

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Greg Gerard Guidry, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it doesn't matter whether you are watching FOX News or reading the editorial page of the New York Times, the media—indeed the Nation—is in broad agreement that there is a crisis on our southern border, and the responsibility lies squarely with Congress to fix it.

Month after month, the number of people crossing our border has ticked up and up and up, and the only people who seem unfazed by these mind-boggling numbers—144,000 last month alone—are House Democrats.

Despite continued pleading from officials at the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, and some of our Democratic friends in the House, the leadership in the House of Representatives is still trying to absolve themselves of any responsibility to act. Well, it is getting harder and harder for them to ignore this crisis that continues to get worse on our border. The recordbreaking number of migrants who cross our border make a difficult and dangerous journey to get here. They travel in the company of human smugglers, appropriately known by most as coyotes. These criminal entrepreneurs do not view the migrants in their custody as human beings. They view them as cargo. It is really their meal ticket.

Coyotes get their customers to the United States, but a safe journey is not part of the deal. Migrants, especially children, often arrive at our border in poor health, suffering from dehydration, exposure, any one of a number of infectious diseases, and, unfortunately, sadly, many are left for dead by their smugglers.

Last week, Border Patrol found a young girl believed to be about 7 years old from India, dead and alone along the border in Arizona. The area where she was found is a rugged desert, and the temperature that day was 108 degrees.

Stories like this are heartbreaking and more common than many want to believe. Those who survive the torturous journey from Central America up through Mexico and into the United States often arrive in critical health. The national Border Patrol Council vice president, Jon Anfinson, has been an agent for 12 years and is based in Del Rio, TX. He said the number of people in custody and the high rate of illnesses is “unprecedented.”

He has seen cases of scabies, chickenpox, mumps, measles, flu, body lice, and countless common colds. Overcrowded facilities make these illnesses

spread like wildfire, and even the Border Patrol agents and people offering assistance to these migrants are getting sick too. That is because Congress has not appropriated the money for the facilities, funding, and for the personnel to manage these record-breaking numbers. They are obviously in dire need of our assistance.

Last month, the administration requested \$4.5 billion for the Department of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Justice to address this growing crisis.

Two weeks after this request, the situation had grown so much worse than expected that the Secretary of Health and Human Services notified Congress that the Department would soon be running out of funding and that another \$1.4 billion could be needed for humanitarian assistance alone. That brings the total to almost \$6 billion. Since the funding request was submitted, more than 144,000 individuals have illegally crossed our border, adding to the growing weight these folks are feeling.

Without providing the necessary funding, we are sending these dedicated law enforcement officials out on a losing mission. We are asking them to carry the weight of hundreds of thousands of migrants without giving them the tools they need to do so.

Enough is enough. It is high time Congress steps up and come to an agreement to get much needed and long overdue funding to the men and women struggling to manage this humanitarian crisis not of their making. This critical funding is needed along the entire southern border but particularly in the Rio Grande Valley and El Paso sectors, which have been disproportionately affected by the dramatic increase in crossings.

For months, communities in Texas have requested help in feeding, transporting, and sheltering these migrants. They have gone above and beyond the call of duty, diverting millions of dollars in local taxpayer funds that are traditionally intended for things like clean water and power for their own residents.

Today I am sending a letter to the Appropriations Committee and asking them to include assistance to these communities. The Appropriations Committee is holding a markup tomorrow, and I hope they can come to an agreement to provide the Departments, Agencies, and local communities in Texas struggling to manage this crisis with the resources they need to be successful. To borrow a saying from Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost, the current situation is akin to holding a bucket under a faucet. It doesn't matter how many buckets you have if you can't turn the water off. The emergency funding is a bucket, and hopefully it will be a sufficient bucket, but we still have to get to the source of the problem.

Last week, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan

testified before the Judiciary Committee and said: “I want to make clear that this crisis is unlike anything we've ever seen at our border and it, in large part, is due to the gaps in our immigration laws that are driving it, causing a dramatic demographic shift in the flow of illegal immigration into the United States that is placing children at unique and critical risk.”

Of the more than 144,000 people who illegally crossed the border in May, 69 percent were either unaccompanied children or families. The number of unaccompanied children apprehended last month is larger than any monthly total from the surge in 2014, back when President Obama called it “a humanitarian and security crisis.” It is an understatement to say we lack the resources to properly care for these children.

In addition to providing more resources and better care, we need to get to the “why” of these rising numbers. I have no doubt this surge in humanity is being driven by the pull factors in the immigration system, most notably the Flores settlement agreement. By “pull factors,” I mean the thing that attracts the migrants to attempt to make this dangerous journey from their homes into the United States.

The Flores settlement agreement is one of them. In the beginning, the Flores settlement agreement provided additional standards of care for children, including a limit on the time they could remain in DHS custody, but a subsequent, flawed court ruling expanded this agreement, in effect applying it to families as well. That essentially turned children into a “get out of jail free” card for migrants, something which is now openly advertised by the coyotes in Central America.

In other words, the coyotes—the smugglers who earn money off of each person they bring into the United States—are letting these people know that if you just come as a child or if you come as a family, you are going to be able to make it successfully into the United States, and it is a money-making proposition, obviously, for them.

A recent Washington Post article quoted a man as saying the following:

That is the thing that everyone knows now. If you go, you need to bring a child.

This has gotten so bad that Acting Secretary McAleenan said the Border Patrol is now running DNA tests and is discovering significant numbers of adults who are claiming a biological connection to a child that is not theirs. This is the ultimate “get out of jail free” card: Bring a child—anybody's child.

This loophole has turned into a major pull factor, and single adults are using it to their advantage. Rather than arriving at the border alone, they are bringing kids with them so they can pose as a family unit and be released in 20 days. These aren't all legitimate families, as I said. It is no exaggeration to say that children are literally being kidnapped to serve as a