights than the generation just before them. Across the Nation, women are living without access to the critical care they need, including in emergency situations. Book bans are on the rise in our Nation and communities across the country. Misinformation and disinformation continues to be rampant and perpetuated by far-right groups and political actors, often targeting families and communities, including those that have immigrated to the United States, and political violence that is on the rise. And, yes, Mr. Ranking Member, gun violence continues to be a scourge in our education system and across the country.

Just 2 years after former President Trump and his allies refused to acknowledge the results of the 2020 election, reports began to surface that the former President and his associates were planning a shadow government and developing extensive policy plans to remake American government as we know it. These and related efforts, including the development of a 922-page document known as Project 2025, have been well documented. Proposals in Project 2025 represent profound threats to the American people, to our freedoms, and to our democracy.

Democracy Forward has published a "People's Guide to Project 2025" to expose many of the policies that undermine the well-being of the American people, which the authors of the Project purport to say a President could do on day one of an Administration. Those policies include, but are not limited to, the weaponization of the Department of Justice against the American people; the politicizing of our civil service; undermining the government's ability to work for the American people; enabling discrimination across society; making it harder for Americans to make ends meet, including Americans in rural areas, through taking overtime eligibility away from millions of American workers; denying our climate crisis; undermining and delegitimizing our public education; and failing to

address gun violence, childcare crisis, and many other crises in this country.

Project 2025 is not hypothetical. It and other extreme proposals are already taking hold at the state and community level in many communities across the country and are being pursued in the courts. Anti-democratic actors are using the states to incubate and normalize Project 2025 and other extremist tactics. Many of the same groups that have supported regressions of our Federal rights, including the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, restricting voting rights, and undermining our government's ability to work for the people, are behind this project. And in many cases, these groups and aligned far-right attorneys generals [sic] are seeking to undermine the progress and policies of the Biden-Harris Administration in the courts and in communities across the country.

It is incredibly important that this Congress understand the threats posed by Project 2025 and the harms of far-right extremism and anti-Democratic movements that are afoot in this country. I provide this testimony today and look forward to your questions with the sincere hope that it is through understanding this crisis that we can build for a better tomorrow. I look forward to your questions, and thank you for having me.

Chairman COMER. And let me remind everyone that the purpose of this hearing is to dissect the policies of the Biden-Harris Administration, and if there is an opportunity and some want to defend those policies, this is the perfect forum to do that. So, again, I look forward to a very substantive hearing, and I will begin with questions. I recognize myself.

Mr. Krikorian, you mentioned what I think is one of the biggest failures in policy of any administration, and that is the disaster at the Southern border, and I know that Vice President Harris has kind of flip-flopped. Four years ago, she implied that the border wall was racist, and now she is featuring it in campaign ads. One of the first policies enacted was the halting the construction of the border wall. You have stated in your remarks that you believe that was their policy to have an open border policy. It was not incompetence. This was their specific intent. One of the arguments that some of my colleagues make is that there was a bill that would have fixed the border crisis. Now, would that bill have solved the border crisis? I guess it was the one the Oklahoma senator and whomever was in the Senate, that was the Senate bill. Would that have solved the crisis?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yes, that was Senator Lankford's bill, and, no, it would not have solved the crisis. H.R. 2, which this body passed, would have been much more effective in that regard. The Senate so-called bipartisan bill, first of all, was drafted by the Biden-Harris DHS, basically, and it was a joint effort of a Democrat, a Republican, and an independent, and I have every reason to believe they were actually trying to craft something constructive.

Chairman COMER. Right, but—

Mr. KRIKORIAN. But neither they nor their staffs have the—

Chairman COMER. Right.

Mr. KRIKORIAN [continuing]. Depth of knowledge on immigration, and so they ended up getting basically—

Chairman COMER. So, it would not have solved the problem?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Right. No, it would have codified some of—
Chairman COMER. Right.

Mr. KRIKORIAN [continuing]. The illegal actions that—

Chairman COMER. Exactly. Commissioner Carr, you have vocally criticized the Biden Administration's very expensive \$42 million BEAD Program. Who is primarily to blame for this program's lack of meaningful follow-through, and what are the causes of these? We spent all this money for broadband access, and I know my district desperately needs that, but no one is getting broadband. No one is benefiting from this. What is going on with that? What is this Administration done with that—

Mr. CARR. Yes, I think we—

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Forty-two billion dollars?

Mr. CARR. The reason why we are having \$42 billion allocated, 1,039 days in, and not a single person connected is because the Administration, under Vice President Harris' leadership, has prioritized a progressive wish list of issues. They want to put DEI requirements in place. They want to put price controls in place. They want government-run networks. So, it has taken time to put those requirements in place, and that has delayed the actual turning of dirt.

Chairman COMER. That is so bad. It is such a huge issue in Kentucky, and Congress allocated \$42 billion, yet no one has benefited from this. That is what the purpose of this Committee is about: waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement of the Federal Government. If someone on the other side wants to defend this BEAD Program, I am anxious when they get their 5 minutes.

Ms. Mobbs, I believe the Chinese Communist Party is the biggest threat we have to the United States.

Dr. MOBBS. Uh-huh.

Chairman COMER. Do you believe the Biden-Harris Administration is still approaching the Chinese Communist Party as a competitor instead of an adversary? And how has their approach contributed to the CCP's increased infiltration and influence operations, such as flying a spy balloon over our country, buying up land close to U.S. military bases, and increased aggression toward Taiwan?

Dr. MOBBS. So, I do feel that we are approaching it as competition versus looking them as an adversary, which I said in my opening statement. It is critical for us to develop policies to effectively begin to deter and counter them as an adversary. Unfortunately, we have had weak deterrence in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. naval fleet in the Pacific is crucial for countering China's growing military presence. We have the lowest number of ships since the cold war, and that rapid naval expansion poses a significant threat, and the Biden Administration has, unfortunately, been slow to increase military investments in that region.

We have also failed to mitigate Chinese economic dominance via maintaining tariffs or failing to do so from economic sanctions. We have had an inadequate response to cyber threats, and we have missed opportunities for strategic diplomacy that could help us establish a winning strategy with our counterparts.

Chairman COMER. Uh-huh.

Dr. MOBBS. So, in essence, we are failing to win in this strategy.

Chairman COMER. Right.

Dr. MOBBS. We are looking at managing the competition versus dominating.

Chairman COMER. Right. Very good. We talked about the border crisis. We have talked about misappropriating \$42 billion in taxpayer dollars. We published a report last week where \$200 billion was lost to fraud during COVID in the Unemployment Insurance Program. We talked about the lack of seriousness and the soft-on-China policies of this Administration. Last, I want to ask about the Green New Deal because when Vice President Harris was campaigning for President, she was an advocate of the Green New Deal. Ms. Gunasekara, what would happen, what would our energy grid look like, what would America look like if Vice President Harris was able to implement the Green New Deal?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Well, we have a snapshot of what that would look like because under the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, the agencies have been largely implementing pieces of the Green New Deal, and so the resulting effect is increased cost energy and a less reliable grid, and also, no real tangible benefit to show in terms of reducing overall emissions. So, it is quite counterintuitive to the purported and stated goals of the Green New Deal to improve the environment.

What you have actually seen, is that you have had electricity prices go up. Most recently, home heating oil is up 36 percent, electricity up is up 32 percent, and natural gas is up 25 percent. This is all a direct result of policies coming from agencies run by the Biden-Harris officials, agencies enacting regulations that put the squeeze on these operations, inject politics, and manifest itself in increased prices on the American people, expanding financial burdens.

Chairman COMER. So, and I am going to give the Ranking Member an extra minute and a half, so is it safe to say the Kamala Harris Green New Deal would contribute as much to increased inflation as the Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act has?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Well, yes, certainly, and I know you recall she was the tie-breaking vote that passed the Inflation Reduction Act. But yes, the Green New Deal, when energy prices go up, the price of everything else goes up, and when you are in the inflationary economy, everyone dealing with it, makes it that much worse.

Chairman COMER. Yes. Thank you. I now yield 6 1/2 minutes to the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you kindly. For the record, it is [Kah'-mah-la] Harris and not [Kim-ah'-la]. And so, I mean, we take it as an honest mistake, but I think everybody on the Committee is capable of saying our—

Chairman COMER. You know, I have trouble with a lot of last names.

Mr. RASKIN. I gotcha.

Chairman COMER. That is a characteristic from Appalachia. I apologize.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, I remember when I hiked the Appalachian Trail, they said if you call it [Apple-ate'-tcha], they will throw an apple-atcha, so.

[Laughter.]

Mr. RASKIN. All right. Back to you, Ms. Gunasekara, and I just want to get this straight. Nobody here has disavowed their own connection to Project 2025, in the big report that I am calling the MAGA Manifesto, but the big book. Donald Trump is trying to backpedal right now. What he said when he was at the Heritage Foundation is our country is going to hell. The critical job of institutions such as “Harrige’s”—and admittedly, he called Heritage “Harrige’s”, but we know he meant Heritage—is to lay the groundwork. ‘And “Harrige’s” does such an incredible job at that,’ he said, ‘they are going to lay the groundwork and detailed plans for exactly what our movement will do and what your movement will do when the American people give us a colossal mandate to save America.’ Are you not proud of your association with Donald Trump and the fact that he seems to be embracing Project 2025?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. It was an honor of my life to serve President Trump at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. And the work that I have put into Project 2025 is a result of that experience and lessons learned that I think would be extremely beneficial to trying to advance the cause of the conservative movement, to reduce the government, ensure that the voice of the people to—

Mr. RASKIN. Just to interrupt for a second. So, your contribution to the Project 2025 Report is something you are proud of, right?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. And you are proud of the association with Donald Trump?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Again, I disagree with the way that you are asking that question.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, OK.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. I understand what you are trying to do here. You are trying to create a—

Mr. RASKIN. I am just trying to get to the facts, that is all, because everybody seems to be backpedaling from what seems completely obvious. Donald Trump praised Project 2025. He said that this “lays the groundwork and details the plans for what our movement will do,” and now all of a sudden, everybody wants to run away from that. Well, Mr. Krikorian, let me come to you. I was interested in your little exchange about the Senate immigration deal. We had a bipartisan border agreement, which Donald Trump blew up at the last minute because he did not want a border solution. He wanted a border crisis to run on, but in any event, are you denying that the people at the border, who work at the border, wanted that deal, wanted the immigration deal?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. The now-former Chairman of or head of the Border Patrol union endorsed it, and my sense was that—I have not talked to him about it—but that it was because it offered extra, you know, pay, and that is the—

Mr. RASKIN. Well, I will help you out.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. OK.

Mr. RASKIN. “As Conservatives Balk, U.S. Border Patrol Union Endorses Senate Immigration Deal.”

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yep.

Mr. RASKIN. That is, the union for everybody who works at the border wanted it. There are people who want to politicize the border and do not want a solution there because they would prefer to

engage in scapegoating and immigrant bashing and stereotyping and so on. But we had what conservative senators were describing as a great deal, and yet, that that was destroyed, and that is unfortunate, but it demonstrates the real lack of commitment to make something happen there.

Ms. Mobbs, I wanted to come to you. I was very interested in your remarks about Ukraine. From what you were saying, it indicated to me that, unlike Donald Trump and unlike J.D. Vance, you actually support Ukraine's effort to repel Vladimir Putin's filthy imperialist invasion of their country. Is that right? Do you support Ukraine against Putin?

Dr. MOBBS. I do support Ukraine against Putin.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. So, you would disavow the positions taken by Trump and J.D. Vance who say they do not care? J.D. Vance said he does not care. He does not give a damn about the people of Ukraine.

Dr. MOBBS. I cannot speak to their position outside of what I witnessed in the first debate when President Trump specifically stated that he did not and would not concede any territory to Vladimir Putin.

Mr. RASKIN. He did say that?

Dr. MOBBS. He did in his first debate.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. I thought his position was he is going to solve this on day one, basically by letting Putin have what he wants, but I am glad to hear it if that is his position. It is certainly not the position being taken by MAGA Republicans, as you know, who have opposed and consistently voted against aid to the Ukrainian people. So, that is different. All right.

Let me come to you, Mr. Carr, because I know you are on the FCC right now. You did not disclaim the possibility of becoming Chairman of the FCC, and that is cool. Everybody has got ambitions. And you have not disclaimed your connection to Project 2025 or to Donald Trump, but here is what I want to ask you about. When Donald Trump said after his—I think everybody can concede—world-class, dreadful, terrible, and pathetic performance in the Presidential debate, he wanted to blame ABC for it, and he called on the FCC to take away ABC's license, OK? In January, he called for revocation of NBC's license because he felt that they cut short his full victory speech after he won the heavily contested Iowa caucus, OK? If you were Chair of the FCC and Donald Trump, per usual, called you from the Oval Office or called upon the FCC to demand the revocation of a license for ABC or NBC because he had a political problem with something they had done, what would your reaction be? It is an honest question. How would you deal with that?

Mr. CARR. I thank you for the question. I do not know about all the premises in there, but I will tell you—

Mr. RASKIN. Well, they are all true, but I can give you the documentation if you want.

Mr. CARR. Speaking of the hypothetical about the future that you were laying out, I am not sort of speaking to a hypothetical future, but I can tell you where I am right now, which is, look, I have been nominated by President Trump. I have been nominated by President Biden. I have been vetted by the Senate three times. I have

been confirmed unanimously. In all of those contexts I have been asked repeatedly very similar versions of this question. I have said going all the way back to 2017, every single decision that I make on the FCC will be based on the FCC's precedent, Federal law, and the First Amendment. I have said it repeatedly, and I have acted consistent with that.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. And so just to be a little more specific, you would agree that the President has no authority to order a Federal commission or agency to engage in an action of a political or partisan nature?

Mr. CARR. Again, what I have said is, anything that comes from the White House, whether it is Republican or Democrat, every action that I will take—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes?

Mr. CARR [continuing]. At the FCC is the same that I have done over the last 6 years, which is apply the law consistent with the First Amendment.

Mr. RASKIN. All right. So, are you disavowing the so-called unitary executive theory that is being propounded by Project 2025, that everything that happens in the executive branch of government, including commission and agency action, is directly under the political control of the President of the United States?

Chairman COMER. And the gentleman's time has—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Expired by a lot, but if you want to answer it, you can. If you do not, you do not have to. We could—

Mr. RASKIN. Could you answer the—

Chairman COMER. All right.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. CARR. This is not an issue that I have spoken to publicly. It is not something that I have addressed.

Mr. RASKIN. That is why I am asking you now, you know. Do you disavow?

Chairman COMER. I was gracious with your time.

Mr. RASKIN. Oh.

Chairman COMER. You have went a minute over, 7 1/2 minutes. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Grothman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Sure. First of all, I just give you a historical quote to start things off. They asked Benjamin Franklin on the Constitution, and he said he was giving the American people a republic, if they can keep it. So, every 4 years, we got to fight to keep that republic.

Now, Mr. Carr, you kind of were interesting there, in which you implied that the Biden Administration is intentionally or spent a long time not enforcing our border law and, therefore, apparently intentionally trying to get as many people here as possible, which would be one way to change the country that we have permanently. Another way would be to try to get rid of the middle class. And one of you—was it Ms. Mobbs or Ms. Gunasekara who mentioned the electric vehicle thing? That is you? I think a vehicle, a car, is something that Americans really need today to get around, I guess, unless you are in New York City or something. Question I have for

you. This electric car thing, do you have any idea how much it is going to increase the cost of a car?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Well, again, we have a snapshot because the price of vehicles has already increased substantially to the point where a lot of Americans are priced out of purchasing new cars. It ranges from \$10,000 to \$30,000, depending on the chassis and what manufacturer you are ultimately looking at. But the reality is, when Americans are priced out of buying new cars, they drive older cars longer, so all of the benefits you would try to achieve by improving efficiency standards are not realized because the change-over is not actually achieved.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. As I understand it, the cost of insurance is also dramatically higher for an electric car. Is that right?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, absolutely, and there are a lot of questions, too, with regard to replacing whether or not an electric vehicle is totaled once it is involved in a fender bender. That typically is a quick fix for a regular gas-powered vehicle. And then when the life of the battery again, this ranges everywhere from 3 years to 10 years, what actually happens with the end of life, the recycling piece of that, and that all adds to considerations on insurance. And what we have seen recently as the trend is the price continues to go up.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Right. I also heard yesterday for the first time—I was not aware of this—these electric cars that people are going to have to buy, they depreciate quicker than the standard car. Have you ever heard that?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, I have heard that as well. Again, I would just look at consumer preference. It is not necessarily about picking one technology over the other. It is what do the consumers want, and when it comes to mobility, they want an affordable, reliable car that safely gets them and their family from point A to point B. And increasingly, Americans are saying no to electric vehicles that this Administration is pushing, alongside state-based regulations like California that is looking to ban the sale of gas-powered vehicles starting in 5 to 7 years from now.

Mr. GROTHMAN. It is a difficult thing to wonder, but given that people need a car, the combination of driving up the cost of a new car, driving down the amount you are getting in a trade-in, and the dramatic increase you are going to have to pay in insurance, it is going to make it much more difficult to be members of the middle class in America than before these cars, don't you think?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, absolutely. And again, point A to point B is usually taking your kids to school or driving to your job and coming back, going to the grocery store and coming back, aspects that are fundamental to create a thriving and healthy home. And you have to think, too, what is all of this for? Why is this Administration and, the Biden-Harris Administration, so keen on pushing Americans into electric vehicles? They say it is to reduce emissions and for their climate agenda, but the reality is the majority of the minerals that go into these batteries are sourced from areas like China where they have appalling environmental standards. They violate basic norms of humanitarian standards and rely on either forced or child labor to extract these minerals. So, if you think big picture, it actually undermines some fundamental goals that all

Americans, Republican or Democrats, have fought very hard to seek some degree of improvement.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes. Another way that you try to get rid of the middle class is you cause inflation by spending huge amounts of money that we do not have, and I want to give you an example of that. We talk about the huge cost of inflation from the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, but it is forgotten that the Democrat party, if it were not for Senator Manchin, actually wanted to have this bill be three times the cost of the bill that was eventually passed. What effect would have that had on inflation if the vast majority of Democrats got what they wanted, including, apparently, President Biden? What effect would have that had on inflation? Would have been much worse than we already saw?

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time is expired, but please feel free to answer that.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, I would just summarize it. I think everyone has done a good job on this side of the dais, but it would make Americans lives that much harder because of the financial hardships and burdens that have been experienced during the Biden-Harris Administration and their disregard for inflation that was predicted, especially with the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and how that has manifested itself in more expensive gas, groceries, and everyday goods.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Just one other brief comment.

Chairman COMER. OK.

Mr. GROTHMAN. A comment was made about the Republicans trying to ban books. Usually, I think that when Republicans try to ban books, it is explicit books for sex-ed class for elementary school kids. I do not think a lot of people realize that when Democrats talk about that, that is what they mean.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. All right. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Norton from Washington, DC.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Perryman, this question is for you. The Biden-Harris Administration landmark Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided historic investments in our communities and America's future. Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Biden-Harris Administration has announced \$480 billion for over 60,000 projects to date, including upgrading bridges in Kentucky, replacing lead pipes in Detroit, and new and ungraded rail tracks from North Carolina to Virginia. On September 5, 2024, President Biden and the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a \$7.3 billion investment for clean energy in rural communities, including in Kentucky, Ohio, Texas, and Florida, made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act.

So, Ms. Perryman, how has the Biden-Harris Administration's focus on investing in America through landmark legislation, like the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, helped communities across the country?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Well, I think they are tremendous achievements, and we have seen investment job growth, hundreds of thousands of jobs that have been reported. By the way, at the same time that we are seeing a multiyear low in inflation, which many economists did not think was particularly possible to be able to keep unemployment relatively low, build jobs, create new jobs at the same

time, while also reducing inflation to multiyear lows. So, those are some policy highlights. But other things that are worth highlighting is the work that the Infrastructure Act has done to connect communities that have been traditionally left out of these infrastructure bills. Where infrastructure has been built and has actually torn communities apart, and highways that have run through communities and displaced people, the IRA, or the Infrastructure Act, did a lot of work in order to invest specifically in those communities that had been left out, and so those are some of the highlights.

The other thing is, with respect to healthcare, the Inflation Reduction Act, of course, has made tremendous strides toward making our medications more affordable by allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices, which is something, of course, Project 2025 calls on repealing for all Americans, including the middle class.

Ms. NORTON. Would you call these investment policies failures or successes?

Ms. PERRYMAN. You know, I think that it is not just me that would call them a success, but I think Nobel laureate economists have called them successes, as have communities across America, including in home states like my state of Texas, that are seeing a lot of investment in their communities.

Ms. NORTON. Well, investments like these and others through the Inflation Reduction Act have led to the creation of more than 330,000 good-paying and union clean-energy jobs since the law was enacted a little over 2 years ago. In total, the Biden-Harris Administration's leadership has led to more than 775,000 new manufacturing jobs, while 200,000 manufacturing jobs were lost under the Trump Administration. Ms. Perryman, do policies that create good-paying union jobs benefit Americans?

Ms. PERRYMAN. They certainly do, and that is one of the concerns that we have with a number of these far-right policies that you see in Project 2025 that are really seeking to repeal that progress.

Ms. NORTON. Would you say this is a failure or a success?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Creating jobs in the United States, particularly good jobs, is always, always a success.

Ms. NORTON. Another highlight of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program, and do not just take my word for it. We know Republican Governors think so, too. I have a packet of press releases and statements from 12 Republican Governors, including the Governors of Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia, celebrating the money they will receive through this program to connect rural communities in their states to high-speed internet.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to submit these 12 press releases and statements into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection. So, ordered.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. I am grateful for the Biden-Harris Administration's leadership investing in American communities and American workers. I am also proud to have passed the Inflation Reduction and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that have made these investments properly possible. And I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Sessions from Texas.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I want to go to Meaghan Mobbs if I can, please, first. Maybe the only one, but the time we have.

We have heard a lot of discussion about families, women, safety, people being able to afford housing, people being able to afford a job that they may have to drive to, middle America, families, women, children, education. Can you please talk to us what, I believe, is about the Administration's excessive spending that has caused inflation, a border that is open where we do not have enough housing for people, cities and crime impacting our schools and communities, and last, the attack on women that has occurred by allowing transgenders to compete against women, thus taking away their opportunity to find success at even national championships? Can you give us an overlay of that? We know that you are here today to talk about Center for American Safety, Security, and Independence. I think they are taking this away from middle-class America.

Dr. MOBBS. Thank you, Congressman. I appreciate the question, and specifically, I am here to talk about kind of foreign policy and national security failures. And what I can say about that is that when we fail to demonstrate safety and security both at home and abroad, the most vulnerable are always impacted, and the most vulnerable are typically the elderly, women, and children. And we are seeing an inability of women to feel safe in their communities. There is the perception that crime is on the rise, there is the perception that schools are unsafe, and certainly when we perceive our lives to be unsafe, you act in accordance with that. There is a reason why one of the largest-growing gun ownership is actually Black women because of feelings of safety. So, certainly, there is an eradication of feelings of safety, security here in America.

I think it is important to also recognize what I said in my opening statement, that it is not just here at home that women and girls are being impacted. It is women and girls abroad who are being impacted by these failed foreign policies, and they are often placed in these vulnerable positions as well because we are not demonstrating substantial leadership.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you very much. Mr. Carr, I live within that area that is not fully compatible with broadband and have several counties that are completely without the ability to have broadband, and yet, I am understanding \$42 billion has been spent by the Administration, and it is not out there. It is not happening. And the Democrats love to talk about all this money that they spend, but I think it is a lot like President Obama, where he had, back in 2009, all this \$787 billion that had to be spent within 6 weeks, and you cannot even engineer a project in that time. Why is it that this \$42 billion has not taken hold of giving people what they needed now to compete?

Mr. CARR. I think we have now gone to the opposite extreme. If you look at Texas alone, they are supposed to get \$3.3 billion of the \$42 billion to connect somewhere in the order of 628,000 homes and businesses that have nothing today, so millions of Texans. And what has happened is, rather than focusing on quickly turning dirt

or otherwise connecting Americans, they have spent time and wasted time adopting these DEI preferences, these climate change agendas, price controls.

You know, we heard about some Governors that supported this. Yes, everybody was excited about this. Once it was passed, the money was going to be spent. Every state wanted to benefit. They deserve to benefit. But Virginia, for instance, they were the first out of the gate, put their first application in. You know what happened? They had to wait and sit around while the Biden Administration, under Vice President Harris' leadership, tried to force them to put in price controls that the state did not want to do. So, the good news is all this money has not been spent. It is largely still sitting there. There is time to correct course. Let us get rid of the extraneous political goals and just connect Americans.

Mr. SESSIONS. It seems like to me that this is something that Republicans have gathered, and that is almost why the Supreme Court said, as it relates to the issue of abortion, we will let local people make their own decisions. We will provide the money, provide basic parameters around it, and let the states go and get things done. I think it is a model that is going to gain power this next year. Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Lynch from Massachusetts.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to clear up one part of the record. This Committee actually had jurisdiction over the negotiations that the Trump Administration conducted for the withdrawal from Afghanistan. They negotiated directly, unilaterally with the Taliban, and from the very beginning, the status of Afghan women and girls was not a priority for the Administration until this Committee, and I was the Chairman, called Zalmay Khalilzad, the Special Ambassador for the Trump Administration, came to this Committee. And in a bipartisan fashion—I believe Mr. Sessions was the Member of the Committee at the time—we insisted that four women would be appointed to represent the voices of Afghan women and girls. And after that, we received a letter that I am going to ask to have submitted to the record.

They thanked the Members of this Committee on both sides for having—here it is—to having women appointed to that negotiation. And look, that was from the very beginning, and the Trump Administration said the status of women and girls in Afghanistan would not be a priority for our negotiating team. Let me leave it at that.

So, we are on the heels of a 2-year sham impeachment that failed to yield any evidence of wrongdoing by President Biden whatsoever, and now Republican leadership has turned their focus to Vice President Harris and the border. I do want to review the facts. Earlier this year, a group of Republican and Democratic senators announced that they had worked out, with the Biden-Harris Administration, a deal to negotiate and develop a bipartisan national security agreement. Importantly, this agreement proposed the most comprehensive border security reforms in nearly 30 years, including \$20 billion to add more than 5,000 Customs and Border Protection personnel at the border. It also included critical provisions, including cutting-edge detection technology, to combat fentanyl dis-

tribution and human trafficking, and it codified the power of any President to shut down the border in an emergency.

President Biden stated he would sign the legislation upon passage. Vice President Harris urged Congress to set political gamesmanship aside and urgently pass the agreement to secure the border. No one—no one—agreed that the bill was perfect, but everyone agreed it would greatly improve the situation. Unfortunately, former President Trump felt differently. As reported by various Republican Members of Congress, he sought to kill the bipartisan border deal to keep the issue alive purely for his own political gain.

According to Republican Senator Mitt Romney, former Governor of my state, and, if anything, an honest man, he said, “Former President Trump indicated to senators that he does not want us to solve the problem at the border. He wants to lay the blame for the border at Biden’s feet, and the idea that someone running for President would say please hurt the country so I can blame my opponent and help my politics is a shocking development.” The former President’s opposition to the deal even led Republican senator, Thom Tillis, to warn his Republican colleagues, “It is immoral for me to think you look the other way because you think this is the linchpin for President Trump’s efforts to win the White House.” Unsurprisingly, however, this Republican-led House did look the other way, with Speaker Johnson killing the bipartisan deal before the text was even available to the House.

Ms. Perryman, Vice President Harris has committed to signing the bipartisan border security agreement into law if she is elected, even while acknowledging that it is not a perfect deal. How does Trump’s ability to shut down the democratic process and the Republicans inability or unwillingness to stand up for their constituents affect the representative nature of our democracy?

Ms. PERRYMAN. This is one of the most unfortunate trends that we have. I mean, the bipartisan border deal was something that if you got a bunch of people together, they would agree on some parts of it, disagree on other parts of it because it was the product of compromise, which has always been a hallmark of legislation in this country because that is what we are. We are a country of compromise, and we are a country that gets things done.

Our Congress has not been able to do that, unfortunately, and as a result of not being able to pass this legislation, we know that there is harm and that the crisis is not being addressed. So, I think it is a deeply troubling outgrowth of broader polarization that we see, and this is exactly why I think so many of the Presidential libraries are saying we have to have some type of role in American politics to restore compromise and understanding how to work across the aisle in disagreements.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Donalds.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you, Chairman. Actually, I am glad we are coming in at this time because we need to set the record straight about the Senate bill, and actually, H.R. 2.

When the Senate bill was actually published, I remember I was at a dinner Sunday night when the text came out. I read the text of the Senate bill. Many Members in the House read the text of the

Senate bill. Members contacted Speaker Johnson, and we were very clear: there is no way the Senate bill should get a vote in the House because it is a terrible piece of legislation that will not secure the Southern border.

House Republicans have passed border security measures, H.R. 2. We did it more than a year ago. Has Chuck Schumer brought it up for even debate or a vote in the Senate? No, he has not. Has the White House decided to reach out to the Speaker Johnson to debate and deliberate or negotiate or compromise on H.R. 2 and its elements to secure the Southern border? No, they have not. They are in charge in the Senate and in the White House. They have done nothing except the bill that could not even make it out of the Senate, so I think it is important to set the record straight. Oh, also, by the way, House Republicans were not going to vote for that bill, and that was before Donald Trump even made his view known on the Senate compromise bill. We were already against it when the bill text came out because it is a trash bill.

Now, moving on. Ms. Gunasekara—I think I got it right—can you explain to me what an environmental impact assessment is?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, certainly. It is an assessment a Federal agency does to measure a proposed project's potential impact on the environment.

Mr. DONALDS. The Biden-Harris Administration, does their EPA use environmental impact assessments?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. They do in some applications. Typically, it is in the context of NEPA, which is in conjunction with other Federal agencies, but yes.

Mr. DONALDS. If you are trying to go through the process of, let us say, limiting permit applications for leases that have been extended to private drillers, would an environmental impact assessment be the way that you would do that?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. It certainly is a tool that this Administration has used. It is to analyze it to death or to keep it in bureaucratic purgatory, which, with a lot of important infrastructure projects, we have actually seen. This Administration has backtracked on important infrastructure improvements that we put in place to limit time for review, to limit the scope of review, that this Administration, again, has changed to the detriment of building out energy infrastructure projects, highway infrastructure projects, and on and on.

Mr. DONALDS. Would you argue that this Administration is pretty adept at using these types of reviews to slow walk energy development projects in the United States?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. The Biden-Harris Administration is an expert at using the Federal Government and weaponizing those processes to undermine the development of key energy projects that we need.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you so much. Ms. Mobbs, I have a question for you. You said in your opening testimony that there have been embassies that have been lost/evacuated. How many embassies have—I am going to just say evacuated—have been evacuated under the Biden-Harris Administration?

Dr. MOBBS. There has been seven total evacuations, and then there have been numerous partial evacuations.

Mr. DONALDS. What is a partial evacuation of a U.S. embassy?

Dr. MOBBS. It is when nonessential personnel are removed for safety purposes and then can return later.

Mr. DONALDS. What is going on in foreign policy in a specific country that would require the United States to do a partial evacuation of an embassy?

Dr. MOBBS. So, the situation would have deteriorated so critically that they felt that they could not establish protection for those non-essential personnel for them to be kind of forced to leave.

Mr. DONALDS. In any administration, let us say, the last 30 years, how many embassies have been lost over the last 30 years, evacuated either total or partial?

Dr. MOBBS. I do not have the number in front of me. I could get it to you.

I think the important thing here, though, is that because there is a historic number, it is because of the unprecedented levels of chaos and instability and the inability of our State Department, and certainly the executive, to project enough strength and power to protect our embassies and our embassy officials around the world.

Mr. DONALDS. Would you say that this State Department has done a fair job, an average job, a terrible job of getting Americans out of harm's way in countries that are experiencing serious security questions for the United States citizens?

Dr. MOBBS. I think we have seen substantial and significant problems in a number of different theaters where the State Department has failed to effectively plan to ensure that American citizens are safely returned to their home.

Mr. DONALDS. Do you think that in Afghanistan it was wise for us to pull our troops out last and for the State Department to not do everything possible to get Americans out before it was turned over to the Taliban?

Dr. MOBBS. I deeply believe we should never leave an American behind. I was a huge advocate of withdrawing from Afghanistan. We were spending \$2 trillion there, almost \$300 million of U.S. taxpayer dollars there every day. But what we saw was basically a catastrophic failure of the State Department, of the DoD, of our intelligence agencies, of the National Security Council, of the National Security Advisor, to effectively coordinate an effective strategy to allow our interests to remain and to get American citizens safely out.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Connolly from Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Perryman, I am going to try to cover a lot of territory, so let us be quick. The gentlelady next to you decried the fact that the Biden Administration is impeding energy production in the United States. Do you happen to know what the daily oil and gas production is in the United States right now?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I do not have the precise point, but I know—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thirteen-point-four—

Ms. PERRYMAN [continuing]. It has not been impeded.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thirteen-point-four million barrels. Is that the largest in the world right now?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I believe so.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is it also the largest in American history?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I believe it is.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And are we now exporting energy because we have so much of it?

Ms. PERRYMAN. We are.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Are we, in fact, energy independent?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I believe we are close.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you very much. So much for the failure of the Biden Administration. Infrastructure. Also comments about infrastructure. Did the Trump Administration have numerous infrastructure weeks, we are going to promote infrastructure 6, 12 times?

Ms. PERRYMAN. They did.

Mr. CONNOLLY. They did. Did they ever pass an infrastructure bill?

Ms. PERRYMAN. They did not.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Did President Biden pass an infrastructure bill?

Ms. PERRYMAN. He did.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is it also the largest infrastructure bill in American history?

Ms. PERRYMAN. The Biden-Harris infrastructure bill is the largest in American history.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And pretty comprehensive. It covers lots of different kinds of infrastructure. Is that correct?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Many infrastructure and lots of investment.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right. Now, Ms. Moby [sic] has an interesting revisionist history with respect to foreign policy, which happens to be my beat. So, let us visit foreign policy. Decrying Afghanistan. And so, I got to go back in history because I remember my other committee having Ambassador Khalilzad, who was the negotiator for President Trump on Afghanistan. Is it true that the United States, under the Trump Administration, had direct negotiations with the Taliban in Doha and excluded the Afghan Government from that table and those negotiations, the very government, purportedly, we were there to support?

Ms. PERRYMAN. That is true.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Did that agreement that Ambassador Khalilzad, on behalf of President Trump, negotiate with the Taliban, did that also involve the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners, many of whom were in prison because they were suspected terrorists?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Five thousand. Have I got that right?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Those are the figures I am familiar with.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And did that agreement also actually stipulate a full and complete withdrawal of U.S. troops by May 2021?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I recall that it did.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right, and did President Biden inherit all of that?

Ms. PERRYMAN. And more.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And did he try to extend the withdrawal to buy time to avoid the very chaos, unfortunately, we experienced?

Ms. PERRYMAN. That is what I understand.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And do you think it would be fair to say that, actually, if we are decrying what happened that summer, we might want to look at the antecedents and the discouragement and the demoralization of the Afghan Government and military from resisting the Taliban, given the fact that the sponsor of the Afghan Government, purportedly the United States, had clearly abandoned that government? Would that be a fair statement, do you think?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I believe so.

Mr. CONNOLLY. OK. She also talked about Ukraine, that, somehow, we should have, you know, anticipated what was going to happen. Was there a President of the United States who withheld Javelin missiles necessary for the defense of Ukraine and threatened to withhold all military assistance to Ukraine until and unless the President of Ukraine, President Zelenskyy, provided political dirt on a political opponent?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I believe there was, and it was the former President.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And was that President, in fact, impeached for that very phone conversation over that very issue?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And would it be fair to say that that development, that threat, and that withholding of weapons might be construed, if you were Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin, as a sign of weakness on the part of Ukraine and a sign that maybe the United States was not going to be there should something bad happen between Russia and Ukraine?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Seems like a plausible.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And might that be enhanced by the fact that that same President, President Trump, actually praised President Putin on numerous occasions and even said that he trusted his word over U.S. intelligence with respect to Russian interference in the 2016 election?

Ms. PERRYMAN. That is, unfortunately, what the former President—

Mr. CONNOLLY. And finally, Iran and nuclear weapons. Was there not an agreement that the United States actually led that involved Russia and China, Europe and Iran to limit nuclear weapon production in Iran?

Ms. PERRYMAN. There was a historic agreement.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And was it working?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. In all respects?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I believe so.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Inspected by IAEA and the Trump Administration and certified by both?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Isn't that correct? Uh-huh. And what happened to that treaty?

Ms. PERRYMAN. President Trump pulled out.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And has Iran been less active in producing nuclear weapons or more?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Iran is now a greater threat because of that failure of diplomacy.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So much for efficacy. Just thought I would revisit that revisionist history of foreign policy. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Dr. Foxx from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to our witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Krikorian, according to the Office of Management and Budget, each year the taxpayers provide more than \$1.2 trillion, or nearly 5 percent of GDP, in funding for thousands of programs across the entire government through grants and other forms of financial assistance. For such a large sum, taxpayers need assurance that their money is not being wasted or spent undermining law and order. However, taxpayers have no such assurances today. Should American taxpayer funds be given to organizations and NGO's that undermine U.S. immigration laws and help illegal aliens get into our country?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. No, Congresswoman, they should not, and, in fact, you are seeing that every day, even outside the United States, where NGO's funded by American taxpayers are facilitating the move of illegal immigrants to our borders.

Ms. FOXX. A second question, please. Last year, the DHS Inspector General published a report on the Biden-Harris Administration's failure to provide adequate oversight of Federal grant funding. That is why I introduced H.R. 8334, the Grant Integrity and Border Security Act, to require any entity seeking a Federal grant to certify that they have not and will not violate Federal immigration law with regard to assisting or attempting to bring aliens into the United States illegally. This Committee voted to pass H.R. 8334 in May to help correct yet another of the Biden-Harris Administration's failures. Can you provide us with other examples of where the Biden-Harris Administration refuses to enforce existing U.S. immigration law as Congress intended?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Well, the big example is the refusal to detain people who are, under law, required to be detained. If an inadmissible alien either crosses the border illegally or shows up at a port of entry and says that he is making some kind of protection claim, he fears being returned to his home country, the INA requires that person to be detained. And the mass release from detention of people who have no right to be in the United States is the single biggest driver of subsequent illegal immigration.

In other words, someone who is thinking about immigrating to the United States and paying a smuggler a lot of money to do so is only going to do that if the odds of his succeeding, which is to say being let go into the United States, is high enough. And the mass release policies of this Administration have, in fact, incentivized this entire border crisis that we have been facing.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much. Ms. Gunasekara, as I have said before, the Biden-Harris era EPA has managed to add \$1.3 trillion in costs on Americans. In contrast, in 8 years, the Obama EPA added only about \$300 billion in costs. What will be the impact of these new costs on consumers?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Well, it makes the price of everything go up. Regulatory costs are another form of tax that is ultimately borne out by the consumers that are either using the energy that the En-

vironmental Protection Agency is trying to squeeze out of existence or create barriers in the cultivation of commercial activities. And so, at the end of the day, it means Americans are paying more for gas at the pump, electricity bills, whatever form they may receive that in, or more for groceries at the grocery store.

Ms. FOXX. I have a second question for you. Since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, Americans have seen the cost of everything rise by over 20 percent, as you alluded to, which means families pay \$11,000 more each year to maintain the same lifestyle. What role have the Biden-Harris Administration's energy and climate policies contribute to the economic pain felt by Americans?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. A huge role. This was a day one action of this Administration: promises made during the campaign by President Biden and then longstanding actions in the Senate by Vice President Kamala Harris, consistent with actions she took on day one to effectuate a war on fossil fuels, as they say. This is traditional energy coal, oil, and natural gas. The reality is this energy still provides 80 percent of our daily energy needs. So, if you have an Administration using the power of their agencies to squeeze the development and cultivation of those energy resources that really are the lifeblood of our entire economy, it makes the price of everything go up, and that is exactly what we have seen throughout this Administration.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Khanna from California.

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Gunasekara, you are the former EPA Chief of Staff in the Trump Administration, and my understanding is you authored the Project 2025 chapter on the EPA. Do you still support Project 2025's proposal to reinstate Schedule F, which would lead to the firing of 50,000 expert civil servants?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Absolutely. And I think there are more "civil servants" that should be gone because the growth of the Federal bureaucracy actually gets in the way of agencies fulfilling important missions, like protecting public health and the environment.

Mr. KHANNA. And do you have an interest in serving in a future Trump Administration, should he win?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. I do not.

Mr. KHANNA. Do you believe that if Trump wins, that he should implement the Project 2025 recommendation of firing the civil servants?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. I think it is the President's prerogative to determine what policies he ultimately wants to implement.

Mr. KHANNA. What would your recommendation be?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. There are a lot of recommendations that I would suggest that the President embrace from an overarching governance perspective.

Mr. KHANNA. Would that include the firing of the 50,000 civil servants that the Schedule F—

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, I actually have a book coming out called "Y'all Fired: A Southern Belle's Guide to Restoring Federalism and Draining the Swamp," and I go step by step of what I would

suggest the President do to actually right size the Federal Government—

Mr. KHANNA. Is that fair to say that there are other people who share your view who will be in his Administration?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. There are a lot of people in the conservative movement that share this view, and there are a lot of Americans—

Mr. KHANNA. And will some of them be in the Administration? I mean, I have no problem in terms of the transparency. I just think the American people should know what their choice is, and my understanding is that your view is that we should fire these civil servants for whatever reasons. I have not read your book, maybe I will, and there are other people in the conservative movement who wanted to do that. And if Trump wins, you believe they should help implement that, correct?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. I do not know who the President plans to hire for various positions. I know when he is ready to announce that, he will. I think the ways that he does—

Mr. KHANNA. But certainly, it is reasonable to assume some of these people would be in the Administration pushing this view of bureaucratic reform, as you put it?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, bureaucratic reform, is—

Mr. KHANNA. And that includes firing these 50,000 civil servants?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Again, I would suggest more than 50,000, but there is a lot within the conservative movement that believe and a lot of the American electorate that actually believe the growth of the Federal bureaucracy—

Mr. KHANNA. I appreciate your perspective because some—Donald Trump is saying, ‘oh, I do not know anything about Project 2025.’ You should just say, yes, we are going to fire 50,000 civil servants like you have been honest about—I respect that—so that the American people can see if that is what they really want.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes. Mr. Khanna—

Mr. KHANNA. Let me just go to Mr. Carr.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. I would just say Schedule F, the policy existed well before the most recent iteration—

Mr. KHANNA. I appreciate that.

Ms. GUNASEKARA [continuing]. And mandate for leadership.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Carr, you did not answer Mr. Raskin’s simple question on ABC and revoking the license. I do not need to know whether you make the same decisions with Democrats and Republicans. I just want to know, simply, do you think, based on the ABC debate and your role as a former FCC commissioner, do you think that that is grounds for revoking the license for ABC?

Mr. CARR. Thank you. What I have said is consistent with what I have said for the past 6 years, which is every single decision, including in the licensing context, is one that I will make based on the facts, the record, and always consistent with the First Amendment.

Mr. KHANNA. The whole country has the facts. We all saw the debate. I mean, it is not like some complicated question. Based on those facts, based on what David Muir did, based on the questions that were asked, would you recommend that the license be re-

voked? I mean, President Trump obviously has an opinion on it. He has made it. What is your opinion?

Mr. CARR. Look, I think I have been pretty clear. Again, I have been nominated by both President Biden and nominated by President Trump—

Mr. KHANNA. And that is not answering the question. That is not answering the question.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. And vetted three times. I have been asked different versions of the question.

Mr. KHANNA. I am not trying to be a debate moderator. That answer would never fly in a debate. I mean, come on. It is a simple question. Do you agree with President Trump's opinion? Look, at least I respect that Trump has an opinion. Just give us your opinion. Yes or no?

Mr. CARR. My opinion is that the FCC, in every single case, has to apply the law, consider the First Amendment.

Mr. KHANNA. Yes, and I am saying how would you apply it here? Trump looked at the debate. He said the debate was unfair. He says the one thing that people respect about him, he says what he believes. You are sitting here not giving us an opinion. Just say yes, I agree with President Trump, or no, I disagree with it. People, they hate the obfuscation. Just take a stand. How hard is it?

Mr. CARR. My position is clear. What you are raising are concerns about weaponization. I think that is important that we talk about that. When there is a license transfer of radio stations—

Mr. KHANNA. This is a bunch of gobbledygook.

Chairman COMER. Let the witness answer the question.

Mr. KHANNA. Look. Look. Look.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. A license transfer in South Florida to a group that people believed were conservative purchasers. Democrats said the FCC should block it because the election depended on it.

Mr. KHANNA. But my question is very simple. Based on the debate and based on what—

Mr. CARR. We have had Democrats in Congress who wrote letters to—

Mr. KHANNA. Do you think that—

Mr. CARR [continuing]. To cable companies telling them they should drop Fox News—

Mr. KHANNA. But you are not answering the question.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Because of the decision—

Mr. KHANNA. Let me try one last time.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. That the newsroom made.

Mr. KHANNA. Based on the debate, did you think that the questions were unfair or rigged in a way that calls for ABC's license to be revoked? President Trump has been very clear. I respect he is very clear on his view. Do you agree or disagree with his view? It is a "yes" or "no."

Mr. CARR. Gosh, I think my position has been very clear going back to 2017 as a Commissioner for the FCC—

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired, but please feel free to answer the question.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Two-thousand-twelve. I have maintained a very consistent issue, but if your concern is weaponization, we

should talk about that. When President Biden stood at the White House podium and said Elon Musk is worth being looked at, and then all of a sudden, the FCC abruptly reverses a 2020 decision to get him \$885 million to bring broadband to 640,000 people, I think that is concerning. When Democrats in Congress write letters to cable companies asking them to drop Fox News because of the decisions, I think that is concerning. And so, I think you have seen from my record a consistent pattern of always basing my decisions at the FCC based on the law, the facts, and the First Amendment. That is what I have done. That is what I will always do.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Chair, can I ask the gentleman—

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Palmer from Alabama.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, I have already taken care of ABC. I do not watch them. Mr. Carr, there is \$42 billion allocated for connecting people who are not connected to the internet. How many have been connected?

Mr. CARR. Zero. Through this \$42 billion program? Zero.

Mr. PALMER. That is what I thought. Mr. Krikorian, we have taken a lot of heat in the House for not taking up the Senate border bill, but wouldn't that have just codified catch and release?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yes, it would have, and it would have made the border crisis worse by making it more likely that illegal border crossers would end up being released into the United States.

Mr. PALMER. Ms. Mobbs, *Wall Street Journal*, this morning, I want to read you a quote. It says, "Any delays providing additional supplies of LNG to Ukraine and our Eastern European allies could jeopardize European energy security and market stability in the long term. LNG exports promote geopolitical stability and serve our national security interests." Who do you think said that?

Dr. MOBBS. I do not know.

Mr. PALMER. Democrats. There is a letter sent to the Biden Administration by no fewer than a dozen House Democrats urging the Administration to expedite projects to help Ukraine and investments in the United States. But the most telling thing is, is Biden officials had hoped to use the pause on LNG exports to excite young progressive voters, and they were using TikTok lobbying campaign on that issue. I find that problematic considering that we have determined, in a bipartisan manner, a hundred percent agreement in the Energy and Commerce Committee, that TikTok is a national security threat. Yet, the Biden Administration used TikTok to launch a lobbying campaign to have a pause on LNG, and it has alienated European allies, who have been counting on the U.S. to reduce their dependence on Russian gas, which still accounts for about 15 percent of Europe's gas supplies. Is that a problem?

Dr. MOBBS. I think much of what you just said is a problem, Congressman, to include, obviously, TikTok being a national security threat. But there were 23 different key actions the Biden Administration took that actually encouraged Russia to invade Ukraine, and if I had more time, I would be happy to delineate all 23 different key policy decisions that were much like this one.

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Carr, we allocated \$7.5 billion to build charging stations. How many have been built?

Mr. CARR. I believe eight more than have been built in terms of connections on the internet side.

Mr. PALMER. Ms. Gunasekara, the EPA set up a National Clean Investment Fund. Do you know who heads up that bank? It is basically an investment bank. In your experience at the EPA, how many investment bankers did the EPA have on staff?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. None that I recall.

Mr. PALMER. Have you looked into the Clean School Bus Program and the grants that have been allocated for that? Have you had a chance to look at that?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Not most recently. I am familiar with the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, which was a longstanding program actually supported by a former boss of mine, Senator Jim Inhofe, and Tom Carper over at Senate EPW and then culminated into lots of advancements and improvements led by Administrator Wheeler to ensure that we could reduce emissions in areas where there is a ton of idling, but I have not looked into recent developments.

Mr. PALMER. Well, hold on. What I am talking about, though, is that they have set up this investment bank, and they are making grants to nonprofit groups. They are making grants to hub groups. And it concerns me because if you go back to what happened with NIH and the gain-of-function research, our law clearly prohibits funding for gain-of-function research, but they make grants to a grantee who would then make subgrants, and I am concerned about how this is going to be managed at the EPA. I just had an opportunity to have this discussion with the Inspector General of EPA. He is very concerned about a number of things, and particularly the Criminal Division of the EPA, but also the fact that they are rushing this money out the door. He cited one instance where a school administration applied for a grant for the Clean School Bus, and they have no students. Is that a problem?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, that is a huge problem. And waste, fraud, and abuse through the grant program, especially when an agency like EPA is receiving billions of dollars to be funneled through their grant office, that they are not equipped to handle that degree of taxpayer funds appropriately or responsibly, it creates all sorts of opportunities for nefarious uses.

Mr. PALMER. OK. On the Criminal Division, they have bought military-style weapons, military equipment, and yet my Democratic colleagues want to defund the police, but they want to militarize the EPA's Criminal Division. Is that a problem?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, I see that as a problem. I would suggest defense resources go toward defense agencies, and that is not within EPA's mission.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you for your answers, to all the witnesses. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Brown from Ohio.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am disappointed how this Committee is continuing to operate: no solution for the American people, chaos and confusion, and baseless accusations against President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. Kamala. Kamala. Like the pronunciation. And I know that we have addressed this multiple times, but it is frustrating to see adults that

cannot master the art of pronunciation that was put on display by elementary school-aged children. It is disappointing, it is disrespectful, it is disparaging, but it seems like this is the only path that the Majority continues to pursue.

That is because my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do not have a positive agenda. They do not have a plan to increase access to healthcare. They do not have a plan to protect a woman's right to bodily autonomy. They do not have a plan to protect our climate, Social Security, and Medicare, and SNAP access. Democrats, on the other hand, and the Biden-Harris Administration have actual plans, not concepts of plans, but real plans, and we have been hard at work delivering on behalf of the American people. Unemployment is at an all-time low. The economy is growing from the middle out. Healthcare is more affordable than ever and so much more. Just as one example, under President Biden and Vice President Harris' leadership, we have had the largest investment in the Nation's infrastructure in the last 75 years with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, unlike the previous Administration, which only talked about Infrastructure Week but never did anything.

President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris led the way. Thanks to this historic legislation, bridges, roads, and public transportation systems are receiving the repair, renovation, and renewal they have desperately needed. In my district, the Cleveland RTA received \$16 million to renovate stations, making them accessible for seniors and people with disabilities. This will help keep our seniors and those with disabilities independent, connecting them to downtown Cleveland and other areas across Northeast Ohio. Every time I go back to my district, I hear praise for cleaner buses and electric vehicle station, Metro Parks expansion on the east side, potholes being filled, and new bridges and highways cutting down commute times—very real acts which benefit people every single day. And these are not acts of God. They are acts of Democrats and the Biden-Harris Administration. The Biden-Harris Administration also invested \$3 billion nationwide to replace lead pipes, ensuring clean water for all. My district alone received \$184 million to replace lead pipes. That means fewer kids getting sick from lead poisoning, so they can go to school healthy and ready to learn.

So, Ms. Perryman, if you could tell us, what the success of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law meant for families and communities across the country, particularly in low-income communities and Black and Brown communities that face the history of unequal treatment?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Well, the act was historic in a number of ways, but that is one of them. Previous infrastructure bills often had overlooked the fact that sometimes when infrastructure is built, it separates communities. It displaces people, particularly people in historically underserved areas. The infrastructure bill actually had provisions that addressed that very thing while also empowering and strengthening communities across the country.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you very much. As my colleagues noted, the Majority's witnesses are proponents of a certain kind of plan, Project 2025. In fact, some of the Republican witnesses are authors of the plan, and you have heard their testimony. So, let me remind

all of us. Under Project 2025, over 70 percent of Ohio recipients of Social Security would have their benefits cut by almost \$4,000 per year. A family of four would see their taxes raised by over \$2,800 per year. Project 2025 would eliminate Head Start, which provides childcare and education for over 32,000 Ohio children. Their plan is dangerous, divisive, and downright destructive. I am extremely proud of the Biden-Harris record, and all of our constituents are better off because of it, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Before I recognize Mr. Biggs, Mr. Palmer, do you have a UC request?

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record the *Wall Street Journal* editorial this morning, demonstrating there are at least a dozen sensible Democrats that are critical of the Biden-Harris natural gas policies.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to point out before I get into my questioning that unless you have all eight of those electric vehicles built by Novvi with the \$5 billion given to Novvi in your district, then you have got EVs that are done by the private sector, and you should acknowledge that, perhaps, maybe, when you are talking about how great they are. So, I appreciate the testimony of the witnesses.

Mr. Krikorian, thank you for your work. Let us ask you some numbers quickly, Mr. Krikorian, and I want you to let me know if these are accurate in the ballpark: 8 million illegal alien encounters by CBP during the Biden-Harris regime.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Actually, more than that because that is the Southern border. When you count the whole country, it is more than 10 million.

Mr. BIGGS. Right. Very good. Southern border. 5.6 million illegal aliens released into the United States by this Administration?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. As far as I know, yes. They are not very transparent about it, but that is the conclusion we have come to.

Mr. BIGGS. One-point-nine million known got-aways.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yep.

Mr. BIGGS. Myriad number of unknown got-aways?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. We do not know what that number is, obviously because it is unknown.

Mr. BIGGS. Six hundred 17 thousand, six hundred and seven illegal aliens released into the country with criminal convictions or pending criminal charges?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. I do not have the number in front of me, but yes, I think that is correct.

Mr. BIGGS. And in early 2021, the Administration tapped Vice President Harris to serve as the Administration's border czar. That is not my title. It is not a title manufactured by Republicans. And Mr. Chairman, I submit an article in the record entitled, "Harris to Visit Mexico and Guatemala."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. Border Czar Kamala Harris often blames the root causes or push factors in Central America for the border crisis. Do you agree with that assessment, Mr. Krikorian?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Those factors are endemic. The reason we have the border crisis is because of the pull factors, the other side, which is to say policies this Administration implemented.

Mr. BIGGS. So, the current Commander in Chief has said that the Border Patrol union backed the Senate border bill, and I want to submit for the record, Mr. Chairman, an article that says Border Patrol union chief says Biden must quit saying the union backed the border bill.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. And Mr. Krikorian, the Senate border bill allowed 5,000 individual encounters a day before you could even begin to call it an emergency situation. Is that true?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yes, it is.

Mr. BIGGS. And then before the President was mandated to take any action, it allowed up to 7,500 people a day. Is that correct?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. And there were 40 different loopholes. Even if the President were to put up a roadblock and say this is an emergency, we are going to stop there, 40 different loopholes allow people in.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. It was riddled with loopholes, yes.

Mr. BIGGS. So, Mr. Chairman, I have an article here: "The Biden-Harris parole pipeline releases more than 1.3 million migrants into American communities," and I would like to admit that to the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. Over the last 15 months, the CBP One app has let in 813,000 into the country. CBP One app. They do not include those in the encounter figures that they release. Isn't that that true, Mr. Krikorian?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Well, it is not included in the border encounter numbers. It is included in the overall—

Mr. BIGGS. Release numbers.

Mr. KRIKORIAN [continuing]. Total numbers.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, in the release numbers. And not only that, they also released over 500,000 from the CHNV Program, which, for folks who do not know what that is, that is the Cuba, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan Program, which, by the way, they stopped. Do you remember when they stopped that for 2 weeks? Why did they stop that, Mr. Krikorian? Do you remember?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Because of widespread fraud on the part of supposed sponsors, because the people are supposed to have a sponsor. And so, there were, like, multiple fake addresses, fake sponsors, hundreds of people sponsored by the same person, that kind of fraud.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. They said they had more than 12,000 cases of fraud, and they took 2 whole weeks to look at it, and then they reignited the program. So, let us talk about some other impacts. Jerome Powell. Anybody know who Jerome Powell is? Federal Reserve Chair, right? He suggested just the other day that the influx of migration is contributing to rising unemployment. I would like to submit that for the record, please, Mr. Chair.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. I would like to submit another article for the record. This one says, "CBP One Application Migrants Are Released Into the United States, No Asylum Questions Asked."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, and then we get to the end of this and the border. Having just been to the border once again, just 2 weeks ago, I can tell you, folks, it continues to be wide open, and this Administration drives that. They are providing every incentive in the world. They love an open border. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Crockett from Texas.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much. You know what? This hearing is actually the best example of what waste, fraud, and abuse looks like, because the only reason we are having this hearing is because somebody got their feelings hurt in a debate, and I do not understand why we are wasting taxpayer dollars. Next time, tell your big boy to show up and be ready to handle the woman in the room who hopefully will become the next President of the United States. Nevertheless, while we do have two amazing authors from Project 2025, which it seems like everybody got the memo like, yes, I am going to double down and say it is my thing, but I am going to make sure I also say that it is not our homeboy's thing because we know that it does not poll very well with the American people because the American people are woke enough to recognize that there is nothing good in it for them.

So, with that being said, Ms. Perryman, I am just curious, and this is yes or no, is Trump's name ever mentioned in Project 2025? Yes or no. Just yes or no. I got you.

Ms. PERRYMAN. Within the document itself?

Ms. CROCKETT. Yes.

Ms. PERRYMAN. There are a number of references to the former Administration.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. So, is Trump's name mentioned just one time?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I believe it is mentioned more.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. Five times?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I have not counted.

Ms. CROCKETT. Oh, OK. Well, if I told you that his name is mentioned approximately 312 times, would you have any reason to dispute that?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I do not have any reason to.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. Thank you very much. So, it is interesting that we want to try to pretend. We are not going to pretend in here. We are going to work with facts and not fiction. So, I also want to talk about inflation really quickly with you, Ms. Perryman, because we have talked about it a lot. I am just curious to know is the inflation that we just struggled through, was that global, or was that limited to the United States?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Global.

Ms. CROCKETT. Global. Seemingly, it was attached to this thing called the global pandemic. Is that correct?

Ms. PERRYMAN. That is my understanding.

Ms. CROCKETT. Oh, OK. So, it was not just the United States?

Ms. PERRYMAN. No.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. So, it was not just a matter of the Biden-Harris Administration and the United States is struggling, right?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I think the United States actually fared better than the rest of the world.

Ms. CROCKETT. Oh, yes. In fact, we are, correct?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I think so, yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. All right. But inflation still hurts, and so that is why we have a candidate that has an actual plan instead of concepts of a plan, or, as I like to say, Trump only has offered concepts of constitutionality mixed with coordination of a coup, but nevertheless, we are going to move on.

I want to talk about the internet really quickly because we wanted to talk about the internet. Actually, let me talk about the border real fast, and then we can talk about Texas in this way. I would ask for unanimous consent to admit this article from *The Hill* that says, "Trump Says 'Blame it on Me' if Border Bill Fails."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much. Now I am going to move on to the internet, and I am actually going to talk about Texas because I believe that the testimony has been somewhere around the fact that no money has actually been distributed as it relates to rural broadband. I would also ask for unanimous consent to admit this article from the *USDA.gov*, "USDA Officials Attend Groundbreaking to Expand High-Speed Internet Access in Rural Texas" dated March 7, 2024, Italy, Texas.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much.

Mr. CARR. With respect, that was not the testimony.

Ms. CROCKETT. Oh, I thought you said no dollars had been spent.

Mr. CARR. The largest single program—

Ms. CROCKETT. My question is, did you not say—

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Is \$42 billion.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK.

Mr. CARR. Zero houses have been connected. There are other Federal programs, including Trump-era ones, that right now are turning dirt and connecting—

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. So, just to be clear, because I do not want the American people to be confused because I was confused, considering the fact the name of this hearing is the failed policies as if nothing had been done. But to clarify for those that are watching, you are not saying that no dollars have been spent as it relates to rural broadband dollars under the Infrastructure Act, correct?

Mr. CARR. To be clear, for the signature effort, \$42 billion dollars—

Ms. CROCKETT. Yes or no. Have any dollars been spent? One dollar?

Mr. CARR. Not a single person has been connected. There is another program—

Ms. CROCKETT. That is not my question, though.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. But they have their—

Ms. CROCKETT. My question was, have any—

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Own sets of issues.

Mr. CARR. Senator Ted Cruz from Texas put out a report—

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. I am going to move on.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. That showed that——

Ms. CROCKETT. I am going to move on. I am reclaiming my time at this point.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. For many of these bills——

Ms. CROCKETT. I am reclaiming my time——

Mr. CARR [continuing]. It is \$100,000 per location.

Ms. CROCKETT [continuing]. Which means——

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Per location——

Ms. CROCKETT. Chairman, I am going to ask that you stop my time because the witness is not——

Chairman COMER. Are you asking him a question or are you reclaiming your time?

Ms. CROCKETT. No, I am not asking him a question. I reclaim my time.

Chairman COMER. All right. The Chair recognizes Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. I was at 41, you all, so go back up.

Chairman COMER. I will give you 9 more seconds.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. Thank you so much. Here is the deal. You have testified a lot about the problem with the broadband rollout being diversity, equity, and inclusion. You said “DEI” I do not know how many times, which is one of the issues that Project 2025 takes issue with. But it is interesting to me because I have another article from the *Texas Tribune*, and it actually specifically states that, “Internet providers say they are simultaneously hopeful and skeptical about whether the incoming Federal dollars will be enough to connect the most underserved Texans. Historically, other Federal rural broadband funding programs have seen limited success because many companies who committed to providing broadband went into default after radically underestimating their cost.” It does not say anything about diversity. And the final thing that I will say——

Mr. CARR. Do you know why those costs have increased——

Ms. CROCKETT [continuing]. Is that this election——

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Substantially?

Ms. CROCKETT. I did not ask you a question. The final thing that I will say is that this election is the best example of why you all are so afraid of diversity, equity, and inclusion because then you cannot have a simple-minded, underqualified, White man somehow end up ascending. Instead, you have got to pay attention to the qualified Black woman that is on the other side, and with that, I will yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Perry from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Mobbs, you served in uniform, didn’t you, as I recall?

Dr. MOBBS. That is correct.

Mr. PERRY. Yes. Thank you for your service. So, I think you know or are aware that in the last few years, the U.S. military, across all branches, have had a struggle in recruiting and meeting their goals, and in an answer to that, this Administration has revised the targets or the goals downward. Is that not correct?

Dr. MOBBS. That is correct.

Mr. PERRY. And I think we are on the precipice of being at the lowest point in the Army, which is where I served—and thank you

for your service, ma'am—of being at Army recruiting levels or sustainment levels that are akin to pre-World War II, 1939 and 1940, right?

Dr. MOBBS. That is correct. Yes.

Mr. PERRY. You served, I served, but I think it is better you are the witness here. Why do you suppose that is? Why is the military having a difficult time recruiting?

Mr. PERRY. Well, thank you for your service, sir. I appreciate it as well. I think this is for a variety of reasons, and I actually testified on this very topic before a subcommittee here. It is for a variety of reasons, but one of the major reasons that is often cited is there are morale issues. There are both morale with recruitment, but there are also issues with retention. But then, broadly speaking, the American populace is not necessarily prepared to serve, and this is across a variety of different factors to include their mental health, their physical well-being, and then their patriotism. The Wall Street Journal did a fantastic poll that showed patriotism is significantly declining over time in our country, and because of that, young Americans do not necessarily feel like they are willing to put on a uniform to fight and die for our country.

Mr. PERRY. Are there any actions that the military itself is taking from a policy standpoint that you think might dissuade, and I say that because we are trying to look at the differences between two administrations or the different philosophies among administrations. And I appreciate the gentlelady that was just speaking, but the hearing is kind of about some of the failures, so we can do better. I do not know that she really defended any of the policies of the current Administration as much as she derided the potential policies of a future administration, which does not yet exist, but if you know of any.

Dr. MOBBS. Well, I think, in general, that this Administration has more focused on initiatives related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and I think the problem with that is it derives from the core function of our military, which is lethality. Ultimately, the responsibility of the military is to fight and win our Nation's wars, and that requires the necessity of unification regardless of your background, walk of life, your demographics. There has to be a belief in both the unit that you are serving in and that the broader apparatus has that unifying factor together. I think, unfortunately, this Administration has focused a little bit more exclusively than the previous Administration on doing things that highlight individuality, and the one place you cannot have individuality is our United States military.

Mr. PERRY. And would you agree with me that the uniform military service, if you break that down, uniform is one form, not many forms, but it is one form, and as you so stated, the policies of the current Administration celebrate the individual, which is great for certain walks of life. But in the military, in the uniform military services, you must put some of those personal things aside so that you can be one cohesive unit, and not doing so is an impediment to recruiting and retention.

Dr. MOBBS. Absolutely. And I think the military, for a long period of time, often remained one of the last bastions of meritocracy. There was the opportunity to compete. And if you were successful,

irrespective of your background, your demographic, if you were the best, then you were promoted and you were put into positions of greater leadership and power, and that is something extraordinarily beautiful. It is a pathway to the middle class. It is an opportunity from those all around our country to serve in uniform, and it allowed them to achieve things that they may not have been able to achieve otherwise without the military.

Unfortunately, some of those standards have been reduced, and when there is a focus instead of not on a meritocracy or achievement, but rather meeting quota systems, you, unfortunately, have an erosion of the belief that the military is that bastion of meritocracy where you can go in, and if you are the best, you will be promoted.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you. I would agree with that. I yield the balance.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The Chairman yields back, gentleman. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Garcia.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to our witnesses. We have been talking a lot about the Biden-Harris record. It is, I think, important to note that we are doing this hearing likely because the debate was such a disaster for Donald Trump and for the House Majority. Now, I was actually there in Philly. It was embarrassing to watch. Donald Trump admitted, of course, to terminating *Roe v. Wade*. He attacked reproductive freedoms. He wants to kill the Affordable Care Act and spread misinformation about immigrants eating cats and dogs. And I just also want to remind folks that we have been talking a lot about Project 2025, of which many of our witnesses know a lot about and which Donald Trump said contains many good ideas, but it is not just Project 2025. Donald Trump has already been the President, and I thought it was also important at this moment to review his record.

Let us start with some of the facts about Donald Trump. Donald Trump, first and foremost, had the worst jobs presidency since World War II and maybe American history, the worst jobs record since World War II and maybe American history. He lost 4.9 million American jobs. He added \$4.8 trillion to the debt, even without the COVID-related spending. Now cities and communities like mine were facing disaster. State and local governments were looking at service cuts. Schools, vital programs were all being looked at being cut. By contrast, when we are talking about the Biden-Harris record, 15.4 million jobs were added during the Biden-Harris Administration, and the Project 2025 agenda, we know, will raise a sales tax on everything we buy, and economists think it will cost the American family an average of \$1,700 per year and would cost 600,000 American jobs, and could even cause a recession.

But it is not just the economic destruction. Let us talk about his COVID mismanagement. We lost 1.3 million American lives, a disaster, under Donald Trump. He asked people that we could combat the virus by injecting disinfectant into peoples' bodies. He failed to get PPE out the door. He picked fights with Governors rather than uniting the country. We were on our own, and Donald Trump should own his failures with the pandemic.

But let us look at the rest of the Trump record. He destroyed *Roe v. Wade*, as a third thing on this bullet point. He brags about the

extremist Supreme Court and turning back *Roe v. Wade*. Just this week, *ProPublica* documented a heartbreaking case where a Georgia woman waited for 20 hours after doctors refused to perform a routine procedure. She passed away. Her death was preventable. But Donald Trump is putting these state abortion bans in place through his judges and the legislatures all across the country.

But let us talk about family separation because it does not just end there. His record attacking immigrants like myself and my family is also shameful. He is promising the most extreme mass deportations in the country, going door to door to arrest our neighbors and friends. He believes that immigrants poison the blood of his country, his quote, not mine. And of course, let us remember at the debate, he kept talking about somehow Haitian immigrants are eating pets in Ohio, and we know that is not true. This country and the world should be united against this type of rhetoric and this record. We all want a secure border, but Donald Trump has shown us time and time again, through his record and his future agenda, the Project 2025 agenda, that he has zero respect for immigrants and for the Latino community.

But I want to also end with January 6. Donald Trump betrayed his oath of office when he provoked an attack on this Capitol and an insurrection on January 6. Project 2025 shows how he will continue to threaten our institutions and our democracy. The Trump Administration was a disaster, and you do not need to take my word for it. Why we are talking about the Biden-Harris record when it fixed the COVID crisis, when jobs are up, when unemployment is down, and not focus on the destruction of Donald Trump is clearly because this is, again, another political Committee hearing.

And let us look at what others have said. Vice President Mike Pence; former Attorney General, Bill Barr; former Defense Secretary, Jim Mattis and Mark Esper; former national security advisor, H.R. McMaster and John Bolton; former Chief of Staff, John Kelly, all of these folks believe that Donald Trump is unfit to serve as President, that he has failed his country and the Constitution. We cannot go back. With that, I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Would the gentleman yield?

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. GARCIA. The gentleman yields, sir.

Mr. RASKIN. I was asking for the time. Is that OK? Thank you. But I just wonder on that point whether any of the witnesses would comment on this unprecedented defection of former Trump officials from supporting him, and anybody, you know, who is on the Project 2025 side wants to weigh in on that, or, Ms. Perryman, what do you say about Vice President Pence and these former cabinet officials who have abandoned Donald Trump. Any comments on that?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes. I think President Trump has spoken explicitly about the majority of these people were either running against him, in the case of Vice President Pence, or they lost their job because Vice President—

Mr. RASKIN. Well, Pence was not running against him—

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. RASKIN. The mob came in chanting, "Hang Mike Pence." He was planning—

Chairman COMER. The gentleman—

Mr. RASKIN. He ran with Donald Trump.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Many of the people who Mr. Garcia referenced are people who were let go because they failed to fulfill the vision that President Trump had painted for the American people—

Mr. RASKIN. So, I see. There is nothing wrong with what Donald Trump did. You are blaming it on these people.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. I am just saying there was—

Chairman COMER. Before I recognize—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Ms. Mace. Yes, before I—

Ms. GUNASEKARA [continuing]. Why he fired employees.

Chairman COMER. Yes. Before I recognize Ms. Mace who is next, Ms. Greene, do you have something to enter into the record?

Ms. GREENE. Yes. Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record an article from *Newsweek* that tells the truth about Amber Nicole Thurman, who died after taking abortion pills. She did not die for the lack of abortion. She died because of abortion. Abortion pills are what led to her death, and this has been a lie that has been told by the Vice President, Kamala Harris, and this is a lie being told by Democrats. This Georgia woman died from abortion pills, so thank you. I would like to enter that on the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, enter the *Newsweek* article. Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. I am sorry. Mace. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from South Carolina, Ms. Mace.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleagues across the aisle said that those that cannot pronounce Kamala's name correctly are elementary-aged children. I would like to enter into the record an article by *Newsweek* saying, "Bill Clinton Pronounces Kamala Harris' Name Wrong During DNC Speech." Bill Clinton, along with Al Sharpton, rapper Lil Jon, let us not forget that Joe Biden cannot say her name right, neither can Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. And this morning on Morning Joe, Joan Baez called her a camel, so I do not want to hear it. It is fake outrage.

I would like to also enter into the record a screenshot of a text message I received from the esteemed professor from Vanderbilt, Michael Eric Dyson, after my CNN interview, begged me for photos. In this text, he says, after calling me a racist on CNN, "Shh, don't tell anybody we look good together," and sent me a kissy emoji.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. MACE. And this guy says I am gorgeous and all these photos. I do not think he is that bent out of shape on how anyone pronounces Kamala. And if we are going to have that standard, you got to hold it to both sides, not just one or the other.

On to the issue at hand, I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for our witnesses being here today. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have presided over the worst Presidential administration in American history. Biden and Kamala Harris inherited a country with a strong economy and next to zero inflation. Under the Biden-Harris

Administration, inflation skyrocketed, wages stagnated, and the American families are struggling to make ends meet, as we are all well aware of today.

Biden and Kamala inherited a world at peace and turned it into a world at war. Our allies are under attack, our adversaries emboldened, and America embarrassed on the world stage. In fact, even being forced to evacuate seven embassies during this Administration. Biden and Kamala inherited a country with the most secure border in our Nation's history. They flung our borders wide open to the largest invasion of illegal aliens our country has ever seen. The illegal aliens Biden and Kamala have let into our country have gone on to rape and murder American citizens, including our women and girls, including 158 Democrats who voted against deporting illegals who are here murdering, raping, and who are also pedophiles, harming our women and girls. Biden and Kamala cannot even tell us the difference between a woman and a mentally ill man in a dress.

Of all Joe and Kamala's many failings, I would like to focus my 5 minutes today on immigration. I am down to about 2, so we will be quick. During her failed 2020 Presidential campaign, well before her coup against Joe Biden, Kamala Harris completed an ACLU candidate questionnaire outlining her policy positions. I would like to examine a few of her responses and how they have informed her work as border czar, since she says her values have not changed.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record this questionnaire, "ACLU Rights for All Candidate Questionnaire 2019, Kamala Harris."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. MACE. Thank you. One of the strangest responses from Kamala in the questionnaire was when she indicated she supported providing taxpayer funded so-called gender-affirming care for illegal aliens and immigration detention, which we all know is taxpayer funded cutting off of their private parts. So, Mr. Krikorian, is this occurring under this Administration and what are the serious safety consequences it may pose?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Well, I mean, the safety consequences of the procedures themselves, I am not qualified to talk about, but clearly it serves as yet one more incentive for people to illegally immigrate into the United States, in this case, people seeking a particular kind of medical procedures.

Ms. MACE. In the questionnaire, Kamala pledges to slash funding for ICE, cut immigration detention by more than 50 percent, and even expressed support for ending immigration detention. Have Biden-Harris Presidential budget requests reflected Kamala's desire to cut ICE funding—

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Oh, absolutely.

Ms. MACE [continuing]. And immigration detention?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Detention funding, absolutely. It is decreased significantly, and, in fact, it needs to be increased significantly because detention is the one way you are going to be able to deter people who want to come into the United States and be released. If you do not release them, the appeal of trying and spending all of that money is significantly less.

Ms. MACE. She pledged to end the use of ICE detainers and criticized the cooperation between ICE and state and local law enforcement. How is this going to negatively affect our country?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. It would make it extremely difficult to enforce immigration law because ICE is a relatively small agency and does not walk around the streets asking people what their green cards are. The main vehicle for finding illegal aliens, if you do not do worksite enforcement, which this Administration has essentially stopped, is working with state and local law enforcement. When they arrest people for state and local crimes, their fingerprints go to DHS, and they are flagged as somebody that they know to be an illegal immigrant.

A detainer is the request ICE sends out to say hold on to this person for up to 48 hours so we can go and get them. If you are not using detainers, it is one of the most pro-criminal policies you could imagine because the only people protected by stopping ICE detainers or not honoring them as sanctuary cities do, the only people protected are criminals. So, it is a pro-criminal policy as well as an anti-immigration enforcement in general policy.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Casar from Texas.

Mr. CASAR. Good morning. Mr. Krikorian, you are an advisory board member for Project 2025, correct? Yes or no?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yes.

Mr. CASAR. Mr. Kirkorian, in addition to being a Project 2025 board member, you also run the Center for Immigration Studies. You have done that for decades, where you spread and disseminated writings of people like Kevin MacDonald, John Friend, and Jared Taylor, correct?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. We used to have an email service that distributed links to those feds.

Mr. CASAR. To their writings. That is right.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. And the *New York Times* and all kinds of other—across the board.

Mr. CASAR. Correct. Yes, I know that you are aware that you spread the writings of these three, along with others, but these three are egregious examples. MacDonald is the editor of a White nationalist journal. Your organization, as you said, disseminated his writings. He blamed Jewish people for the deaths of millions of people in the 20th century. John Friend, who you just said you disseminated his writings, is an infamous Holocaust denier. You spread his writings. Jared Taylor stated, and I quote this horrible quote, that “When Black people are left on their own, civilization disappears.” That is what he said.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Not anything we said—

Mr. CASAR. You, a Project 2025—

Mr. KRIKORIAN. We distributed only op-eds about—

Mr. CASAR. You only distributed. Correct. I understand—

Mr. KRIKORIAN [continuing]. Immigration issues.

Mr. CASAR. I am reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman. Correct. You only disseminated writings—

Mr. KRIKORIAN [continuing]. Nor did you research—

Mr. CASAR [continuing]. From multiple White nationalists.

Mr. KRIKORIAN [continuing]. The backgrounds——

Mr. CASAR. I am reclaiming my time. I am going to ask you a question, sir. I am going to ask you the next question.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. [continuing]. Who wrote about immigration.

Mr. CASAR. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman. I would like that time back. So, you, a Project 2025 board member, you are stating you did not disseminate, for example, Mr. Taylor and Mr. MacDonald or Mr. Friend's specific quotes here, but you continuously disseminated these White nationalists writing. One time is a problem. When you do it over and over and over again, it is a pattern, but I will stop asking about the things that you and your organization disseminated. I will ask you, Mr. Krikorian, and I know you are a Project 2025 board member, your recent quote from a few years ago where you said, "Haiti is so screwed up because it wasn't colonized long enough." Is that correct? Did you say that?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. I am happy to talk about that all you want.

Mr. CASAR. You did say it.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. I wrote it, yes.

Mr. CASAR. You said that?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yes.

Mr. CASAR. Haiti was colonized as a slave plantation colony. The French colonized Haiti so that slaves would work on plantations. The end of colonization in Haiti was so that the people there would no longer be slaves. So, what you are saying, and I read your quote, and anybody watching this online should go read it. What you are saying is it would have been good if they had stayed colonized, which means that it would have been good if they had stayed enslaved by the French.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. In the long run, it is one of the facts of history——

Mr. CASAR. In the long run?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. No, excuse me——

Mr. CASAR. People should not have been enslaved a single day.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Of course not.

Mr. CASAR. I am reclaiming my time, Chairman.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. And they had every right to throw the French out——

Mr. CASAR. What you said is that you would have wanted them——

Mr. KRIKORIAN. My point is——

Mr. CASAR. Reclaiming my time. I am talking now.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. They would have been freed——

Mr. CASAR. You said——

Mr. KRIKORIAN [continuing]. Thirty years later——

Mr. CASAR. You said——

Mr. KRIKORIAN [continuing]. And they would have been in the same situation.

Mr. CASAR. You are saying you wanted 30 more years of slavery in Haiti? Reclaiming my time.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. No, I did not. I did not——

Mr. CASAR. You just said it.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. I did not want that.

Mr. CASAR. Honestly, it adds up. You said that they would have benefited from the French influence. The French were the ones——

Mr. KRIKORIAN. In the long run, like the people in Martinique—

Mr. CASAR. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman. I would like my time.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. [continuing] Who were also enslaved—

Mr. CASAR. Please. This is my time. This is my time, Mr. Krikorian.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. They are much better off now than Haiti was.

Mr. CASAR. Honestly, this all starts to add up. This all starts to add up. You continue to do this, disseminate writings of White nationalists, try to rationalize, for example, Haiti being colonized for 30 more years. You are a Project 2025 board member. In Project 2025, I could not figure out why on page 583 it advocates for not allowing racial disparity or gender disparity to be considered discrimination legally anymore. In Project 2025, it eliminates a 50-year-old executive order that prohibits discrimination in Federal jobs. On page 586, Project 2025 advocates for Donald Trump to allow businesses to discriminate based on religious beliefs.

Before today, I could not understand why Trump's Project 2025 could advocate for ending civil rights protections. Why would Trump's Project 2025—I know there is crazy stuff in here, but I could not get why he would advocate for ending protections against discrimination, but now I understand. We have Project 2025 board members here who are the directors of groups that the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated as a hate group. We have people that are on the board that developed this who have said, for example, that Haitians would have been better off with more influence from their enslavers.

Now, with my time remaining, which I believe should be added, Mr. Chairman, because I was interrupted and I reclaimed that time, I have questions for Ms. Gunasekara. You served as Chief of Staff at the EPA in the Trump Administration, correct?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes.

Mr. CASAR. And you have worked with the Trump and his Administration to implement your ideas in the past, correct?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes.

Mr. CASAR. You authored Chapter 13 of Project 2025, correct?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes.

Mr. CASAR. So, you would support the ideas in Chapter 13 being implemented by the government?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. I believe they are very good ideas for the next EPA.

Mr. CASAR. Yes, you would support those?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes.

Mr. CASAR. So, if Trump was President and he reached out to you and said he wanted to implement your chapter of Project 2025, would you support him in implementing that chapter? Would you say yes?

Chairman COMER. Time has expired, but you can answer that. I gave you 15 seconds.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, I do not know—

Mr. CASAR. No, they interrupted me first.

Chairman COMER. I am the Chairman of the Committee. I decide. I gave you 15.

Mr. CASAR. I would like to appeal that ruling, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Look, you got your time, and the witness, feel free to answer the question, and then I am going to recognize Mr. Fry.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes. I do not believe he would call me and ask to do that.

Mr. CASAR. Right, but if he did, you do want him to implement the—

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Again, I do not believe that he would call and ask me to do that.

Mr. CASAR. I understand you. Do you want—

Chairman COMER. All right. Time has expired—

Mr. CASAR. Mr. Chairman, I make a motion to appeal the ruling—

Chairman COMER. Next item on the agenda.

Mr. CASAR. I would like to appeal the ruling.

Chairman COMER. No. No. No. The Chair now recognizes—

Mr. CASAR. Mr. Chairman, point of order.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Fry—

Mr. CASAR. Isn't it within the rules for me to appeal the ruling of the Chair and ask for a vote?

Chairman COMER. It is not an appealable rule. I gave you extra time. The Ranking Member went a minute over. I gave the Ranking Member 6 1/2 minutes. He took 7 1/2 minutes.

Mr. CASAR. I was interrupted.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes. I think you guys are doing OK, Mr. Chairman. All right. We will let it rest with that.

Chairman COMER. All right.

Mr. RASKIN. And you will see what happens in the next Congress because we are going to be fastidious about the rules in the next Congress—

Chairman COMER. Well, we have already read rules to—

Mr. RASKIN. We are going to show you how to do it.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Everybody already, so that is good.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Chairman COMER. That is good.

Mr. RASKIN. Yup.

Chairman COMER. All right, because the Committee is about waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement. This is a hearing about policies—

Mr. RASKIN. And you exemplify it well, Mr. Chairman. I concede that.

Chairman COMER. No, no, no. You exemplify it. This is a hearing about substantive policy. If you want to defend the policies of the current Administration, if you want to talk about Kamala Harris' agenda, her policy positions, please do so because we are not very clear what they are.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Fry from South Carolina.

Mr. FRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is actually a great segue. When you fail your classes in school, you do not graduate, right? This is a tale as old as time. For the past 4 years, Kamala Harris and Joe Biden have repeatedly failed the American people. So, let us look at the report card on the border, fail; unleashing

American energy, failing again; growing our economy, fail again; support American values, fail. The top leaders of the United States have consistently failed the American people, but it does not have to be this way.

Let us start at the border, the first one. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, we have seen 8.5 illegal encounters at our Southern border, more than 10 across the board, 1.9 million got-aways. Drugs are coming across our border in record numbers. Over 1/2 of a million pounds of meth have come across our border, 250,000 pounds of cocaine, 56,000 pounds of fentanyl, and these drugs are killing our kids every single day.

On the first day of office, Biden and Harris issued a hundred executive orders to reduce our border security. They have gaslit the American people about the seriousness of the border crisis. In fact, the Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee says that we were imagining a border crisis. They ended the Remain in Mexico policy. They stopped construction of the border wall. They established unlawful categorical parole programs. Kamala Harris even was deemed the border czar, but it took her 90 days to even visit the border after entering office. We have seen Americans killed by illegal aliens. We had a hearing on that in the House Judiciary Committee just last week. They forced children to vacate their schools and remote learn to make room for migrant shelters, and they have let terrorists in record numbers into the interior of this country.

Next, let us talk about energy. On day one, they shut down construction of the Keystone XL pipeline that eliminated 10,000 good-paying jobs. On day one, the U.S. rejoined the Paris Climate Agreement without any consultation at all from Congress. They have banned LNG exports, pushing Europe further into the arms of Russia. They tried to ban gas stoves. Their policies have led to skyrocketing gas prices under this Administration. They have drained the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, arguably for political reasons. They insert climate change into every policy, which hampers domestic production. They blocked domestic mineral development in the United States, again, further pushing the rest of the world into China in getting those minerals. They have restricted energy development on Federal land, and they have crippled our domestic energy production, which has harmed our national security.

Next, on the economy. Everyone feels it. The only people that seem to be surprised are the ones on the other side of the aisle, but everyone is getting pinched. Overall, prices are up 20 percent. Inflation has outpaced wages for 26 straight months. The monthly mortgage payment for a median-priced new home has increased by \$1,038. Interest rates are over 5 percent, the highest in over 23 years. Average weekly earnings, by the way, for employees have decreased in that same time, 4.5 percent. Credit card interest rates are at the highest level they have been in nearly 3 decades, and over a third of families paid a late fee in the last year.

Moving on to the next one, foreign policy. For starters, the Biden-Harris Administration withdrew from Afghanistan. I do not need to talk much about that given what has happened, given the catastrophe that happened there. That was a huge blunder. Unfortunately, the failures continue. The Biden-Harris Administration has

been incredibly mixed-messaged on whether to stand with Israel. Vice President Harris even went so far as to boycott Netanyahu's congressional address in this country. Biden and Harris have projected weakness on the world stage. They have had weakness against the Iranian-backed Houthis, against Chinese aggression. They have handed billions of dollars to Iran, which has funded these terror activities in the Middle East.

The U.S. Army has fallen 15,000 soldiers short of their recruitment goal in Fiscal Year 2022. There have been a complete lack of oversight for the funding of Ukraine. There has been grift all over the place. They allowed a Chinese spy balloon to traipse itself all across the country, eventually getting shot down in my coastal district of South Carolina. They allowed Cuba, a known state sponsor of terrorism, to tour the Miami TSA facilities. They have discharged troops for refusing the COVID vaccine.

Let us talk about American values for a second. They have worked to insert DEI initiatives into every aspect of our lives. They allow males to compete in women's sports. Biden and Harris proclaimed Easter as the Transgender Day of Visibility. They have been funding abortions and travel expenses through the Pentagon for military personnel. They have lied to the American people about Biden's cognitive state. I could go on and on and on.

And so, for somebody who wants a promotion to the highest office in the land, you first have to pass the test. In every which way, Kamala Harris has not passed the test. She has not upheld her oath of office, and she has failed the American people, and we should not promote her. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back.

Ms. GREENE. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Greene.

Ms. GREENE. I would like to enter for the record a Fox News interview by Bret Baier with Foundation Kevin Roberts. Kevin Roberts stated—for the record, he also published Project 2025—that Mr. Trump is telling the truth, confirming on Fox that Trump never collaborated on Project 2025 and never endorsed it, nor has Heritage Foundation endorsed Trump for President. Democrats are lying over and over and over again about Project 2025 and President Trump. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, we will enter in the Bret Baier interview. Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair now recognizes Ms. Lee from Pennsylvania.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to appreciate for a moment that this hearing my Republican colleagues have called is about incompetence and failure of our Federal Government when failure is exactly what they want to happen. Incompetence is their M.O., the same Congress that cannot pass a rules vote, cannot pass a government funding bill, coming after the Administration that has actually passed historic pieces of legislation like CHIPS and Science, and the Inflation Reduction Act, and the infrastructure bill, and an actually productive Congress.

But when we talk about keeping the government functioning, let us be real. The people who are actually keeping things afloat are not my colleagues, thank God, and it is not even the President. It is our Federal work force. It is the hardworking career profes-

sionals across our agencies that work to improve our air quality and our water quality. They work to ensure that our medications are safe to take, that Social Security checks get to folks on time, and that our veterans can live with dignity and comfort after their service. These are regular folks who know how to get their job done day in and day out to serve the American people. There is a reason why these people are career professionals. There is a reason why they are not partisan shells. They have the right experience and knowledge to properly do their jobs, yet Trump and the Republican Project 2025—whoever wrote it, whoever endorses it, it exists—wants to get rid of these workers and replace them with people whose only qualification is their loyalty and their financial support to Donald Trump.

So, while I would argue that my colleagues in the Majority have not proven competence, dismantling our government agencies, it is not incompetence. It is intentional. They are purposefully creating dysfunction. We have seen this in action as money pours into our elections, as our Supreme Court justices are wined and dined and then giving increasingly radical rulings. And now, with their plan to gut these Federal agencies and fill them with partisan hacks, they are purposely shifting the balance of power to one man, Donald Trump, the same man who promised to be a dictator on day one. His words.

So, Ms. Perryman, when we talk about replacing these career Federal workers with Trump loyalists, who is actually benefiting? And if it is not the American people, then who do we see gaining the most from these policies?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I am glad that you have raised this, especially in this Committee where there has been a lot of conversation about waste, fraud, and abuse, because what we know is that when governments function without career civil service, when governments function with high levels of appointees that have to be loyal to a particular ideology as opposed to our Constitution and to the American people, they are actually less efficient and more prone to corruption and waste, fraud, and abuse. So, I think that the American people are the ones that lose out from Schedule F policies. And I think on, you know, the question of the Biden-Harris record, we do know that this is an Administration that has promulgated a final rule in order to help protect our civil service.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. So, while we are on the topic of loyalists, I would like to talk about one of the Republican witnesses, Ms. Gunasekara. She is the author of Project 2025's EPA chapter. She was also a top official at the EPA during the Trump Administration, and word on the streets is that she might head the Agency during a future Trump term, and what is her vision for the EPA? She wants to dismantle it, and so that the EPA goes easy on corporate polluters. She wants to make our air and our water less safe. She wants to place fewer regulations on greenhouse gases, endangering public health and driving climate change. She had also called the threats of climate change "overstated." She laid out all of this in her chapter for Project 2025. It is on page 417. Ms. Perryman, what damage can be done if these harmful policies are unleashed at the EPA?

Ms. PERRYMAN. We know that it will make Americans less safe. It will make our world less safe. But we also know, and there was a *Scientific American* article recently about this that we can submit to the Committee, that there are scientists in the U.S. Government today that are dusting off their resumes, that are already concerned about being purged for their loyalty to facts and evidence and to the American people. And so, I think this presents more than just a single policy concern, but really, a broader overall problem for the American people and for the safety of our world.

Ms. LEE. So, let us be clear. This whole plan is another attempt to buy out our democracy. That is why Big Oil met with Trump at Mar-a-Lago. These corporations want less regulation. They want less government oversight. Dismantling our Federal work force makes that easier. These huge corporations pour money into our elections, and they lavish our Supreme Court justices with gifts, and now they want to buy out our Federal agencies. Our Federal Government has jobs to do and the American people to serve. They cannot do that if they are staffed with partisan hacks. And that, I would argue, is the true incompetence and danger that we are facing, not the incompetence of actually getting things done. Thank you so much, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Burlison from Missouri.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, you said that we should stick to the facts, so here are the facts. It is a fact that since the Biden-Harris Administration took office, there have been over 8 1/2 million illegal immigrants cross into the United States through the Southern border. That is a fact. It is also a fact that that population is greater than the population of 37 states. Almost 7 million have been released into the United States. It is also a fact that fentanyl is poisoning the American people. On average, in 2023, it killed 75,000 Americans. We are at war. They are at war with us.

It is also a fact that you have violent crime occurring on a regular basis, and we all know the names of Laken Riley, Kayla Hamilton, Jocelyn Nungaray, but just last month, you had a Mexican national who was here illegally shoot another man in Alabama. You had another individual just a few weeks earlier kill people in a drunken driving incident. In fact, there have been numerous cases where people are being killed by individuals who are not able to drive. In one case, an illegal immigrant took over a semi-truck and killed people. So, these are all facts. You cannot ignore them. You cannot hide from them.

So, Mr. Krikorian, the state of Florida claimed in Federal court that the Biden Administration's policies, specifically the policies of parole and release, imposed significant costs on the state in educating minor children, housing. In addition, you have hospital visits. Has there been any studies as to the financial costs? We know the human cost. Have there been studies for the financial costs?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. We have not done that. There have been studies on this. I do not have the numbers at hand, but it is often very difficult to get, especially at the state and local level because there is unwillingness to provide the information often, on the part of, for instance, school districts and others.

Mr. BURLISON. But they do——

Mr. KRIKORIAN. They do.

Mr. BURLISON [continuing]. Put a strain on the community resources.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Enormous cost. Enormous cost in—for, like you said, for schools, healthcare, law enforcement, et cetera.

Mr. BURLISON. We know that, in addition, they have increased costs in incarceration because they are committing crimes, sometimes violent crimes. What about other public services or law enforcement?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Well, law enforcement, especially, obviously it creates extra work for law enforcement. And I would just like to add because there will be an objection, that a lot of these people are, in fact, paying taxes. All illegal immigrants, everybody pays taxes, but the question is what is the balance? In other words, are the expenses on the services provided, more than the taxes received? And the answer is, especially for those who are here illegally and with less education, the answer is yes. There is simply no question that the Federal taxpayer is, at the end of the day, on the hook.

Mr. BURLISON. It is also a fact that the House passed H.R. 2, a solution to this. The Senate had a response. Instead of actually correcting this, and fixing this problem and passing H.R. 2, they devised the Senate bill. What were your thoughts on the Senate bill?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. It would have made things worse. It was not a kind of thing where the House and the Senate bills could have split a difference. I mean, that happens. You all have dealt with that. That is inevitable in any kind of compromise. But the Senate bill was inherently problematic because it would have codified unlawful Administration policies that lead to the release into the United States of illegal immigrants.

Mr. BURLISON. Right. It would have actually even handcuffed a future President who wants to do the right thing from actually closing down the border.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Right. That provision, that trigger that would have triggered an emergency ability to shut down the border would have expired, basically, I think, you know, in the middle of a new Trump Administration. I think that was the thinking when the way they put it together.

Mr. BURLISON. And, you know, Kamala Harris has said that she supports now a border wall, but what has been the track record?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Has she said that?

Mr. BURLISON. What is the track record? I mean, the Biden-Harris Administration has dismantled stretches of the border wall.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. It really struck me the most when I went to a section in New Mexico where there was border wall being built, but on Inauguration Day, President Biden said, you know, sort of a stop work order. Put your tools down. Step away. There was a gate that had been put into the fence required by treaty because there was a border marker on the other side, and there is an opening and they put in a locked gate. It is something they are required to do. The doorway was there, the gate was not. Because the Biden Administration had stopped construction, and so it was almost like something out of Blazing Saddles, you know, where there is a fence

and then there is just this big opening in the fence, and it is because they stopped construction. Later, years later, the Administration said, OK, well, maybe we will plug some of those holes, but, you know, it is a day late and a dollar short.

Mr. BURLISON. After 8.5 million people came in. Thank you. My time is up.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Stansbury from New Mexico.

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Well, thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I want to say welcome and thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I respect it takes a lot to put yourself out there to come and testify in front of Congress. And I know that some of this ground has been covered before, and I really do appreciate the transparency that all of you have brought about your backgrounds, about your positions, and about your perspectives on the policy issues. But just to kind of put it all in one place, I want to quickly go through, and I am going to mostly state it. I will ask some questions as we go.

Mr. Carr, I know you have said this has been asked and answered several times, but just, you know, going back, we know you are currently serving in the FTC. You have been serving there since 2017 since Donald Trump appointed you, and you are the author of the FCC chapter of Project 2025, correct? It is just a "yes" or "no."

Mr. CARR. Well, sorry. Just to be clear, the——

Ms. STANSBURY. Yes, you are. Thank you. I appreciate it. Mr. Krikorian——

Mr. CARR. The chapter you referenced was done in my personal capacity after——

Ms. STANSBURY. Yes. The answer is "yes."

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Getting clearance from the FTC ethics.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Krikorian, you are——

Mr. CARR. I just want to be clear that it was not in my official capacity.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Krikorian, you serve as the ED of the Center for Immigrant Studies. You are also on the advisory board of Project 2025. Your organization has been actually designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. And Dr. Hobbs [sic], thank you for your service to this country. I understand you are a veteran and an academic. I do very much respect your background and your work. You are involved in the Independent Women's Forum, which is also involved in Project 2025. You have had a number of authors and contributors from the Women's Forum that are participants in Project 2025. And Ms. Gunasekara, I know we have already covered this, but you are a former Chief of Staff for the Trump Administration at the EPA, and I think you have been very clear about your role in drafting the EPA section of Project 2025. So, I think it is very clear this hearing is actually about Project 2025.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to enter the entire Trump Project 2025 into the record so that the American people can have it at their disposal for reference for this hearing.

Chairman COMER. Very good. I do not think anyone on this side has ever read that, but apparently you all have, so we will enter it into the record.

Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. STANSBURY. Thank you so much. And again, I just appreciate the transparency of this particular Committee because last week, right after the debate, we tried to enter it into the record in the House Natural Resources Committee, and three Members on the GOP side of the aisle actually objected to putting it in the record. And I have to say, we were genuinely shocked because I have never seen an objection to a UC to put evidence in the record, but it was very clear in that hearing that the GOP was trying to distance themselves from this document.

So, you know, I think it is interesting that we are here today. We have got the authors of the document, and I just want to say, welcome to the American people, to your campaign stop on the Donald Trump Campaign. Here we are in the Oversight Committee, and we have got a bunch of former Trump and current Trump officials. We have got authors of Project 2025, which is the blueprint for the next Presidential transition. And the last stop for the Trump Campaign was the House Floor last night because Donald Trump asked the House GOP leadership to put a CR on the Floor that they knew was not going to pass, that had a voter bill attached to it, and then he told everyone to vote against it.

You know, we have seen over the last almost 2 years how leadership has used this Committee essentially as a campaign resource. They tried to impeach Joe Biden. They tried to impugn his family. And now here we are, and we are just 47 days until the election, and now they are trying to attack Kamala Harris and use the resources of this Committee and to platform future Trump Administration officials and their agenda, and to try to normalize what are, frankly, very extreme policies. And we heard from one of the witnesses today that, in fact, not only do they support dismantling our Federal Government, but would support doing even more damage than was done during the Trump Administration and even what is recommended inside of this book. So, you know, it is an interesting adventure here always.

But I do want to take the remainder of my time to talk about, since there have been some unfounded and unfactual attacks on the current Administration, to say that this Administration has been one of the single most important administrations in American history in rebuilding our Nation's infrastructure, in tackling the climate crisis, in defending our rights, and making sure that our country can function after a historic pandemic. And I think we all look forward to the continued leadership under the next Administration in that way. So, with that, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Georgia, Ms. Taylor Greene.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to the Oversight Committee, where we focus on waste, fraud, and abuse, not the campaign trail. This hearing is called "A Legacy of Incompetence: Consequences of the Biden-Harris Administration's Policy Failures." Policies that do not deliver results for the American people, who are the taxpayers, are complete failures. Spending

money and allocating money is not a policy of success. It is the outcome of the money that has been spent based on the policy.

So, I would like to talk through this one that I find absolutely shocking, especially given that my district is a rural district in Georgia. This is in 2021. “President Biden Taps Kamala Harris to Lead Effort to Close Digital Divide.” The White House released their remarks by President Biden in an address to a joint session of Congress, and, “in the process, it will create thousands and thousands of good-paying jobs. It creates jobs connecting every American with high-speed internet, including 35 percent of the rural America that still doesn’t have it. This is going to help our kids and our businesses succeed in the 21st century economy, and I am asking the Vice President to lead this effort, if she would.” The Vice President replied “of course.” The President said, “Because I know it will get done.”

Now, fast forward to 2024. Here is the headlines: “Why Has Joe Biden’s \$42 billion Broadband Program Not Connected One Single Household?” Maybe it is because—this is also in the headlines—that “Harris Announces Plans to Help 80 Percent of Africa Gain Access to the Internet, Up From 40 Percent Now.” Talk about a policy failure. Talk about not delivering results to the American people, spending \$42 billion, yet not having one household connected to the internet. Mr. Carr, is that actually true, not one home got internet?

Mr. CARR. That is correct. In Georgia alone, there are about 257,000 homes and businesses that lack internet today, so that is potentially millions of people that were supposed to be connected through this program. Forty-two billion was enough money to actually end the digital divide in this country with competent implementation. Unfortunately, we have not cleared that hurdle. We have stories out right now that describe the implementation as chaotic, dysfunction, delays, no guidance, finger pointing, messy, delayed rollout. That is just not getting the job done.

Ms. GREENE. That is right, Mr. Carr, and many of those homes and businesses are actually in my district, and they are outraged. You know, we are over \$35 trillion in debt. The Biden-Harris Administration has been in charge for nearly 4 years, but not one home or business has gotten internet. It is outrageous. This is so concerning to me. How can the woman, Kamala Harris, that is telling the country right now she wants to be President of the United States actually ask for this job if she has not been able to deliver what the President assigned her to do, which was to take that \$42 billion and provide internet to the American people? I find that hard to believe because I own a construction company, and when we get hired to do a job, guess what? We deliver it.

Let me ask you a question. Under the Trump Administration, in 2020, the FCC awarded Starlink \$885 million to serve 642,925 homes and businesses that lacked internet. What happened to that program?

Mr. CARR. Well, last year, after President Biden went to the White House podium and said that Elon Musk is worth being looked into, the FCC abruptly reversed course and yanked back that award. And now, in other programs, the ones that are actually connecting people under this Administration, we are spending dol-

lars on the pennies. Senator Cruz recently had a report showing that in some cases, we are spending \$100,000 per home for broadband when with that Starlink deal, it was \$1,300. I do not think there is any way to explain the FCC's decision other than to go back to Joe Biden giving the green light to agencies to go after him.

Ms. GREENE. So, what has happened in the process of \$42 billion being allocated for Americans to get internet? Why cannot Kamala Harris deliver those results?

Mr. CARR. Look, after 1,039 days and no Americans being connected, what they have been doing so far is advancing a wish list of progressive policy goals. They have been pushing for DEI requirements, climate change agenda, preferences for government-run networks, rather than just focusing on getting people connected.

Ms. GREENE. You know, thank you very much, Mr. Carr. That is exactly what the American people are so fed up with, is so-called policies that actually never deliver results for the American people. I yield, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes Mr. Moskowitz. Do you—

Mr. RASKIN. Just unanimous consent, if it is OK.

Chairman COMER. That is fine.

Mr. RASKIN. This is from Governor Youngkin in Virginia. "Governor Glenn Youngkin Celebrates Approval of Virginia Broadband Proposal. Approval provides access to Virginia's 1.48 billion BEAD Allocation;" and then another from the Governor of West Virginia: "West Virginia Secures \$1.2 billion in Broadband Funding. Among First States in the Country Allowed to Request BEAD Funds." All of this, of course, just started in the summer, which is what that is all about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Moskowitz.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Man, I love our Chairman. I mean, people have called the Chairman many things, different adjectives over the last 2 years, but I admire his courage. I mean, literally, as Donald Trump is running away from Project 2025, trying to put as much distance between him and Project 2025 because the American people know it is toxic, but not our Chairman. No, no. The Chairman, with all of his wisdom, he features Project 2025 in the hearing, one of our last hearings right before the election. I mean, if the Trump campaign is listening, here you go, Project 2025, any hearing, I am sure they are real happy about that.

But, you know, Project 2025 wants to get rid of NOAA, wants to get rid of the National Weather Service, you know, the people that tell you the weather and help us prepare for hurricanes. So, I say that as a former Director of Emergency Management for the state of Florida, for a Republican Governor, actually, who responded to hurricanes. You know, maybe if once we get rid of it, if Project 2025 were to succeed, if Trump were to win, maybe we will just do it with a magic eight-ball, or maybe with a Ouija board, or maybe we will do hurricane cones like President Trump did, right, where he just, you know, circled in another state that was not in the cone.

So, maybe what we will do, is we will do hurricane predictions, like maybe it will go to Mississippi, maybe it will go to North Carolina, or maybe it will go to all three. Oh, look, I made a smiley face. Maybe that is how we will do the weather. You know, I could see it right now, right? Trump would come out and say it is going to be raining cats and dogs today. Please do not eat them. OK.

But you know, the name of this Committee today is Failures and Incompetencies, so let us talk about the big knish, right: the Chairman's failed impeachment. Let us remember, we misplaced an informant over a year ago. Could not find him. Did not know where he went. Another informant was indicted for providing false information that came from Russian intelligence. We used a second informant who turned out to be an indicted Chinese foreign agent. And to top it off, the Chairman was like, who could we find to make it even better? Maybe we can get someone to testify from prison, which actually we did here on Zoom.

Here is the Chairman's 300-page book report on impeachment. He said in his release, "It is the strongest case for impeachment of a sitting President the House of Representatives has ever investigated." Wow, that sounds pretty serious. So, I want the Chairman to show the American people that we did not just waste millions of taxpayer dollars to issue this book report. Mr. Chairman, the Speaker is watching. You could call for impeachment right now, right? We got a little bit of time left before the election. I mean, you know, just ask the Speaker. You could ask the Speaker right now, or talk to him, like when are we going to schedule an impeachment? Or is this just concepts of impeachment? Right? No? OK.

Well, I mean, here is the thing, I think that the Chairman titled this—and I love the title of today's hearing, right—"A Legacy of Incompetence: Consequences of the Biden-Harris Administration Policy Failures." I made a couple of edits to the title of today. So, the title, I think, really is "A Legacy of Incompetence: Consequences of the Comer Chairmanship," OK, because all we have had in this Committee for 2 years is failure: failed impeachment, failure on this gas stove nonsense, failure on all the Chinese COVID stuff. They did nothing with that COVID committee. It is all failure. The whole House, the whole 118th Congress is failure.

They removed the Speaker, right? Then they tried to remove a second Speaker, right? That is really great for the American people, right? Then they impeach the Cabinet Secretary. That had not happened in 150 years. They have had multiple CRs fail, right? They cannot even keep the government open without both Speakers crawling to the Democrats to be the adults in the room to keep government opening. So, I mean, literally, if we are going to talk about failures and incompetencies, we should just look at what we have done here over the last 2 years.

And I want to end with this. I mean, literally 2 weeks ago, right, all we heard was about what the Haitian people were doing in Springfield, but no, the Chairman wanted to top that. He literally brought a witness who proffered in this Committee that the Haitian people would have been better off had they stayed in slavery for several more decades. Mr. Chairman, I want to spare you the embarrassment. You should strike his words from the record. No,

you stand by his comment that the Haitian people would have been better off in slavery for 30 more years, or should we strike that from the record? I just want to spare you that embarrassment. OK. So, the Chair——

Chairman COMER. All right. Your time has expired. Before I recognize Mr. Timmons, I would love to be a fly on the wall when you find out that Joe Biden dropped out of the Presidential election and his son pled guilty for corruption.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Why didn't you impeach him?

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Wait. Wait. Why didn't you impeach him, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Your time is expired.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Where is the impeachment vote?

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Speaker, when is the impeachment vote?

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I mean, we have a 300-page book report, tens of millions of dollars——

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Timmons from South Carolina.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ [continuing]. And a failed impeachment.

Mr. TIMMONS. Mr. Chairman, I will begin by pointing out that Hunter Biden is going to be sentenced on December 16——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Hunter Biden is not the President.

Mr. TIMMONS [continuing]. And I bet you money he is going to——

Chairman COMER. Dude, you need to take your medication and leave. The Chair recognizes Mr. Timmons.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Chairman, you are several decades older than me. We know who is taking more medication.

Mr. TIMMONS. All right. Hunter Biden is going to plead guilty on December 16, and President Biden will pardon him probably days after, so just write that down.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the witnesses for being here today. We are here to examine the numerous failures of the Biden-Harris Administration that had led to chaos for the American people. My constituents in the upstate of South Carolina feel deceived by Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' reckless spending and policy positions that are dreamed up by woke Ivy League professors who have no common sense or real-world experience. These policies have led to record inflation, an unprecedented influx of illegal immigrants, and a drastic decrease in our standing in the global community. Many Americans have lost their trust in the government, and they do not believe it is working for them, and why should the American people trust this Administration? They have flip-flopped around on policy when it best serves their interests because they know that what they are doing is wrong, and they are hurting the American people. They have deceived us from the start and cannot be trusted to lead our country for another 4 years.

So, let us start with immigration first. In 2020, the Vice President ran on decriminalizing illegal border crossings and even endorsed the redirection of funds from ICE to our law enforcement agencies. On day one of this Administration, President Biden or-

dered a stop to the construction of the border wall, the end of the successful Remain in Mexico policy, and gave exemption status to millions of illegal immigrants already here with a hundred-day deportation moratorium.

As a result, Border Czar Harris' overwhelmed Southern border is responsible for the No. 1 cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45, fentanyl overdoses, which kills hundreds of people every day. Crime has skyrocketed in cities across the country, and our law enforcement officers have not received adequate assistance from our leaders. Now Vice President Harris says she will fund thousands of new border agents and continue funding the construction of a border wall, the wall that she has previously opposed dozens of times.

Mr. Krikorian, can officials from this Administration be trusted to follow through on the VP's promises to finally support law enforcement and finish the border wall when they have done the exact opposite for their entire tenure?

Mr. KRİKORIAN. Well, in investment they say past performance is no guarantee of future results, but I think in politics, how can you avoid it? I mean, there is no way to read the future except by looking at what they have said and done. And so no, I do not think it could be—

Mr. TIMMONS. Well, she will not answer interviewers whatsoever, and it really is sad that she is running from everything that she is done and she is taking the exact opposite position on every major issue.

Let us talk about instability abroad. In 2020, Joe Biden ran for President on a promise to "restore America's alliances and leadership abroad." These past 4 years have been a showcase of the exact opposite. Our allies no longer trust us, and our enemies no longer fear us. The Biden-Harris Administration's foreign policies have given our enemies the green light to attack in Israel and Ukraine without the fear of retaliation. The catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan resulted in the tragic loss of American lives and gave terrorist organizations direct access to our most advanced military equipment. Finally, China is constantly overstepping in the South China Sea and worldwide because they no longer see America as a dominant leader on the world stage. Now Vice President Harris promises to find a peaceful solution to international conflicts and continue on the foreign policy track of her current Administration.

Ms. Mobbs, can our Nation, or the world for that matter, withstand another 4 years of this same foreign policy without devastating outcomes for the global community?

Dr. MOBBS. No, it cannot, and while we are talking about facts I want to address, I am Dr. Mobbs, not Dr. Hobbs, and I appreciate the opportunity to also set the record straight on a couple of different things, as this is critical to talk about oversight. In particular, if you are talking about Ukraine, for example, there have been substantial issues with oversight that I think that we need to address.

Now congressional Republicans should be very proud of the fact that it has been their leadership that allowed 39 oversight provisions to enter into any of the supplementals. However, to your point, Congressman, there has been a refusal to give the weapons

that they need. They have done onerous restrictions on that which the continuation of Obama policy, will be continuation of Biden policy, and, therefore, continuation of Harris policy. They also failed to deliver an unclassified version of the strategy to Congress. It was already months late, and, therefore, there is no transparency to the American people.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you for that. Thank you. I got one more issue I got to address, and I will just say this. When Trump wins in November, Russia will be out of Ukraine and all the hostages will be released, probably before he is actually sworn in.

Last but certainly not least, inflation. Back in 2021, President Biden told the American people inflation would be only temporary. Then Treasury Secretary Yellen claimed inflation was transitory. Outrageously, in 2022, Biden casts the blame on Russian aggression in Ukraine for rising prices. Listen, the people of my district are suffering because inflation is the highest it has been in my lifetime. Interest rates are through the roof, and that is hitting them in the grocery store, at the gas pump. And look, they are just worse off than they were 4 years ago. It is as simple as that, and I think that is what is on the ballot in November. And Mr. Chairman, I appreciate you having this hearing, and with that, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Pressley from Massachusetts.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you. You know, this would all be funny if it was not so devastating at a time when the leader of the Republican Party is trying to claim that he has no connection whatsoever to Project 2025, an outright lie, another lie, like the one that he spews daily about Haitian Americans in Springfield, Ohio. Again, the leader of the Republican Party is trying to claim that he has no connection whatsoever to Project 2025, an outright lie. My Republican colleagues have invited four of the manifesto's architects to testify today. I am over here. In a desperate attempt to erase all of the ways that the American public has benefited from the Biden-Harris Administration, this Committee has instead spotlighted what Project 2025 would offer: chaos and corruption.

However, we would be ignoring a critical component of Project 2025 if we did not address the fact that its creators have been secretly peddling a "100-day playbook" that contains executive orders and emergency actions to roll out in the first hours of a second Trump presidency. Instead of sharing this plan with the public, an indictment of your dangerous policy plans in and of itself, those behind Project 2025 claim it is too controversial to release. Ms. Gunasekara, yes or no, as a main author of Project 2025, are you aware of this playbook or "fourth pillar?" And remember, you are under oath.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Yes, and it is online on the website.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Can you please detail what exactly it calls for?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. I think you explained it pretty well. It is a plan of action so that when Republicans and conservatives have another chance at a next administration, there is not lost time, and so that there is a plan ready to go.

Ms. PRESSLEY. I do not know if that was specific enough. You are under oath. Can you please detail what exactly it calls for, this fourth pillar, this 180-day playbook? Please detail what it calls for.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. Again, I would reiterate what I just said, that I think you summarized it quite well. It includes a plan of action on day one so that Republicans—

Ms. PRESSLEY. But you did not say anything, and that is the problem. What is the plan of action?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. It is to institute a more conservative vision on things that the American people want because they are experiencing all of these hardships caused by the chaos and corruption of the Biden-Harris Administration.

Ms. PRESSLEY. All right. Reclaiming my time. Mr. Carr, how about you. Yes or no, as a main author of Project 2025, are you aware of this fourth pillar playbook?

Mr. CARR. Well to be—

Ms. PRESSLEY. Yes or no.

Mr. CARR. To be clear, I am here in my official capacity—

Ms. PRESSLEY. Yes or no?

Mr. CARR. So, I do not want to have any confusion on that.

Ms. PRESSLEY. I am reclaiming my time. You are under oath, and I do not want you to filibuster. Yes or no, are you aware of this fourth pillar playbook?

Mr. CARR. Just so I can be clear, that writing that I did was in my personal capacity after getting the—

Ms. PRESSLEY. Reclaiming my time. I did not ask you that. Are you aware of the fourth pillar playbook, and can you detail, as you are under oath, what exactly it calls for?

Mr. CARR. Again, I have not seen this fourth pillar playbook that you are talking about. I can—

Ms. PRESSLEY. Moving on. Moving on.

Mr. CARR. But I am happy to—

Ms. PRESSLEY. I find it hard to believe that you do not know—

Mr. CARR. No, but I am happy to talk—

Ms. PRESSLEY [continuing]. The details of this 100—

Mr. CARR [continuing]. I am happy to talk about—

Ms. PRESSLEY. Well, please.

Mr. CARR. I am happy to talk about—

Ms. PRESSLEY. You are under oath, and do not waste my or the public's time.

Mr. CARR. I am happy to talk about all of the policy ideas that I have talked about. I have talked about them in that context. I have talked about them otherwise.

Ms. PRESSLEY. I want to talk about 100-day playbook, the fourth pillar. Can you elucidate us to that?

Mr. CARR. Again, my—

Ms. PRESSLEY. All right. I am moving on, sir. I find it hard to believe that you do not know details of the 100-day playbook, but there is one person that definitely knows: Kevin Roberts, the President of the Heritage Foundation. And that is why, as co-founder of the Stop Project 2025 Task Force, alongside Representative Jared Huffman and dozens of our colleagues, we sent a letter to Mr. Roberts requesting he testify before Congress and release this 180-day playbook. We sent this letter on August 8. The next day, he delayed his book launch, went into hiding.

Kevin Roberts, what are you so afraid of? I am disappointed, but unsurprised, that the authors and leaders of Project 2025 are hid-

ing their 180-day playbook. So today, Congressman Huffman and I are announcing a new, fully confidential tip line. Any person can visit Huffman.House.gov/tip-line-form to submit any information you have about the secret playbook behind Project 2025. That goes for conservatives with a change of heart, workers at the Heritage Foundation, and our witnesses here today who will perhaps find more courage when the cameras are off. I yield.

Chairman COMER. Now it is the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Burchett.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Mobbs, is it fair to say that the Biden-Harris Afghanistan withdrawal was a complete failure?

Dr. MOBBS. It is very fair.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you. Thirteen U.S. service members were killed during that withdrawal, and one of those service members was my constituent, Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss. I know his family well. Every time I come out of our farm, I turn left, and I see the sign right there, the Ryan Knauss Memorial Highway. Young man, he was 23 years old. Has the Biden-Harris Administration acknowledged the families of these victims?

Dr. MOBBS. No, they have not.

Mr. BURCHETT. What would be the reason behind not acknowledging them? I just cannot imagine that. I was county mayor, and somebody would get hurt and we would call their families to make sure they were OK. Just to me, it is just beyond belief.

Dr. MOBBS. I agree with you.

Mr. BURCHETT. All right. How many billions worth of military equipment were left behind during the withdrawal?

Dr. MOBBS. Seven billion.

Mr. BURCHETT. Did you say \$7 billion?

Dr. MOBBS. Seven billion.

Mr. BURCHETT. Seven billion. The Taliban has also accessed \$58 million. Fifty-eight million. It is the Taliban, U.S.-provided funds meant for the former Afghan Government. Has the Biden Administration taking steps to prevent U.S. funds from falling into the hands of terrorist groups in the future?

Dr. MOBBS. No, they currently have not, and that does not also include the \$2.9 billion since August 2021 that the U.N. transported. And unfortunately, the U.S. remains the largest international donor to the United Nations, and, thereby, that money is eventually landing in the hands of the Taliban.

Mr. BURCHETT. So that money is what?

Dr. MOBBS. Landing in the hands of the Taliban.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, ma'am. Close friend of mine, he was on a podcast with another really good buddy of mine, Shawn Ryan. This other friend is a former U.S. Army soldier and citizen of Afghanistan. He recently revealed that the U.S. continues to send the Taliban \$40 million weekly. Are you aware of this?

Dr. MOBBS. I am not aware of that figure exactly, but it would make sense, given the fact that we are transporting a massive amount of money through the U.N.

Mr. BURCHETT. And what would that money be used for?

Dr. MOBBS. I could not say specifically, but probably nothing positive.

Mr. BURCHETT. Well, the fact that a single penny of American tax dollars has ended up in the hands of terrorists is a disgrace. I have a bill—of course, everybody gets here and promotes their bills that are going absolutely nowhere—and I actually have a bill, 6586, that would require the Secretary of State to report on countries aiding the Taliban, the amount and its use. It would develop a strategy to discourage countries from aiding the Taliban and review the eligibility for U.S. assistance, and it would report on direct assistance in Afghanistan, including recipients, payment methods, and measures to prevent Taliban access. Now, this bill has already passed the House, and it is sitting in the Senate.

And I really urge Majority Leader Schumer—this is a bipartisan issue. This is just a failure of the U.S. Government, and apparently millions a week do not add up to a lot. I will tell you, in East Tennessee, dadgummit, they mean a lot, and people are struggling to get by right now. And when we are throwing millions at people that want to kill us, to me, is, our so-called legacy news in this country ought to hang their head in shame for not talking about this at all because this is a complete disgrace. Would you comment on that?

Dr. MOBBS. I could not agree more, Congressman, and I think that the issue is not just the money that is going to the Taliban and Afghanistan. I think, broadly speaking, there needs to be more oversight and accountability of foreign aid dollars going to countries that hate us. I think the Senator said that people should be able to hate us for free. Currently, so much of our money is going to places like Yemen and Libya and Syria to be utilized allegedly for humanitarian purposes. Oftentimes, it is taken away and utilized for the nefarious purposes that you are speaking about.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, ma'am. I totally agree with that, and I would urge Senator Schumer to bring this bill up for a vote, tack it on to some other piece of legislation that is going to pass. I do not see how we can look at the American taxpayer that is struggling so hard, especially in East Tennessee. Folks are, you know, you see them at the gas pump, and they do not fill up. They get a quarter of a tank and they go to the store, and you can tell they are looking through their change, making sure they got enough, and that is pathetic. That is pathetic, and as usual, the war pimps seem to be making out pretty good. They get on both sides of these conflicts, and eventually it is going to be as my daddy, old World War II Marine, told me, he said, "Old men make decisions, and young men die," and we are going to get to that, so thank you. The American public, the people of this country deserve more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, gentleman. The Chair now recognizes—

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous consent request just corroborating the perspective of my friend from Tennessee. This is from *Business Insider*, "GOP Blames Biden for Afghanistan Withdrawal, but Trump Brokered the Deal." CNN: "Fact Check: Trump Administration Officials Tried to Rewrite Their Own Afghanistan History." *Forbes*: "Trump Denies Releasing 5,000 Taliban Prisoners, but His Administration Negotiated Their Release." And *The Hill*: "Former Afghan President Ghani Agrees

Trump's Deal With Taliban on U.S. Withdrawal was a Complete Disaster."

Chairman COMER. Without objection. So, ordered.

The Chair now recognize Mr. Frost from Florida.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, this is the House Rules Manual.

[Book]

Mr. FROST. And at the start of Congress, the House approves the House Rules. Every Republican Member on this Committee voted yes to it. On page 640, Rule XI, Clause 4(b), it states that this Committee, "may not be used for any partisan political campaign purpose." This hearing is in violation of the House Rules that we all voted on, including the Chair, including all the Republicans on the other side of the aisle. And all we have done in this hearing and over these hearings over this entire year is promote the Trump Campaign. And so, my question for the Chairman or for any Republican is, how can we allow this hearing to continue when we are in direct violation of the House Rules?

Chairman COMER. It is about the Biden-Harris policies. You can defend them—

Mr. FROST. That is what you say. You keep saying it is not about the campaign, it is not about the campaign, but Ms. Gunasekara, during her brief, in their opening, said "we are less than 2 months away from the election. Democrats are working overtime to rewrite the truth of the Biden-Harris Admin." One of my colleagues put up a report card to make the point that Vice President Harris should not be elected. Another one of my colleagues literally asked the witness, "why should Harris get the job?" and you expect us to believe that this hearing is not about the campaign?

This Committee functions as an extension of the Trump Campaign. First, we went after President Biden with a nonsense impeachment hearing. Then we went after his son. Now we are going after the Vice President because she is the nominee. And my question is, Mr. Chairman, are we going after Tim Walz next week because I hear from my staff that you are planning a hearing on Governor Tim Walz, even though he has been Governor for 5 years and his name has not been uttered in this room or in this Committee until something happened recently. Oh, yes. He became the vice Presidential nominee. Is he next?

Chairman COMER. His son is going to jail.

Mr. FROST. Oh, OK. OK. I am talking about Governor Tim Walz.

Chairman COMER. Oh. Oh.

Mr. FROST. Are we doing a hearing on him next week?

Chairman COMER. I will have to check the calendar.

Mr. FROST. You will have to check. OK.

Chairman COMER. I will let you know.

Mr. FROST. Well, we will see what happens next week. Someone whose name has not been uttered in this Committee, but now that he is the Democratic vice Presidential nominee, we are going to do a hearing on him, a complete and blatant—

Chairman COMER. And Trump—

Mr. FROST [continuing]. Use of official—

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Is not President. I—

Mr. FROST [continuing]. Resources for a political campaign is what this Committee has been, and anyone who has taken part in that should be ashamed of themselves.

Ms. Perryman, we worked together in 2023 when I hosted an ad hoc hearing to spotlight different issues in the state of Florida.

Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the ad hoc hearing memo and testimony.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered. And we are not doing a hearing on Walz. I just got confirmation.

Mr. FROST. Oh, OK. OK. For those concerned about Project 2025, people should know that Project 2025 is Florida 2024. Ms. Perryman, there are policies and lawsuits that have been popping up all over my state and across the south—book bans, abortion bans, voter suppression—that are now in the Project 2025 plan for the entire country. The architects of this plan want us to believe that this is some sort of organic, grassroots movement, but you and I know that this is really a small group of people. What is so dangerous about this trend for people in every state across America?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Well, Project 2025 would take away rights of the American people and beneficial programs that we have come to rely on in communities across the country. And so, I think that, you know, it really presents a profound threat to individual Americans. We have heard a lot about today about the plight of the middle class and the plight of workers in this country, and we know that it is hard for people to make ends meet. But Project 2025 would seek to undermine things that the Biden-Harris Administration have done, for instance, to qualify millions of American workers for overtime pay, and it would reduce a lot of programs that working families rely on.

Mr. FROST. Yes, I mean, two people in the state of Florida are responsible for about 50 percent of the book bans across the entire state. That does not sound like an organic grassroots movement to me. Ms. Perryman, of the policies these extremists are testing in Florida, which ones do you see these same groups laying the groundwork for at the national level, and how are they doing this?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Well, certainly attacks on the freedom to read, attacks on public education, attacks on just very basic ideas and history, we see in Florida. We have also seen, of course, the Governor of Florida seek to establish a state military and to try to deploy those individuals for his purposes, and we see a variety of those themes in Project 2025.

Mr. FROST. And we see happening right now with Amendment 4.

Ms. PERRYMAN. Absolutely.

Mr. FROST. I do not have much time left, but I just want to say Trump is trying to make it out like he does not know anything about Project 2025, but I do not buy it for 1 second, not when this Committee that functions as an arm of the Trump campaign invites Project 2025 authors to be their credible witnesses to attack the Biden-Harris Administration. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Fallon from Texas.

Mr. FALLON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know what I want to focus on today? The truth. Not your truth or my truth, but simply the truth. That would be a novel idea. And I will not be talking about the big boogeyman, Project 2025, all right? How about this?

Ms. Perryman, would you describe Kamala Harris, her role as the border czar, to be a success or a failure?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I do not agree with the premise of your question.

Mr. FALLON. And what premise is that?

Ms. PERRYMAN. You are calling her a border czar.

Mr. FALLON. OK. So, let us just say this. On March 24, 2021, the quote from President Biden, “I have asked her,”—the Vice President—“today, because she is the most qualified person to do it, to lead our efforts with Mexico and the Northern Triangle and countries that help—are going to need help in stemming the movement of so many folks, stemming the migration to our Southern border.” So, whether or not you want to call her the border czar, the boss, the don, the grand poohbah—

Ms. PERRYMAN. Or the Vice President of the United States.

Mr. FALLON. Or the person that the President of United States put in charge of the border, and this is what he tasked her with. One thing is undeniably clear: she was tasked with mitigating and reducing the flow, or better stated, the flood of illegal migrants from four countries, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. Do you agree with that?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Do I agree with what?

Mr. FALLON. That the President tasked her with mitigating the flow of illegal migration from those four countries?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I think, as the President called on Congress from day one of his Administration to do something—

Mr. FALLON. OK. So—

Ms. PERRYMAN [continuing]. About our immigration crisis, I think—

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

Ms. PERRYMAN [continuing]. It is also as—

Chairman COMER. You are under oath, Ms. Perryman.

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman, I reclaim my time. So, Ms. Perryman does not want to answer a very simple question. The American people just saw that quote. That was her task: get these numbers down. So, did she get those numbers down? Did she succeed or did she fail? Because since its inception, it was known as the Biden-Harris Administration. Now she wants us to forget about the hyphen and the “Harris.” So, Ms. Perryman does not want to answer. Mr. Krikorian, did she succeed or fail?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. No, I am not sure she even tried, but she did not succeed. Let us put it that way.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Again, let us talk about truth. This can be objectively ascertained because we have data. Donald J. Trump was in office, and the Biden-Harris Administration has been in office. Under Donald J. Trump, the illegal migration from those 4 countries was 1.8 million. Under this Administration, it was 4.3 million. That is a 239-percent increase, and by any empirical measure, that was an abject failure in reducing illegal migration. So, Joe Biden, Ms. Perryman, on numerous occasions, along with Kamala Harris, has asserted that the border was secured. Do you believe the border is secure?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I believe we need a border bill that this Congress should pass—

Mr. FALLON. It is not a trick question. Not a trick question. Yes or no? Is the border secure right now? Is our Southern border secure?

Ms. PERRYMAN. I am not here to testify about the border today.

Mr. FALLON. OK. So, I will take that as a yes. We all know it is not. In fact, Homeland Security Secretary, Alejandro Mayorkas, testified under oath in front of God, country, and Congress, "The border is no less secure than it was previously," and then he also said, "We don't bear responsibility for a broken system," but here is the thing. We have got data. And I am glad he was impeached because he deserved it.

Under even Barack Obama's Administration, 4 years, illegal encounters was 1.7 million. Under Donald Trump, it was 1.9 million. So, commensurate numbers. They are close. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, that figure was 10.6 million, a 557-percent increase. That was an abject failure. The Homeland Security Secretary was inaccurate, he was wrong, and I believe he was lying under oath.

In the last 20 years, *Washington Post* said that we had 172,000 illegal crossings in April, yes. We had not had a month in 20 years that we had over 200,000 illegal border crossings, had not happened in 20 years. Under this Administration, it has happened 28 times. We had Chinese communists, migrants, people from the Communist China; 1,282 in 2020, and this past year it was 27,000, a 2,100-percent increase. People on the terror watch list under Donald J. Trump, 4 years, there were 11 people that were apprehended on that list. Under this Administration, it was 375. Fentanyl deaths have doubled, and the people of Texas have had to bear the brunt. In the last decade-plus, we have had 299,000 criminal aliens arrested charged with 513,000 crimes and convicted of 187,000 of them. We are talking about murder, rape, kidnapping, burglary, et cetera.

The biggest and the greatest task, Mr. Chairman, any of us have in this dais is to keep Americans safe because if you are not safe, then you are not free. And it is very clear that if you want more of the same chaos, crime, cartels, corruption, then you keep the same people in power, but if you want change and you want to be safe and you want to put America first, you have an option to do that, too. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Ocasio-Cortez from New York.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You know, days like today are really deeply felt. I am going to speak briefly as the highest-ranking Latino or Latina on this Committee. We hear a lot of rhetoric on both sides about the issue of immigration, and it is precisely because it is seen as a border issue that millions of people suffer over and over and over again. It does matter that Vice President Harris was not the "border czar," and let me explain to you why. Because what Vice President Harris has been tasked with under President Biden's Administration is addressing the root causes of immigration. Once you have millions of people at the Southern border of the United States, you have lost.

We need to understand why people are coming to the Southern border of the United States and mitigating that in the first place.

And frankly, when we turn the page and look at what happened in the Trump Administration, we have to see where folks are coming from. And I am tired of hearing from people who cannot point out Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala on a map telling us about how to mitigate the millions of people seeking refuge. We should be eliminating the reasons why people are seeking refuge in the first place.

Under the Trump Administration, Donald Trump participated in what we saw in Venezuela and many of the regime change activities that were happening there. And what we saw most desperately are the horrific sanctions that were placed, not targeting specifically the Maduro regime, but the Venezuelan people, innocent Venezuelan people that are being starved of food and basic resources. That is what is contributing to a destabilizing environment and part of what they are fleeing. And that is not to conflate the Venezuelan people with the Maduro regime because I oppose the anti-democratic measures, in which even just recently in the election, Maduro's refusal to make public the results of a free and fair election.

You want to know how else Republicans have contributed to the immigration crisis? Marco Rubio has been sitting and sat and stalled and delayed key Ambassadorial appointments of the United States across the world. I, myself, led a congressional delegation to Latin America and sat across in the Colombian embassy where we had an acting Ambassador because Marco Rubio refuses to allow U.S. diplomacy to proceed. You tell me what is destabilizing. What is destabilizing? People have no idea. Legislators who are claiming to understand the issue of immigration do not have the slightest clue as to what is happening in Latin America while supporting the very policies that are driving people here in desperation in the first place. So do not talk to me about how Republicans have an answer to the issue of immigration.

Mr. KRIKORIAN, you advised the Trump Administration and Stephen Miller quite closely while President Trump was in office, correct?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. No. I mean, we talked to him. He called us for information, and we gave it to him.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. OK. So, he called you for information. You talked to him. I do not know how you interpret advising. That is how I would interpret advising. Now, you mentioned earlier that it is your position, we disagree, but it is your position, that you believe Haiti should have been colonized for longer, correct?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. It is not a position. It was a musing, a speculation on my part, a blog post.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. It is your musing that Haiti should have been—

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Yes. Sure.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Do you believe that the oldest colony in the world, Puerto Rico, should continue to be colonized as well, just as your position with Haiti?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Again, personally, CIS does not take a position on this, but I am for independence for Puerto Rico.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. OK.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. Strongly in favor of that.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. So, do you believe in the Trump Administration when Donald Trump raised selling the island of Puerto Rico?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. I do not even remember that one.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Oh, you do not remember when Donald Trump—

Mr. KRIKORIAN. No, I have not heard of that.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. I mean, I suppose that puts you in—

Mr. KRIKORIAN. I am not sure who he would sell it to, but I do not know. I mean, sure.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Yes. I suppose that puts you and Nicky Jam and Anuel in the same boat. President Trump did raise and consider selling the island of Puerto Rico. It is your position that Puerto Rico should have no affiliation. What process do you think that should happen by?

Mr. KRIKORIAN. I mean, I do not know. I have no idea.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. But you are not sure—

Mr. KRIKORIAN. It is not my area. I do immigration policy.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. OK.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. So, like I said, personally, I think Puerto Rico, because it is a distinct, separate country, it is a colony, and it should be given its independence. It is long overdue.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Given.

Mr. KRIKORIAN. It is not a CIS position.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. All right. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Langworthy from New York.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to enter into the record a letter that I sent to the FCC on April 8, 2024, urging the Commission to thoroughly scrutinize the transfer of ownership of Odyssey Incorporated to the Soros Management Fund.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Commissioner Carr, are you aware of this letter?

Mr. CARR. Yes, I am.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. OK. And can you give me a status update on the proceedings as they relate to the transfer of ownership of Odyssey Inc. to the Soros Fund Management Company?

Mr. CARR. Yes. As you have indicated, there is a transaction where a Soros-backed group would take ownership of over 200 radio stations across 40 different markets after the FCC originally indicated that that transaction could be reviewed and approved at the Bureau level without a Commission vote. It has now become clear that that is a decision before the full Commission, and it is one that I would assume now, or in the near future, the Commission would approve.

I think what is interesting about it is that the FCC here is not following its normal process for reviewing a transaction. We have established over a number of years one way in which you can get approval from the FCC when you have in excess of 25 percent foreign ownership, which this transaction does. And it seems to me that the FCC is poised to create, for the first time, an entirely new shortcut.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Yes. Thank you. As you pointed out here and previously, these proceedings for transfer of ownership have been expedited. What exactly makes this case so deserving of an expedited proceeding so far, from what you could tell?

Mr. CARR. There is nothing about this transaction that is out of the ordinary. It is the type of thing that we see all the time, and the FCC has a process for this. The full Commission itself has never signed off on a shortcut like this. What we usually do is we require people to file a petition with us. We bring in national security agencies. They can review the foreign ownership. It is probably no big deal here, but we review that foreign ownership, and then we vote. Here, they are trying to do something that has never been done before at the Commission level.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Yes. I must say, Commissioner, I am extremely alarmed at what is happening with this transaction. This is very unprecedented. Looking at the facts, it seems that the Administration is giving a left-wing billionaire, who is a major donor, a close ally, you know, one of the chief funders of all of their efforts in their dark money, a free pass to take control of hundreds of local radio stations flooding the airwaves with leftist propaganda, and I think it is blatant. What would a normal proceeding look like, Commissioner, here for the transfer of ownership in this nature?

Mr. CARR. If you followed the process of the FCC adopted back in 2016, there would be a petition for dictatorial ruling. We would bring in national security agencies. They would review the excessive foreign ownership that is involved here. They would figure out if there are any issues, again, probably not, but we do not know yet. We have not reviewed it. That could take 3 to 4 to 5 to 6 months. Then the full Commission would step in and decide up or down on the merits of the transaction. It looks like we got the cart before the horse this time.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. It certainly appears that way. From my perspective, local radio and local media are the lifeline of communities like those in my district, much of small-town America, and they offer a diversity of ideas and viewpoints that are not available elsewhere. And it is that diversity of ideas that the left, including, you know, partisan, very activist billionaires, like George Soros, like to stifle and they like to silence. And I am deeply disturbed that this Administration has fast tracked a process to hand over these stations to one of their most loyal funders. And make no mistake, they know exactly what they are doing and they welcome the result. And at this point, I will yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Would you yield your remaining minute and 20?

Mr. LANGWORTHY. I would be glad to yield.

Chairman COMER. I was wanting to go back on the regulations. With respect to the Green New Deal and these policies, all we know about Vice President Harris is what she talked about when she was running for President, as well as the policy she has while she has been vice president. Ms. Gunasekara, could you explain what the Green New Deal does with respect to the bureaucracy? I do not think my colleagues understand the frustration with the American people out there. The government is supposed to work for the people. My colleagues on the left are really concerned about the

bureaucracy and doing anything to disrupt the bureaucracy. But can you explain what the bureaucracy does to the consumers with respect to the Green New Deal and energy policies? Like, how does this affect our energy bill? How does this affect the grid and their reliance on and availability of energy?

Ms. GUNASEKARA. The bureaucracy right now has the power to determine what businesses succeed or fail, what industries succeed or fail. And what increasingly we have seen in the Biden-Harris Administration is they use that authority to push out and squeeze out of existence business and industries that have fallen out of political favor. And what this ultimately means for the small business owner that is trying to get a permit, is that they never get that permit.

Chairman COMER. Right.

Ms. GUNASEKARA. What it means for investors who have put up millions of dollars of capital investment, that that is frozen, and so the jobs and the economic development affiliated with that never manifest itself. And under this Administration, those decisions are made whether or not that business, that industry, or the person aligns with the ideology of the left.

Chairman COMER. Very good. I agree. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Tlaib from Michigan.

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. Of course, we heard a lot today from both sides regarding different views for our country. I mean, historically, it has always been the case. But I do want to focus on, and folks know and Chair Comer, I think, appreciates it, but I want to get centered to the everyday, daily life of our families at home.

You know, I hear a lot of them talk to me about, you know, what are the government's policies affecting, you know, their ability to put food on the table, lights. I think, you know, the cost of utilities is just increasing. I think the cost of water has gone up 400 percent nationwide. And I always tell people, you know, our families are living check by check, majority, and over 50 percent of my colleagues are millionaires. Really, Democrat, Republican, they will never fully understand the struggles of many of our families. And, you know, they are in survivor mode. I do not know how to explain it other than, like, survivor mode. They never have time to be able to think of 'how can I thrive?' and it is real. Like, I know we are in this, like, bubble of Congress, but it is very real out there.

So, a number of Americans, including many of my neighbors, rely heavily on overtime pay. Ms. Perryman, as you know, to make ends meet, they will bust their butt. They will work that 10, 20 hours because they got to get that tire fixed or they got to pay a certain bill that they did not expect. So, I know most, you know, again, Members are in an income bracket that is completely disconnected, so they do not understand what that means.

But you know, even with all those hours, sometimes they are not even eligible for like, overtime pay. And I am going to talk about—what is it, page 592 of Project 2025—where it says, "Congress should provide flexibility to employers and employees to calculate overtime period over a long number of weeks." Sounds great, right? Like, oh, flexibility. But when you actually go look down, you know, the implementation of it, this means you would be forced to work

long hours 1 week, then have your hours dramatically cut later in the month so your boss does not have to pay overtime. Is that correct, Ms. Perryman?

Ms. PERRYMAN. It is. It is.

Ms. TLAIB. What do you think the impact would be here?

Ms. PERRYMAN. We know it would be devastating, and that is not the only thing that is in Project 2025 that is devastating to working Americans who need to be paid for their work. It also would seek to revise the threshold by which you qualify for overtime, which is something that the Biden-Harris Administration, through the Department of Labor, did revise upwards so that more families could be paid fairly.

Ms. TLAIB. Yes, and I know the National Labor Relations Board is incredibly important. Many of our workers are, you know, folks in the labor community, I mean, day-to-day workers rely on the establishment of this Board to make sure that their rights are protected. You know, even in Project 2025, and the former President, you know, seriously continues to attack, saying that the National Labor Board is unconstitutional. I mean, this is literally the Federal agency that protects the right to organize and collectively bargain, many of which my colleagues, their parents benefited from that. Can you talk a little bit about the importance of that Board?

Ms. PERRYMAN. Yes, absolutely. I mean, it is incredibly important for the American people and for the fairness of our work force, for the ability of people to collectively bargain, including in workplaces that are structurally inequitable toward workers. And we do see it attacked not only in Project 2025, but in our courts and in a variety of contexts.

Ms. TLAIB. Yes. And you know, Chairman Comer, you know this. I mean, Project 2025, we keep talking, I know I wish we could, Chairman—and I always look at Cummings because we need to make sure that we are not bringing the campaigning inside the Capitol. It is what most Americans hate about Congress. I mean, I think our approval rating is 17 percent. Honestly, I want to talk about Postal Service. You know that. I want to talk about the cost of insulin, the Big Pharma. I want to talk about these issues. You know, Project 2025 is scary. It is.

As somebody that comes from the most beautiful, Blackest city in the country, all I keep thinking about is what is going to happen to my neighbors. Working class folks, what is going to happen to them? This is real. It is not something on paper. Implementation-wise, it will be devastating for families, you know. I just think we could do better. I think our families deserve better, for our country. We can use this Committee for so much more. Thank you so much, and I yield.

Chairman COMER. May I respond—

Ms. TLAIB. Sure.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. To my friend?

Ms. TLAIB. Yes.

Chairman COMER. Ms. Tlaib, we get along great. This hearing is about policy. It is a substantive hearing. I think many on your side have made it about this Project whatever it is that, that I have never read. The President—

Ms. TLAIB. It is just the—

Chairman COMER [continuing]. The former President said he is never read it.

Ms. TLAIB. Yes, I know, but—

Chairman COMER. And with respect to Postal, we have got that next month.

Ms. TLAIB. I know. I know.

Chairman COMER. DeJoy is coming in, I think, or somebody.

Ms. TLAIB. Look, I could talk about the COVID money because I want to know where that money is, right?

Chairman COMER. Yup.

Ms. TLAIB. All of us do. We could talk about a lot of those things, but yes. And Mr. Chair, just all due respect—

Chairman COMER. Right.

Ms. TLAIB [continuing]. It is hard for our families to be looking at this Committee and just rolling their eyes, and we wonder why the popularity of Congress continues to be reduced.

Chairman COMER. I respectfully disagree. We published a report last week about \$200 billion in unemployment insurance fraud—

Ms. TLAIB. Yes.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. That the Administration does not seem that concerned about.

Ms. TLAIB. We did that in a bipartisan—

Chairman COMER. We have talked about \$46 billion being spent on broadband that has never connected a single household. So, you know, we are concerned about waste, fraud, and abuse.

Ms. TLAIB. I agree. I can say it is 100 percent—

Chairman COMER. And that is kind of what we have been doing this whole Congress.

Ms. TLAIB. Yes. No, I know. We could do—

Chairman COMER. All right.

Ms. TLAIB. Yes. I appreciate that Committee hearing. I think we all appreciated it, and it was done in a bipartisan way.

Chairman COMER. All right.

Ms. TLAIB. I thank you again, Mr. Chair.

Chairman COMER. I thank the lady from Michigan. Her time has expired.

And that concludes our questions. In closing, I want to thank our witnesses, again, for being here today, for your testimony. This is not the easiest committee to testify in front of in this Congress. I now yield to Ranking Member Raskin for 4 minutes of closing remarks.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Witnesses, thank you all for your participation today.

You know, Mr. Frost made the key point that the hearing was framed as a partisan exercise, but at least it has invited a straight-up comparison between the economic records of Donald Trump and Joe Biden. Donald Trump left Americans with 3 million fewer jobs than when he started in office, the worst record since the Great Depression. Meantime, we have had, under the Biden-Harris Administration, the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years, 11 million new jobs created since 2021, including 750,000 new manufacturing jobs, and while bringing inflation down dramatically, putting us at the very top of the G7 countries in terms of our ability to deal with the supply chain problems caused by COVID-19 and Donald

Trump's lethally reckless stewardship of the country during that period when he was recommending that people inject themselves with bleach and hydroxychloroquine and all of these crazy things.

But look, the Inflation Reduction Act dramatically reduced prescription drug prices in America. I had constituents who were paying \$600 a month, Mr. Chairman, for their insulin shots as diabetics. The Democrats reduced that to \$35 a month and made similar dramatic cost reductions across the board for 25 or 30 new drugs. That is a dramatic change. Now, I know Republicans reject that. They are campaigning all over the country to repeal the Inflation Reduction Act, which did that.

We also led to create, finally, a \$1.2 trillion investment in infrastructure, the roads, the bridges, the highways, the ports, the airports, rail and trail, rural broadband. I cannot believe this slander against rural broadband in America. The program did not start until this last summer. That is why that money has not been spent. At least one of the witnesses conceded there had been lots of other money spent. But we are getting Republican Governors, like in Virginia and West Virginia, praising the program because of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been made available to the states in order to expand rural broadband.

But I do want to commend you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the witnesses, for your absolute forthrightness in bringing forward this panel of Project 2025 intellectuals, the people who wrote the plan, the people whose organizations have been involved in the plan, and the people who are defending the plan. I want to particularly commend Ms. Gunasekara—I hope I pronounced it correctly, finally—no, but maybe I got closer—Gunasekara, for saying not only does she support Project 2025, she thinks the idea of getting rid of 50,000 professional civil service workers in NOAA and NIH and FDA and all across the government is not enough. She said it does not go far enough. She wants to extend the demolition of professional civil service jobs and do what Project 2025 is advocating, which is replacing them with political appointees, flunkies, acolytes, supplicants, and sycophants who are willing to do whatever Donald Trump says.

Their unilateral executive theory is that the President should control everything that goes on in the executive branch, including by the commissions and by the boards, wiping out the independence of Federal regulatory commissions and boards. So, they want to slash reproductive freedoms. That includes IVF. It includes birth control, abortion, of course. They want a national ban on abortion in America. That is the reality of what we are talking about, and you have put the politics of it front and center today. And I am glad at least you have not been abashed about it the way Donald Trump is now running away as quickly as he can from Project 2025. You have put it forward, and I thank you for that. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired, and I apologize to the witnesses with his constant misstatements that the majority of this panel had anything to do with Project 2025. Honesty is not the Ranking Member's strong suit. So again, I apologize on behalf of this Committee.

You know, one of the things that is disturbing to me is, when I go back to Kentucky, listening to my constituents, they want government to work for them. They feel like government is not working for them. The policies are not working for them. And the most outrage I have seen from my colleagues today was not over the billions of dollars that have been wasted, was not over the billions of dollars that we left behind in Afghanistan. It was not over the wide-open border that is costing the taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. It was the notion of firing some bureaucrats, some bureaucrats, some fat cat bureaucrats. And you know, that is the level of tone deafness I think that you see by my colleagues on the left. And to imply that the Federal work force is not partial now, I mean, this Federal work force is populated overwhelmingly, if not nearly unanimously, by left-wing activists.

And when you talk about government, we have, you know, the judicial branch, we have the executive branch, and we have the legislative branch, but what has happened in a few years? There is a new branch of government: the bureaucracy. Government is too big. We need to rein in the size of government, one reason we have inflation. We have Biden-Harris inflation because the government has spent too much money. And there are necessary expenses of a government. It is necessary to fund Border Patrol. It is necessary to fund our military. It is necessary to fund social programs like food programs. I have always been a strong advocate for food programs, but it is not necessary to continue to grow these bureaucracies and to continue to hire these Federal left-wing bureaucrats that will not comply with the directives of the American people.

If the American people make a statement this election, that they want a different kind of policy with respect to energy policy. Is the EPA, the way it is populated now, situated and willing to comply with that new direction, the mandate that the American people say that they will voice? No. The answer is no.

And you know, Ms. Stansbury wanted to thank the witnesses for their transparency on background and policies. I appreciate that. Where is the transparency among my Democrat colleagues? What is the vision for the future for the Vice President? All we know are the policies of the past, and the policies of the past, as we have outlined in this Committee hearing, have been a huge failure, primarily to the American consumer who is having to struggle to pay for their grocery bills or having to pay more for rent, pay more for gasoline, pay more for every expense to the tune of \$11,000 to \$13,000 more per year for the same goods and services. The salaries did not increase \$11,000 to \$13,000. That is what inflation is, and we have inflation because of the bad policies of the Biden-Harris Administration.

I want to conclude with this. The Ranking Member mentioned the strong job market. His constituent, Jerome Powell, cut the interest rates yesterday by the—and I come from a banking background—by about as much as I have ever seen at one time, and he said the reason they did that is because of the weak job market. So, at the end of the day, we need to—the weak job market that was created with mass illegal immigration into this country that has had a negative impact on the job market. That is his words.

So again, I want to thank the witnesses for being here today to talk about substantive policy. I appreciate your willingness to come before this Committee.

And with that, without objection, all Members have 5 legislative days within which to submit materials and additional written questions for the witnesses, which will be forwarded to the witnesses.

If there is no further business, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:55 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

