

[Rollcall Vote No. 109 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Barraso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeben	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 postcloture 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