

[Rollcall Vote No. 109 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Collins	Isakson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	Young
Ernst	Paul	

NAYS—45

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Peters	Whitehouse
Harris	Reed	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy	Hirono	Rounds
Gillibrand	Kennedy	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Kenneth Kiyul Lee, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postclosure on the Lee nomination.

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the years, I have spent a great deal of time on the Senate floor highlighting the evolving challenges along our southern border.

My home State of Texas shares a 1,200-mile common border with Mexico, so any major shift in terms of who or what is arriving at the border is felt quickly by my constituents and by my State. In recent months, I have heard from the Border Patrol, local officials, nongovernmental organizations, community leaders, businesses of every size, and just average citizens alike about how the situation today is far more challenging than it has ever been before.

In the past, the number of illegal border crossings have fluctuated by varying degrees, but now we have seen a complete shift not only in number but also in the “who” of those crossing.

While we used to see single adults from Mexico, that is simply not the case anymore. There is no new net migration from Mexico, we are told. As Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost highlighted in a hearing last week, 68 percent of those apprehended are now families or unaccompanied children, and that is on purpose. The human smugglers have figured out what our laws are and how to exploit them in order to successfully place people in the United States by overwhelming our system. The 68 percent of families or unaccompanied children amounts to roughly 293,000 apprehensions so far this fiscal year—293,000. What is more, 70 percent of the unaccompanied children and families are occurring in just two Border Patrol sectors, the El Paso sector and the Rio Grande Valley sector, making the State of Texas and its border communities the hardest hit.

The vast majority of those crossing aren't from Mexico. They are coming from Mexico, but they are actually coming through Mexico. So far this fiscal year, 74 percent of the Border Patrol's apprehensions along the southern border are people from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador—what is called the Northern Triangle. This means that in 7 months, nearly 341,000 people from the Northern Triangle of Central America made the decision to leave their homes and to make a dangerous journey in the hands of a human smuggler to illegally enter the United States. Here is another shocking statistic, Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan recently noted that Guatemala and Honduras have seen more than 1 percent of their total population migrate to the United States in the first 7 months of this fiscal year—more than 1 percent of their entire population.

While it is abundantly clear that the mass movement of people across our border is a problem that must be addressed, it is an understatement to say that Members of the Senate disagree on what a solution looks like. We spent a lot of time debating the semantics of the entire situation without making any real progress. I believe our strategy to alleviate this humanitarian crisis hinges on three important steps:

First, we need stronger physical security at the border. The experts have told us that means three things: barriers and, in-hard-to-control places, people—that is law enforcement—and technology. That is what our frontline officers and agents need to do their jobs, and that is what we should provide.

Secondly, we need to provide Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol with the authorities—that means the laws—they need in order to effectively do their job. That includes closing the loopholes that are being exploited by the human smugglers and the illegal immigrants entering the country because they have figured out how to

game the system. They know our laws better than most Americans do.

Both of these are what are called pull factors—what attract people to come to the United States illegally. They are gaps in our physical security and legal system that encourage Central American migrants to make the dangerous journey north because their chances of making their way into the interior of our country are pretty high.

There is a critical third step here. We also need to eliminate the push factors. That is what is driving people from Central America on that dangerous road north through Mexico into the United States. The reason so many of these families are leaving their home countries in the first place boils down to poverty and violence. We know these three countries in the Northern Triangle are plagued by crime, corruption, and a lack of economic opportunities. Sometimes it is difficult for Americans to grasp the deep-seated nature of these problems and why it is so tough to resolve them because it is such a far cry from what most have experienced here at home.

In October of 2018, the International Organization for Migration conducted a survey of a group of Salvadoran migrants who banded together as a caravan to make the journey north. It found that 52 percent of the people who were coming from El Salvador cited economic opportunity as their motive for leaving the region, 18 percent cited violence and insecurity, 2 percent said they wanted to unify their families, and 28 percent cited some combination of these factors. Now, this may not be the case for migrants from each country, but it paints a broad picture of how these challenges are affecting them.

We must help these countries address their problems, but we can't do it for them. Looking at South America and the successful efforts we have had to help countries rebuild themselves into successful economies with security for their people, there is one that stands out the most, and that is Colombia. What is different about Colombia from the rest of these countries is we had, one, a bipartisan plan that was applied over many years by both Republican and Democratic administrations. We also had a strong partner, a leader, President Uribe in Colombia, which is something we are missing in Central America. Then we had a plan, as the name Plan Colombia suggests, so we knew what we were doing, and we knew how to measure success. We don't have any of these things now as part of our effort to help the Central American countries help themselves.

Having said that, I think that is a challenge we need to rise to, to find a way of helping these countries create economic opportunities and security for their people so we can help relieve some of the strain on our own border.

This morning, my colleague from Delaware, Senator CARPER, and I participated in a discussion by the Bush

Center and the Atlantic Council on how to promote economic growth in the Northern Triangle. I think it is very helpful for these think tanks to gather experts and come up with proposals we can consider and then vote on. Frankly, it is very hard for Congress—we don't have really the bandwidth to come up with proposals from the start, so it is helpful to have smart people from around the country, experts, who can help advise us.

We know this: One of the most fundamental problems standing in the way of prosperity for Central America is the security crisis. Because of endemic corruption and powerful criminal organizations, a genuine rule of law is missing in these countries and has been for generations. We have had some successes partnering with our closest neighbor in this crisis, Mexico, and I believe we can continue to build upon some of the programs we already have in place there. For example, the United States has partnered with Mexico in recent years through programs like the Merida Initiative to combat drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, and money laundering. There is a need for increased security cooperation and burden sharing to lessen the regional insecurity and damage caused by the growing influence of cartels, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations. We have directed funds toward strengthening communities and empowering the Mexican criminal justice system and judicial system to help combat the rampant culture of impunity that exists in Mexico, and I believe we have made some marginal gains, although there is a lot of work that needs to be done. We have also shared intelligence and cooperated in providing various forms of security.

The Bureau of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement continues to work to develop programs to combat international narcotics and crime, especially in Central America, but U.S. funding for this program in Mexico has stagnated. Additional aid for this program would combat transnational criminal organizations, improve drug interdiction, and train Mexican law enforcement and judicial personnel.

Moving forward, we should begin to look at the effectiveness of these existing programs so we can take full advantage of the work they do and ensure they are modernized to confront the evolving epidemic. It is nearly impossible to determine how or if this money is benefiting the people hit hardest by this crime and corruption, and that needs to change. It is no news that the Trump administration has recently announced its decision to suspend aid to Central America. While I believe aid to these countries is important in providing any semblance of long-term stability, I also think it is important to fundamentally examine where this money is going, what we are trying to achieve, and how effective these programs are at achieving that goal. That

seems pretty simple, pretty straightforward, but we actually don't have a plan, and we don't have any metrics to measure our progress.

We know the problem is getting worse because the number of people showing up on our border just continues to increase.

If we are going to ask the American taxpayer to foot the bill, we have a fiduciary duty to them to make sure the money is going to be well spent in pursuit of American interests. We can't do that right now.

Every dollar should be responsibly spent on initiatives to strengthen security cooperation, improve governance, enhance public security, and promote prosperity through pro-growth reforms.

If that is not the case, then we need to take a hard look at how we can improve our foreign aid program.

We need to provide the resources and training to help Central American countries stabilize their governments and their economies. But, again, we can't do this for them. We can't want an outcome more than they do. They need to want this. They need to provide the leadership to be a partner with us to help execute an agreed-upon common plan, and then we need to be able to show the American taxpayers that their money is being well spent because we are making measurable progress.

When the people begin to see the opportunity and safety in their home countries, making a long migration northward becomes less of a necessity.

I hope we can have these continued discussions here in Congress over the coming months. But even more than that, I hope we can focus on this as a problem that needs to be solved—one that is above politics and beyond politics and one that really threatens the security and safety of our own country because not only do we know that migrants come to the United States fleeing poverty and violence, but we also know these same criminal organizations transmit drugs into the United States. They move people for human trafficking and sex slavery, and this is a challenge for our country, as well as the entire region.

We can do this if we will simply focus on it and work together on this as a problem to be solved. But, again, we can't do this for these countries in Central America.

I think President Trump was correct to suspend the money we are spending there until we actually have a plan and a willing partner to work with to implement and execute this plan in a way that can demonstrate measurable progress.

We have a model in Colombia where this has worked in the past, but around the world where the United States is engaged in nation building, there are not a lot of models for success. There are a lot of examples of failure because of the complexity and difficulty of this, but this is something that should be getting our attention and something that should be a priority for all of us.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, in commemoration of National Police Week, families from across the country are gathering in Washington to pay respect to law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty last year.

Mississippi tragically lost four officers who are being recognized this week at ceremonies in Mississippi and here in the Nation's Capital.

On May 17, 2018, Officer Emmett Paul Morris, 61, of Louin, was killed in a car crash. Having served the Raleigh and Reservoir Police Departments, Officer Morris was described as "a kind man who had the spirit of service."

Patrolman LeAnn Simpson of Philadelphia, MS, died in an automobile crash while responding to a call on November 24, 2018. She was just 23 years old. Prior to joining the Philadelphia Police Department, Simpson was a sergeant in the U.S. Army.

The loss of two other officers from Mississippi last year has special significance to me because they had dedicated themselves to protecting my hometown of Brookhaven in Lincoln County, MS.

Officers James Kevin White, 35, of Sontag, and Corporal Walter Zachery Marshall Moak, 31, of Brookhaven, lost their lives in a terrible standoff on September 29, 2018.

Corporal Moak served with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office before serving with the Wesson and Brookhaven Police Departments.

Officer White, in addition to being a police officer, served in Iraq with the Mississippi National Guard.

I join the families and communities of these four Mississippi officers in remembering their lives and expressing sincere gratitude for their service.

Sadly, their sacrifice did not end our losses in Mississippi. Mississippians just yesterday, this past Monday, paused to mourn a veteran Biloxi police officer, Robert McKeithen, as he was laid to rest after being gunned down outside the police station on May 5, 2019—last Sunday.

These officers and Trooper Kenneth "Josh" Smith of the Mississippi Highway Patrol, along with the more than 160 officers from around the country who lost their lives, deserve national recognition.

Law enforcement officers risk their lives daily to help keep us safe, and any loss of an officer deeply affects entire communities. I greatly admire members of the law enforcement community who remain steadfast in the