

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 246) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Pamela A. Barker, of Ohio, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Ohio.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened carefully this morning to Senator McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader, who came to the floor to speak to the issue of the border crisis which we now face. I acknowledge, as everyone should, that we are facing an unprecedented number of people who are presenting themselves at our southern border from primarily three countries—El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

These people who are presenting themselves, for the most part, are not trying to sneak across our borders; they are literally coming up and presenting themselves—identifying themselves—to the first person they find in a uniform. The reason is they want to apply for asylum in the United States. They want to make the argument that they have credible fears that might entitle them to be considered as asylees in this country, which is a legal classification.

After they state that they seek that status, they are taken into our system. They then, ultimately, go through a hearing process, but that hearing process is not done quickly. In fact, it can take months and sometimes years before the actual hearings take place. Because we are seeing so many people coming—especially young children who are accompanied by their parents or who are even on their own—it has created a special challenge for our border authorities.

I was down in El Paso just a few weeks ago. I met with the Border Patrol agents and the Customs and Border Protection agents, and we talked about the challenges they face. In my mind, there is no question that the numbers have overwhelmed the system to the point at which there are things happening down there that are absolutely unacceptable by American standards. I will give you an example.

Those who present themselves at the border are processed and put into detention cells, but these detention cells are not large enough to accommodate the number of people who come to our border. In El Paso, there was a cell that had a plate glass window on the outside so one could see everyone inside. Above the door of that cell was a sign that read "Capacity: 35." I counted the number of people in that cell on the day I visited. There were 150 who were jammed shoulder to shoulder inside the cell. About 20 of them, maybe 30, had an opportunity to sit on benches along the perimeter, but for the most part, they stood. They stood all day. They were fed their meals while they stood up, and I have no idea how they possibly worked out their sleeping arrangements. There was just no room for all of them to lie down on the floor at any given time, and there was one toilet in that room for 150 people. I learned afterward that the number in that cell increased shortly thereafter to 200. Next to it was a cell for women—capacity 16. Inside that cell, I counted 75 women, including women with nursing babies.

We now have press reports that state, because of the desperate situation these detainees face, there have been attempted suicides. This is in the United States of America. This is a situation we need to address. I couldn't agree more with the Republican leader from Kentucky that we need humanitarian assistance quickly to provide temporary housing or whatever is necessary so that there will be humane treatment of those who have been detained at our borders until they are processed through our legal system.

I might say, although the Republican leader came to the floor to blame the Democrats for not coming up with more money in a timely fashion, it was just this February when we joined, on a bipartisan basis, in voting for \$400 million more for humanitarian assistance at the border. There has been no resistance from this Senator or from this side of the aisle when it has come to

humanitarian assistance in addressing the issues that have been before us.

We remember—and it was not that long ago—the Trump administration's policy that was called zero tolerance. Do you remember? Certainly, I do. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that we were then going to have a policy of treating as criminals those who came across the border.

Now, understand what I mentioned earlier. You present yourself at our border for the purpose of seeking asylee status so that you will not be considered a criminal when you present yourself, which is perfectly within our legal system. Rather, Jeff Sessions said, if you come to our border and do not have legal status in the United States, you shall be treated as a criminal. In his having said that, there was a problem. It meant that they separated the children from their parents because, under Sessions' zero-tolerance policy, the parents were presumed to have been engaged in criminal conduct.

The result was awful. There were 2,880 infants, toddlers, and children who were separated from their parents at the border under the zero-tolerance policy. Yet there was a swift public reaction against it, and court cases were filed to stop this policy. In one of the few times since he was elected President, this President came forward and said he was wrong—that this policy was not good and that he was going to end it.

The problem was, in his having separated those children, our government has not kept track of where their parents have gone and how we might possibly reunite them in the future. It took a Federal judge in Southern California to come forward and mandate that our agencies of government find those children and reunite them with their parents.

We didn't accomplish it completely. Overwhelmingly, it took weeks and months for us to put them together because no one thought to keep track of where the parents were headed and where their children were headed. Eventually, we put it together for all but, say, 100, I think—the final number of children for whom we just couldn't find their families and parents.

That was a horrible situation, but it is a reminder to us today as we reflect on what is going on at the border. For goodness' sake, we should all demand the humane treatment of people at our border, particularly of the children. Six children who came to our border died while they sought this asylum status. That is unacceptable.

In fairness to the Department of Homeland Security and to all of those involved in it, I don't believe for a second that they consciously allowed this to happen, but we did not provide the kind of medical assistance that might have ordinarily been provided in these circumstances. We are told that this is changing for the better, and I salute and applaud the efforts to reach that.

When it comes to the humanitarian assistance that Senator McConnell