

The majority leader has asked me to make some concluding remarks.

---

EXECUTIVE SESSION

---

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 588, 589, 642, 677, 678, 679, 680, and 681.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Joseph D. Brown, of Texas, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas for the term of four years; Matthew D. Krueger, of Wisconsin, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin for the term of four years; John H. Durham, of Connecticut, to be United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut for the term of four years; John C. Anderson, of New Mexico, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico for the term of four years; Brandon J. Fremin, of Louisiana, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana for the term of four years; Joseph P. Kelly, of Nebraska, to be United States Attorney for the District of Nebraska for the term of four years; Scott W. Murray, of New Hampshire, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire for the term of four years; and David C. Weiss, of Delaware, to be United States Attorney for the District of Delaware for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Brown, Krueger, Durham, Anderson, Fremin, Kelly, Murray, and Weiss nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

---

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

---

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a pe-

riod of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

---

FORCED SEPARATION AT THE BORDER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the actions by the Trump administration regarding undocumented immigrants in this country have been ineffective and nothing short of heartless. Their priorities have abandoned long-held practices such as the need to focus limited enforcement resources on those who actually present a public safety risk.

These changes are being felt by families across the country. Last fall, Rosa Maria Hernandez, a 10-year-old girl with cerebral palsy who was taken to the hospital for urgent surgery was forcibly taken into custody by ICE when she was discharged, instead of being released into the care of her parents as recommended by her doctors. A few months ago, Jose Fuentes who was fleeing El Salvador with his 1-year-old son, Mateo, was detained at the border and transferred to a facility in San Diego while Mateo was held in Texas. These actions are appalling and run counter to the time honored values in this country. No child should be separated from their parents in this way. The effect of such a traumatic experience and disrupted attachments on children, adolescents and families is longlasting. The cost of these failed policies will not be fully realized for years to come.

Under current policy, families are supposed to be kept intact while awaiting a decision on whether they will be deported and held in special family detention centers or released with a court date. The Trump administration's proposed policy change sends parents to adult detention facilities, while their children would be placed in shelters designed for juveniles or with a relative in the United States.

Wendy Smith recently wrote an article in the Chronicle of Social Change on the Trump administration's proposed policy of separating immigrant children from parents entering the United States illegally, as a means of deterring immigrant families from coming to the United States. I ask unanimous consent that this January 29, 2018, article entitled "Separating Families at the Border Will Multiply Child Trauma" be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Chronicle of Social Change, Jan. 29, 2018]

SEPARATING FAMILIES AT THE BORDER WILL MULTIPLY CHILD TRAUMA

(By Wendy Smith)

Parents do not uproot their children to make a long and dangerous journey to an uncertain future in the U.S. unless the circumstances in their home country are so

threatening that the risks of migration pale in comparison to more certain risks at home. They leave their homes, other family members, schools, churches and familiar communities because they feel they must.

In December 2017, the Trump Administration proposed a new policy of separating immigrant children from parents entering the U.S. illegally, as a means of discouraging or deterring immigrant families from Central America and other countries from coming to the U.S.

Although the administration has already engaged in this practice in some cases, this policy would alter the current standard, which has attempted to keep families intact while asylum issues are considered and addressed.

As a former psychotherapist, I saw firsthand the long-lasting effects of traumatic experience and disrupted attachments on children, adolescents and families. Having taught courses in child development, I know that development of the brain and the child are inextricably linked to environmental opportunities and dangers, and to the continuing presence of important relationships to mediate the environment.

Recovery from trauma and attachment loss is possible, but requires enormous time, effort and care. This knowledge tells me that a policy of separating families should sound an alarm for us all.

Advocates, immigration experts, academics and lawyers have voiced concerns regarding the issues of constitutionality, deterrence, negative effects and unanticipated consequences, alongside the undermining of the core American value of family unity.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—ratified by every country on the planet except Somalia, Sudan and the United States—specifies that children, including immigrant and refugee children, should be treated with dignity and respect and should not be exposed to conditions that may harm or traumatize them.

Family unity and reunification is one of the primary stated goals of the U.S. immigration system, found in many sections of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952. It is also a central theme of American identity. In *Moore v. City of East Cleveland*, the Supreme Court held that "the Constitution protects the sanctity of the family precisely because the institution of the family is deeply rooted in this nation's history and tradition."

The constitution does not allow the government to detain one asylum-seeking family for the sole purpose of deterring that action on the part of other families. And finally, through both United Nations conventions and protocols and U.S. law, migrants have rights not to be returned where their life or freedom would be threatened on the basis of race, religion, nationality, social group or opinion. If these factors exist, migrants can seek asylum if they can show "well-founded" fear of persecution.

The impact of such policies on children is severe. Stress is defined as the result of events or circumstances in which physical or psychological demands exceed our ability to cope. A critical buffer to the detrimental effects of stress is a protective relationship, such as with a parent who can provide comfort and a sense of safety.

Prolonged exposure to stress in the absence of a protective relationship causes the human stress response system to remain activated, preventing rest and recovery of the coping system, and the child's ability to manage or regain the sense of safety necessary to move forward in life is severely compromised.

Trauma, the most extreme form of toxic stress, is the occurrence of events or situations in which one's physical or psychological integrity is threatened (such as a