



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024

No. 27

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 12 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, there are no two lawmakers with identical needs. You know their needs. Bless them in a way that will meet their needs.

Lord, strengthen them for life's challenges, empowering them to endure difficult times, buoyed by faith and confidence in You. Provide them generously with wisdom to solve the problems that beset our Nation and world and to sidestep temptations that dishonor Your Name. Keep them from pride and self-conceit, as they focus on serving You by serving others.

Lord, stay with them until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, the busy work is hushed, the fever of life is over, and their work is done.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

REMOVING EXTRANEEOUS LOOP-HOLES INSURING EVERY VETERAN EMERGENCY ACT—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 815, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 815) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Murray) amendment No. 1388, in the nature of a substitute.

Schumer amendment No. 1577 (to amendment No. 1388), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 1578 (to amendment No. 1577), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 1579 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1388), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 1580 (to amendment No. 1579), to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF FLIGHT 3407 CRASH

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I speak about the supplemental and our upcoming business, I am going to say a few words about Flight 3407, the tragic flight where over 50 people died in a cold winter's night in Buffalo. It is the 15th anniversary. I can't be in Buffalo with the families; so I am going to say a few words here first.

Later this afternoon, at a memorial on Long Street in Clarence, NY, the families of Colgan Air Flight 3407 will mark 15 years since their loved ones tragically perished in a devastating plane crash.

In the blink of an eye, every single passenger, every single crew member, and one New Yorker on the ground were killed on a freezing Thursday evening. It pains me that I can't be in

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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S859

Western New York today for their vigil, but I want to tell the families who have lost loved ones: I am with you in spirit and will always be by your side.

Working with the families to strengthen America's aviation laws has been one of the most satisfying and inspirational things I have done in my entire time of Congress. I have laughed and cried with the Kausners, the Eckerts, and so many of these wonderful people more times than I can count.

Today, from here on the Senate floor, I join with the families to remember those that we lost and to honor their legacy, which has changed the course of American history when it comes to the safety of our skies.

The Scripture says, in moments of darkness, it is natural to turn inward, to curse the darkness, but that if you are able to light a candle instead, that is saintlike.

These families are saintlike. They lost loved ones. The holes in their hearts exist every single day. But instead of turning inward to the darkness, they decided to light a candle and work diligently and persist and change the laws so it wouldn't happen to others in the future. For 15 years, instead of cursing the darkness, these families of Flight 3407 lit a candle. In their grief, the families came together. They organized and raised their voices.

I was proud to be their champion in the Senate to help pass the most significant aviation law of the 21st century, in 2010. I was moved by the families from the beginning. We worked hand in hand after the crash to fix our aviation safety laws to make them the strongest in the world. When I became majority leader, I vowed to ensure these safety provisions the families fought for would not be rolled back.

Because of these families, airlines across America are safer. Praise God, we have not had a single fatal crash of a major airline in America since 2009.

These families helped establish the 1,500-hour training rule that pilots must follow. They helped create a pilot records database and new rules around pilot fatigue to help ensure that what happened on 3407 never happens again.

These families' advocacy is just what the Founding Fathers envisioned: average citizens, with heartfelt convictions, persisting in getting it done. These families didn't have campaign contributions, deep pockets, or super-PACS. All they had was their convictions.

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton would all be proud because these families made Congress listen. They made Congress act. They changed the law. Their efforts have undoubtedly saved lives.

I want to thank so many of my colleagues, particularly Chair CANTWELL and the head of the subcommittee, Senator DUCKWORTH, for working with us to preserve this law.

So, today, we honor these families and remember their loved ones. But we

also acknowledge the fight is not done. The fight is one that will always continue.

The Senate Commerce Committee advanced the bipartisan FAA reauthorization bill that protected the rules for the safety of pilots, crew, and passengers that the families pushed for—again, thanks to Chairman CANTWELL for her leadership and Chair DUCKWORTH for her leadership as well.

We went through the text with a fine-tooth comb to make sure the safety rules were not touched, working hand in hand with the families, talking to them every week. I am glad we succeeded and look forward to moving on the FAA bill reauthorization as quickly as possible. It is vital the FAA reauthorization be passed by Congress.

In conclusion on this issue, we will remember those who are lost. We also say thank you to all the families for lighting a candle, finding a better way—a safer way—for the future.

Thank you, families, for your courage, your brilliance, and your grace. You changed the history of aviation, something very few can say.

H.R. 815

Madam President, now on the supplemental, over the weekend, the Senate took the significant step toward passing the national security supplemental by voting last night on cloture on the substitute, 67 to 27.

By now, we have taken numerous procedural votes that prove beyond a doubt that there is strong support behind this bill. It is time to finish the job and get this critical bill passed.

If we want the world to remain a safe place for freedom, for democratic principles, for American prosperity, then elected leaders need to put in the work to make that happen. We need to improve the investments that ensure our people's security, ensure the security of our partners, and prevent our adversaries from gaining an edge over us.

These are enormously high stakes of the national security package: our security, our values, our democracy. It is a downpayment for the survival of Western democracy and the survival of American values.

The entire world is going to remember what the Senate does in the next few days. Nothing—nothing—would make Putin happier right now than to see Congress waiver in its support for Ukraine. Nothing would help him more on the battlefield. And if some people think Putin is going to stop at Ukraine; if they think it is somehow better to reason with him, to appease him, to hear him out; then these modern-day Neville Chamberlains ignore the warnings of history: The appetites of autocrats are never ending.

Make no mistake, the war in Ukraine is not some regional struggle. Its effects will reverberate around the world. The Chinese Communist Party, the Iranian regime, and all of our adversaries are going to take note if America fails to defend a democracy, an ally in need. They will conclude that, if America

fails one of our friends, it will fail others too, and they will act accordingly.

Imagine what kind of message failure by Congress will send to NATO. Imagine what it sends to our partners whose troops fought with us and bled with us and died with us after 9/11, even though it wasn't them who were under attack.

Imagine what message and action it would send to Taiwan or the Philippines or other places around the world. The message, if we fail, would be that America can't be trusted. We, as a body—as a Congress—and as a country cannot afford to send that message.

Protecting democracy is not for the faint of heart. Sometimes it requires us to make difficult choices in this Chamber, but that is precisely what the American people sent us here to do.

In generations past, Democrats and Republicans would have moved Heaven and Earth to stand up to Russian autocrats. We would have balked at the mere thought of showing weakness to thugs who attack our friends and villains who seek America's demise.

We find ourselves, yet again, in a moment of history when democracy is under siege. We heard directly from President Zelenskyy what is at stake if we fail. So fail, we must not. It has been long enough—long enough.

I urge my colleagues to come together and finish working on the supplemental. We will not rest until the job is done.

QUORUM CALL

Madam President, for the information of Senators, we will have a live quorum. I ask Senators to stay close to the floor until we get this bill done.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll, and the following Senators entered the Chamber and answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 1]

Barrasso	Grassley	Padilla
Bennet	Hagerty	Peters
Blackburn	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Romney
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Britt	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Butler	Johnson	Schumer
Cantwell	Kelly	Shaheen
Capito	Kennedy	Sinema
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Casey	Lankford	Tester
Collins	Lee	Thune
Cornyn	Lujan	Vance
Crapo	Manchin	Warner
Daines	Menendez	Warnock
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Moran	Welch
Ernst	Mullin	Young
Graham	Murphy	

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. A quorum is present.

The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, for the information of our colleagues, I want to bring everyone up to date on where we are.

For the past few days, the leadership on both sides of the aisle, as well as the bill managers on both sides of the aisle, have been working diligently, night

and day, to try to get agreement to consider debate and to have votes on a series of amendments offered by Senators on both sides of the aisle.

Obviously, in order for that to occur, we would need the cooperation of all Members; and we would need to have time agreements because the number of amendments is considerable. Regrettably, I have to inform my colleagues that there have been objections on both sides of the aisle that impede our work going forward.

So, at this point, unless these objections are withdrawn, it is going to be very difficult to have the robust amendment process that many of us—most of us—want to have. And I just wanted to let my colleagues know where we stand.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I come to the floor today in opposition to the Senate's effort to give away 60 billion more of our taxpayer dollars in weapons to Ukraine. We should not give another dime to Ukraine until we secure our border for our citizens. That is what we are here for.

In December, all 49 Republicans voted to defeat similar legislation because it did nothing for our southern border.

Senate Republicans were unanimous. We had a consensus in the Republican conference that we should not give more money to other countries until we secured our southern border. I still believe that. My position has not changed since December. The 17 Republicans who voted to take up this legislation can explain their change of heart themselves. It is up to them. My demands have not changed. We should not send a dime to Ukraine until our borders are fully secured. We have already given Ukraine more than \$120 billion. This is more than enough money to secure every border in our country.

Unfortunately, but predictably, the \$120 billion we sent to Ukraine has resulted in a yearslong stalemate that has cost hundreds of thousands of lives, both Ukrainian and Russian.

This money is in addition to the Executive actions that Joe Biden has taken to isolate Russia from the global financial system. None of this has worked to either deter Russia or force parties to the table to negotiate a diplomatic solution. Yet some of my colleagues think that another \$60 billion—another \$60 billion—of what \$120 billion failed to do will do the trick. It doesn't make sense.

Now should be a time for diplomacy—what a thought. Bring this war to an end. Stop the killing and bloodshed. When Joe Biden took office, he went to the State Department and claimed "Diplomacy is back." That turned out to be a lie. We have yet to see a diplomatic effort from this administration. Joe Biden's idea of diplomacy is sending Anthony Blinken to Israel to tell

Israel to slow down the war in Gaza. That is not diplomacy. We need some real diplomacy in Ukraine.

Right now, we are facing the possibility of a regional war in the Middle East. There have been 160 attacks on our troops in the Middle East since October 7. We are also facing the possibility of war in the South China Sea, with China threatening Taiwan.

A real leader has the right priorities. We cannot get involved in every conflict around the world. Last year, there was a war in Ethiopia. I ask my colleagues who support Ukraine, should we have paid for that? Last year, there was a war in Armenia. I ask my colleagues, should we have paid for that? No one was clamoring for billions in weapons for those two wars. Yet our entire defense industry is now being largely put in service to Ukraine.

Under Joe Biden, Americans' foreign policy is no longer dictated by American interests. It is not even dictated by American ideals. Instead, it is dictated by simplistic moralism with no depth or intellectual heft.

A land war in Europe is not America's top priority. Even President Obama said 13 years ago that we needed to pivot to Asia—13 years ago. Can there be any doubt that our No. 1 rival and adversary is China? It is not Russia. China is watching us. President Xi is watching America bankrupting ourselves for a war that gains us absolutely nothing. We can have a conversation about shifting Ukraine aid to somewhere high-priority, like Taiwan, but right now, aid to Ukraine is two-thirds of this bill.

The bill also includes money for Gaza, which is controlled by Hamas. The vast majority of Gaza supports Hamas. They elected Hamas as their leaders. The bill would send billions to Gaza. Can there be any doubt that some of that will end up in the hands of terrorists? I don't think there is.

Much of what we have sent to Ukraine has been stolen or wasted. There has been a complete lack of oversight. In this year's Defense bill, we finally got an inspector general for Ukraine aid, but it is a little too late. There has already been enormous theft and money laundering of our tax dollars in Ukraine. You don't have to take my word for it; Zelenskyy fired his own Cabinet members for corruption. Ukraine has been one of the most blatantly, notoriously corrupt places in the world for a long, long time.

We are paying Ukraine farmers, and yet we just punted the farm bill for American farmers to next year. We have been paying Ukrainian pensions. We can't even pay our own pensions in this country. We have paid more than \$6 billion for Ukrainian pensions. That is enough money to pay for President Trump's border wall, an amount that the sitting Vice President said was too expensive.

We don't have a plan. We do not have a plan to win the war in Ukraine. We also don't have a plan for Ukraine if it

loses. The Biden administration simply says "as long as it takes." Hell, that is not a strategy; that is a blank check from the American taxpayers to another country. It would be irresponsible to give a blank check to any other country.

Three out of four dollars of Ukraine aid in this bill are for after the current fiscal year. It is not now. We keep hearing that we can't wait 2 weeks. This money is not going to Ukraine for months. And they say they are running out of aid. In other words, this money is for the next President. It is intended to force the next President to continue this war.

So I stand opposed to this legislation. I am not the only one. This bill could not pass the House of Representatives. Therefore, this bill is not going to become law. Passing this bill is purely an exercise in messaging. What message does this bill send? It says that those elected to represent Americans care more about the borders of countries halfway around the world than our own. It is not a winning message.

The American people are opposed to a blank check to Ukraine. The American people are saying enough is enough.

The arguments for this bill have been utterly lacking. Some of my colleagues have argued that Vladimir Putin wants to conquer the world. This is absurd. He can't beat Ukraine. Russian tanks are not going to conquer Europe if we don't pass this bill.

Another argument that has been made is that this money will stay in the United States to support defense contractors. In fact, a Washington Post columnist tweeted at me yesterday, claiming that we should pass this bill to give more money to Alabama's defense contractors. You know, it wasn't long ago that this would be referred to as corruption, but that is the kind of thing that gets published in the Washington Post these days.

Simply put, his argument is more about people should die so that we can increase profits for a few American companies. It is disgusting. These are the same people lecturing us about the morality of supporting Ukraine.

Alabama is deeply, deeply proud to be the top State in America when it comes to the defense industry. I strongly support Alabama's defense industry. I support funding Alabama's defense industry to strengthen our military. I support funding to replenish our stockpiles. It will take months, if not years, to do that. We are far behind. We couldn't fight one war right now, much less three.

The arguments from the other side just don't add up, so it is no surprise that they have resorted to personal attacks and name-calling. One of my colleagues accused opponents of Ukraine aid of getting their "messaging from Russia." This is the best argument they can come up with—name-calling. If you oppose a blank check to another country, I guess that makes you a Russian.

We are \$34 trillion in debt. We are borrowing \$80,000 a second, \$4.6 million a minute. American taxpayers, listen to that one more time. We are borrowing \$80,000 a second, \$4.6 million a minute. Does that make any sense when you are \$34 trillion in debt? We cannot afford to keep giving any money to any countries or any illegal immigrants flooding our border. We don't have it. We are taxing the future of this country.

There is no moral, economic, military, or political argument in favor of more Ukraine aid. Our country—our country—has serious problems of its own, and we need to solve them. But there is no solving any of those problems in this room. It is about spending.

The top of that list is the southern border. If we are so worried about Russia, what about the actual Russians who are entering our country on a daily basis through the southern border? What about that? Is anyone in Washington worried about the Chinese coming in this country every day? It doesn't seem like it. Day after day, month after month, we are failing to meet that crisis with the seriousness it deserves.

Earlier this week, Senate leadership on both sides of the aisle laid out our border giveaway bill that had been written in secret by three Senators over a period of months. We were not allowed to see it until last Sunday night. For weeks—for weeks—there were leaks coming to the press about what it was. When my colleagues and I expressed concerns about these leaks, we were attacked. The authors of the bill said that it was fake news and wouldn't let us see the bill until last Sunday. However, once we got the text, we found out these leaks were true. The bill was even worse than we had feared.

Senators from across the spectrum of the Republican conference came out in opposition. Even some of the Senators who were initially involved in writing the bill opposed it.

After the bill was rejected, we were told that we were "playing politics" if we weren't from a border State. Here is the reality: Under the Biden administration, every State is a border State.

I met with some Alabama sheriffs last week from across our State. They are being absolutely overrun—overrun—by drugs, crime, criminals, illegal aliens. Every single part of every single State is being hurt by this border crisis. Do you think this body cares? No.

I won't belabor the point, but the border bill is a giveaway—is a giveaway. This bill did not attempt to address the seriousness of the crisis. This is the worst border crisis in the history of our country. It is worse than any natural disaster we have ever seen. Yet the response from Senate leadership to this crisis has been superficial, uncaring, and dismissive. The so-called border bill was more of a border giveaway than the actual border bill.

Remember, President Trump had the same laws on the books as President

Joe Biden does. President Trump secured the border. It was a priority. Joe Biden opened it up his first day in office. So new laws are not absolutely necessary, but certain new laws would be very helpful.

I have proposed an amendment to the Ukraine bill that would actually truly secure the border. This amendment, the Border Safety and Security Act, would simply suspend all illegal entries completely until DHS has operational control of the border. They have no control—no control whatsoever.

My amendment prohibits mass parole programs. This Schumer border giveaway bill would have allowed parole programs to continue.

My amendment prohibits catch-and-release and requires detention. The border bill required the release of illegal aliens if we had passed it.

The Schumer bill would have allowed thousands of illegal border crossings a day. My amendment would mean zero illegal crossings. It also allows States to sue the administration if it doesn't do its job and enforce the laws.

We should not pass the Ukraine bill until we first pass a border bill. That is my position, that was my position in December, and it is my position again today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, open the champagne, pop the cork, the Senate Democrat leader and the Republican leader are on their way to Kyiv. They have got \$60 billion they are bringing. I don't know if it will be cash in pallets, but they are taking your money to Kyiv.

Now, they didn't have much time, really no time and no money to do anything about our border. We are being invaded. A literal invasion is coming across our border—800,000 people came illegally last month—and all they had time to do in the Senate was get the money, get the cash pallets, load the planes, get the champagne ready, and fly to Kyiv.

On Friday, they will take the \$60 billion to Kyiv, crack the champagne; and meanwhile, each day, between 5 to 10,000 people come across the border illegally.

Now they put up a sham bill, and they said: You should have taken the sham bill. You should have taken the ruse. We gave you a border bill. But the border bill would allow 5,000 people a day to come across, and then they would declare an emergency.

Guess what? The emergency is already here.

Madam President, 700,000 people in 2 months is an emergency. Nearly 800,000 people in 2 months is an emergency. But they gave lie to the ruse when they tweeted out their great bullet points on how great this deal was going to be. They tweeted out: The border never closes.

So they were putting forward this great border bill that the President

would use to stop illegal immigration, but they tweeted out that of all the main points that this would do, the border never closes. And this is actually true, because what would happen is they would close the illegal crossings, but leave the legal crossings open.

It is like, why wouldn't we have the illegal crossing always closed? Why wouldn't we, after having 750,000 people come in illegally, close down the illegal crossings immediately? And what also gives lie to their assertions is that we have the same laws we had under President Trump and President Trump controlled the border.

So how could President Trump do it with the same set of laws, and now they are saying if you only gave us power, we would do something? But what gives lie to this assertion is that they are in court every day trying to dismantle the barriers that Texas puts up.

Texas and 30-some-odd Republican Governors have said: Enough is enough. They have put cargo containers and razor wire on the border to say: No more illegal crossings. So the Biden administration, who says just give us more power and we will do something about the border, went all the way to the Supreme Court to get the power, and they have it temporarily—they may not keep it—but they have fought tooth and nail to remove the cargo containers, remove the razor wire, and remove the border barriers.

So which is it? They want more power to shut down illegal immigration, or they want to remove the border obstacles to illegal immigration? They can't have it both ways.

Well, some would argue that this appears to be that you don't want immigrants in your country. Nothing could be further from the truth. We admit a million immigrants to our country every year, and I am for that. In fact, I am cosponsor of a half dozen bills to increase lawful immigration. I think it would be difficult for America to do a lot of things, including building houses, apartments, and commercial construction, without new people coming to the country.

I think some of the best Americans just got here. Many of them are my friends. Bowling Green, KY, is known for people from all over the world. We have a hundred languages being spoken in our schools. This has nothing to do with not wanting immigrants.

It has to do with not wanting 750,000 people to come across who we don't know who they are. Most of them are males of a military age. And we are doing nothing. So we come to an inflection point. That is where we are, an inflection point, and we had a chance.

Madam President, 41 of us—41 Republicans—could have stood and said, no, we want something better. There is an emergency on the border; we will not settle for anything until we get a border security bill.

Instead, it folded. Why? Because Republican leadership is flying with the

Democratic leadership to Kyiv because they have prioritized Ukraine over the southern border. There is no other way to put it.

We have a disaster at our southern border, and the ranking Republicans and the ranking Democrats, there is no difference, they are on the same team. They will be on the same plane to Kyiv—Republicans and Democrats, same plane, pallets of cash, your money, to Ukraine.

Even if you could make the argument—and I think there is an argument that there is a noble cause, that these people are fighting for their independence, and they are fighting against aggression. All of that is true—but there is no money to give them. We are out. We are flat out of cash. Not only are we flat out of cash, we are \$34 trillion in the hole. We are borrowing money like it is going out of style.

We have never ever borrowed money at this alarming rate. It is hard to even fathom the billions of dollars that goes out the door. It has been said before, but people have asked: How do you imagine—how do you put into perspective a billion dollars? What is a billion dollars?

If you put a million dollars in the palm of your hand in thousand-dollar bills, it would be 4 inches high. But a billion dollars is difficult—more difficult to visualize. To put a billion into perspective, a billion seconds ago, Reagan was starting his second term. A billion minutes ago, the Pantheon was being completed in Rome. A billion hours ago, we were in the Stone Age, over a hundred thousand years ago. But a billion dollars ago, just a couple of minutes.

In the time that I will speak, the government will spend billions upon billions of dollars, virtually a billion every 2 minutes, \$30-some billion in the space of an hour. It is out of control.

If you look at the debt that is being incurred, people say: What does it matter? You could be like Dick Cheney and some of these Republicans: Eh, deficits don't matter. We don't care about the deficits.

Well, you should, and you see the results of the deficit every time you fill up your car, every time you go to the grocery store, every time you buy something, you are seeing the results of the debt.

The way we pay for the debt is we print out money. The Federal Reserve buys the debt, but the Federal Reserve has no money, so they print up the money, and they dilute the value of the existing currency. What does that mean? Inflation. Prices go up. But so does the cost of the government. People have cost-of-living increases, and I don't begrudge that, but it is 9 percent in the last year or so, so the costs of Social Security are going through the roof. The costs of Medicare are going through the roof. But do you hear a peep? Not one peep about the problem paying our own bills. We are basically like renters paying for our apartment.

In what kind of world do you borrow money to send charity? If you see a homeless person and you want to help them but you have no money, would you go to the first corner and go into the bank and say: I want to help homeless people. Will you give me a thousand dollars so I can help homeless people? No one does that.

If you are paying the rent for your apartment, do you go to the bank and borrow the rent for your apartment? No, there are times at which you borrow against things of value. You can borrow against a home that you have a downpayment on. You can borrow for capital improvements like schools or roads, but you don't borrow for your daily expenses.

That is what is going on here. Realize that two-thirds of the spending is entitlements: Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and food stamps is two-thirds of all spending. That is all we have enough money for. Tax revenue pays for that; everything else is borrowed.

You will hear people talk about a budget. They say, Congress votes on a budget. Well, the budget we vote on is equal to about \$1.5 trillion, that is the debt. Every bit of the budget we vote on is borrowed. Last month we borrowed \$210 billion, so we are on course to borrow over \$2 trillion at that rate.

People are alarmed by this. The head of the Federal Reserve, Powell, said the other day that the problem was “urgent,” and these are the kind of people that pick their words carefully. The debt is urgent. The need to restrain spending is urgent.

And so how does leadership respond? The Republican leaders and the Democratic leaders have gotten together to send \$100 billion to another country while they can't pay the bills for our country.

We are borrowing money to pay our rent as citizens in our own country, and we are sending \$100 billion to another country. Under what world is that a good idea? It is a terrible idea. The Federal Reserve Chairman has said the problem is urgent. Jamie Dimon, the head of JP Morgan Chase, has said the problem is urgent.

Nassim Taleb, the author of “The Black Swan,” has said it is urgent. You have all of these people, some who predicted the crisis in 2008, saying it is an imminent crisis. The debt crisis hangs over us. There is a danger of destroying the dollar and destroying our country, and leadership is concerned about making their plane to Kyiv.

The Republican leader and the Democratic leader will be on a plane to Kyiv—I am assuming with champagne and pallets of cash. Have you ever seen the pictures when they unload the pallets of American cash? When they did it in Iraq? How much oversight do you think there is on pallets of cash? How much is stolen? We will never know because they have refused to have an inspector general.

I have forced at least two votes on this. I have been advocating for over a

year. I am not for sending your money to Ukraine, but if you are going to send it, can we at least count how much is being stolen?

Ukraine has been on the top 10 list for one of the most corrupt countries in the world, and nobody is watching the money.

Now journalists in Ukraine have actually caught a few people. We haven't caught anybody. If you ask our people from our Defense Department, they will say: Oh, nothing to see here.

You realize our Defense Department has never been audited. We have been trying to audit the Pentagon in our country for two decades. Do you know what the Pentagon tells Congress? We are too big to be audited.

You know what my response is? You are too big then. You should be smaller if you can't even audit the money we are spending. They routinely lose billions of dollars. They routinely have billions of dollars paid where they have no idea where the dollars went.

And so in the midst of this, in the midst of a \$1.5 trillion deficit this year, at least, the leadership has come together. People say they want compromise, well, you are getting it today, but it is the wrong kind of compromise. It is compromise to loot the Treasury. It is compromise to spend money we don't have. We have not one penny saved. There is no savings; there is no rainy day fund, they are shoveling out borrowed cash.

Essentially, they have to borrow this from China. They either borrow it from China or they print it up, but there is no money. There is no money sitting around; it has all been spent. There isn't enough money to take care of the stuff they have already promised. So everyone on the other aisle and half the people on this side that are wanting to send more cash over there have also promised they are going to take care of you, so all the entitlement programs are out there.

Well, the entitlement programs consume all of our tax revenue. There is no money beyond that. So the military and the nonmilitary discretion that is about a third of the overall spending, there is no money for it. It is all borrowed. So we are going to add to that.

Now, I have often asked the question: Couldn't we maybe set priorities, and if you really believe that Ukraine is part of our national security—which is ludicrous—but if you believe that, maybe the money should come out of the defense budget.

If this is truly defending Ukraine is defending our country—which is ludicrous—but if it were, we are at \$880 billion in our military budget. This is more than the next 10 countries in NATO combined.

If you really want to send your money to Ukraine, take it out of the military budget. Take it out of something. This is a perpetual problem, but I think the American public needs to know as Republican leadership and Democratic leadership jet off to Kyiv,

cracking the champagne, and delivering pallets of cash, they need to know that there was opposition to this.

People say, why do you come to the floor? Why do you make the poor Senators be here over the Super Bowl weekend? Why do you make them cancel their vacations?

Do you think I do it just to be mean or out of spite?

I do it because I care about our country. I care about the bankrupting of America. I care about the looting of our treasury.

(Ms. BUTLER assumed the Chair.)

There can be an honest debate over national security or what is in our vital security, but there never is a debate. If you look closely at what people say, they will simply declare it is in our national security to send money to Ukraine. There isn't really a debate.

I actually think it is the opposite. I think sending money to Ukraine actually makes our national security more endangered. I think it threatens our vital national security to send more money to Ukraine. Why? Because I think it threatens the fiscal solvency of our country. I think it, along with so much of the rest of the spending, is dragging America down and threatening a day of destruction.

There have been civilizations that have destroyed their currency, and, typically, this happened on the heels of war. After World War I, Germany destroyed their currency. After World War II, England was in arrears to such an extent that they no longer were the dominant currency after World War I and II, and the United States became the dominant currency.

I think that we should think twice before sending our money overseas. I think we should think twice about the problems we have here at home.

But I think the American people ought to look at those here in this body who are willing to prioritize another country over our country. I think they need to look at that and decide: Is this what you want? Is this what the American people really want? Did you elect these people to ignore the southern border and to send money to look at Ukraine's border—to prioritize Ukraine's border over the U.S. border? Is that what you elected these people to do? And, if you did, do you not care about the bankrupting of America? Do you not care about the destruction of the dollar?

It is happening every day, and it is happening sort of gradually—5, 10 percent a year of lost purchasing power. But there are people who are left behind, the people whose salaries aren't adjusting with inflation, people who are being squeezed by this inflation.

And people say: Whose fault was the inflation, Republicans or Democrats?

And I say: Both. Really, there is only one party when you get down to it. They all want to spend money.

The leadership in the Republican party is really not a great deal—this is a secret you are not supposed to expose

in Washington, but there is not a lot of difference between the Democrat leadership and the Republican leadership. They kind of want to spend money sometimes for different things. Sometimes Republicans want to spend more on the military enterprise, and Democrats maybe more on welfare. But they get together.

You say there is not enough compromise in Washington? There is way too much compromise. Why? They compromise to spend money we don't have. So in order to raise military spending, they have got to promise that they will raise the welfare spending as well.

There is one particular argument that has been made by Republican leadership as well as Democratic leadership, as well as the White House. I find this argument particularly reprehensible, particularly disgusting and disturbing. They make the argument that it is really not so bad to send money to Ukraine because it increases the profits of the arms merchants, and most of the arms merchants selling the arms into this war are Americans. They say: Oh, it is a win-win. We send the money overseas to Ukraine, but Ukraine then buys our arms, and the arms merchants are enriched.

I don't know. I know there are no American soldiers yet in this war. But have some sympathy for the young men and women involved in this war—that the argument that we should perpetuate the war, that the war isn't a bad thing, and that war is not a hell on earth, is because we make some profit off of it. I find that disgusting. I find it really disturbing that there are people out there making the argument on both sides of the aisle: No big deal. It is helping our defense industrial base.

That is another word for the military-industrial complex, because even Eisenhower warned 70-some years ago—he warned that there was a danger that the military-industrial complex would get so big that it wouldn't be policy led by Congress, that the corporations would become so big—trillion-dollar corporations grabbing up money—that they would direct policy; that it would no longer be you voting or no longer be us voting, but it would be the corporate interests that make the profits that would be driving this. And I think we have become eerily close to that.

This is sort of the quiet part they used to not say out loud. They used to keep it kind of on the q.t.: We are just going to not talk about the profits going to the arms merchants.

But now they are bragging about it: The defense industrial base—we are going to enhance the defense industrial base.

Really? The meat grinder of war is now justified by expanding the profits of arms merchants?

Some estimates are that 500,000 people have died in that war. So if we keep it going for another year or 2, maybe a million will be dead in the war. That will be good for arms profits. So is that

what our advocacy is? Not to shorten the war, but it is not so big a deal to let the war go on and on.

The head general in Ukraine has said that the war has come to a stalemate.

And I am the first to acknowledge: Look, the whole war was started by Russia. Russia is the aggressor. There is nothing good to be said about Putin doing this. He is the aggressor. He is in the wrong.

But that doesn't really change the situation on the ground. It is at a standstill, and 500,000 people have died. It is at a standstill. In some towns in Ukraine, you can't find young people anymore. They are either dead or have gone off to Europe to avoid the war.

So Zelenskyy, the President of Ukraine, fired his major general because the major general admitted to the truth, which is that this is at a stalemate.

Many people in this body, to justify foreign aid, will say: We are spreading and projecting American power and American values. We are trying to teach and show to the world the nobility of democracy. Yeah, if you watch one of the networks, that is all you hear: democracy, democracy, democracy.

Well, guess what. Ukraine is not a democracy. They don't have elections. So they stopped having elections several years ago, and there is no plan to have elections. Zelenskyy had one, and I am not saying he didn't win. In all likelihood, it was a legitimate election. But it is sort of one and done. He is not going to have more elections.

And so we are bending over backward—not we—the Republican leadership and all of the Democrats are bending over backward to send money to a country that doesn't have elections.

This is a country that has banned media criticism. There is no media criticism. And you would think that the defenders of the First Amendment would be irate at the fact that there is no objective media criticism in Ukraine.

But the reason why the other side is not standing up and why they are not crazy at arms about this is they actually want that now in our country. They actually are for censorship. They believe in the Homeland Security of the United States censoring and telling people they can't tell you.

So if I were to say—which I have said a million times—that it is a mistake to vaccinate your kids for COVID because they already have immunity and that there are some risks to that vaccine, the other side will say I don't have the right to say that. They say it would be OK for government, in league with corporations, to censor my speech.

If I were to tell you masks don't work—and they don't. All of the studies—78 randomized control studies—say masks don't work. You can wear one. I am not going to forbid you from wearing one. I will just tell you the truth. They will say I shouldn't be allowed to say that. I can still say it on the Senate floor, but if I say it on some of the

Big Tech platforms, we have the FBI and Homeland Security under the Biden administration sitting down and meeting with Big Tech on a weekly basis to encourage them to take down my speech.

So when Ukraine limits speech, you don't hear much of a criticism. It is just: Send them money—because they are no longer opposed to censorship. They are no longer for the First Amendment.

They are for the First Amendment, unless you are spreading misinformation. But what is misinformation? It is their definition and their idea that they don't like what you are saying.

I would be perfectly willing to acknowledge that there are arguments on the other side of what I am saying: whether masks work, whether you should vaccinate your children. I think the arguments are stronger on our side, and I will debate anybody on these subjects. I think they should be debated, and then you should make your own choice. In a free country, you make the choice: Wear a mask; don't wear a mask. Vaccinate your kids; don't vaccinate your kids.

But to ban the speech is a very dangerous precedent. This is the kind of speech that they are in favor of banning in our country. So they are not too troubled when speech is banned in Ukraine.

There has also been banning of religious authorities in Ukraine as well. So we don't have elections in Ukraine. We have banned speech. And there has also been a banning of religion as well.

And yet the fervor—the fervor of people to send the money, to load the plane—the plane is likely loaded. Now, I may be exaggerating that there are going to be pallets of cash. There is probably going to be a computer entry. But it is much more visual to imagine the pallets of cash.

But there will be a plane that will leave this weekend, and it will have the Republican leader on it and the Democrat leader, and they will be celebrating \$60 billion of your money going to Ukraine—\$60 billion—\$60 billion we don't have.

And, also, at the same time, they had no time to discuss the invasion coming in from the southern border. We didn't have 1 minute.

We haven't had an amendment. We have several amendments that would actually put border security back into the bill, and some on the other side—I love this—they have said: Well, because you opposed the bill, you don't deserve to have amendments.

I love the definition and the idea of what their concept of democracy is. If you agree with me, you get to have speech. But if you don't agree with me, you—my goodness—you are a deplorable, and you don't deserve to have your speech or to have amendments. That is what they have said, basically.

So, right now, there have been no amendments on border security. There is an emergency at the southern bor-

der. I am all for more legal and lawful immigration. I have several bills that would do exactly that. I have bills that would expand employment-based immigration. It used to be that, when you came to our country, particularly when we had the big waves of people coming in toward the end of the 19th century, you had to have a sponsor and you had to work. I don't have a problem with that. Even for some of the people who have already come here and didn't follow the rules, I would probably be in favor of allowing work permits.

But the thing is, I am not in favor of 780,000 people coming, en masse, across the border. People are coming from China. People are coming from Venezuela and Colombia and Paraguay. They are coming from all over the place.

There was a Pew study a few years ago that did samplings of people: Who would come to America if you could? It was estimated that 750 million people would. Do you think we can take 750 million people all at once? Do you think we can double our population? No, there has to be some planning. There has to be some periodic sort of obstacles. There has to be a lawful way to come into this country.

So I have been for expanding the lawful paths. I have been for expanding employment-based immigration. Most people I know who are first generation are great workers. Like I say, some of the best Americans just got here. But we can't have a wide-open border. We can't allow the invasion to continue.

What has transpired here over the last few days and will continue to transpire is basically ignoring the people. There is an elite class in this country that think that Americans aren't smart enough to figure these things out. They think that Americans aren't smart enough to really figure out whether they want to vaccinate their kids, whether they want to wear a mask, or whether or not 6 feet of distance works.

Did you hear the one recently, when they interviewed Fauci? They asked him where the 6 feet of distance came from? He is like: I don't know. I think we just made that one up.

Really?

I went to my son's university for graduation. They had white circles drawn on the ground outside. You had to stand in another white circle, 6 feet from people outside.

There is zero science behind that—zero. They don't even know where their supposed science came from. I said: I thought you came up with the science.

No, I thought you did. I thought it worked.

It doesn't work, and you don't catch a disease outside.

All of those things—we went through graduations with people with masks on and the chairs 6 feet apart.

My favorite is this, though. These people are so obsessed and think masks work that you will see them on the floor now—and not all of them. I am

just guessing. But I know at least some of them on the floor, when they are wearing a mask, it is because they have COVID.

And it is like, they used to teach the common sense. When I went to medical school and when I was growing up, you stayed home when you were sick. If you had an infectious disease, you stayed home. Now they tell you to just keep going and confronting people while wearing a mask that doesn't work.

Why don't the masks work? Because the pores in the mask are 600 times bigger than the virus, and the virus is aerosolized—not just on droplets of water, aerosolized, moving freely throughout the air.

Probably, the most imbecilic thing we did—which rivals maybe the Middle Ages—is plexiglass. These morons told you that plexiglass would stop the virus. Only a moron would say that. There is no truth to that. There is no science to that. It is ridiculous. It should be a “Saturday Night Live” skit. Plexiglass that is this high? The virus can't go over it? The virus can't go around it?

A group of engineers at MIT looked at this and looked at patterns of flow, and I can't say that I know that this is right or not, but they conjectured, actually, that the plexiglass actually made it worse because the laminar flow of air was actually disrupted by these things, and your filtration systems, which actually probably do serve some value, were interrupted by the plexiglass. But that is what we lived through. But these are the people—the people who inflicted these things on you believe you are not smart enough to make your own decisions.

When you tell people at home what is going on up here—and I go home every weekend, go to the grocery store, go to church—when I tell people at home that they just sent \$60 billion overseas, they are aghast. They say: How can that happen? They say they know of no one—if I am in Eastern Kentucky, I could be talking to a fireman, a policeman, a city councilman. They come up to me spontaneously and say: We have problems here in our country.

We can't pay for the basic functioning of our country. Only two-thirds of the spending in Washington is paid for, and an entire third of it is borrowed. Yet they want to send money to a foreign country to deal with their problems? Shouldn't we try to take care of our own country first? Shouldn't we try to do something to actually quit the destruction of our own currency?

How do they get away with it? It is incredibly unpopular. If you were to take this position in my State and ask everybody in Kentucky “How many of you think we should send \$100 billion overseas and do zero for the southern border—not a penny, not one policy change, nothing for the southern border,” how many people believe that? In my State, it is close to zero. Very few people believe that.

So how does it happen up here? It happens because there is not enough sunlight. There is not enough transparency. So that is part of what a filibuster is. This is a talking filibuster today, and the reason we talk is to try to broadcast this message, to get the message home so they can send us better people.

Madam President, can you tell me how much time I have remaining in the hour of speaking?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 27 minutes remaining.

Mr. PAUL. All right.

So one of the proposals I have had—I think it is a modest proposal and you would think it would be a no-brainer and should have been adopted unanimously, and that is to have an inspector general oversee the money.

We have been doing this in Afghanistan for 20 years, but we still spent nearly \$2 trillion in Afghanistan over 20 years. But at least there was someone trying to watch because in times of war, a lot of things happen.

You talk about the fog of war? Sometimes there are atrocities, sometimes there is killing of civilians—almost always—but there is also a lot of stealing. They have a name for it. It used to have a bad connotation—“war profiteer.” But it happens.

In Afghanistan, there was a hotel being built, and it was being built across the street from our Embassy. It was framed out. It was halfway—it was at least started. You could tell it was going to be a hotel.

As it was being built, somebody said: Wow, looks like they will look right down into the courtyard of our Embassy.

Somebody said: Wow, wouldn't that be a safety risk?

The other one said: Yes, I think you are right.

So the construction slowed down when they evaluated the possible safety risk of building a tall hotel looking down on our Embassy.

Meanwhile, the guy who had the money fled to Jordan with \$60 million. It was going to cost \$80 million, and they put about \$20 million into it. It was left there as an eyesore. My understanding is that it was eventually torn down.

How did we know about this? Because we had an inspector general. The inspector general is called SIGAR, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

So I had a proposal over a year ago. I said: Why don't we take the inspector general who has been doing this in Afghanistan, already has a budget—because I just happen to be conservative with everything—and I said: We don't even need a new budget. The guy already has a budget. He has \$10 or \$15 million in his budget. Why don't we switch him over from Afghanistan to Ukraine?

I told absolutely everyone I know about it, and when I go home, I mention it. People mention it to me. I have

not heard of one person who is opposed to it. I have not heard of one person who would be opposed to having an inspector general.

So we voted on it. The other side almost universally voted it down, and some on my side voted against it. Why? Because the inspector general has a history of finding waste. They don't like it. I picked him because he apparently is good at his job. He has a whole series of maybe 50 to 100 economists, accountants, people who are used to looking at war spending, and he finds the people wasting it. He writes a book on it every year.

One of the waste projects he found was a natural gas gas station.

This is the kind of ludicrous stuff that people at home don't know about, and this is the stuff the other side sticks in everything. Everything has to be green. We are going to make the military green.

So they decided they wanted to have a natural gas gas station in Afghanistan. You have to realize this is a country where a lot of the food is still cooked on open fires, and people ride burros, not natural gas cars. But they built it. They spent \$45 million building a natural gas gas station 30, 40 miles out from any military site—couldn't be protected. But then they discovered another problem, and I guess maybe they hadn't thought this through. They wanted to go green. They wanted to get rid of the internal combustion. They wanted to go to natural gas and away from gasoline. They were going to solve climate change in Afghanistan, a country of open fires.

So they built this natural gas gas station for 45 million bucks, but lo and behold, do you know what they discovered? Nobody had a car that ran on natural gas. So, never to be deterred, the wastefulness of American spending said: Let's buy them cars that go on natural gas. We have a gas station. We have to get them cars that run on natural gas so we can cure global warming in Afghanistan.

So they bought them I think 24 cars that ran on natural gas, but they didn't think this one through, either. The people now had a gas station that delivered natural gas to their cars. We gave them a couple of cars that ran on natural gas. But they didn't have any money. So they said: Let's give them a credit card. So they got them credit cards to buy natural gas. We have a gas station with natural gas, natural gas cars, but now here is your credit card.

But they didn't think that all the way through, either. It turns out that people were still killing each other in that part of the world, and it was too dangerous for our soldiers to protect. So when one of my staff members asked to see the natural gas gas station, he was told by our soldiers: Too dangerous to see it.

So, as you can imagine, this natural gas gas station now looks like—if you can imagine an inner-city gas station with the copper pipes torn out, you

know, anything that is of value torn out of the ground, that is your natural gas station in Afghanistan. That is your 45 million bucks. And that is war even with an inspector general who found out about it. Can you imagine what war is like with no inspector general?

Now, the other side would say: Oh, well, the Department of Defense has an inspector general.

Well, yes, they do. This is the Department of Defense that is missing a couple of trillion dollars' worth of equipment. This is the Department of Defense that says they are too big to be audited. So I would say that you have to be a little bit wary of just saying: Well, the Department of Defense will watch this money.

I mentioned earlier about a billion dollars. You know, what is a billion? So a million dollars in the palm of your hand is thousand-dollar bills—if you had thousand-dollar bills, 4 inches high would be a million dollars.

A billion dollars is more difficult to visualize, but to put a billion into perspective, a billion seconds ago, Reagan was starting his second term. A billion minutes ago, the Pantheon was being completed in Rome. A billion hours ago was the stone age, over 100,000 years ago. But a billion dollars ago, at the rate we are spending money, was just a little more than 2 minutes ago.

Now, that is a billion. See, you wonder how bad things are around here? We used to think a billion was a lot of money, but now we have trillion—\$34 trillion.

I remember when George W. Bush was President, it was \$5 trillion, and it went to \$10 trillion. I was, like, gosh, this is terrible. This is a Republican administration. Then when Obama was President, it went from 10 to 20. Then when Trump was, it went up 7½, 8, in 4 years—even at a more alarming rate. Each President has been worse. They have all been bad. Congress deserves some of the blame, too. It doesn't happen without Congress.

But the money is going crazy. We are up to about \$1.5 trillion. I looked this up this morning. I wanted to know, if you stacked one-dollar bills and you wanted to know how big \$1.5 trillion is. Well, if you take 2 years' worth of debt—that is \$3 trillion—and you want it in one-dollar bills? The one-dollar bills would stack all the way to the Moon, over 230,000 miles away.

We are starting to talk about a bit of money here. But it is not just the overall debt. When they pay for the debt, the Federal Reserve dilutes the currency, and the currency becomes worth less and less. But also what happens is that our interest rates increase over time.

So under George W. Bush, we went from \$5 to \$10 trillion, we doubled the debt from \$5 to \$10 trillion. In that period of time, the interest rate was cut in half, so the interest rate really wasn't a lot worse. But we finally, I believe, have lost the ability for the Federal Reserve to suppress interest rates.

Interest rates have risen, and interest payments have doubled.

We are on course within the next year or so to have interest rates become the largest item, pushing out and crowding out other spending in the budget. Mark my words—this \$100 billion will add to that problem, and I think it is absolutely an utter mistake and an insult to every American that we ignore the invasion on our southern border in order to send money overseas.

I reserve the balance of my time.

I ask the Parliamentarian how much time remains.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, more than 3 months ago, the Republican Members of the United States Senate—more than 3 months ago, the Republican Members of the United States Senate made a commitment—made a commitment to each other and to our voters and to the American people. We agreed not to send one more penny of their hard-earned money overseas to support conflicts in foreign nations until their own homeland—America's own homeland—was secured.

Well, through the efforts of a faithless few, we are poised to treat our promise to Americans the same way President Biden has treated his solemn oath to protect our country's borders—expedient, expendable, and now, apparently, expired.

We cannot send billions of dollars to Ukraine while America's own borders are bleeding. Heaven help us. The American people should not have to watch us every hour of every day, looking over our shoulder, just to make sure that their own government doesn't stab them in the back. What have they done, after all, to deserve such contempt? Such untrustworthy public servants? What grudge does this body hold against the very people who elected us?

On Saturday, I spent many hours trying to make six different amendments to this legislation pending. Most of them, in fact, were germane to this bill. They dealt specifically with them and met the tight legal definition that we use in this body to decide whether it is pertinent to the bill. It has certain procedural benefits and protections if it is germane. Most of mine were. Yet, again and again, I was shot down. I was told that Republicans had forfeited our right to offer any improvements, any changes to this bill because we rejected the border proposal—the border proposal that we had received just a few days earlier—a week ago Sunday, at 7 p.m. eastern standard time.

Now, my request was simple. It was not that each of my amendments be made law—no, it wasn't that—nor was it even that I was asking that each of my amendments be included in the base text of the bill or be considered

adopted as part of this as an amendment. It wasn't that either. No. It was much, much simpler. It was that each amendment merely be permitted to be considered, debated, and possibly voted on. I came to the floor and asked consent to do this because the Senate majority leader, CHUCK SCHUMER, had utilized a procedure that has, unfortunately, become all too common in this body, known as filling the tree.

To make a long story short and to make a complicated system sound simpler, filling the tree is the means by which you say: There is no space to consider amendments to this bill. We can't even make them pending because all of the slots are full. So majority leaders have, over the last few years, become increasingly fond of filling the tree. They will plug in a handful of amendments to the proverbial tree: one amendment changing a comma into a semicolon; another amendment changing a date, say, from September 29 to September 30. It is usually something fairly immaterial. They are just there as space fillers, as amendment blockers, so that the Senate can't consider other amendments.

There are still ways around that, and I was exploring one of those ways. You come down to the floor. You call up your amendment. You ask consent to make your amendment pending and to set aside one of the tree-filling, one of the amendment-blocking amendments that have been put in there by the majority leader just in order to obstruct others from having the opportunity for amendments. So that was the simple request—merely being permitted to have these amendments considered, debated, and possibly voted upon. I had a number of amendments. There are seven I talked about that day. There were six I offered up and asked consent to have made pending.

Here is some of what they would have accomplished had we adopted them.

One proposed to make discrete, commonsense changes to our immigration law in order to protect our border and to prevent traffickers from using toddlers and babies as a means to ensure their customers easy access into the interior of our country, notwithstanding the fact that they are entering our country illegally. That, in fact, describes a few of my amendments.

I had at least one amendment that would make it very clear that an illegal alien who knowingly registers to vote would be subject to criminal penalties. Right now, it is not only against the law to vote if you are not a citizen, but there are far too few teeth in that law, and this would provide some of those teeth.

Now, who could be against making sure of this, especially when we have had a record number of people entering our country without documentation—entering our country illegally—10 million, according to some estimates? Some would say that it is higher than that; some would say it is a little lower than that. Either way, we are talking

about something in the neighborhood of 10 million or so entering this country just since Joseph R. Biden became the 46th President of the United States on January 20, 2021.

It is not unreasonable, as we approach a very important, a very consequential election, to say: Let's make sure that it is citizens who are voting, and let's say, in the case of an illegal alien who knowingly registers to vote, he would face some penalties for that.

These and other amendments that I had prepared would actually ensure border security and protect America's elections from foreign interference, things that, I think, many—probably most—of my colleagues profess to care about, things that we all, certainly, should care about. Nonetheless, these amendments drew objections—all of them objections imposed by Democrats in the Senate to the mere consideration of these amendments. We couldn't even make the amendment pending. We couldn't even consider them.

I also asked that the following amendments be considered: an amendment that would allow only 2 percent of the funds intended for Ukraine to be released until the President delivered a strategy to Congress with specific objectives and specific timelines. This is not too much to ask. It is not too much to ask when we have already sent \$113 billion over for that war effort and when we have got a lot of additional funding that, if this bill is enacted, would also be sent to Ukraine.

If we are going to do all this and if we are going to put American weapons on the line, if we are going to put the additional strain on those who produce our weapons on the line, if we are going to reduce our stockpiles even further, if we are going to tax and inflate the dollar additionally—as this will require us to do because we are talking about borrowed money here—then, the American people should have the benefit of knowing what the strategy is. We don't have a comprehensive, coherent strategy from the administration on what they want as the outcome of our efforts, of our assistance. What does this look like? How does this conflict get brought to a peaceful, lasting conclusion? What does Ukraine look like after that long, hoped-for conclusion?

These are reasonable things for us to expect. These are, certainly, reasonable things for us to debate regardless of how eager any individual Senator might be or, alternatively, how reluctant any individual Senator might be about providing additional funding to Ukraine.

There was another amendment prohibiting any funding for economic support for Ukraine from paying the pensions and the salaries of Ukrainian Government bureaucrats as well as paying for any Ukrainian welfare programs. We were pleased, of course, that the language of this bill contains a carve-out that prohibits the use of the, roughly, \$8 billion we are sending over

in economic support to the Ukrainian Government, saying that it couldn't be used to shore up Ukrainian pensions. That was a good thing. We are glad to see that. We had feared that that would be in there. That was in the original proposal, in that original suggestion, by President Biden that it should be in there. That economic relief package was originally somewhere in the neighborhood of \$11 billion or \$12 billion. It was brought down, I think, in part because of this prohibition against using it to back up pensions in Ukraine; but there is still nothing in there that prohibits Ukraine from using that for its own social welfare programs or to pay the salaries of Ukrainian bureaucrats or other civil servants. By the way, it is my understanding that this is enough money to pay them for an entire year.

Now, a lot of Americans have questions. Even a lot of Americans who might be OK with sending some additional military assistance to Ukraine have reservations about paying the salaries and the social welfare benefits of the Ukrainian Government for an entire year.

There was another amendment that I tried to make pending that would prohibit putting American taxpayers on the hook for any reconstruction activities in Ukraine. It is understandable here, too, why there would be some concern. When we engage in nation-building, this is often how an effort that begins with a promise that we will be there for maybe a year or two—that we will be in charge of reconstruction activities for a year or two—can stretch into two decades really quickly before we know it. Unlike wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places where we have engaged in nation-building—that took way too long and way too much money from the American taxpayer—this isn't even a war that we ourselves are fighting. This isn't even a war as to which we have enacted an authorization for use of military force for Americans to fight or a declaration of war. So it makes it even more inappropriate for us to just assume that nation-building is going to be our focus.

Now, sure, there is only \$25 million in this bill for that effort, identified as such, within that particular project of newly liberated communities—or words to that effect—but this is the nose in the camel's tent. Once that begins and if this war concludes where, I think, all of us in this body will want it to conclude, which is with victory for Ukraine, there is going to be a lot more of this to go on. There was a recent estimate by some global authority—it could have been with the World Bank—suggesting we are looking at something like \$300 billion or \$400 billion for Ukrainian reconstruction.

Why would the United States put itself in a position here to be on the cutting edge of that, to be at the epicenter of that, as far as organizing funding, et cetera? It is a dangerous thing to move forward without even

having a debate on a single amendment to try to limit what we would do on that front.

There was also an amendment that I tried to make pending that would clarify that, not only would our American taxpayer dollars stop funding UNRWA—UNRWA is this singularly offensive, anti-Semitic, anti-Israel agency within the U.N., and, I am, here again, grateful to those who crafted the bill that at least UNRWA was excluded from U.S. funding because UNRWA, as we have discovered in recent weeks and as many of us have worried about for years, has been involved in all kinds of horrible things, not just the indoctrination of young children in Gaza such that they were taught in UNRWA-run schools to hate Jewish people, but it has also encouraged them to engage in acts of violence against them, and they have been for years—in fact, for the better part of a couple of decades. More recently, it appears that a number of UNRWA personnel and facilities and other resources were used actively to help these attacks and those responsible for the attacks.

It is a good thing that the bill, as written, excludes UNRWA. But what about the other agencies? I believe there are 19 U.N. agencies operating within Gaza. What about those? My amendment that I introduced last week and that I tried to make pending on Saturday would clarify that not only would U.S. taxpayer dollars not be available to send to UNRWA specifically, but they would also no longer fund any U.N. organization, any U.N. agency operating in Gaza, ensuring that the American taxpayer dollar does not end up in the hands of Hamas.

Look, these U.N. networks are very sophisticated, and those that operate in Gaza have, of course, worked closely in concert, one with another. To say that we are going to get rid of any risk of funding the same problems that were facilitated and materially advanced by UNRWA in the past just by funneling them through another U.N. agency is folly. To suggest that simply by funneling it through the U.N. to send aid to Gaza we are somehow going to prevent any situation in which we materially assist Hamas, that is not going to happen.

I mean, look, it is difficult for us to grasp this here because, fortunately, those who have grown up in this country and lived here our whole lives have never experienced anything like Gaza—present-day, 21st century Gaza—in which there is no state—to say it is a failed state is almost an insult to failed states everywhere. But this is just a failure at every end. There essentially is no state.

In part, because there is no state and because of the way that it rules—Hamas rules Gaza with an iron fist. Iron fist in a glove, it is in control of everything. So no matter who you funnel it through, even if you don't funnel it through UNRWA—because you can't

under the text of this bill—you give it to some other U.N. entity, it is still going to be helping Hamas. We don't want to do that.

We know that October 7—absolutely grisly. It was a sobering wake-up call to all who have witnessed it. And for those of us who have visited those areas in Israel, in southern Israel next to Gaza—as my wife and I have in recent weeks—it is sobering, heart-breaking, breathtaking. There are not enough adjectives associated with misery and shock and horror to describe the atrocities that were carried out that awful day on October 7. Yet October 7 is—and was—the tip of the iceberg compared to what they have planned.

What they have planned, what they want to do—what Hamas and other Iranian proxies want to do in the region and will do, when given the chance, will make what happened on October 7 look like a Sunday picnic. We don't want to be funding that. Yet on two different accounts under this bill, there is money that could go there. Those two accounts added together total between \$9 and \$10 billion. That ought to be something we are concerned about.

For my colleagues who might disagree with me on this amendment, I would ask them this: Shouldn't this at least be something that we should debate? Shouldn't this at least be something we should vote on before we send it?

This, like the other amendments that I have just described, the other germane amendments that I have just described, they are not dilatory. These are not reckless. These are not there to try to serve any purpose other than to, No. 1, make the bill less likely to inflict harm, which I think should be our first job in all of this; and also to sharpen the debate, sharpen our analysis of what it is that we want to happen. It is not too much to ask for those things to be considered.

But, disturbingly, my colleagues—those of them who objected and those who have supported the objectors and those who have supported cloture, even after it became clear that there is to be no debate on any of these things—persisted in moving forward. And they have defended those who have done it—defended those who have ensured that we will have no meaningful debate on any of these issues, no opportunity to vote.

They have rejected every safeguard, every limit, every condition that I have offered so that we may—if we adopt them, I think these are things we can do to make sure that we are good and faithful stewards over U.S. taxpayer dollars.

You know, these taxes that we spend all too freely here are not free. They are taken from hard-working citizens. They are taken from hard-working men and women who are just trying to put a roof over their head and food on the table, finding these days—since January 20, 2021—it cost them \$1,000 a

month every single month just to put food on the table, gas in the car, groceries in the fridge, in the pantry just to live.

Everything from housing to healthcare, from gas to groceries, and everything in between, that has all become more expensive, in part—in large part, mostly—because our government spends routinely trillions of dollars a year now, more than it takes in every single year. You can't do that, even when you are the world's reserve currency, which the U.S. dollar is.

By the way, we should worry about whether we are jeopardizing that, too. So far, we have gotten away with it because the dollar is still the least bad deal in town. And by "in town," I mean on the planet. But the more we test the limits of that, the more I think we shouldn't test the limits of it. But in any event, even when you are the world's reserve currency, there are still consequences to multitrillion-dollar deficit spending year after year after year.

It is one thing to do that in the middle of a pandemic—we now should doubt the wisdom of a lot of that, but especially because it then led to a pattern of multitrillion-dollar deficit spending year after year since then, including this year, including times like now, when we are kind of at the peak of an economic cycle. We have got relatively—we have got really low—often record low—unemployment as we have been doing this. You print and borrow and spend that much money all at once, it has the effect of just printing it; every dollar buys less.

So through the combination of taxes that many American families work weeks out of months—or if not months, often months out of every year just to pay their Federal taxes—on top of that, they are taxed again when every dollar they make or have saved buys a lot less precisely because we borrow and spend too much money.

You add insult to injury to that, after making them work that long to make the money, after then taxing them again because you spent too much money, you make it so that their money doesn't spend as far, doesn't buy as much as it used to, you add insult to injury by not even debating an amendment to make sure that their hard-earned tax dollars aren't used to kill Israelis and threaten, intimidate, perhaps kill Americans and our allies. This is really concerning. I don't understand why we would want to do this.

We have got to make sure that we have undertaken our due diligence work properly, that we have done so faithfully. If we don't do it, the American people will be disappointed, and they should be.

Look, I have not been quiet about my opposition to this bill. I do believe it betrays a promise that, as I understood it, the Members of the Senate Republican conference made to each other and made to our constituents and made to our colleagues across the aisle and

our counterparts over in the House a few months ago—a commitment that, as I understand it, was not just made months ago but also reiterated pretty consistently over the last 2 or 3 months.

If we stayed to that, then this body wouldn't consider sending another dollar, another quarter, another dime, another nickel, another penny to Ukraine until we had passed something that actually would secure the border; that would force the issue of border security so that the issue of border security and a secure border could be realized in the near, short term, in this Presidency and not at some aspirational moment somewhere in the future.

We were told for months that this was the plan and something was negotiated on that. I have great affection and respect for those who were involved in that on both sides of the aisle. Senator LANKFORD is a dear friend, and he worked really hard on that. I know the other negotiators did, too. But they were in that room; we weren't. For many of us, most of us—in fact, I think it ended up being all but four Republican Senators—after we first saw that bill at 7 p.m. eastern standard time a week ago Sunday, looked at, decided that we couldn't support it.

Once that happened, it didn't somehow expunge the previous commitment. It didn't release us from the obligation we had to each other and to our voters to try to make sure that before we sent another dime to Ukraine, we made sure that this border is secure at home, that we force the issue of border security, even against an administration led by a President not willing to secure the border—in fact, one that is openly hostile toward border security. For reasons I cannot fathom, that is the position they are taking.

Were there positions in that bill that could have made a difference? Of course. Of course, there were. There were things in that bill that I think could have proven useful within an administration that wanted to make the border secure. But with an administration bent on not doing that very thing, that very thing that was the object of the entire monthslong negotiation process to begin with—there were enough loopholes in it that I and nearly all of my colleagues didn't believe it got us to that point.

Once that happened, I believe what could and should have happened was that we, as Senate Republicans, would unite—unite, again, behind the idea of getting something done. Put a few things, concrete things, on the table—something like one of the amendments that I offered up the other day, my Stopping Border Surges Act, which would make some surgical adjustments to immigration law, particularly those dealing with border security issues. They are narrow. They are finite. They should be things that every Republican should be able to support.

We presented that and a couple of other provisions. I know I have got a

colleague or two who have expressed interest in it and I think a majority of Republicans who have indicated that they would support language that would even tie the spending of Ukraine aid to the achievement of certain objectively verifiable border security metrics.

Others have suggested attaching legislation passed by the House to secure the border, H.R. 2—not a bad idea, since we know that has the support of every Republican in the House of Representatives.

Others have said: Well, we know that can't pass in the Senate.

Well, yes. Alone, it couldn't. Alone, I think every Republican over here has expressed support, at least, for the core provisions of that. I think every Democrat has expressed opposition to it as a whole. But once you attach it to this and make it a condition precedent for sending another dime to Ukraine, that might change.

The whole idea from the beginning was to harness the Democrats' overwhelming support for sending more Ukraine aid and combine that with Republicans' overwhelming support for securing the border.

Neither party would, perhaps, be pleased with the outcome and that it would involve giving up something that we didn't want to provide, but nonetheless it would be a way forward.

So if we were standing by that, if after—you know, 24 to 48 hours after the border deal, as it has been described in the public, was released to the public for the first time through the news media at 7 p.m. eastern standard time a week ago Sunday—we knew within 24 to 48 hours it wasn't going anywhere. Within 72 hours, all but four Republicans had voted against it.

Once that happened, the logical next step, consistent with the commitment we made to each other and to the public months ago, would have been to negotiate something else—perhaps including something like H.R. 2, perhaps including something like what most Republicans have said they think would be appropriate in addition to that, which would be conditioning the release of Ukraine aid to the achievement of certain objectively verifiable border security metrics. But, no, rather than having any of this, we have a handful of my Republican colleagues—a dozen and a half of them now—who have chosen to move ahead with the bill, to move ahead with the quid without the quo, to move ahead with what the Democrats want, what unites Democrats—not only Democrats in the Senate but Democrats across the country, Democrats in the House—with what they want but without Republicans having any of what they want, at least most Republicans.

So you can understand my frustration here that if we can't have the bill we want, the next best thing would be to at least have the chance to try to amend this bill. Without something that actually forces fully the issue of

border security, it is hard for me to imagine how I could even consider voting for it for my own purposes, to say nothing of the commitment that we as a conference made to each other and to the public months ago. But if I can't defeat the bill, the next best thing I can do is to amend it to improve it.

Now, some have cynically denigrated this by saying that a lot of those wanting to offer amendments are doing so merely for dilatory purposes or doing so for purposes that are themselves cynical, trying to destroy the bill. In any event, these are people who don't support the bill, are not going to vote for the bill at the end of the day, and therefore shouldn't get a chance to do so.

I find this argument utterly lacking a logical foundation. I find it incompatible with the Senate rules, with two-plus centuries of established tradition, with principles of basic collegiality that ought to purvey to anybody, much less certainly at least anybody who fancies itself the world's greatest deliberative legislative body.

Think about it for a minute. If you say: Unless you agree with this bill exactly as it is, and unless you are willing to agree to support the bill regardless of which amendments pass and which do not, unless you are unequivocally willing to sign on to whatever becomes the finished product of this bill, we are not going to take into account your desire to have us consider amendments. You lose. You are excluded from the process. You are not part of the cool kids club, and you have no say in it. We won't even let you offer amendments, and when you try to do so, we will question the sincerity of your desire to do it.

That is not fair, that is not accurate, and it completely ignores the way this or any other legislative body in any civilized society that I know anything about should operate.

But, look, the fact is that I and others have not been allowed to amend the bill—not just to amend it, to achieve the amendment, to achieve passage of the amendment; we haven't even been allowed to make a single amendment pending, thus putting it in line for eventual disposition either by a roll-call vote, a voice vote, a point of order, a motion to table, or any of the other myriad means by which an amendment, once pending, can be disposed of.

None of my colleagues, neither Democrat nor Republican, have been allowed to amend it. Why not? Well, there is this misinformation circulating about why we can't amend the bill, so I would like to correct the record.

This morning, it was reported by a Hill news outlet that there is still no agreement on amendment votes, in part because of Senator RAND PAUL of Kentucky. Is that really what is happening? Honestly? What that same newsletter failed to note is that I spent 4 hours on the floor on Saturday asking unanimous consent for six amendments merely to be made pending—not to

pass them, not to have them adopted, merely to make them pending. I was not asking for these amendments to be passed or voted on immediately; I was just asking for them to be brought up before the Senate for consideration.

The objector to my request was not Senator PAUL, as this morning's reporting might have led you falsely to believe. Senator PAUL was not the one blocking an amendment process. It was Senate Democrats who objected every single time to even considering any kind of amendment, even my germane amendments, which were most of the amendments that I tried to make pending.

Again, a germane amendment is one that, under the rules of the Senate, is very closely connected, tightly and inextricably connected to the subject matter. It is not some extraneous thing.

My Democrat colleague said that "MAGA extremists had their chance." This is what they said while objecting to the mere consideration of my amendments, implying that when Senate Republicans rejected the border bill that we saw for the first time at 7 p.m. eastern standard time a week ago Sunday, that we forfeited our right to offer amendments of any sort—apparently not just amendments related to border security or immigration or whether or not we should allow illegal immigrants to vote without facing some sort of penalty but also amendments regarding where exactly the money is going to Ukraine; whether they should be able to use it for their own social welfare programs; whether or not they should be able to use it, as they have in the past under similar programs, under similar money we sent them in the past, to pay for concert tickets for Ukrainian concertgoers, to pay for economic stability of clothing stores in Ukraine, and to pay the salaries for 1 entire year for every single government employee of the Ukrainian Government.

When did that become the principle of this body, that because something like this happened here, that Republicans rejected—all but four of us—opposed the border bill that we saw for the first time a week ago Sunday at 7 p.m., we forfeited all of our rights to even offer any amendments and have those considered? When did that become the principle of this body? What insane human being commandeered our system and all of a sudden inserted that new rule? It is not in my rule book. It is not in any of the books that outline the precedents that have unfolded over the last 2½ centuries in this country—no, not at all.

When did we accept that if you disagree with the legislation before the Senate, you can't offer any amendments to make the bill better than it otherwise would be? Where is that written in the Senate rules? When did that become a custom of the Senate?

I hope that my Republican colleagues would unite—if not on this bill but at

least unite to completely disavow this view, to disabuse the press and anyone watching from thinking that this is how we roll now. We really should be able to unite to completely disavow this view. Why? Well, because it will completely trample on the rights of the minority party and disenfranchise the voters who put us here to begin with. That is a really good reason—really good reason—to make clear that it doesn't matter where you are leaning on a bill or where you might vote on the ultimate package before the Senate; you still have no less a right to try to improve the bill, to try to make sure it is better than it is now.

But I am afraid that some of my Republican colleagues are entertaining this view. In fact, one of my Republican colleagues who is here in the Chamber today reportedly said yesterday—I hope he was misquoted:

You don't put forth 80 amendments and say that you won't negotiate on time agreements and be taken seriously. . . . That is what is happening here. Those folks are going to vote against it no matter what.

Look, maybe there is more to the context of this. I hope there is. Perhaps there is something I am misunderstanding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. I rise to see if the Senator from Utah will yield with the knowledge that I will provide some of my unallocated time so he can continue his comments beyond that required to answer my questions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LEE. Without surrendering the floor, I will yield for a question.

Mr. TILLIS. Thank you, Senator LEE.

Senator LEE, first, I want to thank you for putting forth amendments, many of which I would like to vote for. I also want to thank you for not having the proviso that all of these amendments must be voted for without yielding any time.

But, Senator LEE, you mentioned about how the Senate works. I have only been here for 9 years. You have been here longer than me. But I thought it was custom, whether Democrats were in control or Republicans were in control, that when we reached a point to where we are on the bill, that a part of the process was making good-faith offers of amendments, like you have, and then the majority, which actually controls what we take up on the floor, would then look for at least some concession on time. But I understand that we have some Members who have said that no matter what, they would not be conceding any time.

So just to be fair to the couple of dozen people watching C-SPAN and some of the people in the Gallery, I am just trying to understand whether or not it is clear that we have Members who said "Under no circumstances would we negotiate any time," and it is, in fact, that intransigence that is

making it less likely that any of the good bills that my colleagues have offered up in the Republican conference are going to get voted on? Is that your understanding?

Mr. LEE. Yes. I think so.

Mr. TILLIS. OK. May I ask another question?

So I just want to be clear that, generally speaking, Senator LEE, I have observed you do some extraordinary things on the floor and managed to get some very helpful measures—amendments—voted on, including some of the ones today. But I do want to be clear that we are likely never going to have an opportunity to vote on those because we do have some of our colleagues who have made it very clear that they are not willing to have the puts and takes that are necessary in the world's most deliberative body to actually get an opportunity to take those votes. Is that your understanding?

Mr. LEE. Yes, essentially. I would like to respond. I hope to get the floor back soon.

Mr. TILLIS. I yield back.

Mr. LEE. Thank you.

In the first place, yes, you are right to point out I have not been objecting to those. It is a common agreement and understanding that we will reach. Not always but much of the time, we can pool together a list of amendments, put them together on a raft, so to speak—a raft that you can send forward, send out among all Senate Republicans. If no one objects, you can vote on a handful—maybe it is 4, maybe it is 40, maybe it is somewhere in between—of amendments. Then you will set up some agreements surrounding the amount of time for each of those.

I am not sure of exactly all the details or all the reasons of those objecting, but I do understand there have been some of my colleagues who have objected to those.

But I will say this: The fact that there are some who object to that, my understanding is—at least for some of them—I can't purport to speak for all of them but at least for some of that—what they were concerned about is making sure that any such raft of agreements not culminate in or create an expectation of a scenario in which we would limit the total number of amendments that could be offered, considered, and voted on or the total amount of time in which amendments could be considered. And that on that basis, they were objecting.

I didn't harbor that particular view and wasn't making those particular objections. Nonetheless, those colleagues were not objecting to what I was doing all day on the floor on Saturday, which is calling up, again and again, amendments, most of which were germane to the bill, that no one on the Republican side was objecting to—not one—to having them made pending.

And the only reason given that I heard on Saturday as to why they

weren't allowing amendments—it is funny about this point—the objection, as it was made, was usually occurring in response to something that had nothing to do with border security, as far as my amendments went. The objection I got from the Democrats who objected over and over and over again was: Look, MAGA Republicans are to blame, and they rejected the border package. Therefore, they don't get any say in this bill.

So that is entirely afiel from that objection, entirely afiel from what my friend and colleague—I mean that sincerely, when I call him a friend—from North Carolina was mentioning. This is different than that.

These were—nobody else was here. No other live requests were being made for people who wanted to make their amendments pending. There was no reason in the world why we couldn't at least make those pending. And the fact that, yes, some were objecting to having them pass en bloc, that is their business. I can't answer for that. But they had their reasons, and they did not object to what I was doing there.

It really leads me to wonder why it is that anyone would imply that, if you don't support the final bill, you don't get any say in the bill. You can't make your amendments pending. You can't even have your amendments considered. You can't even tee them up for consideration, for disposal, as I say, either for a rollcall vote or a voice vote or, alternatively, a motion to table, a motion to commit, or a point of order, or something like that. You cannot make them pending, apparently, unless you swear allegiance to the finished product, which can't yet be seen. But you are asked to assume it consists of that which has been foreordained by whatever very, very small group of Senators happen to be the privileged ones to have written that.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President.

Mr. LEE. I would like to continue my remarks, if I could.

Mr. TILLIS. I would ask if, at the end of Senator LEE's remarks, if he would yield for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah has the floor.

Mr. TILLIS. My inquiry to Senator LEE was whether or not he would yield at the end of his comments for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. LEE. Go ahead and ask your question. At some point, I would like to be able to continue my thoughts without being interrupted. Go ahead.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I just want to make a point that I have actually seen a number of amendments Senator LEE has made that I would like to vote on, and I don't believe that there is anyone here who is making a judgment about whether or not he should get the amendments, whether or not he is going to vote for the final passage of the bill.

I just want to restate, again, whether or not he is aware that we are not get-

ting on any amendments, probably a handful that would be his, because of objections offered by our colleagues. I just want to make that point. It has nothing to do with where he will ultimately vote on the bill. It has to do with the intransigence of some of our Members who simply won't seek agreement, which is how we operate in the Senate.

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator LEE.

Mr. LEE. A couple of things: First of all, it is still beside the point. I appreciate the observation made by my friend the Senator from North Carolina. It still misses the point.

I was still here. I still sought to have my amendments made pending on half a dozen amendments, most of which were germane, on Saturday. There is no reason we couldn't make those pending. There was nobody objecting. The same Senators objecting to other amendments were not objecting to these. I don't know what that has to deal with this.

Secondly, it was my understanding, when I agreed to entertain the first of those questions—to yield for a question—that it would not count against my time. I would ask consent that it does not.

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

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that any Republican Senator be allowed to call up amendments and that the tree be set aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MENENDEZ. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent any Senator from either party be allowed to call up amendments and the tree be set aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MENENDEZ. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LEE. I ask unanimous consent that any Democratic Senator be allowed to call up amendments and the tree be set aside for that purpose.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LEE. This is interesting. This is interesting what has happened. They are now opposed to even Democratic Senators calling up amendments and making those pending. Why is that? Well, it appears to be, again, this consolidation of power.

The American people have lost enormous power in recent years. Power has been taken away from them in at least three steps.

First, it is taken away from them as power is brought away from States and local governments, where most of the power under our Federal system is supposed to reside, consistent with both

the original text of the Constitution and the 10th Amendment.

Second, once that power has been brought here to Washington, it has been outsourced, moved away from the American people. In yet another step, the lawmaking power gets shifted from elected lawmakers to unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats.

Third, even when the power resides and remains within this body, once it has been moved here—in many cases where it shouldn't be—it has been consolidated excessively to a few. Here in the Senate, I often refer to this as the firm—the law firm of Schumer and McConnell.

Very often, we consolidate power in the hands of a few legislative leaders to put together a bill, a bill very much like this—in fact, this very bill. And then nobody allows, apparently by agreement, for anybody to get votes on anything, even when we try to throw it open. We try to say anybody in this body gets to have their amendments made pending. They are told no. Even after we make a request that just Democratic Senators have that time, they are told no.

Look, this is not how it is supposed to work. This is not how it is supposed to work at all. The American people are excluded from a process insofar as we all point to someone else. The American people must not be excluded from this process, and, when they are, bad things happen.

Today, this might be a bill that you like. Tomorrow, it might be a bill you don't like. Majorities can change. Republican Senate leadership within the Senate may change. And, when it changes, you might not like the precedent you yourself have set when you try to exclude people just because they disagree with your ultimate outcome of the bill.

This just isn't right. The Senate was set up to be a different sort of deliberative legislative body. Part of what makes it deliberative is that each State is represented equally. There is a type of comity that naturally arises out of that understanding of what differentiates us from the House, a type of comity that survived and thrived for more than two centuries. It has been eroded materially in recent years. And by recent years, I mean very recent years. It has gotten significantly worse even in the time—the 13 short years—that I have spent in the U.S. Senate. I hope we can turn it around.

May I ask how much time remains on my account after the deduction for the interruption?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. LEE. I have 8 minutes remaining. I would like to reserve the balance of those minutes so that I can come back as necessary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VANCE. Madam President, I come to debate and to make an argument about whether we should con-

tinue funding Ukraine indefinitely, because this country and this U.S. Senate has not actually had much of an argument about whether we should continue to fund Ukraine indefinitely.

It has become extremely commonplace, among advocates for further Ukraine funding, to frame this as the courageous against the partisan; those who, in America's and Ukraine's, apparently, moment of need, are expressing the great spirit of patriotism that animated us in World War II and other moments of great world conflict; and that those who don't want to send another \$61 billion to Ukraine, well, we are just knuckle-draggers. We are the people who are listening to the base; we are the people who are listening to the media—ignoring that so many of us have been criticizing America's Ukraine policy from the get-go, when both the media and the base were much more supportive than they are today.

One of the most preposterous arguments that I hear in defense of our policy in Ukraine is that it is bipartisan, that the experts know better. Perhaps, Senator J.D. VANCE doesn't know what the Joint Chiefs of Staff do. Perhaps the Republican base doesn't know what the experts in national security do. Maybe, they, with their knowledge and their training and their intelligence briefing access, know something that the American people don't. So while the American people have grown more and more skeptical of this conflict, perhaps it makes sense that we should actually listen to the experts.

Where have we heard that argument? So many times in the last many decades have we been asked to listen to the experts, and yet we never actually ask what the track record of those experts is in matters of foreign policy.

The experts—the bipartisan consensus, of course—got us into Vietnam, a war that lasted nearly 15 years that saw the destruction of nearly 60,000 American lives; and for what?

It was the bipartisan foreign policy consensus—the experts—that got us into a 20-year war in Afghanistan, where American taxpayers, for two decades, funded things like how to turn Afghanistan into a flowering democracy or how to ensure that the Afghans had proper American thoughts about gender in the 21st century. Well, maybe that was a waste of money and maybe the experts were wrong.

Those same experts, of course, counseled us that we must invade Iraq because Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Yet Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction, and the war led not only to the destruction of 5,000 American lives, and many, many hundreds of thousands of innocent people beyond that, but also led to the regional empowerment of Iran, which now we are told, by those same experts, is the biggest problem that we face in the Middle East.

Now those experts have a new crusade. Now those experts have a new thing that American taxpayers must

fund and must fund indefinitely, and it is called the conflict in Ukraine.

Now, we—at least most of us, I think, in this body; nearly all of us, I hope—do not think Ukraine deserved to be invaded. We don't think what has befallen the innocent civilians of Ukraine was deserved. We condemn it, as we should.

But we have to ask ourselves: “What are we doing there?” not how we feel about it. “What is our objective there?” not how sad we feel about what has befallen the innocent civilians. We have to engage in what the bipartisan experts have failed to engage in for 50 years: a conversation about strategy—asking very specific, very discreet questions about what it is that we are doing there. What are we trying to accomplish? How long will it take to accomplish these things? And for how many millions or billions or trillions of dollars are we in for before we can accomplish these things?

Now, I have heard any number of explanations from my colleagues who support our policy in Ukraine about what it is that we are trying to do. At the beginning of the war, especially—you hear this argument far less—but at the beginning of the war, especially, you would hear an argument that we had to throw Vladimir Putin back to the 1991 borders. Well, we don't hear that argument so much anymore. Why? Because it was preposterous then, and it is preposterous now.

Ukraine is a country that now has about 28 million people. That is after many hundreds of thousands have died in the war and many, many millions have left the country, probably permanently, beyond that. Russia, by comparison, has 160 million people and has the industrial capacity to make many, many more times artillery shells and other critical weapons per day. So against that leviathan in Eastern Europe, we are told, somehow, the Ukrainians can win.

Well, again, what is victory?

We know now that throwing Russia back to the 1991 borders is preposterous. No one, not even the inner circle of Zelenskyy's own Cabinet, makes that argument. They did a few months ago, but they don't make that argument any more. So what is victory? And when you talk to people, both in public and in private, the actual thing that you can piece together that we are trying to do is to send enough weapons and send enough money to the Ukrainians until something good happens; until, maybe, the Russians get sick of the conflict, and they come to the negotiating table. That is one opportunity to end this war.

That is one opportunity to end this war that we are told is that if we just keep on going and we show our resolve, then Vladimir Putin will come to the negotiating table.

And yet if you listen to former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder or you listen even to some of the ministers in Zelenskyy's government or,

certainly, if you listen to a number of other Western European allies, they will say that Russia was willing to come to the negotiating table at the beginning of 2022, after the war had stalemated from the Russian perspective and after the Ukrainians had shown some real bravery and some real resolve.

Now, it is not just Vladimir Putin who says this; it is virtually everyone who has ever talked about this moment in the conflict. And they will say that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, backed by any number of leaders within the American security apparatus, basically said: Tell Vladimir Putin to shove it. The Ukrainians are winning, the Russians are losing, so we will just keep this war going for as long as it takes.

So we had the opportunity to negotiate back in 2022, and if we had taken it, here is what would have happened: Many fewer hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians would have died. Many fewer innocent civilians would have lost their lives, their homes, their livelihoods. And a war in Eastern Europe that has put stresses on everything from food supply to energy prices would have concluded.

So, we are trying to get Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table. We don't have a pathway for how to do it, by the way; we just think that is a good thing, and we are going to try to do it if we continue to throw money. But yet that same negotiating table was on the offer about 18 months ago, and we told them to go shove it.

OK, so negotiating table, that seems to not be a realistic end goal if we just continue to funnel money and resources. So what is the end goal here? It is astonishing that not a single person from Joe Biden on down can actually articulate what another \$61 billion can do.

They will tell you what it won't do. They will tell you what the absence of \$61 billion will do, but how weird is it that they want to send \$61 billion to America's ally, Ukraine, and they can't actually tell you what it is supposed to accomplish—what this will accomplish that the previous \$120 billion didn't.

So, first, we have a complete absence of strategy, a complete failure for the President of the United States to articulate what we are going to do.

I try to imagine what it would have been as an American citizen if on December 8, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt stood before the country and said: The Japanese have attacked us. It is a day that will live in infamy, and so we are going to send money for as long as it possibly takes, with no articulation of what we are going to do, of what the battle plan is, of where we are fighting, of what we were going to have our manufacturing base try to accomplish. We are just going to send money and hope that, eventually, these guys come to the negotiating table. That is the equivalent of what we are doing at this moment in time with this particular conflict.

Now, I mentioned just now our manufacturing base. So let's talk about the costs of this conflict. We know there is no strategy. We know there is no plan to do anything other than just to funnel more and more money and more and more resources.

What are the costs of continuing our posture in Ukraine? Well, let's go through them. Now, let me just make an observation about costs, about actually thinking about costs and considering the consequences of our actions. It used to be common in American statesmanship that we hear this phrase, "Speak softly and carry a big stick."

The idea was be smart in your strategic decisions, be willing to hit back and hit back hard if you have to, but don't bluster. Don't brag. Don't pretend that you can do things that you can't. And a fundamental part of American statesmanship, I think, is asking ourselves: What is it that we are costing ourselves by continuing to fund this war?

Well, you have heard some of my colleagues talk about this already. We have \$61 billion on top of \$34 trillion in debt. Can we actually afford to send another \$61 billion to Ukraine? Can we afford to send the \$100 billion that will be requested at some point next year? Can we afford the hundreds of billions of dollars of reconstruction costs that we have effectively committed ourselves to by funding the war in Ukraine indefinitely?

You already hear these people like vultures with a carcass talking about how much money they are going to make on the reconstruction of Ukraine. And I ask myself, why are we destroying the country in the first place, given that we know the war is at a stalemate and American diplomacy could plausibly bring it to a close.

Now, here is another thing that this is costing us, something that doesn't get talked about nearly enough in this Chamber. But I am reminded of the only time that I have ever been in the White House with a sitting President of the United States. It was about a week before the inauguration of Donald Trump and Mike Pence, and so I was there with President Barack Obama.

I think it is important to never reveal confidences of private conversations. But he said something then, said something that was extremely interesting and I didn't expect to hear from a Democratic President. What he said is that the refugee crisis in Europe in 2015 would take down a number of liberal governments.

Now me as a conservative, I might not care about liberal governments going down, but I thought it was interesting that a theoretically pro-immigration guy—a guy much more committed to the cause of open borders than almost any Republican I know—would say that when you have wide, open borders and when you have uncontrolled migration, it destabilizes governments.

Well, of course, the former President was exactly right: Refugee crises do destabilize governments. Why are we not talking about the fact that in multiple countries in southern Europe right now, they are being overwhelmed with people—not bad people, by the way; most of them are just looking for food to feed their family or a job with a decent wage. But we are witnessing the beginning of what I believe will become the biggest refugee crisis in the history of the world. Why?

Because in Africa, which has 1.5 billion people, most of whom have a standard of living much lower than what we have in the United States of America, you have grain prices through the roof, wheat prices through the roof, barley prices through the roof. And if anybody who is advocating an endless war in Ukraine asks: What happens when 1.5 billion starving people start to move north to look for some food? You don't have to make any moral judgments about the plight that they will go on. You should make a moral judgment about the people in this building who refuse to think about the unintended consequences of their actions.

Are we really willing to have over a billion people, starving, trying to pour into the borders of Europe and the United States of America? Are we really willing to set up a refugee crisis, the likes of which the world has never seen? And if we do that, what effect will it have on our allies in Europe? What effect will it have in our own country? What effect will it have for millions of American citizens who are already dealing with the consequences of an overwhelmed southern border?

And I want to talk about that overwhelmed southern border in a second, but I want to keep talking about the unintended consequences of the war in Ukraine. Another unintended consequence is, What do energy prices look like all over the world?

We have no idea who blew up the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. We can have some guesses. But isn't it kind of weird and isn't it unusual for our European allies to have had their most important fuel artery destroyed and they seem totally uninterested in asking questions about it?

We already know that governments like those in Poland, like those in Slovenia, like those in a number of other allied countries across Europe are under an extraordinary amount of stress because fuel prices are so high.

The country of Hungary, which has 10 million people, took in nearly a million Ukrainian refugees, an important American ally by any standard, and yet they are facing skyrocketing energy prices because of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

What effect does it have on the many millions of people who are living over there? What effect does it have on America's national security when we take down a number of allied governments because the people there can't

afford food and can't afford energy? That is another unintended consequence.

And while we are talking about the unintended consequences of energy prices in Europe, let's ask the very important question about why we are here.

Now my Democratic friends on the other side of the aisle act like Ukraine is the most significant issue confronting our country. You see the Ukrainian flag lapel pins. You see the way people talk about it on social media. There is a species of American liberal who thinks that the Ukraine war is the most important thing confronting our country, but it is not so important that they will pursue commonsense American energy policies.

The reason—the reason—why Russia is so powerful on the world stage today is one reason: because of stupid American and European energy policies, preposterous energy policies that drive up the cost of natural gas.

So while we, with the one hand, send \$61 billion to Ukraine, we pursue a set of energy policies that drive up the cost of natural gas and enrich the Russian oligarchs who are paying for the war. We are literally paying for both sides of the war—the Russian side with our energy policy and \$61 billion to Ukraine direct with American taxpayer subsidy. That is another unintended consequence.

And my Republican friends, who I assume all of them agree with me on the idiocy of our modern energy policies in 2023 and 2024, why are they supporting a conflict that, in fact, is a cover for those energy policies?

If they really cared about Ukraine as much as they say they did, perhaps they should force the President of the United States to stop enriching Russian oligarchs with terrible energy policies. But we are not doing that; we are going to continue to fund both sides of this war, and I guess that is just the way that it is going to be.

Let's talk about another unintended consequence of our Ukraine policy. We are, at this very moment, incredibly stressed in how many weapons we can manufacture. I tell this to people, and they are sometimes surprised by it. The first time that I heard it, I was surprised by it.

America, if you measure it by GDP, is, of course, the largest economy in the world, and we are 10 times the size of the Russian economy. And yet the most important weapon in Eastern Europe today are 155-millimeter artillery shells. It is one of the reason why 400,000 Ukrainians—that's the best estimate—have died during this conflict is because the Russians have an incredible advantage in artillery.

So you ask yourself: We are 10 times the size of the Russian economy, how many artillery shells do we make in a month, and how many artillery shells do the Russians make in a month? Well, we make, in a month, about 30,000 artillery shells. That is up from about

20,000 artillery shells a month at the beginning of the conflict. Guess how many the Russians make? They make about 25,000 artillery shells a day.

So in a month, the United States, the biggest economy in the world, makes weapons at a rate per month that the Russians are able to meet in a single day. Well, one thing that suggests to me is the GDP numbers are awfully fake. If you can't produce weapons to defend your own people, then you can't pretend that your economy is as strong as you might like to think.

Unfortunately for Wall Street, we cannot fight wars with dollars and derivatives; we need weapons, we need bullets, we need artillery shells, we need missiles. And America doesn't make nearly enough of those—not for our own security and certainly not enough to support both the Ukraine conflict and, God forbid, a conflict that might occur in east Asia.

So let's specify that a little bit more. We are, right now, depleting critical munitions, missiles, artillery shells, and bullets faster than we can replenish them, and then we send them to Ukraine.

I am sorry, why does that make an ounce of sense for our own national security? Shouldn't we rebuild our own manufacturing capacity before we spend all of it on Ukraine? Shouldn't we make more of our own weapons and gain some self-sufficiency in weapons manufacturing before we send all of those resources to Ukraine? The answer of the U.S. Senate is: Apparently not.

So on issue after issue after issue—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I am inquiring to see if the gentleman from Ohio would yield to a question about the subject matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. VANCE. Madam President, I am happy to yield.

Mr. TILLIS. Senator VANCE, this appropriations bill that is before us, I just want to make sure that I have my facts right. I believe that there are \$35 billion to restore U.S. military readiness and modernization. I also believe—and, please, correct me if I am wrong—that for every dollar we are sending to Ukraine, we are appropriating about \$2.50 to make sure that we backfill and cover—there are a lot of bad, unintended consequences to this conflict. One of the good ones is learning, before we have to defend ourselves, that we are grievously out of step with manufacturing capacity.

And it is my understanding that \$35 billion, about half of the money that is being appropriated to Ukraine, is actually being appropriated back to the industrial base and for Patriot missile manufacturing, a number of other vulnerabilities that we have found, we are trying to address it. Do I have a correct understanding of that?

Mr. VANCE. To my colleague from North Carolina—before I answer that

question, Madam President, can I inquire how much time I have?

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I would also like to state that I have time that I will—in response to my question, I will yield my time for the purposes of you allowing to have time beyond the answer of the question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio has 40 minutes remaining.

Mr. VANCE. So, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the only time used by the Senator from North Carolina be debited to his postclosure time and that, to answer his question, we not have time deducted from my account.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VANCE. Madam President, to my colleague and friend from North Carolina, I want to answer that question. So the Senator is right that this legislation contains a lot of resources, and I think \$35 billion is the number that he used to rebuild the American industrial base, and I have no reason to object to that number. I know that some people have had more time with this legislation than I have, but I believe, based on my own review, that number is correct. But we have to ask ourselves not just how much money is going to rebuild our industrial base, but combined with Presidential draw-down authority, how much of that will then be just redirected to Ukraine?

My understanding is that given the current authorizations and given the current appropriations, while a lot of this money will go—and I am glad that it will go—to places like Ohio and Alabama to manufacture weapons, those weapons will then be mostly sent to Eastern Europe because we are currently spending resources and munitions in Eastern Europe at a rate that is far faster than our own industrial base's ability to replenish them.

So what will happen, in effect, is that we will make the weapons, and literally faster than we can make them, they will then go out the door to Eastern Europe, unless, of course, in the next few months or the next couple of years, the conflict ends.

So the gentleman's question is well-taken, but it actually doesn't address the core concern that we are depleting munitions much faster than we can replenish them.

I want to just—on one final point here, if I may, and I will be quick because I know I am on borrowed time here. The question of whether we should rebuild our industrial base is something my friend and I agree on and I think most of my colleagues here in the U.S. Senate agree on. The more difficult question is, What do we do in the interim?

It will take years to get our industrial base to the point—maybe 3 years, maybe 5 years to get our industrial base to the point where it can support a war in Eastern Europe and a war in East Asia simultaneously.

We don't debate the need to rebuild our industrial base; the question is, What do we do in the interim? And I think, in the interim, continuing to support the Ukraine war indefinitely is a terrible, terrible mistake.

Madam President, I suppose I could go back on my own clock. I don't know what I am supposed to say here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will resume.

Mr. VANCE. Madam President, I appreciate your charity, and I appreciate you having to sit up there and listen to me. Members of our Gallery chose this, but some of us did not, so I appreciate you and my staff.

Let me keep on going here on how we got here. I have articulated to the best of my ability why I think we don't have the strategy here and why I think it is important for us to actually articulate a strategy, what it means for us to not have that strategy, and importantly the unintended consequences of continued conflict in Eastern Europe backstopped by the American taxpayer.

But I want to talk about the politics of this. Not long ago—or I should say, excuse me, not long after Russia invaded Ukraine, I made an observation that frustrated a lot of my friends who advocate for continual conflict in Ukraine. I said: How can we support a war in Ukraine? How can we defend Ukraine's borders when we are not even defending our own American border under the Presidency of Joe Biden?

The response that came back went something like this, and I will paraphrase it as much as I can: America can walk and chew gum at the same time.

A great power should, in theory, be able to support an ally in Eastern Europe while at the same time securing its own southern border.

I think the events of the last week have revealed just how preposterous that argument is. We clearly are not able to walk and chew gum at the same time, and, in fact, if we were able to walk and chew gum at the same time, we would secure our border first, and we would have done it weeks or months ago, but certainly we would have done it this past week.

Now, here is the basic political dynamic that unfolded, and I know my colleague from Kentucky has discussed this. So have others. The basic political dynamic that unfolded is the Republicans in the Senate said: We want border security. That is the issue around which Republicans are unified. We want border security.

Of course, the Democrats are in charge. The Democratic leader is the majority leader of the Senate, and we have a Democratic President. So what do the Democrats want? What unites the Democrats that doesn't unite us? And the answer came back: Ukraine.

The Democrats want to send \$61 billion to Ukraine. The Republicans want to secure the border. There was the root of a potential compromise. In di-

vided government, sometimes you have to make compromises. Nobody is happy, but there was a potential compromise that could be made.

Here is how the argument went: If we are going to send \$61 billion to Ukraine, we should do it first in tiers. We shouldn't send it all at once; we should stagger it out a little bit. The reason we should do that is to ensure that Joe Biden actually keeps his promise and enforces the American southern border.

In other words, we tell the President: You don't get another dime of American taxpayer money for Ukraine unless you bring illegal border crossings to the level that they were during the Presidency of Donald Trump.

That, to me, was the negotiation as it was set up by the Republican conference. That was the understanding that I and so many of my colleagues in the Republican conference had.

Of course, that negotiation could go many places. It could go a place that might make Democrats uncomfortable. It could go to a place that might make some of my Republican friends uncomfortable. In theory, to get a deal, it would sort of get everybody a little uncomfortable, but you would be able to get 60 Senators to pass it and send it on to the House.

Well, that is not what happened. What was produced instead was a secret negotiation where Republican Senators by and large had very, very little input in the process and where we had no idea what was actually in the final package. We heard it through rumor and through conversations with friends. But immigration law is complicated. What a colleague—even a well-meaning colleague—tells you exists in a piece of immigration law doesn't matter nearly as much as the text of the actual immigration law.

So that text finally dropped on Sunday of last week. I believe on February 4 that legislation dropped, a 370-page piece of legislation that would commit many, many billions of dollars to Ukraine, a few billion dollars to East Asia, a few billion dollars to Israel, and a few billion dollars, combined with some policy changes, to the American southern border.

Now, here is the problem: It actually inflamed some of the worst—when you read the text, you realize that it inflamed some of the problems that make the southern border crisis the worst. Let's just walk through a few of those.

No. 1, parole. The last Democratic President, Barack Obama, paroled approximately 5,000 illegal aliens per year; that is 5,000 per year. Joe Biden, in 3 years, has paroled between 600,000 and close to 1 million illegal aliens per year. That is not a typo or an overstatement. So Joe Biden radically increased parole authority, and that doesn't just have the direct effect of making nearly 1 million illegal aliens legal, it also has a secondary effect, because if you are in Central America or

you are anywhere in the world and you would like to come to America and not go through the proper channels, now, all of a sudden, the clarion call has gone out. Joe Biden has thrown open the southern border, and if you come across illegally, he will parole you close to a million times per year, when the last Democrat did it 5,000 times per year.

That is the first effect of Joe Biden's parole, and our great border compromise did nothing to limit Joe Biden's parole authority.

No. 2. Another problem with our border law is that it has been manipulated so that we turn so-called illegal aliens into so-called asylum seekers. Here is how it works. We, of course, want to be a country that is welcoming to those who are fearing persecution. So if you come into this country as an economic migrant and you come illegally, you come having not followed the laws of this country, you can claim asylum. If your asylum claim is granted, you immediately receive amnesty, and you are on the track to becoming a citizen of this country even though you never followed the law to get into the country in the first place.

The other effect of our jacked-up—excuse me—the other effect of our problematic asylum laws is that even if the asylum claim is not granted, you can be released into the country for a period of years, sometimes even decades, before an immigration judge hears your claims.

So let's say you are an economic migrant. You show up at the American southern border. You say: I am an asylum claimant fearing persecution.

An administrative official from Customs and Border Patrol says: Well, we have to adjudicate your asylum claim. You can't do that right now, so what we will do is ask an immigration judge to hear that claim in 12 years. You are free to hang out in America for the next 12 years.

Well, that is an effect of amnesty, and, again, it sends a message all across the world that America is open for business, and we can have a wide-open southern border. That is what it does.

This particular legislation actually made that problem worse. Now, on the one hand, it tried to increase the standard for granting asylum from a credible fear standard to a reasonable fear standard, but, importantly, it changed the people who were enforcing that standard from immigration judges to CIS officers at United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. These are people who are widely believed to have some of the most pro-asylum views within the U.S. Government.

So millions of people could come across the southern border, claim asylum, and have their claim granted unilaterally. That would put them on the pathway to citizenship. That would put them in a competitive posture with American citizens for jobs and for

other important benefits. Yet this legislation trying to fix the border actually made the asylum process worse. So here we are with a border compromise that actually makes the border security problems in this country worse.

Let me just say that what we would need to do if we really wanted to secure the border is very simple: We just have to make Joe Biden do it. He has the tools necessary. He has the legal authority necessary to secure the border. The real debate, whether you are using Ukraine money as leverage or something else, is, how do we force Joe Biden to do his job? This legislation didn't do that. It didn't even come close to doing that, and so most Republicans rejected it.

So now here we are an hour after the first foray of border security negotiations, the first volley where Democrats give us border security and Republicans give \$61 billion to Ukraine, and what happens? It doesn't succeed. For the reasons I just articulated, the gross majority of my Republican colleagues didn't like that proposal, and so it got dropped.

What you might expect to happen in a good-faith negotiation that was actually about the border, if we were actually trying to secure the border, you might have said: This is not the Democrats' best offer. Let's go back to the negotiating table. Let's continue to push for border security because that is the most pressing crisis that we face as a country.

What happened instead is, after an hour, Senate Democrats and even some in Republican leadership decided that we should move on from border security. They had checked the box. Now let's move on to their real priority, which is sending another \$61 billion to Ukraine.

It stinks to my high heaven, ladies and gentlemen. No one who watched this process unfold believes that Republican leadership negotiated in good faith for border security or that Democrats did the same. It was always kabuki theater. It was always an excuse to say: We tried on the border. Now let's move on to the thing that really matters, which is the money for Ukraine.

That failure, the way that it blew up in the faces of our leadership, and the appearance gave lie to the idea that this was ever really about border security.

By the way, it alienated millions of Republican and Independent voters who want their government to focus on the most pressing problem for this country, and that is the border.

When I go back home to Ohio and I talk to audiences about their views on Ukraine, most people agree with me, but some people disagree with me. But if you go to an audience in the State of Ohio—a State that is affected tragically by the fentanyl problem, where you will drive on highways and see billboards for sex trafficking victims to call the hotline because they are being

sex trafficked in the State of Ohio by Mexican drug cartels who have been given free reign at the southern border—if you talk to people and ask them “What are the most pressing problems the country faces?” none of them will say Ukraine, even those who would like to send more money to Ukraine. None of them will say Ukraine.

So what are we doing? Why did we give up so easily? Why did Republicans stab their voters in the back? Why did we not fight for border security, ladies and gentlemen? That is exactly what we promised we would do.

Many of us did, by the way. Even some of my colleagues who disagree with me on the Ukraine question at least have the courage to stand and fight for border security. But unfortunately far too many Republicans refused, and so we are where we are.

Now let me just make an argument about where we are on this particular border situation. We have millions of people coming into the country illegally every single year. We have hundreds of thousands dying just in the first 3 years of Joe Biden's term from fentanyl overdoses. We have a President who has invited the opening of the American southern border, and now we are living with the consequences.

The American people know that this was the direct result of Joe Biden's policies, and they know he could stop it. So let's debate real border security—border security that actually forces the President to do exactly that.

There are a number of options on the table. You will sometimes hear some of my Democratic colleagues and even some in the Republican leadership say: We can't have a bill because Donald Trump doesn't want us to have a bill; that if we advance commonsense border security, Donald Trump would destroy it.

That is the furthest thing from the truth. In fact, just last week, Donald Trump proposed a border security bill that would force Joe Biden to secure the southern border. You may agree or disagree with the policy, but the idea that there is no policy that would get Republican buy-in, including at the top of the Republican ticket, is preposterous. It is something that does not exist in reality.

Madam President, how much time do I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. VANCE. Great.

So I have given my spiel here, and I want to get a little bit into the details of what we are trying to accomplish here and how we might try to accomplish it. But, first, let's start with a conversation about the American southern border.

I want to read a piece from the Washington Post, an argument that I want to read and that I want to respond to:

Having failed to convince the American people that a blank check to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is in their interests, the Ukraine First caucus now

claims the aid primarily benefits American workers. Mark A. Thiessen's [who drafted an] op-ed [on this point] exemplified the pivot.

This is disingenuous and dangerous.

And this is partially in response to some of the arguments that I have heard earlier. We cannot rebuild our industrial base by building capacity and sending all of it to Ukraine. It doesn't make sense.

Now I support—

We support increasing defense spending and building up our defense-industrial base. An expansion of our military manufacturing capacity benefits American workers and bolsters our national security. Washington is more focused on sending our limited military stockpiles to a conflict in Ukraine with no clear path to victory.

The Biden administration's new message fails to account for grave shortages in our stockpiles. Thanks to nearly two years of mission in Ukraine, the United States is perilously unready for any additional contingency. Anything with a solid rocket motor is in short supply—

Solid rocket motors are the rocket motors that power so many of the critical missile systems that we need. And whether it is Javelins or Stingers or Patriot missiles, we are critically in short supply of not just the missiles themselves but of some of the components that are necessary for building those missiles—

including the SM-6s that would be needed in the Pacific. The high demand for Stingers, Javelins and Patriot interceptors in Ukraine means we are desperately short of the weapons that would be needed in Taiwan. Replenishing them is going to take years.

I want to just pause here to make an observation. One of the arguments my friends make in defense of \$61 billion to Ukraine is that we need to send a message to Vladimir Putin that if we give up and walk away from the Ukrainian battlefield—even though the leader of Ukraine's own military, until recently, said they had no chance of victory on that battlefield—if we give up, then it will send a message to Xi Jinping, the leader of China, that we are not a steadfast ally.

What they are arguing, in effect, is that it will weaken American deterrence, that process by which we prevent our enemies and our adversaries from doing things we don't want them to. Well, in classical foreign policy circles, deterrence is the combination of, on the one hand, resolve and, on the other hand, capacity. And they are making an argument about resolve. They are saying that if we show weakness to Xi, we will be showing a weakening of American resolve. We will show that America can't stand in there and fight the fight. And, look, I am obviously a critic of further aid to Ukraine, but it is true that American resolve is important, and we should do everything we can to show American resolve.

But you know what is more important than American resolve? Do you know what is more important than thumping our chests like eighth graders on a playground and saying we are tough, we are strong, we can do it? What is much stronger than that is to

actually have the capacity to defend ourselves and our allies. And that is what is so weak.

Xi Jinping does not care how tough America acts. He cares how strong America is.

And if we use our ammunition, our missiles, our artillery, on a war in Eastern Europe when we don't even have the bullets to defend ourselves or our allies, it doesn't matter how tough we act, Xi will do whatever he wants all over the world. And that is what this is ultimately about. We are trying to rebuild our country. What do we do in the interim? What do we actually do when our country is in a weak enough place because of decisions made over 30 or 40 years?

I find it interesting that so many of the people, from the news commentators to my Senate colleagues, Republican and Democratic, who actively advocated shipping our industrial base to East Asia and Mexico are now the people who are most fervently advocating for endless war in Ukraine.

Here is the game they played: Send all of our weapons manufacturing; send all of our industrial base; send it everywhere but the United States of America. And now that America is in a tough spot, we should fight every conflict everywhere, even though we don't make the weapons that we need to support those conflicts. And why don't we make those weapons? It is because these guys encouraged us to ship our industrial base overseas.

Those of you who are students of history will have heard the term "arsenal of democracy." America was "the arsenal of democracy." We won World War II, not because of chest thumping, not because we showed the strongest resolve, but because we had the strongest people and the strongest economy in the world.

So at a time when America faces a number of problems—including the southern border here at home, at a time when we are weaker in manufacturing capacity than we have been at any time in the last half century, this is the point when these people want to send unlimited weapons to Ukraine? This is the point where they want to send weapons not just to Ukraine but to many theaters all across the world?

Let's have an honest conversation about the decisions that have been made and how they have made this country weaker. Let's not pretend that weakness doesn't exist and send an unlimited number of weapons to Ukraine in the interim.

"OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!"

Now, I want to move on to another argument. But before I do, I am mindful of something that is very close to my heart personally. I have three beautiful children. I have a 6-year-old baby boy named Ewan—not so much of a baby anymore. I have a 2-year-old baby named Mirabel who is still very much a baby, and I love her very much. And I have a little guy named Vivek Gabriel Vance who was 3 years old yesterday but turned 4 today.

And I am sorry, Vivek, that I can't be with you for your birthday dinner, but I want you to know that Daddy loves you very much. And I am going to read this into the RECORD because maybe you can watch it at home.

"Oh, the Places You'll Go!" by Dr. Seuss.

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You're off to Great Places!

You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself

in any direction you choose.

You're on your own. And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.

About some you will I say, "I don't choose to go there."

With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,

you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.

And you may not find any

you'll want to go down.

In that case, of course,

you'll head straight out of town.

It's opener there,

in the wide open air.

Out there things can happen

and frequently do

to people as brainy

and footsy as you.

And when things start to happen,

don't worry. Don't stew.

Just go right along.

You'll start happening too.

Oh, the places you'll go!

You'll be on your way up!

You'll be seeing great sights!

You'll join the high fliers

who soar to great heights.

You won't lag behind, because you'll have the speed.

You'll pass the whole gang and you'll soon take the lead.

Wherever you fly, you'll be best of the best.

Wherever you go, you'll top all the rest.

Except when you don't.

Because, sometimes, you won't.

I'm sorry to say so

but, sadly, it's true

that Bang-ups

And Hang-ups

can happen to you.

You can get all hung up

in a prickly perch.

And your gang will fly on.

You'll be left in a Lurch.

You'll come down from the Lurch

with an unpleasant bump.

And the chances are, then,

that you'll be in a Slump.

And when you're in a Slump,

you're not in for much fun.

Un-slumping yourself

is not easily done.

You'll come to a place where the streets are not marked.

Some windows are lightened. But mostly they are dark.

A place you could sprain both your elbow and your chin!

Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?

How much can you lose? How much can you win?

And IF you go in, should you turn left or right . . .

Or right-and-three-quarters? Or, maybe, not quite?

Or go around back and sneak in from behind? Simple it's not, I'm afraid you will find, for a mind-maker-upper to make up his mind.

You can get so confused that you'll start in to race down long wiggled rocks at a break-necking pace

and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space,

headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.

The Waiting Place . . .

. . . for people just waiting.

Waiting for a train to go

or a bus to come, or a plane to go

or the mail to come, or the rain to go

or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow

or waiting around for a Yes or No

or waiting for their hair to grow.

Everyone is just waiting.

Waiting for the fish to bite

or waiting for the wind to fly a kite

or waiting around for Friday night

or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake

or a pot to boil, or a Better Break

or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants

or a wig with curls, or Another Chance.

Everyone is just waiting.

NO!

That's not for you!

Somehow you'll escape

all that waiting and staying

You'll find the bright places

where the Boom Bands are playing.

With banner flip-flapping,

once more you'll ride high!

Ready for anything under the sky.

Ready because you're that kind of a guy!

Oh, the places you'll go! There is fun to be done!

There points to be scored. There are games to be won.

And the magical things you can do with that ball

will make you the winning-est winner of all.

Fame! You'll be famous as famous can be,

with the whole wide world watching you win on TV.

Except when they don't.

Because, sometimes, they won't.

I'm afraid that some times

you'll play lonely games too.

Games you can't win

'cause you'll play against you.

All Alone!

Whether you like it or not,

Alone will be something

you'll be quite a lot.

And when you're alone, there's a very good chance

you'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants.

There are some, down the road between hither and yon,

that can scare you so much you won't want to go on.

But on you will go

though the weather be foul.

On you will go

though your enemies prow!

On you will go

though the Hakken-Kraks howl.

Onward up many

a frightening creek,

though your arms may get sore

and your sneakers may leak.

On and on you will hike.

and I know you'll hike far

and face up to your problems

whatever they are.

You'll get mixed up, of course,

as you already know.

You'll get mixed up

with many strange birds as you go.

So be sure when you step.

Step with care and great tact

and remember that Life's

a Great Balancing Act.

Just never forget to be dexterous and deft.
And never mix up your right foot with your left.

And will you succeed?

Yes! You will, indeed!

(98 and $\frac{3}{4}$ percent guaranteed)

KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!

So . . .

be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray
or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea,
you're off to great places!

Today is your day!

Your mountain is waiting.

So . . . get on your way!

—Dr. Seuss

I love you.

Returning to the matter at hand.

Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). Thirteen minutes.

H.R. 815

Mr. VANCE. Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to read this piece, which articulates my argument for peace very well, written in *Responsible Statecraft*, published on July 6, 2023. We are now—think about it—nearly a year since this piece was published, and its arguments are, if anything, more prescient today than they were last summer:

Last year, referring to the possibility of escalation that the Russo-Ukrainian war entails, President Joe Biden announced that America and the world are closer to a destructive nuclear war than ever since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

Perhaps no other statement from the highest level of government could so directly affirm the failure of American grand strategy and foreign policy in the post-Cold War world. What seemed to be a Hollywood sci-fi scenario that the average American in the 21st century did not even think about is now a possibility that experts, policymakers, and world leaders like President Biden discuss regularly.

As America and the world grapple with the tectonic shifts that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has unleashed, war budgets around the world keep increasing. In 2022, global spending on defense reached an all-time high of \$2.24 trillion. The U.S. defense budget accounted for almost 40 percent of the total, surpassing the next 10 countries combined, including China, Russia, India, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

Yet, America's ever-increasing military expenditures have hardly translated into success stories in the 21st century. The trillions of dollars pumped into questionable military adventurism abroad, such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003, have yielded equally questionable results not only for U.S. interests and national security, but also for global security. America's overreliance on the military to achieve policy objectives and the unilateral actions pursued without an international mandate have backfired in the form of a growing coalition of dissatisfied states that refuse to accept a world order that they see as unjust and hierarchical.

In April of 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered his famous "Chance for Peace" speech in which he compared the enthusiasm for a just and peaceful world after World War II to the unstable, hostile, and unpredictable environment of the Cold War. "The eight years that have passed have seen that hope waver, grow dim, and almost die. And the shadow of fear again has darkly lengthened across the world," he said, before laying out his vision of a just and peaceful order and warning against the unbalanced political influence of military interests.

Today, 70 years later, the world faces the same "shadow of fear" as the unpredictable war unleashed by a revisionist Russia shakes the international system. Biden's promised end of "America's forever wars" that was supposed to bring stability and predictability back to the realm of international affairs while also allowing the United States to reorient its resources towards a much-needed domestic revival did not materialize.

While the war in Ukraine poses a significant threat to U.S. national security interests and necessitates an appropriate policy response, including security assistance to Ukraine for self-defense, U.S. military spending was growing even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This pattern should raise questions about whether the United States should have increased spending on the military in response to the crisis in Ukraine.

The war has also turned into a talking point for those whose direct interests tied to military spending overshadow the actual interests of the American people. Many are now pushing for the concept of a long standoff with foreign rivals, without accounting for the real costs and implications that will be borne by ordinary citizens, both in America and abroad.

In foreign affairs, discourse and reality are sometimes interwoven in complicated and nuanced ways. Conflict can arise as much from actual strategic disagreements, security considerations, and national interests as from discourse and perceptions. In this context, embracing conflict and promoting discourse that emphasizes a long-term confrontation is a dangerous path for America to follow. The very cause of World War I has been attributed to the perceptions of threats and the interpretation of actions by states as "hostile," leading some scholars to argue that European leaders "sleepwalked" into a conflict they neither desired nor expected to win easily.

The question for Americans today, especially the new generation that will be inheriting a more unstable and dangerous world, is whether they will allow America to sleepwalk into a conflict that the United States neither needs, nor can afford to win. Traditionally, American voters do not attach much importance to foreign and defense policy issues. Yet, the citizens of a country that will be spending a record \$842 billion on the military cannot afford to close their eyes on such critical policy issues that, in fact, profoundly affect their livelihoods.

The question is not whether America should abandon its legitimate security needs and interests, nor neglect the foreign threats that necessitate spending on the military. We must understand how much of the current spending is actually justified. We also need to assess the efficiency of the military to protect the American people and interests abroad without overextending resources wastefully and prompting a dangerous arms race that will paralyze growth, development, and more importantly—the long-term prospect for peace and a new, more just world order.

This is why young Americans should be especially concerned with the unchecked influence of special interests that seek to inflate threats, instill the inevitability of long-term conflict confrontation in the world, and justify ever-increasing spending on the military. The new generation will be the primary bearer of the burdens, costs, and consequences that decisions taken in Washington today will have. Ultimately, it boils down to a simple question of the kind of vision young Americans have for their country and for their world.

This question is especially critical given America's own undeniable internal strife. Those seeking to downplay the legitimate

critique of the overreliance on military for-
get or deliberately neglect that foreign policy is ultimately dependent on domestic policy. Both experts and the general public now agree that the once-hailed American democracy is threatened. The inflection point for America is serious: the country is facing a crisis of identity, social cohesion, a growing discontent with the economic model that has marginalized an ever-growing segment of the population, and what is more concerning—a waning belief and trust in the country's most foundational institutions.

Those championing a new age of unnecessarily militaristic and confrontational foreign policy that relies on growing and unbalanced defense budgets should rethink the use of those resources. A stroll in the streets of Portland or in the infamous Skid Row in Los Angeles could be beneficial to re-evaluate priorities and distribution of limited resources to deal with the most pressing issues America faces. Ultimately, the strength and attractiveness of the United States on the global stage and America's competitiveness vis-a-vis its rivals depends on the domestic revival of a country that has been decaying silently for decades in virtually all key aspects.

This is why a new generation of Americans must step in to seize the new chance for peace before it is too late. As the world order continues to fracture, only a wave of democratization of the most undemocratic sphere of policymaking in Washington can trigger the kind of reassessment and accountability the American people should expect from their elected leaders.

Unless we take steps now to usher in an overdue reckoning in Washington, we may miss, as President Eisenhower said, "a precious chance to turn the black tide of events."

That was by Martin Makaryan, and that, again, is from "Responsible Statecraft"—an important argument and an important piece.

Let me address just a couple of points brought to mind by that piece and by that argument.

You will hear—especially in the last couple of days after former President Donald Trump criticized NATO, you will hear a strong argument about what NATO means to the United States of America. I think it is important for us and for our citizens to be honest not just about the problems inherent with NATO and the lack of burden-sharing but also the problems that exist in NATO's own countries—countries that most of us love, that most of us see as important allies, but that have deep, deep pathologies and problems that must be addressed.

Something that is often said is that in this particular conflict of Ukraine versus Russia, NATO is actually carrying its fair share of the burden. You will see charts that make an argument that NATO, which has the economy approximately the size of the United States of America, is spending, actually, more resources on Ukraine than the United States of America. Now, that argument has a few critical flaws. Let's walk through them.

First of all, NATO is providing a large amount of humanitarian assistance, and of course they are absorbing a large amount of refugees; they are doing it because Ukraine is in their backyard. But the critical weapons and

munitions that are being provided are overwhelmingly the responsibility of the United States of America. NATO is not carrying its fair share of the burden when it comes to weapons, and that is the most important thing that the Ukrainians need to win.

Second, even if we assumed—and it is wrong—but even if we assumed that NATO was carrying its fair share of the burden over the last 18 months, NATO has failed to carry its fair share of the burden for literally decades, ladies and gentlemen. Look at just how much money the United States has spent on defense since 1992 and compare that to our NATO allies. Ladies and gentlemen, we have been subsidizing European security to the tune of trillions of dollars. It might feel nice when we go to Munich and the Europeans thank us, and it might be great to get a pat on the back from a European head of state, but the American people demand that NATO carry its fair share of the burden.

Germany is the largest economy in Europe. They have promised for decades and especially over the last years that they would meet the NATO threshold of 2 percent of GDP spent on defense. They are still not there. Italy—a massive economy—still underspends on defense. In fact, most of the economies of Europe—outside of the UK and France and some economies in Eastern Europe—most of the economies of Europe massively underspend on defense, and that has invited aggression not just from Vladimir Putin but from other places as well.

At the same time that world leaders play armchair general with the Ukraine conflict, their own societies are decaying. Not a single country—even the United States—within the NATO alliance has birth rates at a replacement level. We don't have enough families and children to continue as a nation; yet we are talking about a problem 6,000 miles away. We are being invaded by up to 10 million illegal migrants over the course of Joe Biden's term in office, and we have apparently no President with the willpower to stop that problem. We have a fentanyl crisis that has led to the deaths of over 100,000 people per year in the last few years of our youngest and brightest people. Mental health crises are skyrocketing. Youth suicides are skyrocketing. Every single place—not just the United States but every single one of the countries in the NATO alliance sees similar or in some cases even more troubling dynamics on most of those metrics, from migration to economic malaise.

What are we doing, ladies and gentlemen?

China and Russia. If we want them to fear us, we need to rebuild our own countries. We need to rebuild a strong Europe and a strong America. We need to rebuild a civilization that can support conflicts instead of just run away from them because right now we don't have that. We do not have a country

and we do not have a NATO alliance that is strong enough to do the things that need to be done.

So our message to the Europeans needs to be simple: Fix your own country. Share your own burden. Spend more on defense. Fix your own problems.

That will deal with the problem in Russia far more than a \$61 billion check to Ukraine will. In fact, we are subsidizing them. We are enabling their refusal to spend enough resources on defense.

I see that my time is up. Thank you.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I know that we have Tennesseans who are watching, and many people are saying: Why is it that you all are here? Because this was to be a week where we were working in our States. Of course, many of us have set meetings in our States, but here we find ourselves looking at this piece of legislation that, all of a sudden, has become a must-pass.

Now, the schedule for when we were going to be in and out of session came out in December, back around the 1st of December. So that is when we decide how we are going to organize our year and our work periods and meet those obligations to our constituents.

But what we find out is there is all of a sudden this deadline that has to be met because there is the Munich conference, and we have a delegation that is going, and they don't want to go emptyhanded. They want to take this bill that is going to be more money for Ukraine.

Now, there are some of us who have said: Hey, wait a minute. We have these problems at our southern border, and we really can't help others until we deal with the crisis at our southern border.

There are some of us who remember what happened on 9/11, and we remember the impact that had on our Nation, and we will never forget that. We realized how important it was to get our country back on track, and we did that. We moved forward aggressively not only militarily but in getting our economy back on track, stabilizing our country, changing how we looked for terrorism, and taking the steps that were necessary to protect the citizens of this country, to protect individuals in their communities, in their places of work, and to make certain that they knew we were going to be there to put them first and the protection of this country first.

Well, of course, deadlines and work periods have a way of forcing issues, of saying: Well, this has to be done, and we have to meet this deadline.

I would suggest to all of my colleagues that after we return from this work period, guess what. There is all of a sudden going to be this deadline and this push: Oh, we have the CR coming up. We have to take action right now, so everybody has to get in the same boat and vote for things that you real-

ly don't want because we just cannot have a government shutdown. That is going to be the message that is there.

Bear in mind, I think it has been now 103 days since the Democratic leader has allowed an appropriations bill to come to this floor for consideration.

Because of the good work of Senators COLLINS and MURRAY, the Senate appropriations bills came out of the Appropriations Committee in July. But, no, they are not coming to this floor because, then, the Democratic leader would have to give up the ability to jam it and to get what he wants right at the very end, just like there is this jam to get this bill passed before the Munich Conference, so there can be smiles, handshakes, and back slaps when they get there.

But I think our allies would like for us to take care of ourselves and secure our border so that, indeed, we are going to be able to continue to help them, because this is a dangerous place. This world is a dangerous place. There is an axis of evil—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea—that is working overtime trying to destroy the United States. They don't hide that that is their goal. They are really pretty open about that being their goal.

China, they want global domination. Russia, they want to be able to sell China oil. Iran wants to sell China oil. Indeed, Iran is making billions of dollars every single month selling oil to China because this administration withdrew the sanctions on Iran—the sanctions that President Trump and his administration had put in place that prohibited them from selling oil.

But instead of the President putting those sanctions back on Iran and prohibiting that—and that is what is giving them the money they need to go out here and fund their proxies. The Houthis, Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIS-Syria, ISIS-Iraq, the IRG—where did they get their equipment, their training, their missiles, their rockets? Courtesy of Iran. That is where they get it.

But let's not talk about that. Let's talk about: We have got to pass this bill. We have got to do it right now because the happy handshakes are going to depend on it when they all get over to Munich.

But what we need to be doing is paying attention to what is happening here on our own shores.

Are we concerned about Israel? You better believe we are. We know that they are in a fight for survival. We also know that Iran is who is funding Hamas.

Taiwan, are we concerned about them? Absolutely, and we want to make sure that Taiwan has what they need.

I have even introduced legislation that would authorize a defense Lend-Lease Program for Taiwan. It is important for them to have that. It is important for people to be able to pay back what we give them.

Another thing that we need to do is look at the expectations of our enemies. We have got enemies that expect us, at this point in time because of

this President and his administration, to be weak and to give them running room. They like that. They think that is a good thing. They think that because this President is weak when it comes to our southern border, that they can push people into our country.

From October to the end of the year, 24,000 Chinese, I think it was, came in through our borders. You are talking about people, according to the Border Patrol, from 170 different countries who were coming across our border. We know that these 8.8 million illegal immigrants who have entered this country under President Joe Biden's watch are not all individuals who are coming here for a better life. We know some of them are coming here to do us harm.

Indeed, the FBI Director, in December, when he was before our committee, responded to Senator GRAHAM's question about what he saw with the terrorist threat. And, indeed, in paraphrasing his comments, he talked about how he had never seen such broad-based threats, and that everywhere he looked, he saw red lights flashing.

The world is a dangerous place, and it is coming to our border.

There are some things that we had wanted to get done in this bill that are not going to be done. I will note for my colleagues that H.R. 2—I know my Democratic colleagues do not like that bill. I know that. I understand that. We have a difference of opinion on that. But H.R. 2 is the House border security bill—border security, what people are demanding that we do: secure our southern border—that landed on our desk at the Senate Judiciary Committee. And, of course, Homeland Security has part of that, and HHS has part of that, and the Senate HELP Committee. But it landed on May 15.

We have had over 80 meetings—80 meetings—of the Senate Judiciary Committee since that bill landed. Not once have we even looked at taking it up, amending it, letting regular order take place, letting people amend that bill and make it a work product of the committee.

That is not what has happened, but it is what should have happened—allowing regular order to take place and people to be able to weigh in and speak on this bill. But there was a decision not to move forward with that. Instead, it was pushed to the side and a special committee put in place, and they were tasked with solving what was going to be a border and national security bill.

Interestingly enough—and I know that they all worked hard, and I know that Senator LANKFORD put his best efforts into that. But, you know, I think there is a lot to be said for going by regular order—letting the committees take up a piece of legislation, letting the committees do their work on that piece of legislation. But that did not happen.

When I talk to Tennesseans, they are terribly concerned about what is happening with the open border because

they see the impacts in their communities every single day.

The impacts are undeniable when you look at the tens of thousands of U.S. citizens who lose their lives every year to fentanyl poisoning. Right now, the No. 1 killer of U.S. citizens in the 18- to 45-year-old age bracket is fentanyl.

We know the Chinese are working hand in glove with the Mexican cartels, especially the Sinaloa Cartel, which is right there on the Mexico side, across from that Arizona border. They are working overtime. They are pressing those pills, and then they are pushing them across the border. That is what they think is going to help them attack us and harm our citizens.

The drug trafficking, the human trafficking, the sex trafficking that are taking place every single day—local law enforcement—I visit with each of our 95 Tennessee counties every single year, and, to a county, law enforcement tells me they can't deal with the drugs and the human trafficking and the gangs and the crime until we secure the southern border. They are trying, but it continues to grow every single day.

Another thing that concerns everyone—and this ties us back to the FBI's comments about seeing flashing red lights—that is the number of people who are special-interest aliens who are coming from countries like Iran and Afghanistan and Syria. They are flooding into our country. As I said, people from 170 countries is what the Border Patrol tells us came across our border last year.

Think about that. These are people who are making a choice to come across our southern border—paying a cartel to come across that border, instead of legally coming into this country. That is the choice that they are making.

Also, the Terrorist Watchlist—in addition to those hundreds who are coming from special interest countries, you have got 49 Terrorist Watchlist individuals who have been apprehended at the border since the start of fiscal year 2024.

We know that this danger is there. We know these individuals are coming into our country, and we know that our law enforcement professionals are telling us—they are telling us—it is not a question of if we have another terrorist attack on U.S. soil; it is a question of when.

So when you look at what has transpired with this security supplemental and the \$113 billion that has already gone to Ukraine—and, by the way, some of us keep asking for a whole accounting of where that money is. Some of us continue to ask for what we consider a win with Ukraine. We continue to ask what is the strategy that is being implemented there. But what we get back at us is crickets.

So some of us have had amendments that we think would make the legislation before us, the security supplemental, a stronger piece of legislation.

I had several amendments that I have proposed.

No. 1540 would limit the number of aliens who can be paroled into the United States every year, because, if you look at the numbers from previous administrations—Democrat and Republican—you see that many multiples of those numbers are what the Biden administration is waiving right on into the country.

I also had an amendment No. 1534 that would prohibit any of our taxpayer dollars going into Gaza until all the hostages have been released. There again, our citizens do not want their tax dollars going into Gaza being scooped up by Hamas through UNRWA and that being pushed forward.

Now, my amendment No. 1535 would accelerate deportations for illegal aliens who physically assault first responders. Indeed, we have seen more of that than we would like to see in this country. So they should be immediately deported.

I also have 1547, which would prohibit the President and his administration from selling or removing any of the existing border wall or the components that are out there for the border wall.

It was distressing to us to hear that the President was choosing to sell off the border wall when Border Patrol tells us they need a physical barrier, they need better technology where they cannot have a physical barrier, and then they need more officers and agents. Giving them that physical barrier should be something that we agree to do.

No. 1548 would put back in place the President Trump-era Migrant Protection Protocols: Stay in that safe third country; execute your claim for your asylum there. That is something that would be an assistance to our Border Patrol.

(Ms. DUCKWORTH assumed the Chair.)

Now, my amendment No. 1539 should be something that we would all agree on. This would allow the border States to place temporary barriers on Federal land to protect their communities.

Now, for those of us who have been to the border many times, we have walked along this border, and we have met with ranchers, and we have met with farmers, and we have met with property owners who say: You know, we are losing the right to private property.

They can show you pictures of dead bodies they have found on their ranches. They can show you pictures of fields of melons and tomatoes and produce that have been literally trampled by people who are coming across.

So allowing them the right to protect their property—everybody should agree someone has the right to protect their property. A homeowner backing up to the border there in Arizona need not worry that they are going to walk out their back door and find illegal aliens napping in the backyard or taking a dip in a swimming pool or leaving clothes and water bottles strewn right around their back porch.

Now, one that I have worked on for quite a while, No. 1536, is the END Child Exploitation Act. What this would do is end that horrible practice of child recycling.

Now, Madam President, you and I are moms. I am a grandma. And this legislation would require a DNA test for adults and children to determine the familial relationship between an alien and an accompanying minor. This is important to do.

During the Trump era, we did DNA testing at the southern border—not a difficult task. It is a 45-minute test, and this will save a child's life, because we found that fully a third of those children were being trafficked.

We also have learned from Border Patrol that many times a child will present with an adult. They get across the border, and then the child is cut loose. And on the child's arm or on their back is written a name and phone number, whom to call to send the child back across the border.

Border Patrol tells us some of these children have been recycled eight or nine times. There is a way we could end that. The PRINTS Act would also help us to end this recycling by fingerprinting noncitizens under the age of 14.

Now, there is another issue that I have been working on for about a year, and it is to find out what has happened with the unaccompanied alien children who have been released to sponsors who have not been properly vetted. Right now, we have 85,000 children that we do not know where they are—if they are dead or alive, if they are trafficked or not.

My amendment No. 1537 would have addressed this issue and required HHS to report back to us. We should all agree that these unaccompanied alien children should be protected. They ought not be being sex-trafficked. They ought not to be in labor gangs and crews. They ought not to be unprotected.

We found out about this through a reporter who was working in a meat processing facility. And there were children there who were illegally in the country, brought across. They had been turned over to a sponsor by our Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is a part of Health and Human Services, and they were in a labor gang.

We can't get an answer from HHS about this. So that amendment, plus 1538, which would require in-person home visits so we can find out where these children are—those should be things that we agree with—that we agree with. And that ought not to be a partisan issue. That should be something that is a part of a homeland security bill.

Now, 1533 would require any funding to the U.N. to be contingent on the organization placing Hamas, Hezbollah, and other foreign and Iranian proxies and groups designated as foreign terrorist organizations on the U.N. Security Council Consolidated List. Ter-

rorist organizations ought not to get the money that is coming from U.S. taxpayers.

There are so many concerns about this process, about this legislation. And the fact that we would rush to pass this so we can go have a good "shake and howdy" in Munich, I think, is so disrespectful of the American taxpayer. It is disrespectful of Tennesseans.

We should have taken up H.R. 2. We should have amended and debated that. And we are here when we have a week where we would be working in our States, and we know that this legislation that is in such a rush to be passed for the celebratory moment is dead on arrival in the House.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. SCHMITT. Madam President, I rise to bring attention to the process which this body is considering, not just this massive spending bill but the way in which we have handled all the very limited business that has come before this Chamber this entire year.

Before I do that, I would like to say we have some folks in the Gallery, and we have people tuning in. And I am sure everyone watched the Super Bowl last night, where the Kansas City Chiefs won in overtime. I think it is only the second overtime win. Patrick Mahomes, anytime he has the ball—the last guy to have the ball usually wins, and in big games this is becoming a thing. And the Chiefs essentially now are in a dynasty.

So Patrick Mahomes has been in the league for 6 years. He has won three Super Bowls, three out of four trips—three in the last 5 years. So it was a great game, and I am certainly glad our Kansas City Chiefs won, with my not sincerest apologies to the California Senators. I would probably be disingenuous if I said that. But it was a good game, and congratulations to the Chiefs on another well-deserved championship.

Right before that game, yesterday—and I finished just in the nick of time, essentially, for the kickoff—I rose on this floor to talk about what has happened at our southern border.

Now, in this bill that we are considering now, there is nothing in there for our southern border. It is gone. To the extent there ever was anything, this is now an exclusively foreign aid package. And I can't probably make the case strong enough of what a disconnect that really is from what the American people care about.

And I know that there will be some people in this Chamber who will say: As much as we tell them, they just don't understand.

Now, I think they do understand. I think they do understand. They see a Federal Government that is \$34 trillion in debt, with a President who wants to spend trillions and trillions more this year than we take in. No real sanity in sight and no real process for Senators

to actually weigh in on these important matters.

I went through the laundry list of how we got here. The punch line is—not to recap that, and maybe I will tomorrow—but the punch line is: Joe Biden has every authority he needs right now under existing law to secure our southern border. He just doesn't do it; he doesn't want to, because on day one, the executive orders that were in place that were effective under President Trump, he got rid of, whether it was "Remain in Mexico" or title 42. A number of them we rolled through last night. Even right now, as we stand here, talk here, Joe Biden could do all those things; and he actually could stop abusing the parole process, where those are supposed to be individualized adjudications. But instead, millions of people—millions—are being released en masse because they are from a particular country or category. That is illegal.

So if you wonder how we got here, that is how we got here, and you don't need another bill to fix that. You need a President who wants to fix it.

Now, we could have a real debate on the Senate floor with all of us about how we go about improving existing law, but we don't do that either. We have secret negotiations with a couple of Senators. Some people liked the product; some people didn't. But the process—there is no doubt about it—is totally broken, and that played out last week.

So that is what I want to talk about. It turns out that there are a few other Senators—I know Senator LEE, Senator BLACKBURN; I think, probably, Senator VANCE touched on this, and there are a lot of other people, and not just Republicans, by the way—who feel that this process that is in place now is broken and people don't have an opportunity to weigh in.

Before I leave the border, though, I do want to mention one thing. If there is one thing that could crystallize the lunacy of this administration's policy, there was something under President Trump called Operation Talon. You didn't hear much about it because it was canceled very early on.

What is Operation Talon? Operation Talon was an effort to deport previously convicted sex offenders from other countries. There is a lot that divides us. I don't know. I would think that is something we could come together on. Maybe we want to deport people who have been previously convicted of sex offenses—evidently not. That was too difficult for the Biden administration to accept, probably because Trump did it.

That reflexive desire to undo success to appease the group clamoring for more compassion at the border has completely backfired. Women and children are being raped on their way to the southern border. The cartels are in control. Fentanyl is streaming across. Human trafficking that, when I went down to the border when I was attorney general of Missouri, was valued

then at the time—you probably saw two-thirds of the level of illegal immigration that we see right now—was valued at \$100 million a week—\$100 million a week—for the human trafficking alone.

Some of that is the worst stuff that you could possibly imagine. But some of it also was people being trafficked across, being placed in employment in cities across this country, being taken advantage of. And if they ever expressed any concern, their family might get killed back home.

There is nothing compassionate about what is happening at our border. The media won't cover it. My suspicion is if it was happening under the previous administration, NBC "Nightly News" would be camped out for a year at the southern border. But that is not what we see.

What do we see here? We see 98 Senators—96 Senators—locked out. And I mean this as a call to any colleagues who are listening, and I have had many of these conversations already: There is a better way. We can strike some real reform in the way that we handle things.

Regular order is talked about. An open amendment process is talked about. There are a couple of people who don't want to see that happen. Senator SCHUMER certainly doesn't want to see that happen. Think about the power he gets to wield: Come to me. I am the one that gets to come down from the mountain and unveil the tablets. You will be cast aside if you dare try to change what has been carved into stone.

That is not what our Republic is supposed to be like. Each one of us is from different States. Madam President, our States share a border along the Mississippi River. There are a lot of things we have in common as Missourians and Illinoisans. My wife is from Illinois. She has family there we get to visit. There are a lot of things we get to agree on, but there are also things that are different.

We have a system of federalism. And the Founders had a really unique opportunity at the time, 240-some-odd years ago. They decreed a government from whole cloth. They got the unique opportunity to create structural safeguards to protect individual liberty. They were students of human history. They understood the dangers of consolidation of power, of what it meant to have a single person in charge of too many things. They had seen it play out, and it plays out in the world today.

So a system of government was created to spread out that power, vertically and horizontally. The States came together and unanimously agreed on the very limited powers they wanted the Federal Government to have, and the States retained the rest. The States were sovereign. They made this compact. The first one didn't work with the Articles of Confederation, but the Constitution stuck. Thank God.

In that Constitution, the Article I branch is the first one mentioned, of

course, because what we do here has enormous impact on people. We are supposed to be connected to the people, not cloaked away, telling everyone we know better than them.

The idea that as a U.S. Senator, you cannot come to this floor and say, I have an idea, I have a way that I think would improve this bill, and then offer it and have people vote on it is totally insane to me. Maybe I have not been here long enough to have that idealism beaten out of me, but I will never lose that. I will never lose that desire—sincere desire, no matter your political party—to have the ability to come out here and try to persuade—or your willingness to be persuaded.

Unique coalitions can be formed from that. All of that is taken out. So for me, I want some diagnosis of why this place is so dysfunctional. There are zero vehicles—or there are very limited vehicles.

To the folks in the Gallery who are coming here today or the people listening, what you think happens here doesn't happen here. I mean, I think back a little over a year ago when I was sworn in or before I got sworn in. There is an orientation we go through, and you meet the people that are going to have this shared experience with you as a freshman Member of the U.S. Senate.

I mean, it is humbling. I speak for myself and I think all the freshmen Members—Republicans or Democrats—understand what a unique privilege this is to serve in this Chamber. When I signed my name in that book, I was No. 2,000, which is kind of cool.

And you learn a lot. You are actually given some reading materials. I have always kind of had an interest, particularly in this Chamber, in the unique role that it plays in our Republic. There is a reason why they take 60 votes to get to move. It is not supposed to be a place where simple majority rules. That is for the House of Representatives which, of course, every 2 years has elections. It is supposed to be more rooted in the kind of changes that could happen every couple of years.

The Senate—with staggered terms, every 6 years—is supposed to be more deliberative. This body is not deliberative. It is deliberately exclusionary.

Anyway, you read about how the Senate used to operate. I am not talking about ancient history. I am talking about a couple of decades ago. I mean, in the course of a republic, it is certainly not that big of a reach in time. A Senator would have an amendment, and it would get voted on.

There is something that happens in that process. If a Senator has 80 amendments, the colleagues are going to come up and say: You know, Senator from Nebraska, or whoever it would be, we get it. Are you sure all of them are necessary? Maybe they are; maybe they are not.

There is sort of a social pressure that comes into play, and you start figuring

out what are the most important things. You start to see where the body might be, if you have similar issues that have come up on amendments. There is a flow to it.

Right now, there is no flow. We come in here a couple of times a week in a 45-minute window to say yes or no to some judicial nominations because CHUCK SCHUMER—you better go to his office. If you want anything to happen, if you want some glorious omnibus monstrosity, that is where you head.

It is worth pointing out that we have already done a couple of these CRs. We are headed to another. And guess how much time we dedicated to appropriations bills? In almost 14 months since I have been here, we have spent a grand total of 8 hours on one piece of legislation that combined three appropriation bills. That is it. So for a government that is bankrupt, borrowing money to spend, that is the kind of respect that the majority leader has given to the American people on perhaps the most important thing we are supposed to do every day or every year, which is to kind of sift through our priorities. That has been robbed from this place.

It is my sincere hope that in this place, a group of us can come together, a bipartisan group together, and demand real reforms. This idea of filling a tree is totally antithetical.

I mentioned the Founders created a system. They were weary of and concerned of aggregations of power. I can't think of a greater aggregation of power in what is supposed to be a place where power is diffused among the 100 of us than one person getting to decide that amendments don't—look, by the way, this is a point made from my Republican colleagues and Democrat colleagues about objecting and withholding consent. I think there is a lot of muscle memory that needs to get back into this place where we are allowed to vote.

You see the frustration. You don't need to be a social scientist to figure out where the frustration comes from. There are not that many vehicles. Something gets bounced of yours—human nature—they maybe want to bounce something from somebody else.

I guess my plea here is that we use this—regardless of how you feel about this particular bill—this slow-moving train wreck of how we do business here, where everybody privately looks at this and says, This is not the way, this can't be the way. And then you have a bubbling up among Members, rank-and-file Members, to demand something different.

But we can't get there if we just go along with this stuff every time because somebody says this is how you are supposed to vote. You will get out of here in 3 hours. Every time that happens, individual Senators cede really important autonomy to help shape legislation that will affect people's lives or refuse, in this instance, to get serious about potentially demanding our southern border is secured before we

send another \$61 billion to another country.

The appropriations process. I know there has been some progress made in that committee, and I commend Senator COLLINS and Senator MURRAY for the work they put in it. It doesn't necessarily mean I agree with all of the work product, necessarily, but that process that they went through is very important.

Then what is supposed to happen is—it is like the old “how a bill becomes a law.” Those bills, each one of them, are supposed to come out on their own. Senators would have an idea, amend it or not. We send it over to the House—or, more appropriately, those bills come over from the House, and we have a vehicle to do something on it in the Senate.

Something happens in that process, too. There are going to be disagreements. I don't care who is in charge or if different parties are involved in the two Chambers. There are going to be different priorities; there are going to be different ideas. That is healthy. Then you work it out in a conference committee. And then it goes back to each Chamber for an up-or-down vote. That is how it is supposed to work.

That is not how it works, not even close. I mean, we are already sort of creeping towards—again, talk about an embarrassment of riches for CHUCK SCHUMER. He has another couple of CRs coming his way. Then what you get to is a couple days before or a day before or 5 hours before: Here it is. You need to support this, Senator SCHMITT or Senator SCOTT or whoever, or you are in favor of shutting down the government. And let me read off the parade of terribles of the things that will happen that you will be responsible for if you don't vote for this thing that I came up with in my basement 4 hours ago.

It is crazy. And I know that many of my Senator friends agree. I have had these conversations. If you are in your office and agree with me, blink twice. We are all being held hostage here.

I guess in the limited time that I have here—and if we have more time later, I will continue to talk about this—but I just think there is real opportunity for reform. I mean that sincerely. I mean that as a gesture of good will. It doesn't need to be the stuff—it doesn't even need to be my amendment.

I am prepared to win. I am prepared to lose. I just think it is healthy for this place to have vehicles where people can offer these sorts of amendments, where they can have regular order.

But I want to talk specifically about sort of where we are at with this one. We had a negotiation among a few people who produced a product that a lot of people didn't support. And that is not a personal attack on anyone—quite the contrary. I appreciate the effort. Senator LANKFORD worked very hard.

There were a lot of things that were very problematic, from my perspec-

tive—not to relitigate that but only to say that I think part of that, the lesson from it is that there has to be more buy in, there has to be more input, and that all shouldn't happen, you know, where nobody can see it or there are broad strokes because, you know—I am a little biased here as a lawyer—language actually does matter.

I think from the get-go—by the way, my position on this has been, I think, consistent. You could roll the tape from when I was on this floor talking about it. I think these issues should be spread out separately. I don't think Ukraine money should be tied to Israel money. I think it is a mistake. Again, I think it robs the ability of individual Senators to say: You know, that situation is different.

Take the difference between Ukraine money and Israel money. There are different levels of support in this place. There are different likelihoods of success. There are different needs. There are different coalitions of allies around the world that can step up or haven't stepped up. But to continually come back to the American people without an articulated plan here or what victory looks like as it relates to Ukraine, you are denying the reality of the justified skepticism.

I will just speak for my State. Missouri is the “Show Me” State. Missouri has always been skeptical, and I don't care if it was Harry Truman or Kit Bond or whoever—who, by the way, stood at this desk—skeptical of a government a thousand miles away telling them how to live their lives or in this instance the Federal Government saying to Missourians and the American people: Securing the southern border isn't a priority, but sending \$60 plus billion to Ukraine is today.

It is so important, we were here all weekend—I don't care about that. But all business aside, here we are, and we are going, and we are going to the mat, and you don't get amendments. The American people are smart. They see right through that. And you can try to explain it away, but that is the reality.

The truth is, Joe Biden can secure the border with existing law—the same law that existed under President Trump—but refused to do so.

Part of what that negotiation was supposed to be about, I guess, was that if you were going to tie this stuff together, you weren't going to have that unless the southern border was secured. Well, we didn't get that, but here we go immediately confirming the worst fears of the American people: that this whole debate, all of it, the center of gravity all along has been about the Ukraine money; the rest of it, window dressing, maybe to get a couple more votes to make it look like it had a broader bipartisan coalition—or not. I think if people were being honest in this place, that is what it was about.

So here we are now with the center of gravity at center stage, but instead of

Senators having an opportunity to maybe affect that in a particular way—maybe the \$8 billion to pay for the Government of Ukraine might be amended out. I know Senator COTTON from Arkansas has an amendment about that. We are not going to have a chance to vote on that, I don't think.

I had an amendment to separate out aid for Israel. We are not going to get to vote on that.

By the way, I don't think it necessarily changes the result too much on the floor if you separated out Ukraine and Israel and Taiwan. I don't think that it does. But it does certainly harm, again, people's trust and their faith in the process.

So the two main points I suppose I wanted to bring up in this 30 minutes before I yield back and reserve the remainder of my time—I think we have to be honest about the disconnect between what we are doing here and what is happening in real America and what people really feel about all this. We can keep bulldozing right through that, but I think it is insulting and disrespectful to the American people.

Secondly and more broadly, we have to come together as Senators and decide that no matter who is in charge, people are going to have a say. They get to vote. They get to offer ideas. And all these little tricks and procedural roadblocks that have been set up by both parties over the last 40 years—20 years probably more specifically—are not healthy for our Republic, and it certainly diminishes our power as individual Senators to fight for the people of our States.

Madam President, I reserve the remainder of my time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, earlier this week, I came to the floor to discuss the horrific terrorist attacks committed by Hamas against Israel on October 7, the brutal murder of about 1,200 people and the seizure of 240 hostages. I underscored the fact that Israel not only has the right but it has the duty to defend itself against those heinous acts and prevent any future October 7s. Never again. I also repeated my calls to prioritize the release of hostages, including American citizens. I also pointed out that while Israel is conducting a just war, it must be waged justly, including taking all necessary measures to protect innocent civilians.

Last week, Secretary of State Blinken made his fifth trip to Israel, where this time he urged Prime Minister Netanyahu not to launch a major military operation against Rafah, a city in southern Gaza whose population has increased fivefold since the beginning of the war because Palestinian refugees fleeing from northern Gaza and other parts of Gaza were told by the Netanyahu government that Rafah was a safe place for them to go.

Within hours of meeting with Secretary Blinken, Prime Minister

Netanyahu rebuffed that request and announced publicly that he had decided to launch just such an operation against Rafah. Yesterday, as if to rub it in, Prime Minister Netanyahu appeared on ABC Sunday television here in the United States to say that despite the requests from the United States, he had decided that Israel will launch a military operation against the city of Rafah.

This is part of a pattern—a pattern where Prime Minister Netanyahu thanks President Biden and the United States for our substantial military assistance but then mostly rejects our request to take measures to protect civilians and to facilitate desperately needed humanitarian assistance to people in need.

President Biden has called the bombings in Gaza “indiscriminate,” and the United States has repeatedly called upon the Netanyahu government to take steps to end the huge number of civilian deaths from bombing, artillery, and other weaponry. The death toll now stands at over 28,000 people, over two-thirds of them women and children. What does Prime Minister Netanyahu say? He says Israel is already doing all it can.

President Biden recently called Israel's actions in Gaza “over the top.” Prime Minister Netanyahu said he didn't know what President Biden was talking about.

Every major international aid organization I have spoken to—and I have spoken to virtually every one—says that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is the worst they have seen in the world, ever, in their decades of experience, as over 400,000 people are on the verge of starvation, and the entire population of over 2 million is at crisis levels of food insecurity. Meanwhile, Israeli authorities in Gaza, COGAT, say, “There is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza.”

The Biden administration has repeatedly urged the Netanyahu government to allow for more humanitarian assistance into Gaza, only to be mostly ignored. The overriding message to the United States from the Netanyahu coalition is this: Thanks for giving us all the weapons. Thanks for your taxpayers' support. But don't lecture us about civilian casualties or the need to better facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

For example, on his trip to Israel last week, Secretary Blinken pointed out that “Israelis were dehumanized in the most horrific way on October 7th, and that the hostages have been dehumanized every day since.” I agree. Secretary Blinken then went on to say “but that cannot be a license to dehumanize others.”

A former Ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, responded by essentially saying: Thank you, Secretary Blinken, for the ammunition, but don't accuse Israel of dehumanization because that delegitimizes Israel and makes it harder for us to use that ammunition or to defend ourselves and exercise our right to self-defense.

In other words, former Ambassador Oren was saying: Keep sending us the weapons, but don't suggest that we are dehumanizing innocent Palestinians.

I would suggest that rather than criticizing Secretary Blinken for his comments, Michael Oren and others should condemn the dehumanizing statements about Palestinians that have been made by members of the Netanyahu coalition and other Israeli Government officials during the war in Gaza. Here are just some of them:

One said: “There is no such thing as innocence in Gaza.”

Another Minister described the campaign in Gaza as “rolling out the Gaza nakba. Gaza nakba 2023,” nakba being a reference to the mass displacement of Palestinians back in 1948. And that statement was echoed by other members of Netanyahu's Likud Party.

Another member of Likud said: “There is no place for any humanitarian gestures—we must erase the memory of Amalek,” referring to members of a biblical tribe that was an enemy of Israel—in fact, such an enemy that Scripture said the Israelites should put to death every man, woman, and child.

Indeed Prime Minister Netanyahu himself said: “You must remember what Amalek has done to you,” a reference, scholars say, that has long been used by the Israeli far right to justify the inhumane treatment of Palestinians.

Even President Herzog, considered by many to be a more moderate voice, painted all Palestinians with a broad brush, saying: “It's an entire nation out there that is responsible. It's not true this rhetoric about civilians not aware, not involved, it's absolutely not true.” President Herzog.

These are just a sampling of the many statements made by government officials and Netanyahu coalition members.

So what should the United States do? What should we do when bombs and artillery that we have provided and paid for are being used to kill large numbers of innocent Palestinian civilians and we are told to go mind our own business? What should the United States do when over 2 million Palestinian civilians, who have nothing to do with Hamas, are facing a humanitarian catastrophe, but the Netanyahu government refuses to open the Erez crossing or take the other measures that 25 Senators wrote to President Biden about last week, asking him to push the Netanyahu government to do them? What should the United States do when the Netanyahu government refuses to prioritize the release of all the remaining hostages, including American citizens?

What should we do when extremist settlers in the West Bank, in many cases with the IDF standing by and in some cases with their active participation, attack Palestinians with impunity and push them off their land? What should we do?

What should we do when we have made clear that the United States opposes the launch of a new military operation in the city of Rafah because it will turn into an even bigger humanitarian disaster, but Prime Minister Netanyahu goes on American national TV to say he is going to do it anyway?

Rafah is a city in southern Gaza. Before the war started, it was a city with a population of about 300,000 people. Its population has now multiplied in size by 5 times. About 1.3 million people are there now, over 1 million of them having fled death and destruction in other parts of Gaza because they were told by Prime Minister Netanyahu and others that they would be safe there.

I visited the Egyptian side of the Rafah gate about 5 weeks ago, along with my colleague Senator MERKLEY, to better understand the humanitarian situation in Gaza. We talked to people. We listened to people. We got fully briefed. The humanitarian situation was a catastrophe then, and, by all accounts, the situation in Gaza has gone from nightmare to pure hell, even more so in the north than in the south.

When asked on national television on Sunday where all of these civilians now seeking refuge would go, Prime Minister Netanyahu breezily stated:

You know, the areas that we've cleared north of Rafah, plenty of areas there.

That is what the Prime Minister said on American TV. Now, unless he is talking about areas that were cleared through bombing and have been reduced to rubble, it is simply not true.

Don't believe those who claim that there is an easy path to caring for the 1.3 million people in Rafah. It wasn't that long ago that Prime Minister Netanyahu claimed that there was no humanitarian crisis in Gaza—no humanitarian crisis there. In fact, he boasted that he was allowing into Gaza the minimal amount of humanitarian aid to avoid a humanitarian disaster. Well, the claim that there is no humanitarian disaster doesn't pass any credible test, and we know that.

For weeks, the United Nations and international aid organizations have warned that Palestinian civilians are on the verge of starvation. Those warnings have been ignored and dismissed by Prime Minister Netanyahu and his extremist government.

Just recently, the World Food Programme, together with UNICEF, which is the U.N. organization to look after the well-being of children around the world—both of these organizations, by the way, currently headed by Americans—they, WFP and UNICEF, issued an analysis recently on the deterioration of the nutrition situation in Gaza during the first 120 days of the war. Here are some of the things that they concluded: In northern Gaza, more than 90 percent of children age 6 to 23 months and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls faced severe food poverty. The food they do have is of the lowest nutritional value. More than 90 percent of children age 6 to 23 months

and more than 95 percent of pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls are eating two or fewer food groups. And 95 percent of households are limiting meals and portion sizes; 64 percent are only eating one meal a day.

They indicated that health screenings show a rapid deterioration of the nutrition situation for children age 6 to 23 months in northern Gaza, with global acute malnutrition at over 15 percent.

WHO, the World Health Organization, classifies global acute malnutrition over 15 percent as a critical emergency.

Yesterday, I began to hear reports of people who have actually starved to death in Gaza. So, earlier today, I asked the head of the World Food Programme, former American Ambassador Cindy McCain, about these reports. I sent her a note—a text message—asking about reports that some children have now crossed the awful threshold from being on the verge of starvation to dying of starvation.

She wrote back:

This is true. We are unable to get in enough food to keep people from the brink. Famine is imminent. I wish I had better news.

I want that to sink in. Kids in Gaza are now dying from the deliberate withholding of food. In addition to the horror of that news, one other thing is true: That is a war crime. It is a textbook war crime, and that makes those who orchestrate it war criminals.

So now the question is: What will the United States do? What will we do? What will President Biden do?

President Biden must take action in response to what is happening. First and foremost, the President must demand that the Netanyahu government immediately allow more food and water and other lifesaving supplies into Gaza and make sure it reaches the children and other people who are starving, including in the north.

A few weeks ago, 25 Senators wrote the President a letter outlining some of those steps. To my knowledge, none of those five steps have been implemented by the Netanyahu government.

Second, unless and until the Netanyahu government allows more relief into Gaza, President Biden needs to invoke section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act. Here is the exact language of that section of the Foreign Assistance Act:

No assistance shall be furnished under this chapter of the Arms Export Control Act to any country when it is made known to the President that the government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance.

Now, about 3 weeks ago, I asked senior State Department officials to tell me why this law—section 620I, Foreign Assistance Act—has not been applied. Tell me how it is not the case that Prime Minister Netanyahu is not restricting, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance, when we have

the humanitarian horror show that I just mentioned.

Well, I haven't gotten an answer to the question I posed about 3 weeks ago. And the answer is: There is no good answer to that question.

Now I applaud the President of the United States for issuing National Security Memorandum No. 20 a few days ago. National Security Memorandum No. 20, which now has full legal force, is based on an amendment that I and 18 of my fellow Senators filed on this national security bill that we are considering right now, and I want to thank the President and his team for putting the terms of that amendment into action, into law, through the national security memorandum, which gives the President of the United States additional tools to require that countries—all countries—that receive and use our military assistance do so in accordance with international humanitarian law. In fact, here is the wording of the national security memorandum, which is now the law of the land.

The Secretary of State shall . . . obtain credible and reliable written assurances from a representative of the recipient country as the Secretary of State deems appropriate that, in any area of armed conflict where such recipient country uses such defense articles, consistent with applicable law, the recipient country will facilitate and not arbitrarily deny, restrict, or otherwise impede, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance and United States Government supported international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance.

That is now the law of the land.

The bill before us does a number of things. It provides military assistance to Ukraine, to Israel, and to our partners in the Indo-Pacific. It also contains lifesaving humanitarian aid that, if it can actually be delivered to those who need it, would save lives in Gaza, the West Bank, Sudan, and other places around the world facing desperate humanitarian situations.

As I have said before on this floor, I am supporting this bill because of the vital military assistance it provides to the people of Ukraine, and I will vote for it because, without that assistance, they will not be able to sustain their courageous effort to fight off the onslaught against their democracy and their sovereignty from Vladimir Putin. And I support the vital humanitarian assistance in this bill, and I fully support the funds to supply Israel with the Iron Dome system and other defensive systems that have been essential to protect the people of Israel from Hamas rocket attacks and are there to protect them from other incoming missiles.

With respect to the lethal, offensive portion of that assistance, I am asking President Biden to make sure that it is provided in strict adherence to National Security Memorandum 20 that he just issued and be used only in accordance with international humanitarian law. That memorandum provides the President with substantial

new leverage to make that happen, if he chooses to use it.

I hope he will because the U.S. Government has an obligation on behalf of the American people to make sure that our military support aligns with our values and interests. There should be no blank checks for any country.

We cannot continue the pattern where Prime Minister Netanyahu says, "Thank you, Mr. President, for America's generous military assistance," and then thumbs his nose at America's legitimate requests.

This is a huge moment in history with what is going on right now in Ukraine, but it is also a critical question for our country with respect to what is going on in Gaza. And I hope and I pray that the President of the United States will make sure that the United States conducts itself in a manner that is consistent with our values and with our interests.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, some of my Democratic colleagues, unfortunately, will want you to believe that any opposition to their agenda is evil and unjustified. They have claimed for weeks that mere questions about the \$95 billion bill that the Senate is now considering are rooted in some radical rightwing anti-democracy conspiracy, and the liberal press prints these lies as gospel. I think this process has destroyed the Senate and ignores the history of our great Nation.

One of the first decisions facing our new Republic was whether to engage in the conflict raging between French Revolutionaries and an alliance of European nations led by Great Britain.

As we know, President George Washington ultimately decided to remain neutral in that conflict, knowing that our new Nation was not prepared to assume the grand responsibilities of supporting a cause, no matter how noble, while properly attending to the pressing matters facing his new government here at home.

America was cash-strapped and war weary.

In the centuries that have passed since that moment, our great Nation has evolved. The United States has grown to be the leader of the free world—the true global superpower—representing the ideals of liberty, freedom and democracy, and standing staunchly against oppression and tyranny wherever it is found.

We no longer must wrestle with these decisions in the ways our Founders did, but we still face tremendous domestic challenges that I am sure Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson could never have imagined in April of 1793.

Today, we are once again cash-strapped and war weary. Like never before, Americans are questioning whether their Federal Government has lost its way and now fails to represent the people they elected. Less than 25 percent of the country believes we are on the right track.

Decades of politicians in Washington being addicted to earmarks and pushing reckless fiscal policy have decimated the financial health of our great nation. The United States has more than \$34 trillion in debt—soon to exceed \$35 trillion—and a budget deficit projected this year of nearly \$1.8 trillion.

Since 2019, the U.S. population has increased just 1.8 percent, but our Federal budget is set to increase by 55 percent. Federal revenues were down over 9 percent last year. In the last 3 months, we have lost nearly 1.6 million full-time jobs. Part-time jobs are up more than 850,000 as more Americans can't find full-time work and have to work multiple jobs to make ends meet.

Biden's bad economy and reckless policies have created massive inflation. It is up 17 percent since he took office. It is causing immense pain for families every day, especially our poor families like mine growing up.

Unfortunately, the world's evil regimes and tyrants do not wait for the United States to be in top fighting and fiscal shape to launch their attacks. And the weakness and appeasement of the Biden administration has emboldened them to sow chaos in every corner of the world.

Iran and its proxies, like Hamas, the Houthis, and Hezbollah, are waging war against Israel, fighting to destroy the Jewish State and its people. Russia continues its war in Ukraine, creating instability not seen in Europe since World War II. And Communist China continues to threaten the United States and prepare for an invasion of Taiwan that will upend world trade and destabilize the Indo-Pacific even further.

While chaos continues abroad, America's national security is also being threatened every day by invasion of single adult males at our own borders—one that President Biden's lawless actions have created and encouraged and maintained.

This is the sad reality for our Nation under the weak leadership of Joe Biden. It has forced this body to deal with world events in a way that I am sure many of us completely dislike.

I say all of this to put the moment we find ourselves in today into the honest context that it deserves but that is so often ignored or purposely manipulated by Democrats and their allies in the mainstream media. The United States cannot ignore the massive threats we face to our national security and prosperity that I have just outlined. On that, I hope that we can all agree.

But as this body so often does, especially under the control of our Democratic colleagues, the Senate is about to again fail to meet this moment with responsible and appropriate legislation.

Rather than negotiating a bill for border security in the public, we are kept in dark for months and, ultimately, failed to negotiate a border security deal with Democrats that could

actually get Republican support and pass because it did not require Biden to secure the border.

This bill completely fails to deliver what most of our conference supported in tying the disbursement of Ukraine aid to real reductions of illegal immigration at the southern border. It is the only way we knew to make Biden do his job.

Voters in Florida want a secure border today, inflation to cease, and better paying full-time jobs.

Our conference demanded a secure border before we helped Ukraine secure their border only because we thought it was the only way to get Joe Biden to do his job and secure the southern border.

Our conference supported tying the disbursement of Ukraine to real reductions of illegal immigration at our southern border.

I remain interested in negotiating voting for a bill that secures our border now, stops the flow of drugs across our border, and stops more criminals and terrorists and human traffickers from coming into our communities now in a fiscal, responsible manner.

When I was in business, I negotiated and closed a lot of deals. And I knew that if I could not walk away from the table, I would never get a good deal. I also knew that I would never get a good deal if the people sitting across the table from me didn't want the same outcome I did. We have to walk away from the table until we are negotiating with people who share the same goal as our conference, a secure border today.

The result is what we have before us today—a wildly unaccountable foreign aid package that does absolutely nothing to secure the U.S. southern border and could funnel billions in borrowed money to Hamas terrorists and into the salaries of Ukrainian politicians.

This bill claims to address the invasion of Ukraine while ignoring the invasion we face right here in the United States. This bill could send billions in borrowed money into Gaza, which is still dominated by the Iran-backed Hamas terrorists who killed 1,200 Israelis and more than 30 Americans and are still holding Americans hostage.

I am unapologetically pro-Israel. I have had the honor of visiting Israel five times as both Florida Governor and as a U.S. Senator. What happened on October 7 horrified the world, and it struck me personally.

In 2019, my wife Ann and I visited Kfar Aza, one of the kibbutz that was site to a complete massacre. As the early reports were coming out, I was really worried about the kibbutz because of its proximity to Gaza, about a half mile away.

When I heard the news that it was the site of some of the most horrific and barbaric activities, my heart just sank. I wanted to vomit. We had spent an afternoon there in Kfar Aza. It was the most peaceful place. I kept thinking about the moms and kids who were

playing outside and enjoying the warm summer weather. It is gut-wrenching to think of the fate of the families we met that day.

I spoke with Chen, the lady who led our tour of the kibbutz who, fortunately, was traveling outside of Israel that day and survived. I was able to talk with her, and she had not yet been able to go home. She said it was unclear if she will ever be allowed to go back to her home.

I can't imagine.

So many of us in this Chamber are so deeply connected to Israel, and I bet many of you have a story like mine.

We know people in the IDF who have been called to serve. We have friends all over Israel who have spent days in bomb shelters as rockets have been launched by terrorists intent on wiping Israel and Jews off the face of the Earth.

I have met with survivors and the hostage families. I have a poster outside my office that features the faces of the hostages being held by Hamas. I am not going to take it down until they are home. I have been clear that we cannot see a cease-fire until every Hamas terrorist is dead. I want every single one of them dead. These monsters beheaded—they beheaded—children and babies. They raped girls and burned innocent civilians alive. They dragged innocent people through the streets and are now holding them as hostages in Gaza, which these terrorists absolutely control.

It is unimaginable that the United States would ever consider sending money to a place where we know that it will be used to help terrorists who are holding American hostages. And that is exactly what this bill does.

I have heard a lot of my Democratic colleagues talk about what is happening in Gaza, and your heart goes out to anybody impacted by war. I wish everybody would start talking more about the hostages. We still have American hostages.

I want to make sure everyone understands exactly what I am saying here, which is the fact that every dollar that goes to Gaza directly benefits Hamas.

I have spent every day since October 7 telling the stories of those being held hostage in Gaza by Iran-backed Hamas terrorists. I have pictures of the faces of the hostages, and I am not going to take it down.

Unfortunately, President Biden has not done the same. I can't imagine why the President of the United States isn't speaking every single day about Americans—Americans—being held hostage by Hamas terrorists and what he is doing to get them out.

The IDF just rescued two American hostages in a mission that the Biden administration urged them not to do.

What has Biden done to rescue any hostages?

Many of my colleagues will recall the name of 9-year-old Emily Hand. Emily and her father Thomas lived in a small kibbutz of Be'eri, which was ruthlessly

targeted and destroyed by Hamas during the attacks. In the days following the attacks, Emily's dad was initially told that his daughter, who had spent the night at a friend's house just a few doors down, was killed.

I am a father of two daughters and a grandfather of seven grandchildren. Watching this father speak about the murder of his daughter was heart-wrenching.

He said to CNN at the time:

They just said, "We found Emily, and, she's dead," and I went "Yes." I went "Yes," and smiled because that is the best news of the possibilities that I knew . . . She was either dead or in Gaza, and if you know anything about what they do to people in Gaza, that is worse than death.

Those are the words of Emily's father. Soon, to his relief and horror, Thomas learned that Emily was, in fact, alive and being held hostage by Hamas.

This beautiful, innocent little girl spent 50 days as a hostage in Gaza.

While I am sure that Thomas thanks God every day to have his little girl back in his arms again, he knows that the child he had on October 6 is long gone. Emily will never be the same as she was before she was taken.

It has been more than 120 days since the attacks, and some parents are still waiting for their children to come home. Little baby Kfir Bibas' first birthday was spent as a hostage in Gaza. His 4-year-old brother Ariel is also still being held hostage. I have a picture of Ariel on a milk carton. I have four or five milk cartons in my office—just a beautiful little boy. Kfir and Ariel's parents have been waiting for more than 4 months to hold their babies again.

Can you imagine?

Now we have heard horrible reports that these innocent children may no longer be alive.

Why is Biden giving money to Gazans who are holding American hostages? Why would we allow Biden to give more money to Gazans who are holding American hostages?

They are holding Americans hostage. When will this stop? Why the heck are we allowing Biden to send more money to Gaza in this bill when we know that every dollar that goes to Gaza funds terrorism or Hamas?

What are we doing to get American hostages released?

I am not going to stop talking about this fact: Every dollar that goes into Gaza directly benefits Hamas. That is the undeniable truth, and that is why I have been fighting for years to pass my Stop Taxpayer Funding of Hamas Act, which prevents U.S. tax dollars from going to Gaza unless the Biden administration can certify that not a single cent will go to Hamas. Any of my colleagues that are interested in having money going to take care of the children in Gaza should want this bill to pass. They shouldn't want any money to go to Hamas. They should want it to go to these children.

This isn't a solution in search of a problem—it addresses a very real threat of taxpayer money funding Iran-backed terrorism that seeks to destroy Israel.

We cannot allow American families with a family member being held hostage to see their tax dollars going to the same people who are holding their family member hostage. We have seen reports that the Palestinian Authority has been paying over \$300 million each and every year in monthly salaries to secure its prisoners and in monthly allowances to families of dead terrorists. The Palestinian Authority, who pays terrorists and their families, should not receive U.S. tax dollars. And this bill will allow more of that.

That is insane.

In 2021, President Biden's State Department said:

. . . We are going to be working in partnership with the United Nations and the Palestinian Authority to 'kind of' channel aid there in a manner that does its best to go to the people of Gaza.

The official went on to say:

As we've seen in life, as we all know in life, there are no guarantees, but we're going to do everything that we can to ensure that this assistance reaches the people who need it the most.

The Biden administration thinks that the risk of resources going to Hamas terrorists is OK because "in life, there are no guarantees." I completely reject that. I will not leave anything to chance when it comes to preventing U.S. taxpayer money from being sent to the brutal terrorists who have slaughtered so many Israelis and Americans.

That is why I wasn't surprised in August 2021 when the Senate voted 99 to 0 for my amendment to a budget bill that would have made the Stop Taxpayer Funding of Hamas Act the law of the land. But, as we would learn soon after this vote, the Democrats only voted for it because they knew that, in the final text of the bill, written by Democrats, my language would be mysteriously missing. I have tried twice more since then to pass this legislation in the Senate, and the Democrats have blocked it twice.

I know that the left has a big problem on its hands as so many Democrats rally for Hamas and against Israel in the streets of liberal cities and on the campuses of America's universities. You would think my Democratic colleagues would be eager to show that Democrats don't support Hamas. Instead, they blocked my bill, proving that there is no interest in the Democratic Party to stand up to these people who hate Israel.

That is why I will be asking today to make my amendment to add my Stop Taxpayer Funding of Hamas Act to this bill. I hope Democrats don't again oppose simply going on the record to vote on my commonsense measure. I hope we get a vote, and it passes.

We have also tried twice to pass a stand-alone Israel aid bill that would

not send money to Gaza, but Democrats blocked that, too. Each and every Democrat voted against aid to Israel. So don't tell me or my colleagues who oppose this bill that we don't stand with Israel when Democrats twice blocked our bill and then all voted against it—which has already passed in the House—to immediately send money to Israel.

Let me be clear about one more thing: Since the day that Vladimir Putin launched Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine, I have stood strongly on the side of the Ukrainian people, but there are clearly numerous unanswered questions.

What has happened to the more than \$100 billion of aid that has gone to Ukraine? What is our plan to win? Why are we paying the salaries of Ukrainian politicians? Will Biden give Ukraine the weapons they need? Why can't Congress pay for this with savings from other areas? Why is the Ukraine border more important than the U.S. border?

Ukraine must win, and Russia must lose. There is no question that is what is in the best interest of America's national security, and that is why I have said that we should continue to provide lethal aid to Ukraine, paid for with seized Russian assets so it can win its war and have a clear plan for how Ukraine will win. We need to answer these questions and be strategic about how we protect our interests, especially as we add to America's \$34 trillion in debt.

The American people will not tolerate borrowing billions of dollars to pay the government expenses and salaries of Ukrainian politicians, nor will they tolerate this government having no plan for how Ukraine will win, how American resources will help it win, and how we are making sure that every dollar spent is with one mission in mind: defeating Russia.

Concern grows when we see that Ukraine has fired another top military official and seems to be struggling to show a clear path to victory. Without more information, we are left to assume the worst—that this entire bill has no clear mission but to accomplish the appearance of unity so that American politicians can fly over with a giant check and deliver hollow speeches about moral righteousness.

It doesn't soothe our concerns when we hear the majority whip say on this floor that we must pass this bill now so that he can go to Munich this week and pontificate about a bill that the Speaker of the House has repeatedly stated will never become law. That accomplishes nothing. If my colleagues were serious about aiding Ukraine and its war against Russia's invasion, they would work with us in good faith to produce a bill that can pass here and in the House.

As I said, I want Ukraine to win, and I want Russia to lose, but that does not mean that I am or should be willing to simply accept any offer thrown down by the Democrats that they claim—but

cannot prove—will advance that cause or while America is being invaded as a result of our open border. I will not accept anything that ignores the most urgent threat to U.S. national security: Joe Biden's wide open border. This should not need to be said here on the floor of the U.S. Senate, but securing America's border is more important than securing the border of any other country. We should be able to do both.

The fact that we aren't using revenue generated from seized Russian assets to pay for Ukraine aid is ridiculous, but that is how things work here. Your Federal Government cannot continue to write massive checks and borrow more money while providing zero accountability to the American people. I know the people of Florida are sick of it. We are all sick of it, and I think just about every American is sick of it.

The deal has always been Ukraine aid for border security—not immigration policy but real border security now. Florida families are feeling the impact of this administration's lawless border policies every single day as deadly fentanyl, criminals, and terrorists pour—pour—across Biden's open borders. There are 1,145 children between 14 and 18 years old who died from fentanyl in 2021. What is the plan to stop that? That is a classroom of students dying every week.

In 2022, I heard from a mom in Kissimmee, FL, whose son had a future in the Air Force and came home to visit her on Mother's Day weekend and surprised her. He, unfortunately, visited an old friend who he didn't know had begun dealing drugs. The friend convinced the young man to take a Xanax which was unknowingly laced with fentanyl, and the mom found her wonderful son dead. It is heartbreaking, and there are more stories like this.

There are 100,000 Americans who died from drug overdoses in 2021 and 72 percent of those from opioids like fentanyl. Families in Florida and every State across the Nation are being torn apart by these deadly drugs coming across the border. What is Joe Biden's plan to stop these drugs from coming across the border?

My Democratic colleagues seem to finally be acknowledging this crisis on TV. Unfortunately, they are still unwilling to stand up to the President and force him to do what is right. We all know what is right: Secure the border. I can't imagine why. It is obvious to everyone that the invasion of our southern border is what Biden, unfortunately, wants. Just take a look at the numbers.

On January 20 of 2021, Joe Biden took office and inherited the most secure U.S. southern border in modern history. In some of his first acts as President, he used his Executive power to dismantle the policies that President Trump used to secure the border and sent a clear message to the cartels: The border is now wide open for smuggling, and I won't do anything to stop you.

The surge of illegal immigration started almost immediately.

In February 2021, right after Biden was inaugurated, there were more than 101,000 encounters—101,000 encounters—of illegal aliens attempting to cross our southern border between ports of entry. If you go to the southern border, what you will see on the Mexico side are IDs everywhere. They want to come, but they don't want anybody to know who they are. If you had a stellar background, would you be doing that? No.

That February, there was a massive increase from what we saw just the prior month. From there, the numbers continued to skyrocket. March 2021 saw 173,000 encounters with illegal aliens between ports of entry. By July 2021, encounters with illegal aliens between ports of entry skyrocketed to more than 213,000. That is more than 213,000 people attempting to illegally enter the United States in just 1 month.

I point this out to make something very clear: The border was secure. Then Joe Biden took office, and the cartels got his message loud and clear. The invasion hasn't stopped since. In fiscal year 2022—the first full fiscal year under the Biden administration—there were more than 2.3 million encounters with illegal aliens between ports of entry.

These aren't families searching for a better life. They are mostly single adults. Of those 2.3 million encounters with illegal aliens at our southern border, more than 1.6 million were single adults, most of whom were military-aged men. That is 70 percent of all people who are trying to illegally enter the United States. Even more terrifying, 98 of the people caught trying to illegally sneak into our country in fiscal year 2022 were on the Terrorist Watchlist.

Here is another terrible stat for you from that period: The CBP seized more than 14,000 pounds of fentanyl along the southern border. Just 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be a lethal dose, and they seized more than 14,000 pounds. That is enough fentanyl to kill 3 billion people. This is how much fentanyl has crossed the border. Think about how much fentanyl has crossed the border without being seized.

In fiscal year 2023, things got worse with more than 2.4 million encounters with illegal aliens between ports of entry. Again, these aren't mostly families searching for a better life; they are mostly single adults. Of these 2.4 million encounters with illegal aliens at our southern border, 60 percent, or more than 1.5 million, were single adults—again, most of whom are military-aged men. There were 169 people on the Terrorist Watchlist who tried to illegally sneak into our country during fiscal year 2023, and we don't know where they are.

The drugs continue to flow into our country. Last fiscal year, the CBP seized nearly 27,000 pounds of fentanyl

along the southern border. That is enough fentanyl to kill 6 billion people.

Last December, more than 300,000 illegal aliens were encountered trying to unlawfully enter the United States. This is an invasion and a clear and present danger to the safety of every American. Even Al Sharpton called it an invasion on his MSNBC show last week, but Senate Democrats and Joe Biden still won't do what is needed to fix it. Let me say that again: Biden's open border is a clear and present danger to every single American.

In a hearing of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee last October, I questioned FBI Director Christopher Wray about the threats that we are facing because of Joe Biden's open border.

In his response to me, Director Wray said:

We went through a period where the traditional-structured Foreign Terrorist Organization threat in the U.S. subsided some in favor of this inspired, ISIS-inspired, let's say, attack . . . to be clear that threat has not gone away. What has now increased is the greater possibility of one of these Foreign Terrorist Organizations directing an attack in the United States.

In the United States.

He went on to say:

It is a time to be concerned. We are in a dangerous period.

Since Joe Biden took office—this is Director Wray—"The terror threats have elevated."

I refuse to ignore this threat or pretend that it is OK to take care of the border in Ukraine while doing absolutely nothing to stop the invasion we have right here in the United States.

I want to get something done, and I will always believe in the ability of our great Nation to answer the call and defend freedom and democracy wherever it is threatened by tyranny. I care deeply about protecting the national security of the United States. At 18 years old, I enlisted in the Navy to defend my country. My adoptive father was 1 of 3,000 American soldiers who did all four combat jumps with the 82nd Airborne and then fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

I know there is evil in the world and that America must be the leader of the free world. There is no one else to rely on, but we have to take care of the families we represent first. We have to secure our border today. This bill does not secure our border, and it has too many failures to say it will do what is needed to protect America and our interests. This bill allows Biden to send billions to Gaza, which would go straight to Hamas terrorists, and sends billions to pay the salaries of Ukrainian politicians. That is wrong.

We all know that no bill is perfect. It is nearly impossible to write something that all 100 of us love and have no concerns about, but this isn't a situation where we can ignore some parts we don't like. The truth is that the things I have just outlined not only fund threats to U.S. national security by

giving billions to Gaza that could go to Hamas, but they also recklessly force American taxpayers to borrow billions to pay for the salaries of foreign politicians while U.S. debt skyrockets to more than \$34 trillion while doing nothing to secure our border—nothing to secure our border—nothing to secure the border of the United States where we have drugs, terrorists, criminals, and human traffickers flowing across. That could impact every one of our families. That is unacceptable. We can and must do better.

So, today, I am once again going to ask that the Senate be given the opportunity to vote on my amendment to add the Stop Taxpayer Funding of Hamas Act to this bill. I am asking for a vote on my amendment.

We have heard from colleagues that they were rightly concerned about the citizens of Gaza. If they were concerned about the citizens of Gaza, they should want this bill. They shouldn't want a dime to go to Hamas. They shouldn't want a penny to go to Hamas. They should want every dime—every dime—to go to the children who don't have the food they need.

But in the meantime, shouldn't we spend more time thinking about the American hostages? Where is the conversation about the hostages? Where is the conversation about what we are doing to get the hostages home? What have we heard from Biden? What have we heard from my Democratic colleagues? Nothing.

As I have said before in this Chamber, in August 2021, the Senate voted 99 to 0 for my amendment to a budget bill to ensure that U.S. tax dollars do not benefit terrorist organizations such as Hamas. It is a no-brainer. The vote was 99 to 0. Everyone in this body seems to agree that American taxpayers should never fund Hamas terrorists, but they don't want to do anything about it. They want to say it but do nothing about it. The final text of the bill written by Democrats does not include my language.

We all know that Hamas controls Gaza. Every dollar that goes to Gaza comes under the control of Hamas, who decides what to do with it.

We must make sure American tax dollars aren't funding terrorists. What my Stop Taxpayer Funding of Hamas Act does is make it so that no funds will be authorized for the territory of Gaza until the President certifies to Congress that these funds can be spent without benefiting terrorist organizations.

It would also ensure U.S. funds are not authorized for expenditure in the territory of Gaza through any United Nations entity or office unless the President can certify that—the President will have to certify that it is not encouraging or teaching anti-Israel or anti-Semitic ideas and propaganda.

Finally, this bill mandates that the President certify that there are no hostages held in Gaza by any terrorist organization.

Senate Democrats have both overwhelmingly supported this common-sense measure and blocked its passage in the past. Can anybody explain that? What will it be today?

I sincerely hope that Democrats will stand against taxpayer money flowing to terrorists who want to destroy Israel and are still holding Americans hostage in Gaza.

Let me just read the language that some people say prevents the money going to Hamas, and tell me if you come to the conclusion this doesn't.

The Secretary of State shall certify and report to the appropriate congressional committees not later than March 1, 2024—

It is just a report. It doesn't mean they have to stop; it is just an after-the-fact report—

that oversight policies, processes, and procedures have been established by the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development, as appropriate, and are in use to prevent the diversion, misuse, or destruction of assistance, including through international organizations, to Hamas and other terrorist and extremist entities in Gaza; and—

It doesn't stop it. They will just say: We will have policies and report on the policies—

such policies, processes, and procedures have been developed in coordination with other bilateral and multilateral donors and the Government of Israel, as appropriate.

The easy thing is none. The only policy you should have is, no money. Don't give a report that you had a policy and it wasn't enforced. Tell me that it never happened.

Then it goes on to say:

The Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees, concurrent with the submission of the certification required in subsection (a), a written description of the oversight policies, processes, and procedures.

We don't sign off on them. They are just going to give us a written description of them. We don't get to sign off on them. We don't get to question them. We don't get to change them. We don't get to vote on them. All it is is a written description of "procedures for funds appropriated by this title that are made available for assistance for Gaza, including specific actions to be taken should such assistance be diverted, misused, or destroyed, and the role of Israel in the oversight of such assistance."

Israel doesn't have to sign off on it. It just says: What role did Israel play? The answer could be that Israel played no role.

There is nothing in this—there will be nothing in this bill that is going to stop money from going to Hamas. There will be absolutely nothing. So anybody who says they are worried about the children in Gaza, there will be nothing to prevent money from going to Hamas instead.

And I always say the first thing we ought to be talking about is how we get our hostages home.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AMENDMENT
NO. 1542

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside all pending amendments and motions and make my amendment No. 1542 pending to the text of Murray 1388; I further ask that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided between the proponents and opponents and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on adoption of the amendment, with a 60 affirmative vote threshold required for adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, we all share the grief and horror we saw unfold when Hamas committed the atrocities against the people of Israel. We all continue to work, as the President and his team have been doing, to find a way to get the hostages released while also addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. But to cut off all humanitarian aid at this point in time would mean that innocent civilians and children in Gaza would be irrevocably harmed.

We need to continue, as the administration is doing, to develop this framework, to get the hostages out, and to get a pause in the fighting while we do, but we also need to address the humanitarian crisis.

I would also note that if my colleague from Florida is interested in securing the border, there was a bipartisan agreement to secure the border that Republicans turned and walked away from last week because they would rather keep this as a problem and a political issue than actually work to pass a solution. They could have, of course, after we had gone to the bill that included a border security package that was supported by the National Border Patrol Council, representing 18,000 Border Patrol agents, because they knew it would make our border secure. They walked away from it.

The last thing I will just say is that if we are interested in standing up to authoritarians and standing for freedom, as my father did in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II and as I just heard my colleague speak of how his father did the same, then we need to make sure that we make clear to Iran and to China and to North Korea and to Vladimir Putin that the United States of America stands for freedom.

If my colleagues are serious about that, they will be supporting this bill.

With that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, what we have just witnessed on the Senate floor, I think, is disgusting.

All I ask for is a vote. By blocking the Senate from even voting on my amendment to add the Stop Taxpayer Funding of Hamas Act to this bill, Democrats have done the work of

Hamas here in the U.S. Senate. Senate Democrats just made clear they are so terrified of losing the votes of radical, Hamas-loving leftists, they cannot bring themselves to vote on an amendment—all I want is a vote; if I can't win it, it is my problem—to vote on an amendment that simply states that we are not going to send money to thugs who brutally murdered 1,200 innocent people, including more than 30 Americans, and are still—they are still holding American hostages.

We are giving money to Gazans that can help Hamas. They are holding American hostages, and we are going to give them money.

I can't imagine this is where we are, and this bill is going to do nothing to address this, while approving billions of dollars of aid. We have an open southern border, we have hostages in Gaza, and we are going to give Gazans aid that we know is going to go straight to Hamas. If you look at the text that I read, there is nothing that is going to prevent this money from going there.

All my bill says is that all the President has to do is certify that the money is not going to go to Hamas, and the money can go to Gaza.

I am disappointed.

I wish to retain the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I come to the floor today as we debate really difficult, challenging, and serious issues. I am reminded that I didn't seek to be a U.S. Senator to do what we have been doing month after month—mostly spending each day dealing with confirmations and nominations. These issues we are debating and will ultimately vote on this week have consequences well beyond the things we have been normally dealing with in the U.S. Senate.

Secretary Gates, a fellow Kansan, warned of the government's dysfunction at a moment in history in which he argues that our Nation "confronts graver threats to its security than it has in decades, perhaps ever." I agree with this assessment. We live in a dangerous time in a very dangerous world.

I underscore to my colleagues the importance of doing the work we were elected to do. Americans will be directly impacted by our decisions but so will our adversaries and our allies. The United States must be a steadfast and reliable partner in the midst of so many dangers that threaten our Nation's peace and prosperity. The dangers are certainly to other people—other people within the world and other nations—but what we are dealing with are threats to our own national peace and prosperity.

The national security crises abroad are challenging, and they are ever-increasing.

China is rapidly modernizing its military, with the goal of being ready—ready—to invade Taiwan by 2027.

Putin continues Russia's aggression in Ukraine, putting strain on European allies and on food supplies around the world.

Iran is providing support for terrorism that is attacking our ships and bases and killed three servicemembers last month.

Hamas has stated its attempt to wipe Israel off the map, even saying the terrorist attack on October 7 was just—was just—the beginning.

North Korea's expansion of its nuclear arsenal places risk to us here in our homeland.

In a joint FOX News op-ed that I penned with former Secretary Mike Pompeo, we stated this:

The preservation of freedom requires enormous efforts; indeed, liberty demands the marshaling of every resource necessary in its defense against those who would see it destroyed.

Putin has chosen to pursue the reconstitution of the Russian Empire according to his own warped vision of Russian history, and he has made it clear that he has aspirations beyond Ukraine and that he views NATO as Russia's enemy.

Under Putin's leadership, Russia has increasingly collaborated with other nations that oppose us—Iran, Syria, and our most powerful adversary, communist China.

Allowing the war in Ukraine to fester will only prolong and deepen the instability already wrought, and it puts at greater risk 100,000 U.S. servicemembers defending NATO's borders, including those from Fort Riley, KS.

It is in America's national interest to assist Ukraine in repelling Russia's invasion.

I thought about wearing a tie the color of Ukraine's flag. We see those every once in a while. I thought to myself, that is a mistake. While this has something to do with Ukraine, this is really about America, about the United States of America.

We are doing what is necessary for our own well-being and our own preservation. Ending the war on terms favorable to Ukraine will leave Ukraine and NATO's front in a stronger and better position to deter further Russian aggression. By treaty—by NATO agreement—we have no choice that should Putin take the next step and invade a NATO member country, we will not just be supplying aid, but we will be supplying military young men and women.

Allowing the war to continue is damaging. Allowing Ukraine to not be successful is damaging our own security and well-being. We must project strength. Failure to do so undermines our credibility, and that resonates around the globe.

A large majority of the funding provided in this legislation to Ukraine—this legislation that says it is to Ukraine—has really been directly injected back into the United States economy. This bill provides \$35 billion to replenish American stockpiles and

develop and produce and purchase American-made weapons. This is not a blank check for Ukraine. It is not a blank check for Israel. It is not a blank check for Taiwan.

There is nothing free about this. We are spending a lot of money. It is hugely expensive. However, in the absence of spending this money, we are going to be spending more later as the world continues to crumble.

There is no path forward for Ukraine, there is no path forward for other countries that are looking for a brighter future, if the United States is disengaged from the world. I wish it wasn't true.

I remember the first graduation speech I gave as a new Member of Congress. It was to a small town in West Central Kansas. And I said: Growing up, all we paid attention to was the price of grain at the grain elevator.

What we had to know and what affected us in our lives in rural Kansas was something very local. I wish it was still that way. But we have no—no—alternative. We must engage in the world to protect our own selves. It isn't free, and it is spending a lot of money. But it is less expensive than the alternative.

The price tag is overwhelming. The debt is damning to the future of our Nation. But in the absence of taking a stand now, we have to take a stand tomorrow. And that stand will be even more costly.

The disastrous, chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, one of the saddest days or few days of my life—certainly in my life as an elected official—was watching the way things unfolded there. Certainly, it was damaging to people who were there, but it also has been damaging to our country in huge and significant ways.

The whole world watched as a void in leadership resulted in the death of American servicemembers and stranded thousands of our Afghan allies—those who helped our service men and women, stranded them behind enemy lines, perhaps to their certain death.

I was critical—and remain critical—of the Biden administration for the manner in which we came out of Afghanistan. And many of my colleagues—especially Republican colleagues—joined me in that criticism. But our failure to support our allies and partners around the world is a replication of what happened and what we did, what we didn't do, when we departed from Afghanistan in such an unthoughtful and haphazard way.

We have an opportunity to partially remedy the situation by passing legislation to protect those Afghan citizens who helped save the lives and promote the success of American servicemembers.

As we debate how to proceed in this national security supplemental, I would take this moment to remind my colleagues of the importance of a bill—the Afghan Adjustment Act—as we seek to attain a vote on an amendment

to this bill to assure that those Afghan allies are not forgotten.

As Kabul fell to the Taliban—and while I can certainly see the importance of this to those Afghans, this issue comes to me as a Member of this body who spends and devotes time to our veterans, to our military men and women—our veterans extended the creed “leave no man behind,” as they helped their Afghan partners flee to the United States for safety.

I don't have the ability to undo what the Biden administration didn't do or what it did. I don't have the ability to change the outcome of their inept ability to lead on a global stage and defend the country. But we as Members of Congress can rein them or push them in a certain direction. The reality is the decisions made by the administration in Afghanistan have come back to haunt us. We sent a message to the world. In my view, it is the same message we would send if we failed to pass the emergency supplemental—hopefully—as amended.

The administration continued its inaction at the border, and it is terribly frustrating. This administration has many tools it needs to improve the situation at our borders and, particularly, our southern border.

I am disappointed we couldn't move forward on border policies as part of this package and to mandate the President to enforce the law. But it turned out there was no path forward on the border deal that would get the necessary votes in the Senate. And we wanted to succeed in having a border provision that not only worked and addressed seriously the problems on our border, but we also wanted to send a message to the House of Representatives that it is a piece of legislation that they could support. And, unfortunately, we never got there.

Senator LANKFORD demonstrated leadership. He did what he was asked to do. I was in those meetings in which we talked about having a border provision of serious and significant magnitude before we moved forward with help to any other country. I continue to believe that that is the right course of action. But now it doesn't seem to be a course that we are able to succeed and put into effect. It will take a different Congress and a different administration.

Kansans are right to be upset when their government does not enforce the laws, and they are right to be upset when we spend too much money. I am reluctant, as many of my constituents are, to spend more or to engage further in the world. But while I and many Kansans are angry and frustrated, our enemies abroad are on the march.

There is not a day that goes by that I don't worry about what is happening elsewhere and not so much about what is happening elsewhere to people who are there but what happens in our own country if we don't deal with those circumstances today.

It is always easier, I suppose, to look the other way. But often, when we do

that, the end result suggests that we should have looked right in the face of the problem and taken it on. Our enemies are on the march.

I try never to use my membership of the Senate Committee on Intelligence to say I know something that nobody else knows. I certainly never want to suggest to Kansans that I know something that they don't know. I trust their judgment and believe in them. But China, Russia, Iran, Iran and its proxies, North Korea are collaborating to weaken, to harm, and to attempt to make the United States abandon its leadership role.

There is some morality to the decisions we make here. And I suppose there is an argument that can be made about the morality both ways, regardless of what we do. Morality—there actually is a right and wrong. I think we forget that in our country. Some things are right, and some things are wrong. And we try to finesse so that we never have to make the decision about which ones are which.

I suppose right and wrong comes from, really, your soul, who you are as a person, how you grew up, what your parents taught you, what you learned in church or synagogue. I care about how my constituents feel.

I indicated to my colleagues recently that we spend so much time doing next to nothing here, why do you take me away from my family, and why do you take me away from Kansans where I love to be? I would always prefer to be in Kansas. But every so often, there are issues that come before us that seem to be ones that explain why we are here. This is one of those moments in which we are finally escaping the drudgery and dissatisfaction of doing little.

When I came to the U.S. Senate, I was welcomed here by then-Majority Leader Harry Reid. Senator Reid was polite and pleasant to me and always was; but on that day, on the first meeting as a new Senator here on the Senate floor, in that well, he said: JERRY, welcome. How do you like being here? My response was to Senator Reid: I was really honored that Kansans gave me the chance to do this job. But, sir, it doesn't seem like we are ever going to do anything.

There is nothing about my life that would suggest that I would be a Member of the U.S. Senate; nothing in my background, nothing in my family. I wanted to come to the Senate to do something; to do something right; and to do it well.

Senator Reid's response to me was: JERRY, you just need to understand, we are not going to do anything. You just need to know that.

Here, I had just worked my way to the U.S. Senate only to discover that the job description was: “Let's not do anything.”

So I tried from that day to take what Senator Reid said and use the opportunity that I have been given by Kansans to do something—to do something right; to do something in cooperation

with my colleagues; and to provide meaning for all those days away that me and my colleagues are away from home and family.

When this is all over, I think we all want to actually do something that matters. Today, I tell my colleagues and my constituents and Americans that the challenge we face will not resolve themselves, and the preservation of freedom requires an enormous effort. It is a special place we live in—a special place we call home. And the freedom and position that we enjoy, we too often take for granted.

It has been a while since—in fact, many in this body—many in Congress—no longer have served in the military. We tend to forget what that burden of serving means.

We owe something to those who served. We owe something to a generation of hard-working men and women who have come before us. In my view, we owe them to live up to our responsibility to preserve what they have defended and protected and made available to me, to Americans today, and to our generation, our children and grandchildren, and Americans that we will never know.

I believe in “America First.” But, unfortunately, “America First” means we have to engage in the world. Taking a sober view of history, there should be no doubt of the importance of the outcome in Ukraine, the Middle East, in China, in the South Pacific, and what it means to the United States.

I go back to what Secretary Pompeo said with me in that FOX News opinion piece:

The preservation of freedom requires enormous effort; indeed, liberty demands the marshaling of every resource necessary in its defense against those who would see it destroyed.

I am not the articulate individual that President Reagan was, but he said it well, perhaps better, than what I and Secretary Pompeo said. President Reagan said in his first inaugural address—his first inaugural address to become President:

The crisis we are facing today does not require of us the kind of sacrifice that . . . so many thousands of others [have been] called upon to make. It does require, however, our best effort and our willingness to believe in ourselves and to believe in our capacity to perform great deeds, to believe that together with God's help we can and will resolve the problems which now confront us.

I am tired of telling people when they ask me how I am—I say: Well, I am fine. My family is fine. The world is a mess.

You can't differentiate the two. Your family, you can't be fine if the world is crumbling. That is me, not Reagan.

President Reagan concluded:

Together with God's help, we can and will resolve the problems which now confront us. And after all, why shouldn't we believe that? We are Americans.

I reserve my time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I want to thank my friend and colleague

from Kansas for the speech that he just gave. I would like to associate myself with every single word.

Madam President, last Thursday, I came to the floor to explain to the pages who were on duty then—I think they are different now—and to a few people in the Gallery what was about to happen. Then I told them what was about to happen was that a lot of people were going to file a lot of amendments. There were going to be some people who wouldn't do time agreements. And then we would come to the floor, and we would hem and haw about how either Leader SCHUMER, the majority leader, or MITCH MCCONNELL, the minority leader, somehow blocked them. Well, that is fiction. I am not a fortuneteller. I have seen this play before. And what played out over this weekend is exactly what happened in the past, where people are making objections without any good-faith offer to negotiate time, et cetera.

So what happens? Great amendments, like those that are being offered by Senator LEE, are likely not going to get a vote. Great amendments by TOM COTTON, RICK SCOTT, and other Members are likely not going to get a vote. I hope, maybe, that changes, but unless we decide to negotiate in good faith—and I don't know why anybody thinks that they will. So it is disappointing, but it is not surprising, and that is exactly what I was thinking on Thursday.

And, now, here we are on Monday.

I have one other thing.

I had some of my colleagues come to the floor. They referred to the fact that I made a statement that says: I feel like it is on me to vote the way I think I need to vote, and then go back home and explain it.

Why? Well, because a lot of people, when they hear a Senator speak, they believe that it is the truth. They heard somebody say that, if we pass this bill, we are all going to go ride to Kyiv with buckets full of money and let oligarchs buy yachts.

I wonder how the soldier in a trench right now in Ukraine, defending against Russians, feels about that. I wonder how the spouses of the estimated 25,000 soldiers in Ukraine who have died feel about that. I mean, really, guys, sending billions of dollars to Ukraine so Ukrainian oligarchs can buy yachts; is that the best you have?

What we are talking about is funding for the next 10 months. Then we have other people say a forever war—a forever war. Well, the last time I checked, this appropriations runs out at the end of this calendar year. And then, next year, we will have to fight again, either under a Biden administration or a Trump administration, to continue to do the right thing.

A lot of people say we are sending \$70, \$80 billion to Ukraine. Really? Well, the last time I checked, about half of it is going to the military industrial base here to replace the inventories we sent to them, to replace and aid the modernization of our arsenal.

We have billions of dollars in this bill to actually build up our defense industrial base that we now know—thank goodness this is not against a NATO ally because we would be desperate trying to actually support all-out war now.

Thank you, Vladimir Putin. If anything good came from this, we know how weak your military is—a 10-to-1 ratio of Ukrainians to Russian soldiers dead. I feel bad for every one of those Russian families who lost somebody in this war they didn't want to be a part of—87 percent of their ready forces when Putin started this war.

Putin is losing this war, folks. This is not a stalemate. This guy is on life support. He will not survive if the 50 nations that have come together in the Ramstein process to support Ukraine stick together. He will not survive if NATO becomes stronger.

NATO already has one and is about to have a second ally that is only here because of Vladimir Putin. He has made NATO stronger. He has demonstrated that he is weak. He has demonstrated that he is losing.

We all heard the classified reports that are now public that we thought that Russia was going to have air superiority within a couple of days and control all Ukraine that they wanted to control within a couple of weeks. Folks, that was 2 years ago. Ukraine is winning, and Ukraine is winning because the Western world, the NATO allies in 25, some two-dozen other countries have come together and made it very clear that Putin's desire to reestablish the Russian Empire is inconsistent with the democratic world order.

Putin is losing. This is not a stalemate. A 10-to-1 kill differential between Ukrainians and Russians is indisputable. The platforms that he is leaving on the battlefield are indisputable. The fact that we need to modernize and build up our industrial base is indisputable. Thank you, Vladimir Putin, for bringing that to our attention.

And guess what else. China is watching. I am less concerned about Vladimir Putin than I am about China and our retreat from leading the Western world.

Guess what. We are an exceptional Nation, and we are the beacon of hope for democracy. When we step away, who fills the void? You would be hard-pressed to find any nation that has the scale and the ability to do it but the United States, with all due respect to my friends in NATO.

China is watching.

Why am I so focused on this vote? Because I don't want to be on the pages of history that we will regret if we walk away. You will see the alliance that is supporting Ukraine crumble. You will ultimately see China become emboldened, and I am not going to be on that page of history.

I believe that we have to vote today, and we have to respect some of the pri-

orities—maybe the concerns of the House as they move this through—but let's let this Chamber be the Chamber that stands with the free world. That is what we can do today. That is what we must do today.

And what I must do is go to my great State of North Carolina, and, if I have friends who think otherwise, I owe it to them to share every bit of knowledge that I have, to have them understand that I don't love where we are today, but I hate where we will be if we don't move forward with this vote.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the supplemental bill that is before us, but what should be appropriately called the "Ukraine funding bill."

It is only in America where we try to fund other nation's problems, to fight other people's wars for them, before we fix our own budget.

We are just weeks away from our own government funding ending. We had the President's budget, which was due several weeks ago—we don't have that budget. We have not done the funding for this year yet. Yet we are moving on to a supplemental bill, of course, all in the background of \$34 trillion of debt.

A couple of things to point out about this supplemental bill. Stating the obvious, there is no border security in this bill—nothing to secure our border. We are about to send almost \$100 billion overseas without addressing our most imminent national security threat that our Nation faces: our open southern border.

I want to start also by saying this. I am not apologetic about being a patriot. A patriot is a person that puts America first. Look, I am always going to root for my home team, the Panthers. I am always going to root for the Kansas City Chiefs. I don't wish other players any ill will, but I will always be an American first. When the American hockey team is playing the Russian hockey team, I am going to root for the American hockey team. If the American soccer team is playing the German soccer team, I am going to root for the American team. I don't have ill will toward the others. I will be American first and set American priorities first.

I think the next thing we need to point out about this bill is that two-thirds of Republican Senators voted against it. Two-thirds of Republican Senators have voted against proceeding with this legislation. In a Republican-controlled House, I don't see how you are going to find more than 50 percent of those Republicans to pass this bill. It just isn't going to happen.

As I take a look at these last 4 months up here, I realize that the White House negotiating on securing the border was actually a charade. They were never serious about it. And, of course, it never made sense to the folks back home. Why would we have

to beg the President of the United States to secure our own border? Why would we have to negotiate over that? Why would we have to give them Ukraine funding in return for a secure border? It makes sense to nobody.

I want to take a second and talk about why this is important—why this issue is important—why are so many of us standing up and fighting against this \$95 billion to never-ending wars.

I think, as I even consider the 300 people who die from fentanyl every day in this country, this is important. The fact that we don't secure our border is going to allow more of that fentanyl into this country. We are seeing just upshots and upshots of human trafficking, sex trafficking going on across our Nation. As FBI Director Wray said, he sees warning, blinking lights everywhere he looks for the first time in his career.

Why wouldn't we? Why wouldn't we when we have over 10 million people who have crossed our borders illegally in the last 3 years?

So I think it is important from a national security standpoint. This is important to secure our Nation and to make our families safe again.

I want to talk for a moment about whom we are fighting for. This is no longer just our own border issue. I am fighting for families back home. Every State is now a border State. Fentanyl poisoning kills a person almost every day in the State of Kansas.

So I am fighting for all those people who died. You know, I just read this week about a young lady in Kansas who has lost four members of her family from fentanyl poisoning and most recently, over the past several weeks, lost a child to fentanyl poisoning. So I am fighting for all of those who lost a loved one to fentanyl poisoning.

For all those people who are being human-trafficked as we speak, are being sex-trafficked as we speak as well, I am fighting for all of those people.

I think it is important to take a second and talk about how we got here, you know, how we got to these open borders. This President likes to create a crisis, and then he tries to solve it. In this situation, the President of the United States created this open border crisis.

This President penned over 90 Executive orders that opened that southern border, to go from less than 1,000 crossing a day to now, many days, having over 10,000 a day. These were Executive orders. It was policies that changed. The President created this crisis. Even today, the President could end that crisis. The President could shut down the border. He has the legal authority today to shut down the border, to secure the border.

How did we get thrown into the Ukraine war? Another crisis created by our current President.

You know, I would go back to Afghanistan. When America ran with her tail between her legs out of Afghani-

stan, we lost our reputation. This President lost his reputation, and, as I have been taught by so many physicians in my own practice, once a professional loses their reputation, you can never get it back.

Then you fast-forward, and you see that this President will not respond to Iran's attack on Americans through their puppets with any type of significant response. I think it just basically allows our enemies to push us around and to shove us.

How did we get to the Israel situation where Hamas came to be—where Hamas had the courage to cross the borders to brutally attack and murder thousands of Israelis? I think, again, it is this lack of respect. It was a lack of respect.

It was this President's policies that allowed Iran to increase their sales of oil, to allow their economy to grow, to allow them to fund and to ship weapons to these puppets of theirs, these terrorists.

I think an even bigger picture of how we got here is just the lawlessness in America today. The lawlessness started with an open southern border, cashless bail, turning our heads away from riots, the smash-and-grabs, turning our eyes away from these to see the lawlessness grow and then to see the fentanyl explode. As my dad, the police officer, taught me, wherever there are illegal drugs, crime is certainly going to follow it as well.

So I think in this backdrop of a lawless America, where our constitutional rights are being attacked and where, on the world stage, a President lost his reputation, it allowed Russia to have the courage to attack Ukraine, and it allowed Hamas the courage to attack the people of Israel.

As I look at the big picture of this legislation—\$60 billion for Ukraine—I think of what else we could do with that. Do you realize that the entire annual budget of the Marines is only \$53 billion? How much more national security would we have if we invested the money in our Marines as opposed to sending this money abroad? We could have built three walls on the southern border easily with this amount of money, maybe much more.

As leaders, we need to focus on priorities, and I think that is what America is seeing right now. I think they are seeing these two-thirds of Republicans who voted against proceeding with this supplemental bill—we were folks who put our own national security first, put securing the border first. But up here in DC, my friends across the aisle and the White House—they continue to put Ukraine funding as their priority.

Of course, add to that the complexity of the situation. Each one of these issues, even by itself, has merits. There are reasons to push them, and there are reasons that you wouldn't do it certain ways. But when you throw them all together, it is next to impossible to solve this Rubik's Cube, if you will, just seemingly next to impossible.

You know, one of the things that the national media especially likes to do up here is declare within hours of a vote who was right and who was wrong. I think it is important to realize that oftentimes we don't know who is right or wrong for years, for decades after. And even sometimes they write the history books, and they don't get it right.

I certainly have empathy for those who support Ukraine funding right now. And I could be wrong. I could be wrong that this is not the proper time to do it. But what I am not wrong on is securing the border, that that should be the top priority. Once we secure our own border, then let's look abroad and see what we can do to help with Ukraine as well.

As I think about the border and the significance of the problem, I think about the number of people who have died from fentanyl poisoning. I know I keep bringing up this fentanyl poisoning, but it is so significant—300 people, 300 young adults, young Americans, dying every day from fentanyl poisoning.

You try to put that into historical perspective. Pearl Harbor—a day that lives in infamy—2,400 American soldiers died. So that would be 8 days in February that the same number of people died from fentanyl. Every 8 days, we lose the same number of Americans we lost in Pearl Harbor, a horrible tragedy.

Of course, 9/11, some 3,000 people died there. In 10 days—you know, just this month of February alone, we have lost more Americans to fentanyl poisoning than we lost to 9/11.

D-day, 2,500 Americans died. Again, in just the month of February, we have lost more Americans to fentanyl poisoning than we did to D-day.

So I think that is what we should be focused on. We should be securing our border to stop the flow of fentanyl into this country, to stop the human trafficking, to stop the sex trafficking, for all those reasons.

I want to talk a little bit more about what border security looks like. Many of us have been to the border multiple times. You know, the Border Patrol officers, I think, would be one group of credible people. At my last visit, what they focused on was that they need policy changes.

I think it is important that Americans realize that we would have proceeded with this bill if there was meaningful border security in the original legislation. Again, all the border security has been stripped out of this bill, but it is important for Americans to know what was missing.

The Border Patrol officers themselves said that this bill—to make America truly secure, we needed more work on asylum, more work on the parole issue, and then this magic number of 5,000 and the border shuts down—not that it really ever did under this legislation, of course; the border never really shut down—that that 5,000 was way

too high and to codify that into law would almost make that the norm.

Again, the Border Patrol would say: We really can't deal with more than 1,000 people crossing the border a day. And even 1,000 is a huge stress, and they recommended that whenever we hit 1,000, we would literally shut the border down.

So, again, if this bill would have been negotiated in broad daylight, if it would have gone through the Judiciary Committee, went through some type of a process where we could have addressed that particular number on the parole situation—I think it is so important that Americans understand that under President Obama, he was paroling 5,000 people per year. Barack Obama, President Obama, was paroling 5,000 people per year. President Trump, 5,000 people per year. Joe Biden, 700,000 people per year. So this President was illegally or is illegally paroling over 700,000 per year.

Now, what is the magic number that should be? Is it 5,000? Is it 10,000? I think that we in the Republican caucus were willing to negotiate that number and that if there were some extenuating circumstances, then the President could come to this body and say: Hey, we need more than that number. But just to say that as long as they are flown in—and by the way, the vast, vast majority of those parolees are flown in on, of course, American taxpayer dollars. So think about that. Two million people have been paroled under President Biden—2 million people flown into this country for the most part on American taxpayer dollars and given a work visa. I wonder how that makes my union workers feel—like 2 million people entering the workforce here, willing to work for minimum wage or less.

So this bill did not correct the parole situation, that they could continue to come into this country as long as they were flown in.

Then there is the asylum issue. What this legislation did, again, was basically codify catch-and-release. Yes, some of the people were being caught and retained, but a significant number were still being caught and released for who knows how long.

So that is the bare minimum that needed to occur on this bill to make it palatable because we wanted meaningful border security. We wanted to address asylum, address parole, and then this magic number of 5,000 when people cross the border, and those number of encounters, that we would change it, that that would shut down the border.

So I hope that dispels any questions or concerns about what we would like to do with border security.

I want to talk about Ukraine for a second a little bit more as well.

As I assess Ukraine, I certainly feel for the folks there. You know, this has been a battle for thousands of years over the borders of Ukraine. But where we are today, I think it is very disingenuous—very disingenuous—to say

that this war is anything but a stalemate.

Look, the war front has not moved in over a year's time. It is a quagmire. But meanwhile, 200,000 Ukrainians have died, and maybe twice that number of Russians have died, probably 1 million casualties with no end in sight. This is a never-ending war, just like the Afghan war. I am not sure how long Russia was there but for years and years, and then America was there for years and years. But just due to the terrain, due to all the circumstances there, there appears to me to be no end in sight, and anyone who says otherwise I think is just not being intellectually honest with themselves or with Americans.

I think the focus should be on some type of peace talks right now, not on fueling this fire, not on throwing more gasoline on this fire, not sending them more and more weapons. I think that if there is a will, there is a way, and that if America was leading on some type of a peace talk, I think we could have already been there by now.

But one of the challenges we have with a President who has lost his reputation is trying to slow Putin down. So he is in this for the long haul. He is not going to step down. He is not going to step back when he sees a weak President that we have who is even afraid of Iran.

So for all those reasons, I cannot support funding to Ukraine at this point in time. I think we have to secure our border first, and then I am willing to talk about funding for Ukraine. But I need to know what is the path to victory, what is our goal here, what some type of a realistic schedule looks like for that war coming to a conclusion.

This legislation before us even promises money for future years—again, misinformation being passed around by some of my colleagues. So this bill commits future Presidents to funding this Ukraine war. And by the way, there are a lot of Americans back home who don't think this is a good idea at all.

Look, I grew up in the Vietnam era. I remember what it was like on my way to my grandparents to drive by the cemetery and see coffins draped with the American flag and the bugler playing "Taps" on a regular basis—too often a person I saw playing high school football last season, and here their life had ended.

I don't want more wars; I want less wars. But right now, we are projecting weakness. Joe Biden has given us war through weakness instead of peace through strength.

Let's turn our attention to Israel and Iran— Hamas as well—just for a moment.

First of all, I want to remind everybody, four times we came to this floor and asked for unanimous consent for stand-alone funding for Israel.

And I would do that again tonight if I thought it would be of any benefit, if I thought that it had a chance.

I support funding Israel. Israel has been one of America's—if not their best ally, certainly one of their top allies of all times, faithful to us, a great source of intelligence. They have stopped so many foreign attacks on this land that we—many Americans—owe their life to the work that the people of Israel have done. And then, just in general, they are being attacked by a terrorist group that not only wants to destroy Israel but destroy America.

Why wouldn't we support Israel?

But, of course, the issue of Israel now tears the Democratic Party apart. It divides them. You know, it looks like, to me, many of them are very concerned about supporting Israel, that they have become this pro-Palestinian caucus rather than a pro-Israel caucus. They support Iran, but not Israel.

Look, in the world of the Middle East, you can't do both. I don't see how you could possibly support Israel and Iran. I don't see how you could support Israel and support Hamas. I don't think it is possible. I think sometimes you have to choose and support who your friends and allies are. And, for me, I believe we should be standing firmly beside Israel and eliminating Hamas.

Again, Hamas wants to destroy Americans. That is their goal. That is their stated purpose.

So we would have—almost to a person, we would have supported some type of stand-alone funding for Israel, if given that chance.

We talked about Israel. We talked about Hamas. We have to talk about Iran. There is so much more that this President could be doing right now, besides just funding Israel. Look, Hamas is the head of the snake. They are the ones that fund, train, support, plan these attacks by these puppets of theirs, these terrorist organizations in so many ways.

So what could the President do besides, you know, funding more wars and more battles? I think that there is a military approach. There is an economic approach, and there is a diplomatic approach.

Let's talk a minute about the diplomatic approach. The Abraham Accords are making great progress in the Middle East, and perhaps one of the most precipitating factors of Hamas attacking Israel was the progress of these Abraham Accords, that Israel was close to working out an agreement with our friends from Saudi Arabia. And if they would have done that, it would have put so much pressure on Iran.

Well, basically, Hamas attacked on October 7, and now those talks have been cut off. But, if somehow, some way, those negotiations, those talks could be rekindled, that would indirectly put a huge amount of pressure on Iran. So there are huge opportunities for a diplomatic approach.

Economically, let's talk about what we could be doing. Recall when Joe Biden was sworn in, Iran had about \$6 billion of currency left—\$6 billion in their treasury. Well, today they have

got over \$60 billion. Why? Because the sanctions that we had on, under the Trump administration, were lifted, and now Iran easily is selling all this oil, and, among other things, they have a fleet of 500 ghost ships.

So they take these ships that are owned by foreign countries. They use that foreign flag then to smuggle either Russian oil or Iranian oil to people, ignoring the sanctions. We should be punishing not just Iran but also punishing those countries that lend them their flag, so to speak.

What else could we do economically? I think that we could be putting—double-down on all the previous economic sanctions that we placed on them, including bank sanctions. And, again, anyone that is doing business with Iran, we could be shutting them down as well.

Militarily, what could we do? I think back to what President Reagan did in 1988 when an American warship was attacked. I believe it hit a mine, if I recall properly. And what President Reagan did is he ordered an attack on Iranian oil platforms, and I think we also sunk three of their battleships as well. So without going inside of Iran proper, we sent a loud and clear message to Iran. And guess what. It worked.

Instead, what the Biden administration has chosen to do are these fairly innocuous attacks on empty sheds, and maybe sometimes there is some old ammunition there. But something more than that needs to be beefed up.

We need to shut down Iran's ships as they are crossing through the seas as well. Iran launched three military satellites recently. We could take out those military satellites. So there is a lot we could do, but this idea of passivity, this idea that if we just watch what Iran is doing and thinking that they are going to stop doing it, doesn't work. Anyone that has faced a bully in third grade out at recess knows being passive never works, and, eventually, you have to stand up and smack the bully in the nose. Otherwise, he is going to keep pestering you.

It is that clear. That is what we should be doing in the Middle East right now. It is a military action on Iran, economic and diplomacy as well. You can't look at that in just a little silo. We should be supporting Israel, but all those other things would help Israel significantly as well.

There is funding in this legislation for Taiwan. And, again, I think if that was standing alone, I could support it.

I think back to pre-invasion of Ukraine by Russia. We begged the White House to make Ukraine some type of a porcupine, so to speak. That would have been our goal—that we should have been getting all the military aid in there before this all happened, not after. We could have gotten them A-10s that we were mothballing.

Pardon me. I don't know what is going on, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I don't know either.

The Senate will be in order.

Would the person in the Gallery please sit.

Mr. MARSHALL. Thank you, Mr. President. I didn't know what type of security situation there was there. So we felt that we had better just pause as well.

So if we were talking about Taiwan, I think we can compare Taiwan to where Ukraine was a couple of years ago. We begged this administration to arm Ukraine so that they could protect themselves. If we could have gotten them those A-10 Warthogs—think about how that war would have changed if Ukraine had these A-10 Warthogs, as all of these Russian supply automobiles were stuck there trying to enter from the north. There is so much more that we could have done. It seems like this White House has just slow-walked the entire response.

So, yes, I think many of us agree that we should help arm Taiwan to make them a porcupine. And, by the way, they have been a great ally, too, a great business partner. They seem to be a good player, a country that we greatly respect and want to help protect.

But, at the end of the day, when you bundle this funding without giving us our own border security, that doesn't make much sense to us.

And, of course, there is funding in here for humanitarian aid as well. I think to the tune of—goodness, I think it is close to \$10 billion for humanitarian aid. This is in addition to what we typically are doing. We would remind everybody that USAID has a budget of over \$60 billion a year, that we are all doing much of this humanitarian work already.

And, of course, our fear—and I don't know how to answer Kansans thoughts on this when they ask me: How are we going to make sure that that humanitarian aid gets to women and children, the people that really need it, as opposed to—will Hamas intercept it?

Again, I made several trips to the Middle East, and what I have seen is corruption. I have seen the terrorist groups grab the humanitarian aid, and it doesn't get to the people that we want it to get to there. So I am not convinced on the humanitarian aid part of this that we would accomplish what our goals truly, truly are.

I don't think that this humanitarian aid should be going to support Hamas. I am all for helping those that need it, but very concerned about where it actually ends up being.

I want to go back to the budget process just for a second as well. I have never have been part of an organization that functions quite like this. Most of us have run businesses before or have been on a church board or a school board. You know, typically, the fiscal year is going to be starting 4 or 5 months from now. We want our CFOs giving us a budget outline. We want to be presenting those budgets to the board at least 6 weeks before that new

year kicks in and certainly ready to go before the new year starts.

This body seldom does a budget. They seem to just fly by the seat of their pants. They do a cost-plus system. Whatever we spent this year, we are immediately talking about adding 5 or 10 percent to that budget, regardless. As opposed to that, I think we should go back to a zero-based budgeting process. I think we should go back exactly to the way the budget of the law of 1974 says we should be doing and then put some teeth on it, so if the President doesn't get his budget here on time, that there is some type of punishment, if you will, for the White House not getting that here on time, within the realms of the Constitution. I know there are some certain things we can't do, and I really think a President—a responsible President—could have that budget to us before—you know, months before the fiscal year ends as well.

And then I think we should hold the Senate Budget Committee to the test and make sure that they get a budget out in time. And then we communicate that to the House, and they work on a budget, and we go back to this regular order that we have all talked about.

And my compliments to the Appropriations Committee here in the Senate. I think they have done an incredible job, especially with the time presented to them, to at least giving us something. It has been through subcommittees; it has been through committees—for the most part, with large bipartisan support. We would have loved to have had them out here by now. We would have loved to have taken those packages—there are 12 buckets—taken them one at a time and gone through them and shine the light on the bridges to nowhere. Maybe there are places we need to accentuate, things that we could cut back.

In a Federal budget of—goodness, I guess we are at \$77 trillion a year now. You would think there would be some ways—there would be some programs that we could shut down, as opposed to, again, just this cost-plus system that we do up here: Whatever is last year's budget, let's just add 5 percent; let's just add 10 percent as well.

And it still amazes me that, again, having a \$900 billion military budget, we are going to have to go back now and spend even more to fund these never-ending wars overseas as well.

So I do think that we need to pay attention to what is going on with our budget process.

I had some folks back home send me some questions, and I thought I would try to answer them. Some of them I have covered already, but I think this is a good opportunity to talk about some of their questions as well.

The first question: Were the Democrats ever serious about border security?

Listen, I think there are folks in the Democratic Party that want border security. I don't know if it is as much of

a priority as it is to me. I would like to assume that they do.

But, on the other hand, it feels like, for the White House, that is not their priority. I think I have never heard from the White House that border security is a priority. They talked about an immigration system, wanting to grease an immigration system, but I never really heard that commitment from the White House that they wanted border security.

Next question: Why is it so urgent to send Ukraine this largest lump sum of money right now when the war started over 2 years ago?

I think that is a great question. Again, I would just point out that the situation there is a quagmire. I know that Ukraine is starting to launch offensive weapons into Russia, which concerns me. It concerns me about escalating a war as well. I think we need to realize that, in the stalemate situation, I am not sure why we need to be sending them more and more weapons. Again, the focus, I believe, should be on some type of peace talks.

Next question: Has Israel been used as a pawn in these negotiations, and what message does this send to our allies like Israel?

Well, Israel has been used as a pawn. As I pointed out before, Israel divides my friends across the aisle, so that much of their base no longer supports Israel. So when their base sees them thinking about funding Israel, it creates division. It creates havoc. It hurts the President's poll numbers.

So I think that Israel has felt like a pawn. Again, what some will say is that the President is using the Ukraine funding as an excuse to include the Israel funding.

Next question—again, these are questions from folks back home that wanted to make sure that I answered this: How does funding Ukraine address our No. 1 national security concern, the border crisis, as well as our long-term concern of our national debt crisis?

You know, I couldn't agree more. Our No. 1 most immediate threat to our national security is an open southern border. The greatest threat to our long-term national security is our \$34 trillion national debt.

Look, we are going to spend more money on interest this year than we do on the military. When any business is spending that significant amount of their budget—probably, I am going to guess around 1/7th of our budget this year—1/7th will be spent on interest. I think, whenever that happens, that threatens our education programs. It threatens our roads and bridges. Any type of long-term infrastructure that we could be investing in, if we are going to be spending \$900 billion or trillion on interest, we know that is a tough row to hoe. Any business that is ran, when you are that far in debt, spending that much in interest soon ends up in some type of bankruptcy.

So this bill does not address—actually, it worsens our long-term national

security crisis with the national debt. It certainly does not address the border in any way.

Next question: When will the President realize that deterrence doesn't work after the fact?

Well, I think, again, that is the difference in our philosophies here. I always believed President Eisenhower actually said it first. He said he believed in "peace through strength." President Eisenhower said he hated wars as only a soldier could, as a soldier who has lived it and seen its brutality and futility as well.

As a veteran myself and the brother and son of a veteran and uncles who were soldiers and a child who is now in the Active-Duty military, I certainly understand the importance of peace through strength and hope that we can regain some of that strength as the military begins to focus once again on military strength and readiness, as opposed to some of the other diverse issues.

Next question: Why is putting America's safety and security so controversial?

I can't answer that question. To me, it is not controversial. Of all my tasks up here, again to our priorities, I think my No. 1 priority is to make America safe and secure—I think physically safe with secure borders and then financially secure would be right behind that as well.

Next question: Who within the American Government is responsible for overseeing how this money is spent in Ukraine? Whose job has it been to this point?

Well, look, I think many of us have been concerned that there wasn't an individual person, an inspector general, focused on this \$113 billion we have already spent. We know that whenever you send over large amounts of money at one time, the opportunity for fraud and abuse is there. Many leaders of our own country are concerned about the fraud in Ukraine as well.

So I cannot look Kansans in the eye and say, Hey, we know where all this money is going. For heaven's sakes, the Department of Defense doesn't know where most of its assets are either. It has gotten so big, they can't keep track of what they have or where they have it.

Next question: Why don't we bring Russia and Ukraine to the negotiating table to bring peace, instead of funding death and destruction indefinitely?

I couldn't agree with you more. I think we have the leverage. I think we have the economic leverage. Even our trade with these foreign countries alone gives us a leverage that most people don't have to bring them to the negotiating table.

Next question: How can we be sure that humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip can be used to help civilians and not fall into the hands of Hamas terrorists?

I can't. I cannot be sure of that. We know if history repeats itself, that sig-

nificant amounts of aid have fallen into the hands of these terrorists.

Next question: What is the end goal of Ukraine?

That is a great question.

It wasn't too long ago that Ukrainian leadership was here saying they wanted to go back to pre-Crimea. Basically, they want Crimea back, as well as the other territory that Russia has invaded and controls as well. I don't know that that is feasible or not, to think that they are going to get Crimea back. Crimea is so important to Putin. Folks don't realize the challenges that Russia had in getting their oil and getting their crops and their commodities out to a warm water port. Crimea is vitally important to their economy and militarily as well.

I think that is another great point and another great question as well. What is the end goal in Ukraine? I don't think America has been given the answer to that. Again, I just think back to Vietnam and being a young child, listening to Walter Cronkite on "The Nightly News," and my parents asking that same question: What is the goal? What are we trying to do in Vietnam? Where are we going with this?

And as we saw, my goodness, the Agent Orange and all the atrocities that were coming out of Vietnam. Our soldiers were vilified. Americans didn't welcome them back home. It was a horrible time in America. And I think there was never a clear purpose of what the end game was in Vietnam. Let's don't repeat that same mistake.

Next: What are we doing to ensure that Europe is doing their part as well?

Listen, it is almost impossible for me to understand exactly how much Europe has committed and then actually followed through with. In my humble opinion, they have made some very bravado claims that they are going to do, and I don't think they have adequately followed up on it yet.

I am still waiting for a report that I can trust and verify that Europe is doing their part. I do think that they should be more motivated than we are to secure the situation there. They are willing to help, but once again, I think it is about priorities for me. Let's secure our own borders first.

Next question: Is there corruption happening in Ukraine?

Look, I think that there is, unfortunately. I think that there is corruption in Ukraine. The largest telecom company in Ukraine is being threatened to be nationalized by Zelenskyy. Let me say that again. Zelenskyy is threatening to nationalize the largest telecom company in Ukraine.

This particular company is on NASDAQ—American ownership, many Americans have ownership on this stock as well. It is sitting on a fair amount of cash, and the plan was when this war settled, that they would go back and reinvest that cash and reinvest that money through the telecom to help Ukraine's economy recover. But it appears to me that President Zelenskyy wants that cash.

And just think what he can do from a political standpoint. It would be like if the White House could control two or three of the largest telecom companies in America; what an unfair advantage that is to other political parties as well. So there is political issues with it, as well as I think economic issues, and for Zelenskyy to threaten Americans, to threaten our leadership that if we don't give him the \$60 billion, he is going to nationalize this American company, I think is hitting below the belt. It is not right. It is not fair. I don't like to be threatened. Americans don't like to be threatened.

So those are some of the questions that folks back home in Kansas have asked us. I hope we have adequately addressed them.

What time I have got left, Mr. President, I think I will talk about being a patriot, what it means to be a patriot. And I would just ask the folks in the room, Are you a patriot? or when did you become a patriot? And maybe if I could, I would just like to share my moment when I became a patriot.

My wife and I got married about 2 weeks before medical school started. A year and a half later, in the second year of medical school, we had our firstborn. We brought her home to a little studio apartment. I took my desk and made a little spot for a crib for her. My wife was going to give up her job to take care of the baby, which I was so forever grateful for the sacrifices that moms make. And already, we were having a rough time making ends meet.

So I knew I needed to do something economically. I said, This is no way to take care of a family. It was one of those moments when I was considering what I needed to do. I thought about my forefathers. My dad had served in the military. My brother had served. As a matter of fact, going back to the Civil War, every generation in my family had somebody who had served in the military. Four grandfathers of my grandparents served in the Union Army, a few gave their life, made the ultimate sacrifice preserving the Union.

My wife had an uncle who served in World War I, suffered from nerve gas exposure in the Argonne Forest. Two of my dad's uncles were part of the D-day invasion. My dad served; my brother served; and I served, and my son served. Anyway, in that moment, I said, This is what I need to do; I need to go in the military, rather than borrow money. I wanted to check that box as well. So my wife and I signed up, and officer's basic training was in Fort Belvoir, VA, just 30 minutes from where we are standing today.

Most people don't take their wife and newborn with them to basic training, but we decided to do that. And even though my wife stayed in a different place than I did, I was so glad that she got to come. Every spare moment that we had, though, we enriched ourselves in the many cultural opportunities that our Nation's Capital gives us.

We spent a day at Monticello. We spent a day at Mount Vernon. We spent a day going through the National History Museum, spending days on end at all the different Smithsonians on the Nation's Mall, sucking up the history, the nectar of life in this great country, stopping at each one of the monuments and reading and learning and going on tours about the sacrifices that our forefathers, our Founding Fathers had done for all of us.

Now, as a pre-med student—biochemistry, nuclear engineering—I didn't get to spend much time on history, so it was truly a great awakening for me. But sometime in that process that summer, between taking an oath to defend the Constitution and learning all this information about our Nation's history, I became a real patriot, dedicating myself to make sure I leave this country better for the next generation.

And as I look at legislation like this—complicated legislation. My goodness, trying to do something in Ukraine, something in Israel, in Taiwan, in humanitarian efforts, and to think that we have left behind this opportunity to secure our border, it is very troubling to me—horribly troubling to me—that we squandered this once in a generation opportunity to fix this problem.

And that is why I have been willing to go forward. I wanted to go back and work. Let's work on this border security issue until we get it right, and then we can move on to this, but that opportunity was not afforded us, and here we are today.

But as a patriot, I stand before you and I stand before the people of America saying the right thing to do would be to secure our border first. There is going to be those who today and tomorrow judge us and say that I am in the wrong, but it will take decades. It is going to take decades for history to figure out who is right here and who is wrong here. And as I have said before, I may be wrong on Ukraine, but I am darn secure and darn confident that securing the border should be our top priority right now. It is our No. 1, most immediate threat to our national security.

So as this debate concludes, it is with an ill heart that I will go home having lost this battle, and Americans are not going to understand that. But they are going to hold people accountable. Americans are going to hold people accountable that chose to move on from border security and fund foreign nations before we took care of our own homes.

I can promise the Presiding Officer that I am always going to be a patriot first.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

CONGRATULATING THE KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I am here tonight to talk about the foreign aid supplemental that is the pending

business on this floor, but before I do that, I have to take a moment of personal privilege, if my colleagues will allow me, in light of recent events, just to say a word about the Kansas City Chiefs, which last night, in dramatic fashion, won their third Super Bowl in the last 5 years. Now, as a lifelong Kansas City fan, it is an incredible privilege to get to congratulate the Chiefs again on this floor just as I did last year.

For those who missed the game, the Chiefs beat the 49ers in a terrific, terrific game, with a final score of 25 to 22, in an overtime thriller. It is only the second time, I think, in Super Bowl history that a Super Bowl has gone into overtime. Yet again, the Chiefs came back from a double-digit deficit. They were down 10 points at one point in the first half, coming back to win the game again by a score of 25 to 22.

This is the first time in 19 years now that a team has won back-to-back Super Bowls. Already, we in the Kansas City area and Chiefs Kingdom are ready for a three-peat as we gear up for next season.

I just want to call out a few folks who had particularly outstanding performances.

I have to start by highlighting my good friend Harrison Butker, the Kansas City Chief's stellar kicker and best kicker in the league. Harrison, last night, set a new Super Bowl record with a 57-yard field goal at the end of the first half. He scored more than half of the team's total points, being 4 for 4 in field goal attempts and, of course, 1 for 1 in his point-after attempts. He made a crucial field goal there at the end of the fourth quarter that tied the score and sent the game into overtime.

This Super Bowl performance of his underscores a phenomenal season in which he was perfect in the postseason and missed only two field goals the entire regular season. I will just say that what happened last night was typical of Harrison's performance the entire season in terms of scoring points for this team. He has truly been an outstanding, outstanding, outstanding player this season and absolutely key to this team.

Of course, what can you say about Patrick Mahomes, the best quarterback in the league, the best quarterback of all time?

Andy Reid—another phenomenal coaching game. His end game adjustments were absolutely unbelievable.

A terrific defensive play from Steve Spagnuolo's unit and everybody involved.

Tight end Travis Kelce led the team in receiving last night—9 receptions for 93 yards.

Pacheco rushed 18 times for 59 yards, had 6 receptions for 33 yards.

Mahomes—34 of 46 pass attempts, 333 yards, rushed nine times for 66 yards and, of course, was named the Super Bowl's Most Valuable Player. That makes him only the third player to have won that honor three times, joining Tom Brady and the great Joe Montana.

This was a terrific, terrific game, and I hope that we will soon pass a resolution here on the floor to honor the Chiefs' terrific victory and to prepare for what I think will be its terrific season next season.

Let me just say two more things on this score just personally.

First, to Clark and Tavia and to their three kids, thank you for your leadership. Thank you for putting your faith at the center of all that you do. You have made your faith the center of the family. You have made your faith the center of your organization, and it shows. The excellence that you have brought and have continued with this program in Kansas City, with the organization that your family has built, that you have carried on, the legacy that you have passed along, is truly incredible.

So thank you, Clark and Tavia. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for what you have done for this organization.

On a personal note to Harrison Butker and Isabelle, congratulations. Thank you for your bold witness, for your faith. Thank you for the way that you lead your lives. Thank you for being a terrific ambassador, Harrison, and terrific ambassadors as a couple for the Kansas City Chiefs, for Kansas City, for the region, but most of all, for your faith and for the faith we have in common. It is an honor to get to call you a friend. It is an honor to get to see you play.

This was such a terrific, terrific game last night, such a fantastic game. Congratulations to all the Chiefs.

Senator MARSHALL and I and others have offered a resolution honoring the team, which I hope will pass the Senate with unanimous consent. We look forward to sharing that with all of the team members, Andy Reid, Clark and Tavia, as well as the entire State of Missouri.

Since my good friend Senator MARSHALL is on the floor, I will just say that we in Kansas City of Missouri—you know, the Chiefs in Missouri football team—are so proud to have the Chiefs in Missouri, but, hey, we welcome fans from Kansas and all around the country. So it is a great day for Missouri but also for Chiefs' fans everywhere, and you are sure welcome to cheer for them in the great State of Kansas as well. So thank you for that.

I thank the Presiding Officer for indulging me in making those remarks and in honoring this terrific football team.

I will just say, as a guy who grew up—as a young guy watching the Chiefs play, I still remember exactly where I was—maybe Senator MARSHALL can relate to this—when Joe Montana took the Chiefs to the AFC Championship game. Montana played for the Chiefs, of course, for 3 years toward the end of his career. I still remember right where I was while watching Montana in that first season at the

AFC Championship game. It was the farthest the Chiefs had ever gotten in my lifetime. We lost that game, unfortunately. But I was sitting in a Maid-Right in Lexington, MO, where I grew up, watching them on a little TV that was kind of up in the corner there, and I thought to myself, man, it doesn't get better than this. But, as we found out, it does get better than that. It gets better than just going to the AFC Championship game. It gets better when you win the AFC Championship game and when you win the Super Bowl year after year after year.

Congratulations to the Chiefs and the dynasty that they now have created in the National Football League, and I think they are just getting started.

H.R. 815

Mr. President, on a more serious note, in turning now to the topic of conversation that is before us on the floor tonight, we are considering the national security supplemental, and it is absolutely true that America faces no shortage of threats to our national security.

Our own borders, which, to begin with, as we sit here and speak tonight, are wide open. The number of border crossings continues at alltime highs. There were, in fiscal year 2023, 860,000 illegal "got-aways" and 302,000 encounters with illegal aliens in December of this last year alone. That is an alltime high for a single month. The number of Chinese migrants at the southwest border jumped more than tenfold, from 2,176 in fiscal year 2022 to 24,314 in fiscal year 2023. CBS News reports today that migrants in Mexico have made 64 million requests—64 million requests—to enter the United States using the CBP One app. That is an app that the Federal Government developed with your tax dollars for the phone that illegal immigrants can now use to get concierge service to cross the border. There are 64 million illegal immigrants who have asked to set up appointments to enter the United States using this app. I laugh, but it is not funny. It is not funny at all. It is deadly serious. The threat across our southern border is deadly serious.

The threats that we face on all sides across the world are deadly serious. China—Imperial China—is now twice as powerful relative to the United States as the Soviet Union was at its peak, and China explicitly seeks to dominate the world's largest economic area and to displace this country as a global power. That would have monumental, unprecedented implications for America's interests, and we cannot allow that to happen.

But right now we are considering a so-called security supplemental that puts those pressing concerns last, not first, and that does not do anything for our border at all. In fact, we were first served up a so-called border bill that would have made the problem worse not better—a border bill that I think of as the full employment act for illegal aliens.

The border bill, so-called, that was before this Chamber a week ago—of that border bill, its central feature, from my point of view, was to give illegal aliens already in the country expedited work permits—expedited work permits now to millions of illegals, almost none of whom will ultimately qualify to remain here permanently in the country, including for asylum claims. Over 80 percent of asylum claims fail, we know, statistically. Yet that bill would have given those illegal aliens here expedited work permits to go enter our labor force right now.

We are looking at the flatlining of wages in this country for working people. Blue-collar workers, A, are having trouble finding a job, and B, haven't seen a real rise in their wages in years. Over the last 30 years, blue-collar wages have declined. Yet the solution of this body would be to create even more cheap labor in this country?

We know why the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Wall Street love that bill. It is a cheap labor bill. They love cheap labor. Their first preference would be to have overseas cheap labor, but if they can't get that, then why not subject Americans and those who are here illegally to even more illegal cheap labor? It makes absolutely no sense at all, none at all, which is why I voted against it. Yet that was what we were offered as a solution to the border.

As to a solution to China, this body has dragged its feet and neglected its responsibilities toward China for years—one is tempted to say decades—and the current supplemental does nothing meaningful in that regard. In fact, the focus is entirely almost—certainly heavily—on Ukraine, more money for Ukraine. We have spent \$115 billion almost in Ukraine so far. This bill would commit tens of billions more—and to what end?

Let me just offer a contrast. Not long ago, I was on this floor, discussing the need—discussing the cries—for justice for Americans in my State, in Arizona, Idaho, New Mexico, Texas, Wyoming, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alaska. These are Americans who have been exposed to nuclear radiation or radioactive waste by their own government that goes back decades.

In my State, the city of St. Louis was used as a uranium processing facility at the very beginning of the Oppenheimer project, the Manhattan Project. We have all learned about this in greater detail thanks to that movie, but have we yet learned about the brave men and women in this country who gave their health and, in many instances, yes, their lives to see that project come to fruition? Well, we haven't when it comes to the brave men and women of Missouri. I can tell you that.

St. Louis was a secret uranium processing site for years. When the Federal Government shut down its uranium processing work in St. Louis, what did it do? Did it clean up the uranium? Did

it clean up the nuclear waste? No, it didn't. Here is what it did: It put the waste into canisters—metal canisters, unsecured—and set them out in open parking lots and other facilities, exposed to the elements—exposed to the wind and the rain and the weather—for years on end and then watched as those metal drums leaked nuclear waste right out of the drums and right down into the soil and right into the water, right into a creek—Coldwater Creek is its name—that runs through the greater St. Louis area, from the center of the city out into the suburbs.

Just as this was happening in the 1950s into the 1960s, what was happening to those suburbs? Well, people were moving out of city centers. They were moving to the suburbs, and they were building homes. Where were they building their homes? It was along this beautiful, picturesque creek that just so happens to have been contaminated from the fifties forward with nuclear waste. Where did the waste come from? From the Federal Government.

But that wasn't the only place in St. Louis that was contaminated, no. The Federal Government also then decided: Do you know what? Maybe a way to get rid of this would be to just dump all of the waste in a public landfill.

So that is what they did. They took the waste, some of it, to a public landfill—without any controls, without any appropriate cleanup, and by the way, without informing the public—and they dumped it into the landfill, along with everything else that was there, taking no precautions and exercising no appropriate cleanup.

They dumped it in another location called Latty Avenue, and then there was yet another location called Weldon Spring, such that there are now multiple locations all of these years later in the city of St. Louis.

We are talking now about, in just one metropolitan area in this country, there are multiple locations where nuclear waste has been dumped into the soil, dumped into the water, exposing people—into the air, and for 50-plus years, it has been going on. It continues as I stand tonight on this floor—because how much of it has been cleaned up? None of it. Has the creek been cleaned up? No. Has the landfill been cleaned up? No. Has the second landfill at Weldon Spring been cleaned up? No. Has Latty Avenue appropriately been cleaned up? No. No, it has not.

But what has happened is generations of residents in my State—in St. Louis and then in St. Charles—have played in that creek, and they have gone to those schools. They have been exposed repeatedly to this nuclear radiation and waste, and they have developed cancers of many and various kinds such that we lead the Nation now, in St. Louis County, in breast cancer and in various childhood cancers. It is not natural, Mr. President. There is nothing normal about it. It is because of what the Federal Government has done and done for decades.

Why do I mention it? Well, because the program that this government set up some years ago to compensate those Americans who have been exposed by their government to nuclear radiation is about to expire, and just a few months ago, I secured the approval of this body to renew it.

We passed here on the floor of this body, with a strong bipartisan vote, a renewal measure to make good on our promise to those Americans who have been exposed to nuclear radiation by their government, who have grown ill because of nuclear radiation by their government, who have died because of nuclear radiation by their government, to make good on our promise to help them. We passed it. We also included in that legislation relief for the people of St. Louis and St. Charles and others in Missouri, relief for people of New Mexico and Arizona and Utah and others who were downwind of these tests that we saw so vividly portrayed in the "Oppenheimer" movie and elsewhere.

Then what happened, Mr. President? I will tell you what happened. The National Defense Authorization Act—the Defense bill—went to conference, and there, despite the strong bipartisan vote on this floor, it was removed in a backroom deal. Senator MCCONNELL and others led the charge to remove this provision.

What was the rationale? What were we told? Why was it that nuclear radiation victims from Missouri to Kentucky, to Tennessee, to Alaska cannot be compensated, according to so-called leadership? What was the rationale, Mr. President?

I remember it vividly. I heard it. It rings in my ears every day. The rationale is, we don't have the money. The rationale is, it is too expensive to do right by the American people who have suffered and died because of their government's nuclear radiation program. The rationale was, we can't possibly afford it. That was the rationale.

Now, lo and behold, I turn, Mr. President, to this bill before us, and I find we seem to have unlimited sums of money when it comes to foreign wars. Good Lord, when it comes to funding the machinery of war, we have money; we have money; we have money that we couldn't possibly dream of. We can run the presses indefinitely if it is going to go overseas, if we are going to be paying foreign governments. Why, we have got enough money apparently to send \$8 billion direct to the treasury of Ukraine. My goodness, we have enough money to make hundreds of millions of dollars of our taxpayer funds available to the private sector in Ukraine. We are now literally funding their businesses, their banks—Lord knows what. We have got money without end. We have got enough money to pay for bureaucrats' salaries. We have got enough to pay for Ukrainian Government officials' pensions.

We have got enough for so-called humanitarian aid that gets funneled away from, siphoned off into any manner of

corrupt uses. We won't know because we don't have a special inspector general to oversee this money, but that is a different story. Oh, no, we have got plenty of money.

I have listened carefully—carefully—to colleague after colleague of mine come to this floor, stand where I am now, and say: It is so important that we spend this money on these overseas wars. We must spend the money. If we don't spend this money now, why, it may cost us more money in the future. No, it is imperative—it is imperative—that we spend this money.

Meanwhile, these same people turn to the citizens of Missouri and say: You are not worth a dime. They say: You can't have a penny. They turn to the residents of Kentucky and Tennessee and Alaska and New Mexico and Arizona and Utah and Texas, and they say: We don't care that you were poisoned; we don't have a dime for you. We have unlimited money for Ukraine. We are going to rebuild the borders of Ukraine—that is in this bill—but we don't have anything for you.

We are probably, for all I know, paying for radiation exposure compensation for Ukrainians in this bill. We very well could be, Mr. President. We will never know because there will never be an accounting. But the contrast strikes me as not only stark, it strikes me as absurd. It strikes me as absurd. It is worse than that; it strikes me as grossly unjust.

Listen, if you want to give money to overseas military operations, I think you are making a mistake when it comes to Ukraine. I think doing it without oversight is a serious mistake. I think doing it in a way that seriously harms our position in the Pacific, which is our most important foreign policy challenge, is a serious mistake. I think doing it before we secure our own border is a serious mistake.

But given all of that, if you want to give money to foreign wars in Ukraine, that is one thing, but to turn around and say we have plenty of money for that endeavor; we have unlimited sums of money for that endeavor, but we have nothing for the people in the United States of America; we have nothing for those who are sick and dying of cancer because of their government's action—to say that, Mr. President, is not only a juxtaposition but strikes the mind to say that is manifestly unjust, to say that is wrong, to say that cannot be sustained, Mr. President, to say that is a scar on the conscience of this body.

It cannot be that we have unlimited sums of cash for foreign wars but we have nothing for the needs of our own people whom our own government has hurt and poisoned. That cannot be true in this country. It cannot be, which is why I will soon demand again that this body vote to make good on this government's commitment to help those whom its government has poisoned.

But I hope and expect that when that time soon comes, we will not hear talk

about how expensive it is to clean up after the Federal Government, how expensive it is for all of these Americans—hundreds of thousands of them who have been poisoned by the government—how expensive it is for them, after we have been treated to speech after speech, hour upon hour, day upon day, on just how important it is to spend this money on Ukraine. If it is good enough for the Ukrainians, surely it is good enough for the American people. Surely, Mr. President, it is good enough for the American people.

What of those in East Palestine? Here we are a year now since the train derailments, the explosions, the chemical spill in that State. It is not just, of course, the residents right there, as devastating as it was for East Palestine, but that those chemical agents spilled into the waterways, eventually meeting up with the Mississippi, carrying those toxic agents all the way down, including to my State of Missouri, affecting everybody who lives along the river and at the greater watershed area.

I just note again, Mr. President, what is it that this body has seen fit to do for the residents of East Palestine? Has that crisis been addressed? Has that spill been cleaned up? Has our river been cleaned? No. Have we voted on a railway safety bill? No. No. We haven't lifted a finger—this body hasn't—to do anything to help the residents of East Palestine or anybody else downstream from that crisis. Certainly, the people of Missouri haven't gotten an ounce of relief—nothing. Nothing. But we have unlimited time, unlimited resources, and unlimited rhetoric for our foreign wars.

There is a moral incongruity here that cannot be sustained. It cannot be that the American people will constantly be asked to be fodder for our foreign wars and adventures, while their needs are overlooked, overshadowed, and put to one side. It is not sustainable. It is not right.

Whether we are talking about St. Louis or St. Charles, MO, or East Palestine, or any other State in this Nation, it is not right that this body's priority is time and again overseas wars, the machinery of war, foreign adventurism, and, of course, let's not forget the priorities of Wall Street. Let's not forget that. Right. Who is it that always gets paid?

In the national Defense bill, we were told over and over that there is just no money available for Americans poisoned by their government, but I noticed that we had \$1 trillion of funds available for defense contractors. Wall Street always gets paid. The defense contractors always get paid. And this body always hops to do their bidding. I have seen it over and over in my short time in the Senate. It doesn't take long, if you are paying attention, to see who really calls the shots around here. The big corporations, the defense contractors, the Wall Street banks—they call the shots. Both parties—let's

be honest. That is why we call it the uniparty, because at the end of the day, there is one set of interests that play the tune and that call the shots, and they are the ones who get paid.

The American people have to take a back seat to that. If the working people of my State and Ohio have to get nothing, then that is just how it is. But Wall Street will certainly get paid. The defense contractors will certainly get paid. They will certainly have their way. And so here we are again.

I am sure they love this bill. They love this bill, which makes me think, Mr. President, maybe one way to help clear the eyes and focus the mind on this body is, maybe we ought to pass a law that says that no Member of Congress can hold stock or trade stock in corporations that have contracts with the defense industry. Wouldn't it change things around here if no Member of Congress could turn a profit on the machinery of war? My goodness, what a difference that would make. My goodness, how the debates in this Chamber would change. My goodness, might it be, Heaven forbid, that Members might ask themselves, what should we do for the workers of this country as opposed to the defense contractors who are making hand-over-fist money in Ukraine?

I keep hearing all this talk about how this bill is really all about renewing our industrial base. What that really means is it is about sending more money to defense contractors. They have already gotten paid once this year. Now they are going to get paid again and I am sure again and again and again. But mark my words, in just a few weeks' time, we will be hearing about how we have no funds—no funds—for anybody who is a victim of nuclear radiation, no funds to do anything for East Palestine, no funds to clean up any of the disasters this government has created. No, we have no money. We have no money. It has all gone to Ukraine.

I think that the moral contrast is clear, and all I can say is, I don't think it is lost on the American people, who want to see a Congress that actually puts their interests first, to see a Congress that actually invests in them ahead of all others, to see a Congress that says: If there is going to be a conflict between what we can afford to do overseas and at home, we are going to prioritize home. If it is between rebuilding another nation or rebuilding this one, we are going to rebuild this one. If it is between securing another nation's borders or our own, we are going to secure our own. But at the very least, if we are going to invest in all of these foreign wars, we are at least going to take care of our people in this country—at the very least.

Mr. President, I think it is not lost on them, which is why here we are passing this bill probably in the dead of night—another exercise in this body's monumental detachment, disconnect, and, frankly, contempt for the American people.

I will be voting no, Mr. President, but I will be here to stand and speak for and say yes to the people of my State and other States around this Nation who want to be prioritized, who want to be heard, who want to be put first by their government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Madam President, we meet this week at a critical time for our country and for our world. There are wars raging in Europe and the Middle East.

China poses a growing threat to the United States and our interests in the Indo-Pacific, and we are currently facing the worst border crisis in U.S. history. We are feeling the consequences of this crisis all over the country.

In New York City, we witnessed illegal aliens attack members of law enforcement and then brazenly flaunt obscene gestures on camera to all of America. In Boston, an illegal alien who crossed the border in December 2022 was arrested by ICE after raping a handicapped citizen. Pick your city. Pick your State.

In my home State of North Carolina, we have seen a 22-percent increase in drug overdose deaths—the highest level ever recorded. This is primarily due to deadly fentanyl that was produced in China and then transported into our country through an open southern border on President Biden's watch.

Police departments from Charlotte to Raleigh have uncovered tens of thousands of pounds of fentanyl, enough to kill every man, woman, and child not just in my home State of North Carolina but in this whole country.

Now, in order to tackle the challenges both at home and abroad, the Senate and the White House attempted to craft an agreement to deal with this border crisis.

The Senator, my friend and colleague from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD, did the best he could considering the ideologies of those he was negotiating with. But unfortunately, Senate Democrats are still beholden to progressive ideologies and ideologues who believe in open borders.

Now, this term "progressive" is a perversion of the term "progress," isn't it? Especially since it leads the other side of the aisle down a path of chaos and tragedy. For example, President Biden has taken 94 Executive actions that transformed the border from a place of relative security to a place of lawlessness. That might be progressive, but, friends, that ain't progress.

It might be progressive, but it is not progress to live in a nation where children die of accidental fentanyl overdoses before they even learn to drive a car. It might be progressive, but it is not progress to allow terrorists, cartel members, and human traffickers to roam freely in communities around this country.

But when it comes to our side's recent history, the Republican House

acted. They passed H.R. 2. But at the end of the day, it is Democrats who refuse to agree to any provisions that would meaningfully secure our border.

At the same time, the threats we face on the world stage demand our attention as well.

We have an opportunity to rebuild the arsenal of democracy, make significant investments in our national defense, and prepare ourselves for the threat from the Chinese Communist Party. Right now, our defense supply lines are brittle. Our manufacturing base is not prepared for future conflict, and it has to be modernized.

Our allies and our partners, like Israel and Taiwan, need our help—especially our friends in Israel. They are in a fight for survival. We need to send them the aid they need to finish the job and to free the remaining hostages, one of whom is a North Carolinian.

At the same time, we should share Israel's military objectives: to destroy Hamas, to demilitarize Gaza, and to deradicalize the Palestinian population.

We don't need President Biden's virtue signaling to a Democrat base that is increasingly becoming pro-Hamas. We need to let our allies in Israel and around the world know that we are on their side and that our resolve is, indeed, strong.

If we let our own defense atrophy and we leave our allies high and dry, forces of evil and instability will be even more emboldened, and our world will become even more dangerous.

Remember, it is American strength that deters aggression, and it is weakness that provokes it. But in order to be a strong nation, we first have to be strong right here at home. We must secure our own border before we can help other countries protect theirs. I believe that this position is reasonable, and I am going to mention a quick example to make my point.

On one of my recent telephone town-halls, I asked a poll question to thousands of people who were on the call. I asked: If you could be assured that the southern border was secure, then would you support sending support to our allies and our partners?

I will say that again.

If you could be assured that the southern border was secure, would you then support sending support to our allies and our partners?

Roughly two-thirds of the respondents said yes. I bet it is the same in other States around this country. Most folks aren't opposed to helping our friends; they just think we need to take care of our country first. And "America First" doesn't have to mean "America Only." But as I watch the process play out here in this Chamber, I can't blame folks back home who really feel frustrated.

The Senate's initial deal, which at least attempted to address the border crisis, was then replaced with a bill with zero border provisions at all, and to date, there has not been a full amendment process, as was promised.

For example, I think it would be outrageous to allow a single U.S. taxpayer dollar to flow to Gaza while Hamas terrorists hold American citizens hostages. This amendment and many others are not even going to be considered.

The truth is that this entire process is not working. The only viable path forward is for Congress to force President Biden to get serious about border security and then for the American people to see the situation at the border start to get better. Until that happens, we find ourselves locked in a stalemate as the world burns.

We can't accept this. Yes, we want to help our allies and our partners, but to keep our Nation strong, we must always put America first.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, what we have here is a "Ukraine First" bill. This bill was never really about securing our border but about securing another country's border. What we have here is a failure of the elites of Washington on both sides of the aisle—the leadership of the Democratic Party, the leadership of the Republican Party—what we have here is a failure of these elites to understand that the American people want to put America first.

Sixty-one percent of Americans live from paycheck to paycheck, and they want to put Ukraine first. I want you to talk to your constituents at home, the ones who live paycheck to paycheck, and tell them why you are shipping \$60 billion to Ukraine. This will be \$170 billion. We have never before in the history of the United States flooded so much money into another country.

Sixty-one percent of our country lives paycheck to paycheck. Eight out of 10 families who make \$50,000 or less won't have enough money to pay their bills in 2 weeks if their check doesn't come. If they have one interruption in their family, one thing that sets them back, one unexpected expense, they won't have enough money to pay their bills, and you want to put Ukraine first.

This is why the Democratic Party is losing the working man. This is why the Republicans have become the party of the working class. This is why many, if not most, members of the unions are now looking at Republicans—because we support the working man and we support the working women of America, and we recognize that they do not want to send their hard-earned money and taxes halfway across the world.

What does their money go for? Do we know what they are doing with their money in Ukraine? Well, we do know that the money went to fund six fashion brands to go to the Paris fashion show. We do know that it is funding small businesses to sell ladies' handbags. We do know that it is paying for the salaries of 57,000 first responders.

What about the first responders in our country? What about the people who get in an ambulance and have a \$35,000 bill in our country? What about tackling the problems of America first? Instead, this bill is a "Ukraine First" bill. It is a "Ukraine First" policy.

According to the "Ukraine First" party, which includes elites of both parties, war is good; war is useful; war profits make us stronger. It sounds a bit Orwellian. They say that war profits will build the defense industrial base. This is the part they used to say quietly. They used to whisper this. They used to never say it out loud, that war profits fund the defense industrial base. And by golly, we are going to be stronger the more war profits there are. According to the "Ukraine First" party, war is not so bad. More profits make us stronger.

Lost in this reprehensible argument is any sense of grief over the 500,000 dead, for the mothers and fathers weeping graveside. Little sense of grief, little sense of understanding that supporting and lauding grief is supporting and lauding the death of war. Missing from the "war profits are good" argument is any sense of compassion for the thousands of lives that will yet be lost by the prolongation of this war.

If military contracts for 100,000 rifles are good, what about 1 million rifles? If military contracts for 1,000 tanks are good, what about 1 million tanks? If military contracts for 500 bombs are good, what about military contracts for 5,000 bombs?

Missing from the argument that war profit is good, that the more armaments we sell, the better, is compassion for the deaths that we are talking about, the prolongation of war.

You know, war doesn't end typically in victory. Almost all wars end in negotiated settlement. The longer there are unlimited war profits, the longer there are unlimited weapons being sent to Ukraine, the longer the war goes on, the more people who die.

This is a grinder. It is a meat grinder over there. There are whole towns without young men.

Do I think Russia is in the wrong? Of course they are. Are they the aggressor? Of course they are. Do I have sympathy for Ukraine? Absolutely. But we also are now funneling money to a country that has no elections. They have canceled their Presidential elections. They have suppressed speech. They have banned certain opposition parties. They have banned certain opposition press. They have banned officials of opposition religion.

Now, this should bother people because it is said that American might and foreign aid is to express our power and our values. Are our values no elections? Are our values suppressing speech?

What has become confusing even in our country is the Democratic Party has become the party of censorship. They are the party that agrees that the Biden administration is OK to meet

with the FBI, to meet with Homeland Security, and to meet in the offices of Twitter, meet in the offices of Facebook. They suppressed for over a year anybody who is willing to say that it looks like the virus came from a lab in Wuhan. That was suppressed for over a year not just by private business but by the government, by the Biden administration meeting the FBI, Homeland Security, meeting with the tech companies. So it doesn't surprise me that they don't care too much; just get the honey out the door even though, in Ukraine, they are living under a regime where speech has been suppressed.

What the "American Firsters," what the "Ukraine Firsters" are really arguing for is an "America Last" policy. They are really arguing for a longer, bigger, more deadly war because it expands the profits of the defense industrial base. How despicable. How absolutely disgusting. They are saying the quiet part out loud. They are OK with war. The longer the war, the more profits, the stronger the American defense base.

It is a circular argument: We are not sending the money to Ukraine; it is coming right back. It is coming back in the form of profits to the American arms merchants. It is OK. We are really not going to lose \$170 billion because it is coming back in profits. We will make more bombs.

What ever happened to the progressive left? Wasn't it great when there were people on the left who actually were progressive on things such as war? How absolutely disgusting to argue that war profits are a benefit, a benefit that somehow overshadows the awful specter of war's death and carnage.

The amount of money going to Ukraine in this bill is more than we spend on the entire Marine Corps. Think about it. We are going to send to Ukraine more money than we spend on our own Marine Corps. This is a bill about "Ukraine First." This is a bill that makes us weaker.

There is no money to give to Ukraine. It is not like we have a pot of money. There is no surplus. There is no rainy day fund. This money will be printed up or borrowed from China to send to Ukraine. It makes us weaker.

Once the border bill failed and they decided that this wasn't really about the border, that this was about Ukraine's border, the "America Firsters" plowed on but with a more intellectually honest proposal: Nothing for America, everything for Ukraine. That is what this bill is: nothing for America; nothing to stop the invasion of nearly a million people across our southern border. They offered a border bill that would have said: Well, if we have an emergency. The emergency has already happened. Nearly a million people came in the last 2 months. That is the emergency. This is a bill that is "Ukraine First" and America last and ought to be defeated.

I notice my colleague from Alabama is here. I reserve the remainder of time.

Can you tell me how much time I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, reclaiming my time, I come to the floor to sound the alarm, as a lot of my colleagues are, about the crisis at the southern border.

I have been here over 3 years, and I have never seen this group try to do more for people out of our country than within our country. It is amazing.

But this is the worst border crisis in our history. Since Joe Biden took office, there have been at least 8 million illegal crossings at our southern border—that we know of. This is in addition to the 2 million "got-aways." These are the illegals that we know of. The real number is probably much, much higher.

Border crossings are at a record high. Deportations are at a record low. Why is this happening? You know, it didn't come out of the blue. This is a policy choice by President Biden and his allies here in Congress. We have been talking about this now for 3 years, asking why; and we have not gotten one good answer yet.

Why is our border open? Joe Biden campaigned on opening up our borders. He campaigned on giving free healthcare to illegal aliens. So it is no surprise that he is keeping his promise.

Since taking office, President Biden has taken 94 Executive actions related to immigration—94. We have the same laws on the books as we did when President Trump was in office, but President Trump secured the border. Joe Biden has opened our border more than it ever has been in the history of this country.

Let's take a look at just a few of these Executive actions. First, President Biden stopped building the wall. In fact, he has been selling all parts of the wall for pennies on the dollar. I know people in Alabama who have bought stacks of steel that the American taxpayers paid in lots—\$300,000 for these certain lots; \$300,000 of American taxpayer money. These people now can go online at an auction and buy these lots for 10 cents on the dollar. I know people who have bought \$300,000 lots for \$30,000, just throwing taxpayer money down the drain. The same thing with razor wire, same thing for other parts of the wall that are being sold. They are just, basically, being given away. So we have been selling parts.

President Biden—nobody told him to do it. He did it on his own. He chose to do it. President Biden got rid of President Trump's "Remain in Mexico" policy. That was the most effective policy we have seen in discouraging the abuse of our asylum system in years. I have been down the border several times. Border Patrol has told me time and time again: Finish the wall. That is the best thing we can do here. It won't stop

it, but it will give us an opportunity to police the wall, make them come in through certain sections of the wall, and allow us to have some kind of border security.

President Biden is currently suing the State of Texas to get them to stop securing the border. Let's think about that for a second. The President of the United States is suing a border State for stopping illegal immigrants from coming into our country. That doesn't sound quite right.

I am proud that my State of Alabama has sent Texas hundreds of National Guardsmen to help them police Texas' borders. Unfortunately, President Biden is trying to stop them from doing that.

As I mentioned, Joe Biden has essentially stopped all deportations right now—completely stopped it. He is not letting ICE do their job, immigration police. All these policies have led to this unprecedented crisis. They have also sent a message to the world: If you can get here, you can get in, and you will never, never have to leave. That message has been heard around the world loud and clear. There are 193 countries around the world, and we know of 190 countries that have been accounted for coming across our southern borders. Illegal aliens have literally crossed our border wearing Joe Biden T-shirts. I would imagine the American taxpayers somehow paid for those.

TV reporters have asked people coming across our borders why they came across. Time and time again, they say because President Biden invited them. That is on television. FOX News recorded one illegal in Tucson saying, "I love you, Joe Biden. Thank you for everything." That migrant was not from Mexico. He was from Africa. People are coming from every corner of the globe. People are flying to Mexico and then walking across our border. The whole world knows that our border is open.

These illegal aliens are criminals, drug traffickers. Just last year, nearly 500 people on the Terror Watchlist were caught trying to cross our border—500. You would think that would open somebody's eyes. You would think it would go all the way up Pennsylvania Avenue, but nobody seems to care.

Just a few weeks ago, Christopher Wray, the FBI Director, said something bad is going to happen. This is Christopher Wray, the guy that runs our FBI, Federal Bureau of Investigation, said something is going to happen. He seemed like in his voice, he was begging somebody to do something. Nobody has. But just imagine, if 500 have been caught, how many more terrorists have come across the border unchecked. It doesn't take many; it only takes a few—9/11 was committed by 19 foreigners here on visas—19. It only takes a small group to do terrible, terrible damage.

But Americans are already dying because of the border crisis. We all know that. We are here to protect American

citizens, but we are losing. We are losing that battle. More than 300,000 Americans—300,000 Americans—have died from drug overdoses since Joe Biden took office—300,000. I met with a police chief of Montgomery, AL, not too long ago. He said: Coach, I had never heard the word “fentanyl” until 2 years ago; and now, it is 95 percent of what we have on our streets here in Montgomery, AL, killing young people. That is roughly half of the Americans killed in the Civil War—300,000. And that was the deadliest war in American history. The Governor of Oregon recently declared a state of emergency over fentanyl. The Governor is a Democrat. But she declared a state of emergency. Where does she think the fentanyl is coming from? She should demand that the people that represent the constituents in her State do something about what is happening.

Federal law enforcement has said for years that almost all of these drugs are coming over the southern border. You don't have to take my word for it. That is what the DEA has said for years. Under Obama, under Trump, and under Biden, they said that most of the drugs that come into our country come across the southern border.

Every day we fail to secure our border, another 150 Americans die from overdoses—150 a day—a planeload of people. This is in addition to Americans who are victims of crime committed by illegals. A few weeks ago, we saw the video of illegal aliens attacking New York City police officers. New York City is a sanctuary city. In fact, New York City is giving out free money on debit cards to illegal aliens as we speak. American citizens don't qualify for this money that the New York City government is giving out. If you are a citizen, you don't qualify for it. American citizens just have to pay for it.

Yet New Yorkers wonder why there is a magnet pulling illegal aliens from all over the world into their city. You wonder why that is? New York State is also a sanctuary state. That was a policy choice by the current Governor. That means they do not cooperate with ICE. That is what a sanctuary city does. When an illegal commits a crime in New York or Philadelphia or Boston, they do not get sent to ICE when their jail time is up. It doesn't matter what crime they commit. My Democratic colleagues want these criminals to stay in our country because they don't want them to have to be sent home because that is exactly what ICE would do.

In the New York case, these illegals who attacked the NYPD officers were jailed and then released without bail. They were let back on the street where they can continue to commit crimes against Americans. This case shows you how much Democrats care about our police officers. “Defund the police” is all I have heard since I have been here. Really? They want police to go out and arrest the same people over and over again. Police are risking their

lives every day. Every time they arrest someone, every time they kick in a door, they are risking their lives. Yet liberal judges and leftwing prosecutors will just let criminals go back on the street again, again, and again.

Democrats like President Biden talk about a lot of compassion in our immigration system. We have to be compassionate. They don't have any compassion for Americans. They don't have compassion for Americans like Kate Steinle who was murdered in San Francisco. They don't have compassion for the woman who was raped by an illegal on a train recently in Philadelphia. They don't have compassion for the mother and daughter killed by a drunk driver who had allegedly been deported four times.

When Americans get attacked or even killed by illegals, Democrats just see that as collateral damage. It is just the price of open borders. It is clearly more important to them to keep the border open than to bring justice to the victims.

Protect American citizens. What an idea. Just weeks ago, the House voted on legislation to deport illegals who have been caught driving drunk—deport them.

Madam President, 150 House Democrats voted against deporting anybody that was illegal caught driving drunk—150. The House also voted on legislation to deport illegals who committed Social Security fraud; 150 House Democrats voted against it. Democrats won't even do the most basic things to secure our border—won't do anything.

Now that it is an election year, obviously, now that we have gotten to this point and people have to have votes, we are supposed to believe that our Democratic colleagues have had a total change of heart—because I have not seen anybody down there in 3 years and 2 months, and I have been going once or twice a year. I have not seen any of my Democratic colleagues down there. I wouldn't be shocked if I didn't see somebody down there in the near future because it is an election year.

They are paying lip service to the crisis at the border. They don't listen to their rhetoric. Look at their actions. Democrats are not doing anything of substance that would actually help. President Biden could start by undoing all 94 Executive actions on immigration. We didn't need to do that, but he did it because he wants open borders.

Earlier today, I spoke at length about why the Schumer-Murphy border bill is not good enough. I won't belabor the point, but, as Senator MURPHY said, under their bill, the border never closes. That gets pretty much to the point. Even at 5,000 crossings a day, we would still process 1,400 illegals per day—1,400.

This is like putting a bandaid on a bullet hole. Why even worry about it?

The acceptable number of illegal crossings is not 5,000. It is not 4,000. It is zero. In a TV interview a few days ago, CHRIS MURPHY said:

We failed to deliver for the [American] people we care about most.

No, they care more about the undocumented Americans.

What is an undocumented American? Undocumented is just a leftwing code for illegal. They don't like using the word “illegal.” The term used in Federal law is “illegal alien.” That is who we are talking about.

These are not Americans who lost their paperwork and just can't find their documents or lost their passport. These are illegal aliens who have no right—no right—to be here. First, we stop them from coming in, and then we deport the ones who are here.

For decades, we have been told that there are about 11 or 12 million illegals here right now. I would say that is very, very short on numbers, but this is a huge problem. Alabama's population is 5 million—my home State. So there are two States of Alabama's worth of illegals already here before Joe Biden let in the other 8 million. This takes away power from American citizens.

They are overrunning our hospitals, our schools. They are even affecting the balance of power in Congress and the electoral college. Seats in the House of Representatives are divided up based on census. Votes in an electoral college are based in votes on Congress. Right now, illegals are counted as part of the census.

A Democratic Member of Congress went on TV recently and said:

I need more people in my district just for redistricting purposes.

The presence of tens of millions of illegals in this country is tipping power to blue cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles.

It is watering down the power of the American voter. I joined with Senator HAGERTY to introduce legislation to fix this. Only American citizens should have representation in Congress. We ought to count citizens only. Otherwise, our voting system is not equal for all Americans.

This shouldn't be a partisan issue. This should be an American issue. But it looks like a partisan issue when Democrats in Congress go on television and say they need more illegals in their State for redistricting.

Democrats have shown no willingness to stop this crisis—none. They put out some press releases and a few vague statements in the press, but they have taken no meaningful action in 3 years. Actions speaks louder than words.

Remember, President Trump had the same laws on the books as President Biden, but President Trump secured the border. He went with the law. He went with the Constitution. Joe Biden opened it up.

And so new laws are not absolutely necessary, but certain new laws would be very helpful. And so, right now, I would like to propose an amendment to the Ukraine bill that would actually secure the border. My amendment is still a bill. It is a bill I have introduced called the Border Safety and Security

Act. The bill would simply suspend all illegal entries, completely, until the Department of Homeland Security has operational control over the border.

My amendment also prohibits mass parole programs. The Schumer border bill would have allowed parole programs to continue at an unlimited pace.

My amendment prohibits catch-and-release and requires detention. The Schumer bill would require release of illegal aliens.

The Schumer bill would have allowed up to 4,999 border crossings a day. My amendment would mean zero crossings as soon as it is signed into law.

It also allows States to sue the administration if it doesn't do its job and enforce the laws.

We should not pass a Ukraine bill until we first pass a border bill worthy of the name. That was my position in December, and it is my position now. Either we will end this border crisis, or this border crisis will end us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, often the titles of bills before the legislature don't really represent what the bill stands for. The title of this bill should say "Ukraine First, America Last" because that is what this is really about.

Now, bills in the legislature, bills that come before the Senate, don't have pictures or covers on them like a book would have or a magazine. But if this bill had an image or a cover on the front of the bill, the image would be the migrant in New York who assaulted a police officer, was freed from jail on no bail, and gave the middle finger of both hands to America.

That is what this bill is. It is the middle finger to America. This bill is the middle finger to every working man and woman in America, every struggling American family. This bill gives them the middle finger and says: We don't care about you. We care more about Ukraine than we care about our southern border.

We don't seem to care or these "Ukraine Firsters" don't seem to care about the crime that is happening. They don't seem to care about the assault on a police officer in New York. They are intent on more coming in. Just that one image of that man, that migrant, that illegal immigrant who came across the border and decided to assault, with a whole group of other thugs, to assault a police officer in New York—just that image alone ought to be enough for us to say: Enough is enough.

Enough is enough. We really have to control our border. Guess what. From now on, the only people who can come into America are legal immigrants. But this bill—this bill—ignores the southern border. Almost a million people came over the border in the last 3 months, almost a million people. And the "Ukraine Firsters" are saying: We don't care about the southern border; we care about Ukraine first.

And so the picture, the image that every American should have when they see all of these billions of dollars—\$60 billion being shoveled out the door, being loaded on the plane—as you see the smiling politicians gleefully dropping off the pallets of cash over there, every American should remember the image of the young man giving America the bird after he assaulted a police officer.

That is the image of this bill. That is the image of the "Ukraine Firsters," and nobody should forget about it.

When we look at the problems that we face, we need to be fully aware that there is no pot of money. There are no surplus funds. There is no money to give to Ukraine. We don't have enough money to pay our bills. We do not have enough money to pay for what we budget every year. In fact, the entire budget that Congress votes on is borrowed.

Let me make that very clear: The entire budget—not a little bit of it, not half of it, the entire budget—is borrowed. This would be like someone saying: Well, yeah, I don't have any money for rent, and I don't have a job. I am going to borrow the money for my rent.

That is essentially where we are.

Two-thirds of spending up here is entitlements. All of the tax revenue from every source that comes into the Federal Government is only enough to pay for Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and food stamps. Everything else is borrowed. And we don't vote on the entitlements. The entitlements are on autopilot.

What do we vote on? We vote on what is military discretionary and non-military discretionary—\$1.5 trillion.

So people talk about: What is a trillion dollars? Well, we are running a \$1.5 trillion deficit in 1 year. So in 2 years, \$3 trillion is accumulated. How much is a trillion? How much is \$3 trillion? If you take a trillion in \$1 bills and you stack them up, \$3 trillion would reach to the Moon. So 240,000 miles high would be the stack of \$1 bills. That is what we borrow in a 2-year period.

But it is accelerating. Just in the last week, the Federal Reserve Chairman said the debt problem is "urgent." Jamie Dimon, head of one of the big banks, JPMorgan Chase, says: The problem is urgent. Some of the economists and authors that wrote about the collapse in 2008 that predicted it coming have said that the debt is an urgent problem.

So how does the Senate respond to some of the keenest minds in the country saying that we have a debt crisis? They respond by sending \$100 billion of your money overseas.

And it is not money we have got on hand. It is not cash on hand. We don't have any money. We are flat broke.

People say: It is for our national defense. We have these "Cold Warriors" who still believe in the domino theory, and they say we are going to be somehow overrun by communists if we don't do this.

But we have no money. There is no money to be sent over there. It all has to be borrowed.

The title of this bill should be "Ukraine First, America Last," if they were being honest.

Sixty-one percent of Americans work paycheck to paycheck. Eight out of 10 Americans who make \$50,000 don't have enough money on hand to pay their bills. If something goes wrong for them, do you think they are excited about having their tax dollars shipped off to Ukraine?

Ukraine first, America last—that is what this bill is about. It is about giving the middle finger to America. It is about giving the middle finger to every working-class man and woman in America. It is an insult. It should be rejected. It should be soundly rejected, and we should get back to the business of this country, which is protecting our borders.

We have got a real problem. Democrats didn't even seem to think there was a border problem until a few hundred of them were shipped to New York, and, all of a sudden, they think there is a problem now. So they put them up in a fancy hotel, and they spend millions of dollars coddling them.

But, mark my words, the American people are smarter than the elitists up here. The title of this bill is and ought to be if they were honest: "Ukraine First and America Last." That is what the authors should have called this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. PAUL. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, there are a number of things that make the U.S. Senate unique as an institution. We have got every single State in the Union that is represented equally. If you are a big State or a small State, a huge population or a tiny one, you have got two Senators. That makes our work more important and all the more unique. We need to represent our States, looking out for the people of our States, and our States sometimes as States.

I can make a case that voting to pass this bill under these circumstances, without amendments or any language whatsoever forcing the issue of border security, forcing the border to be made secure by a reluctant, recalcitrant, willfully disobedient administration hellbent on not enforcing the border—this is a decision that empowers drug cartels, dissolves our borders, and spends insane amounts of money that we don't have on priorities of foreign countries—all at the same time.

Now, look, Senators here today, as always, have an obligation to vote no on bills that do bad things. We have an obligation to vote no today on bills—including and especially this bill—but

all bills, certainly, that prioritize gangs above Governors, cartels above courts, encourage breaking the law over enforcing the law.

Voting yes on this bill is a capitulation. It is a surrender. It is a vote for flooded classrooms and crowded hospitals. It is a vote for increased homelessness, deaths by overdose. It is a vote that undermines law enforcement; puts citizenship itself at risk and in doubt; adds burdens to teachers, food banks; undercuts safety in our community parks; and threatens the first jobs that lead to the second jobs that, ultimately, culminate in the best jobs for our younger people.

Those who vote yes undermine what Senators are elected to do first and foremost, which is to represent our States, not sides. Every Senator has the chance—the chance today, the chance tonight, this very evening, to vote no on this bill and, by so doing, vote in support of Governors, schools, hospitals, churches, playgrounds, clean streets, and safe neighborhoods.

By voting against more funding for Ukraine tonight in this bill without any language finally compelling President Biden to enforce the border, Senators have a chance to vote against more border chaos, no to sanctioned corruptions, and no to shifting our burden of representation onto the shoulders of families, police officers, charitable organizations, school principals, judges, doctors, and parents.

Look, at the end of the day, everyone wants peace. World peace, however, isn't always within our grasp. World peace isn't our principal business. All we can do is world funding, and that is all government can ever do is tax, spend, print, and force.

Our economy is our business; our debt reduction is our business; our leadership, due to our multilateral strength, is essential.

But this, alas, undermines what makes us strong in an attempt to prove our strength. And, in trying to do that, we will become less strong.

We are not helping any group of people whenever we prolong a war in which they are involved. It doesn't help the Ukrainian people to prolong their suffering in this war, and it doesn't help our people to refuse to finally—after the Senate Republican conference has come to a conclusion, after Senate Republicans have made a commitment to each other, to our counterparts in the House, to voters in our respective States and across America, we use this as an opportunity to force a bargain, a real bargain, a bargain that harnesses appetite more prevalent on the left to fund Ukraine and an appetite, sadly, existing almost exclusively among Republicans to force the issue of border security.

We committed to that some 3 months ago. We got a bill Sunday night, a week ago Sunday night at 7 p.m. eastern standard time that, unfortunately, didn't do that. It did other things. It contained some provisions that might

prove helpful here and there, but it contained a lot of other provisions that made clear it wouldn't force this administration to do what this administration could already do.

That was the essence of the bargain that we struck, the agreement, the commitment that we made to each other and to our voters months ago. Republicans stand for border security and the rule of law.

Regardless of where they come down on Ukraine aid, they should realize that we are forfeiting that leverage, that bargaining power tonight if we vote for this. I encourage my colleagues emphatically to oppose cloture tonight. And by opposing cloture, to vote for America's communities and for the rule of law.

I yield the floor and reserve the balance of my time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

MR. ROMNEY. Madam President, the vote we will soon take to provide military weapons for Ukraine is the most important vote we will ever take as U.S. Senators. We are not being asked to send American troops into war. We are asked to help the Ukrainians defend themselves.

If we fail to help Ukraine, Putin will invade a NATO nation. He may delay his next invasion until he rebuilds his decimated military, but we must be clear-eyed. Ukraine is not the end; it is a step.

If we fail to help Ukraine, China will eventually absorb Taiwan. If we fail to help Ukraine, we will abandon our word and our commitment, providing to our friends a view that America cannot be trusted.

The Chinese Communist Party is already spreading propaganda, using our delay as a warning to Taiwan that the United States will not be there to help in the face of China's threat.

If we fail to help Ukraine, NATO, the alliance that has prevented great power conflict for over 75 years, will falter and eventually disintegrate.

If we fail to help Ukraine, America will cease to be the arsenal of democracy. It will cease to be the leader of the free world. We will be replaced by the authoritarians: China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

If we fail to help Ukraine, we will be known not as our fathers and mothers were, the "greatest generation," but as the worst generation.

Now, for months, I have listened to the arguments for denying help to the Ukrainian people. I have observed that the reasons have evolved over time. First, it was claimed that Europe was not paying their fair share. That was proven incorrect. Our allies have already contributed more than \$96 billion in aid, and the EU earlier this month agreed to provide \$54 billion more over the next 4 years.

Next, it was argued that we should, instead, focus on the Pacific and Taiwan, but Taiwan and Japan and South Korea tell us that the single best thing

we can do to dissuade China's aggression is to support Ukraine.

Next, we were told that we couldn't afford \$60 billion for Ukraine-related funding. But, somehow, we can afford an \$850 billion annual defense budget, an annual trillion-dollar deficits—which has happened under both former President Trump and President Biden.

Next, it was claimed that we would have insufficient weapons to defend America and Israel if we send more weapons to Ukraine. But the Department of Defense has explained that helping Ukraine will actually strengthen our national security by helping to rebuild our depleted military-industrial base.

The latest excuse for denying aid to Ukraine is that this bill is a clever disguise to set up an impeachment of Donald Trump at some point in the future. Under this so-called logic, Trump has to be elected, Democrats have to win the House, and those Democrats have to be unable to find any other discretion of Donald Trump's upon which to base an impeachment.

Now, I know that the shock jocks and online instigators have effectively riled up many in the far reaches of my party. But if your position is being cheered by Vladimir Putin, it is time to reconsider your position.

Now, I can't see into the future. But there are no guarantees that Ukraine will defeat Russia, but that does not mean that we should stand back and let Putin have his way with Europe.

What sending weapons to Ukraine does do is help discourage further Russian and Chinese invasions, which could draw us in. It helps preserve NATO. It allows America to remain the leader of the free world, and it shows that we honor our word to our friends and allies.

Lech Walesa, the first democratically elected President of Poland since 1926 and someone I have been fortunate enough to meet with, recently wrote to all the U.S. Senators. He said this:

You are obliged to assure a peaceful future for your children. Our grandchildren will never forgive us if we fail to stop Russia now. If the U.S. does not lead, nobody will.

I couldn't agree more. Helping a free people defend their freedom is simply the right thing to do.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

MS. COLLINS. Madam President, last week, General Kurilla, the Commander of U.S. Central Command, gave me a briefing that was directly relevant to the national securities supplement that we are now considering. During the course of that briefing, the general told me that this is the most dangerous security situation in 50 years. The threats that the United States faces from an aggressive Iran and its proxies, an imperialistic Russia, a hegemonic China, are interconnected, and they require our immediate attention and a strong response.

That is why this bill focuses on fortifying our military, rebuilding our

own defense-industrial base, and strengthening and defending our partners and allies.

This legislation would send a strong message to Putin that his goal of capturing free democratic nations will not be allowed to succeed. It would reassure our closest ally in the Middle East, Israel, that terrorists will not achieve their goal of wiping that nation off the map, and it would counter ever-growing Chinese aggression.

I urge our colleagues to recognize the perilous times in which we are living and vote for this absolutely essential national security bill. The world is watching to see if the United States is still the leader of the free world.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, we all understand we cannot leave our job here unfinished. The clock is ticking right now, and there is so much at stake. We have a strong, bipartisan package to support our allies in Ukraine, Israel, and the Indo-Pacific and provide humanitarian aid to civilians who are caught in conflict. By passing this bill, we would show our allies we stand by our word and we will help them in the time of need. We will show dictators that their flagrant attacks will not go unchecked and they cannot steamroll our allies. And we will show the world that American leadership is still alive and well and that we are still a strong protector of democracy and provider of humanitarian aid.

Given all the stakes of this moment, now—right now—is a critical time to send that message, which is why I am glad we are here on the cusp of passing this bill in the Senate.

And to my colleagues who have been holding this up and dragging the process out, we can disagree. You can vote against this. That is how it works. But one way or another, this aid will get to our allies. We spent months going back and forth to try and get a bill to the floor, and now we are here. We are not going to let a few more hours or a few more days wear us down.

However, what is an inconvenient delay for the U.S. Senate is a dangerous one for our allies in Ukraine. Putin's forces are on the march as we speak. Ukrainians are fighting bravely to defend their homeland, but they are running lower and lower on bullets, air defense missiles, and more every day.

We measure time in hours; they are measuring it in how many bullets they have left, how many more missiles fall on their cities, and how much closer Putin's tanks are getting. The question for us is: How long is this going to take? The question for them is: How much longer can they hold out?

We cannot leave them waiting. So I urge my colleagues to support moving forward on these votes, vote to waive the budget point of order, and let's keep this bill moving.

And once we get it through the Senate, we are going to push every way we

can to get this to the President's desk and signed into law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO TABLE AMENDMENT NO. 1579

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to table amendment No. 1579.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The motion is agreed to, and the amendment is tabled.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO TABLE AMENDMENT NO. 1577

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to table amendment No. 1577.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion is agreed to, and the amendment is tabled.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. VANCE. Madam President, pursuant to section 314(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, I raise a point of order against all emergency designation provisions contained in Senate amendment No. 1388 to H.R. 815, a list of which I am sending to the desk.

The list is as follows:

S.A. 1388 TO H.R. 815, EMERGENCY DESIGNATION PROVISIONS

DIVISION A, TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
Military Personnel

1. Military Personnel, Army
2. Military Personnel, Marine Corps
3. Military Personnel, Air Force
4. Military Personnel, Space Force

Operation and Maintenance

5. Operation and Maintenance, Army
6. Operation and Maintenance, Navy
7. Operation and Maintenance, Marine Corps
8. Operation and Maintenance, Air Force
9. Operations and Maintenance, Space Force
10. Operations and Maintenance, Defense-Wide (including transfers of funds)

Procurement

11. Military Procurement, Army
12. Procurement of Ammunition, Army
13. Other Procurement, Army
14. Weapons Procurement, Navy
15. Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy
16. Other Procurement, Navy
17. Procurement, Marine Corps
18. Missile Procurement, Air Force
19. Other Procurement, Air Force
20. Procurement, Defense-Wide
21. Defense Production Act Purchases

Research, Development, Test and Evaluation

22. Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Army
23. Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Navy
24. Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Air Force
25. Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Defense-Wide

Other Department of Defense Programs

26. Office of the Inspector General

Related Agencies

27. Intelligence Community Management Account

General Provisions—This Title

28. Section 104

29. Section 105

DIVISION A, TITLE II—DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Energy Programs

30. Science

Atomic Energy Defense Activities National Nuclear Security Administration

31. Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation

32. Federal Salaries and Expenses

DIVISION A, TITLE III—DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Protection Preparedness, Response and Recovery

33. Federal Emergency Management Agency Operations and Support

34. Federal Assistance

DIVISION A, TITLE IV—DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Children and Families

35. Refugee and Entrant Assistance

General Provisions—This Title

36. Section 401—

DIVISION A, TITLE V—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

37. Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corp

DIVISION A, TITLE VI—DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND RELATED AGENCY

Department of State

38. Administration of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Programs

39. Office of Inspector General

40. Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Service

United States Agency for International Development

41. Funds Appropriated to the President Operating Expenses

42. Office of Inspector General

Bilateral Economic Assistance

43. Funds Appropriated to the President International Disaster Assistance

44. Transition Initiatives

45. Economic Support Fund

46. Assistance for Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia

47. Department of State Migration and Refugee Assistance

48. Department of State International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

49. Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs

50. Peacekeeping Operations

51. Funds Appropriated to the President Foreign Military Financing Program

International Assistance Programs

52. Multilateral Assistance Contribution to the International Development Association

General Provisions—This Title (including transfers of funds)

53. Section 612(c)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

MOTION TO WAIVE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, I move to waive all applicable sections of that Act and any other applicable points of order for the consideration of H.R. 815.

And I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE: The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 66, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 45 Leg.]

YEAS—66

Baldwin	Heinrich	Romney
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rounds
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Butler	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Capito	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Lujan	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Sullivan
Casey	Markey	Tester
Cassidy	McConnell	Thune
Collins	Menendez	Tillis
Coons	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cornyn	Moran	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Welch
Ernst	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Padilla	Wicker
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	Young

NAYS—33

Barrasso	Fischer	Mullin
Blackburn	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Ricketts
Braun	Hagerty	Risch
Britt	Hawley	Rubio
Budd	Hoeven	Sanders
Cotton	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cramer	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Crapo	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Lee	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Vance

NOT VOTING—1

Lummis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 66, and the nays are 33.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to, and the point of order falls.

The motion was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1388

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1388.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 46 Leg.]

YEAS—66

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Ossoff
Bennet	Grassley	Padilla
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Hickenlooper	Romney
Butler	Hirono	Rosen
Cantwell	Kaine	Rounds
Capito	Kelly	Schatz
Cardin	Kennedy	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cassidy	Lujan	Smith
Collins	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Sullivan
Cornyn	McConnell	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Thune
Duckworth	Moran	Tillis
Durbin	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Ernst	Murphy	Warner
Fetterman	Murray	Warnock

Warren	Whitehouse	Wyden
Welch	Wicker	Young

NAYS—33

Barrasso	Fischer	Mullin
Blackburn	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Hagerty	Ricketts
Braun	Hawley	Risch
Britt	Hoeven	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Cotton	Johnson	Schmitt
Cramer	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Crapo	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	Merkley	Vance

NOT VOTING—1

Lummis

The amendment (No. 1388), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 30, H.R. 815, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Brian Schatz, Margaret Wood Hassan, Angus S. King, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Mark R. Warner, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Christopher A. Coons, Michael F. Bennet, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mark Kelly, Martin Heinrich, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin.

QUORUM CALL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair now directs the clerk to call the roll to ascertain the presence of a quorum.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll and the following Senators entered the Chamber and answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 2]

Baldwin	Fisher	Peters
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Reed
Bennet	Grassley	Romney
Blackburn	Hagerty	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hassan	Rounds
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Heinrich	Sanders
Britt	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Hoeven	Schmitt
Butler	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Cantwell	Johnson	Shaheen
Capito	Kaine	Sinema
Cardin	Kelly	Smith
Carper	Kennedy	Stabenow
Casey	King	Sullivan
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Lankford	Thune
Coons	Lee	Tillis
Cornyn	Manchin	Warner
Cortez Masto	Markey	Warnock
Cotton	Marshall	Warren
Cramer	McConnell	Welch
Crapo	Menendez	Whitehouse
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Daines	Mullin	Wyden
Duckworth	Murphy	Young
Durbin	Murray	
Ernst	Padilla	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A quorum is present.

VOTE ON CLOTURE MOTION

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on H.R. 815, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 47 Leg.]

YEAS—66

Baldwin	Hassan	Romney
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Butler	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kennedy	Sinema
Capito	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lujan	Sullivan
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Cassidy	Markey	Thune
Collins	McConnell	Tillis
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cornyn	Moran	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Welch
Ernst	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Padilla	Wicker
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Grassley	Reed	Young

NAYS—33

Barrasso	Fischer	Mullin
Blackburn	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Hagerty	Ricketts
Braun	Hawley	Risch
Britt	Hoeven	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Cotton	Johnson	Schmitt
Cramer	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Crapo	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	Merkley	Vance

NOT VOTING—1

Lummis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 66, the nays are 33.

Three-fifths of the Senators, duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Kentucky.

H.R. 815

Mr. PAUL. This filibuster now enters its fifth day. For many people across America, they may not understand the Byzantine rules of the Senate, but they allow for sufficient debate on important questions. Often the rules of the Senate are abbreviated, and bills are passed in a quick fashion—sometimes too quickly, sometimes without sufficient discussion, sometimes without sufficient review.

But this bill will take a while to pass. We have been here through the weekend; we were here on Super Bowl Sunday—none of it because of a desire to punish or a desire to inflict pain on those from the other party or another persuasion, but with the desire that

there be a full and sufficient airing of the pros and cons of this legislation.

This is not the naming of a post office. This is a profound question about where our priorities are as a nation. Are our priorities as a nation the borders of Ukraine or the borders of the United States?

We had a chance, in the beginning, to perhaps discuss both, but immediately that chance was lost when the proposal to control the border was inadequate. It would have actually been less than the current law. It would have actually allowed 1.8 million illegal immigrants to continue to flow into the country.

The battle to attach border security to this bill was lost, frankly, when the Democrat cosponsor tweeted out to the public how proud he was that the bill would never close the border; that even under an emergency, as the bill defined it, even with 5,000 people coming across illegally, that the ports of entry would always be open.

And the American people reacted, and they called us, as they have called us by the thousands today, to say: Continue the debate. Don't give up. The debate is worth it.

Our phone lines have been jammed all day. People have been texting and messaging saying: Don't give up the fight. The fight is worth it.

The fight is worth it on many levels. Most profoundly, the fight is worth it because we have no money. More than the debate over the border, more than the debate over whether we should fund Ukraine, the fight is over whether or not we are going to stave off calamity by controlling our expenditures; and when we have priorities, when we set those priorities, where we spend the money, where it is most needed.

I will never forget being in a committee hearing and a member of the opposite party looked at me and said, "We shouldn't have to make choices," because I said: Shouldn't we set priorities? Shouldn't we spend money on what is most important and leave those things not as important for another day when we have more money?

Because, you see, this is the way government operates at every level other than in Washington. If you go to your city council, at any city anywhere in the country, or you go to your county magistrates, or you go to your State government, they are all constrained by spending that which comes in.

We are the only government in America—unfortunately the biggest and most expensive—but we are the only government in America that is not constrained by their budget.

In fact, we don't even have a budget most years. We don't operate under a budget currently. They can't even take the time to pass a budget.

But even if there were a budget, it is not constrained by the amount of money that comes in. We just spend.

There are never any priorities set saying: Well, this is more important than this. So we will have to wait until next year to spend the money on this.

So it is always just spend it on everything.

But as we come to this crisis in our country with \$34 trillion of debt, we are adding between \$2 and \$300 billion in debt every month. Our interest payment has doubled. We are basically borrowing to pay the rent. This is a disaster unfolding before us.

There are some who describe a "black swan" event. Nassim Taleb wrote a book called "The Black Swan." It is an unexpected big event that just sort of consumes, like the 2008 crisis we had. Some predicted it, but it was still a "black swan" that arose out of nowhere and was enormous.

But many people are calling this more of a "white swan." It is a big event. It is an important event, but it is unfolding in slow motion. It is unfolding with all kinds of warning signs.

Federal Reserve Chairman Powell recently said, in the last week or 2, that the debt is urgent, that somebody must do something about it. But when you tell that to many Members of this body—that it is urgent that we deal with the debt—the response to the debt wouldn't be sending \$100 billion to another country. The responsibility of dealing with the debt, the urgency of the debt, would be to do something about controlling the expenditures. And yet the response of this body, upon hearing from the Federal Reserve Chairman; upon hearing from the chairman of JPMorgan Chase, Jamie Dimon, that he was concerned about the accumulation of debt; upon hearing from economist after economist that this is unfolding, that the interests rates are rising, that interest rates are going to squeeze out other spending, and that there may come a day in which we destroy the dollar, the response is to send \$100 billion to Ukraine?

So while superficially and initially the debate here has been about whether Ukraine comes first or America comes first—so many bills here are inappropriately titled. Many of them say they are going to do all of these great things, but in the end, there is a more accurate title for so many bills, and the more accurate title for this bill would be "Ukraine First, America Last" because they are prioritizing the border of Ukraine over the border of the United States.

This isn't someone alleging a problem. This isn't us making it up and saying there is a border crisis. This is us seeing it in person—785,000 people coming across illegally.

People say: What is it? Do you have a problem with immigrants?

I say: No. I am for lawful immigration. We bring in about 1 million people a year—that is pretty many. I am actually a sponsor, with some on the other side of the aisle, to bring in more people lawfully. I am pro-immigration. I am proud of saying that some of the best Americans just got here.

I live in Bowling Green, KY. We have over 100 languages spoken in our

schools. We have a large population of people from Bosnia. I remember treating my first patients from Bosnia and trying to learn a little bit of the language. Their language is Serbo-Croatian, so I speak exactly about 10 words of Serbo-Croatian. But I found the language sort of very logical and easy to pronounce, and I enjoy knowing a few words to try to communicate.

Many of the people from Bosnia in my town own restaurants. One owns a trucking company. They have been very successful in our community, and we welcome them. Our church has invited many of them to begin with.

So there is something great about America and accepting immigrants, but accepting immigrants lawfully who take the time and pledge to work and have a sponsor and come in an orderly fashion is not the same as the people marching up through Central America. Some of them are coming from China. Some of them are coming from the Middle East. Some are on the Terror Watchlist. Many of them probably want a better way of life but apply to get in. We can't let everybody in all at once.

There was a Pew or Gallup poll a few years ago, and it asked people: Would you want to come to America if you could? If they let you come in, would you come? And they estimated the percentages by country, and they added it up, and it was about 750 million people would come. That might be too many, particularly if they all came in a 2- or 3-year period.

We are talking about millions of people coming across the border at a time, undocumented, unprocessed. I think it is a mistake. And I think we have made a huge mistake in this body today. And I know I won't convince any minds in Washington—nobody in the Senate is going to be of this mind—but I do truly believe the Senate is out of step.

I talk to people at home. I go to the grocery store. I go to my church. I see people at home. I don't meet anybody who is saying: Please prioritize Ukraine. Please make sure Ukraine gets their money before you do anything about our southern border.

I meet nobody saying that. I meet everybody who says the opposite, and these are people from all different parties—Republican, Democrat, Independent, Libertarian, you name it. The people I meet say: We can't just leave the door wide open. We have this enormous welfare state. There has to be a wall either around the country or around the welfare state. We have to do something.

But they certainly don't beg me and plead with me to send the money to Ukraine. They would never support a "Ukraine First, America Last" bill, and that is what this is.

Now, many in the blue States have sort of refused to see this for so long. They just have completely ignored the problem because it has mostly been Texas's problem—California, too, but

Texas in particular. The tens of thousands of people coming across the border overwhelm the hospital system, overwhelm the city system, overwhelm—you name it, it is being overwhelmed by so many people. So it is intriguing that the only way we have gotten anybody on the other side—particularly in these cities in the Northeast—to at least be aware of the problem is to let them have some of the immigrants.

You know the people who have “love” on a yard sign in their yard? They love everybody? They love everybody until they have all these immigrants in their city and say: Oh my goodness; we can’t pay for it. They are putting them up in hotels and giving them free credit cards. They are just giving—you know, they go: We have 100; we will give them \$10 million. What happens when you have 1,000 or 5,000?

But even worse, what happens when they begin to commit crimes? Because, see, lawful immigration selects out for the people who want to work and are willing to obey the law. If you are a scofflaw, if you are a potential criminal, or if you got let out of a prison in Venezuela, guess what—that is part of what is coming across unlawfully.

So when some of these people made their way to New York, New Yorkers are starting to wake up and say: My goodness, maybe we can’t afford this. Maybe there ought to be some, you know, criminal justice applied to people breaking the law.

But everybody saw the pictures. Everybody saw the pictures of a gang of migrants attacking two police officers, kicking them and beating them, kicking them to the ground—awful images. But then everybody in America saw the images of a migrant let out without parole a day later, after kicking a policeman in the face, kicking and bludgeoning a policeman, let out of jail with no bail. What does he do? He flips the finger to America, both hands, holds them high and proud, walks on by, and New York let him go. Nobody put him back in jail. Nobody rearrested him. He gave the finger to America.

Well, guess what. This bill gives the finger to American taxpayers. This bill gives the finger to all of America. This bill is “Ukraine First, America Last.”

Even more than the border issue, which I think is about setting priorities, whether or not the priority should be America’s border versus the Ukrainian border—I think that is a big issue, and for me, it is an easy one. This ought to be an “America First” legislature. We ought to be taking care of American problems before we think about trying to solve the world’s problems.

Now, this doesn’t mean I have no sympathy for Ukraine. I hope Ukraine kicks Russia’s butt. I hope Ukraine wins. I hope Ukraine can stave them off. And the battle has been somewhat fought to a standstill. But I know that my first oath of office and my first responsibility is to my country, to America.

If we are to send \$100 billion overseas, this will be a total of \$170 billion. Never ever in the history of the United States have we ever sent so much money to one country—\$170 billion. This is about 1½, almost 1.75 times the entire economy of Ukraine. Never before have we done that.

But the thing is, it is not like we have the money sitting around. It is not like we have a rainy-day fund or a surplus fund or, hey, here is a bunch of money we are not doing anything with. Our money is all gone.

See, we have responsibilities. And the really I think disturbing thing this legislature has done—not just this one but over decades—is they vote for everything for everyone. Everybody’s got a need, we will give it to you. We are not going to set priorities and spend what comes in; we are going to give everybody everything they want. Everybody who ever comes to Washington with their hands out, we are going to give you what you need regardless of whether we have the money to pay for it.

So this legislature, this Senate, this Congress, has made all of these promises to people. They started these things. They started Social Security in the thirties. They started Medicare in the sixties. They added on to all of these problems—Medicaid, food stamps. They have all of these problems.

But in being everything to everyone, in saying that you can have free stuff and it won’t cost you anything, it has been a big lie. This big lie to America is that you can have your cake and eat it too. You can have stuff for free. We are going to give you free government stuff, and you won’t have to pay for it. You don’t have to pay taxes.

We still have taxes in this country, but the taxes in this country pay for only about two-thirds of the spending. So we spend about \$6 trillion a year, and we bring in \$4 trillion. In no world will that work. There are repercussions to that. Eventually, if you spend \$2 trillion more than your revenue, you will go into this massive debt and potentially a debt spiral.

People say: The debt is meaningless. We owe it to ourselves. It doesn’t mean anything.

Tell that to the person who goes to the grocery store. Anybody bought a steak lately at the grocery store? I saw a steak in Kroger less than a month ago—\$20 a steak. I didn’t buy it.

So the thing is that there are all kinds of problems people are facing. There are people with ordinary incomes that are not going up with inflation who are being hit by the price of food, being hit by the price of gas.

Think about what has really happened when the money gets printed by government and it goes into these programs. The last people to get it are the working class. The people who get an advantage to inflation in the early stages are the rich people. These are the people who have stocks and mutual funds and retirement funds. Those peo-

ple have been kicking butt for the last several years. The stock market is doing this, and they are all getting wealthy. It is the ordinary citizen in our country, it is those on fixed income or working class who just get creamed by inflation.

But inflation isn’t a mystery. They come to us, and they say: Oh, well, inflation—it could be transitory. It is probably over, and maybe it has something to do with greed.

I say: Really? Inflation is caused by greed? Did people just become greedy? They haven’t been greedy since the beginning of time? It is greed that causes inflation?

No. It is debt that causes inflation. Inflation comes when the Federal Reserve buys the debt. So when we run a deficit each year, we spend \$6 trillion and we bring in \$4 trillion, the \$2 trillion in debt has to—somebody has to finance that. So we print up Treasury bills, pieces of paper—that is basically what they are—and we sell them. Some are bought by foreigners. Some are bought by private funds in the United States. But then at least about one-third and sometimes more are bought by the Federal Reserve.

You say: Well, that is fine. They are a big bank. They are the country’s bank, the central bank.

Well, but they don’t have money; they own debt. And it has always been boggling to me. They call this the asset sheet, but it is really just a sheet full of debt.

But they buy Treasury bills by printing up money, by creating money, and so when they do that, it dilutes the value of the currency.

So people who say the debt is just a number and doesn’t affect people—no. The debt causes inflation. The Federal Reserve causes inflation when they buy the debt, and it causes the prices to rise.

But inflation disproportionately hurts the poor and the working class. Rich people can get by. You know, if the steaks cost more, the food costs more, their gas costs more, rich people get by. They have extra income. But if most of your income is going toward your rent and your food, you get creamed by inflation.

Inflation is part of a bait-and-switch problem. So many of the people got elected here because they promised something for nothing. Government will be Santa Claus and will give you a free education. We will give you free electric cars. We will give you free electric car stations. We will give free money even to other countries. We will let people come in for free and take stuff for free. Everything is going to be free, but it is a bait-and-switch. It isn’t really free. Nothing is really free. You can either pay for it through taxes—and we tax the heck out of everybody. Some would tax them even more. But, really, a third of it is left over, and it is not taxed. It ends up being this deficit that rolls forward, and then it is financed by the Federal Reserve and causes prices to rise.

So think about this when you think about the bait-and-switch that is American politics: Politicians offer people something for free. They say to the working class and to the poor: We will give you free stuff.

Many people accept that, and they say: I want free stuff. I am struggling. I need some extra help.

But then they don't realize that the free stuff comes with a price. The free stuff comes with a price, and it is an inflation tax. And the inflation tax hurts the very people you tried to help.

So it is a catch-22. They are behind the eight ball. They are poor, and they want some help from government. But that causes the prices to rise, which traps them in the same place that they started with—maybe worse.

So when we get a bill like this, it brings things into stark perspective for everyone, because what we are finding is, this isn't just a priority about whether we borrow the money or spend the money, this is about whether we spend it across the ocean or whether we spend it in our country.

It is also a very visible problem that we have 785,000 people who came in, in the last 2 months. So we are looking at a couple of million people that have come in. We are close to a million already in 2 months. So we are looking at a problem that is not something that can easily be pushed away.

So this problem arose, and there was a decision to try to match up—the Democrats really, really want to send your money to Ukraine. I can't tell you how much they really want to send your money to Ukraine. They want to send your money to Ukraine. They are hot and heavy—so hot and heavy to send your money to Ukraine that almost nothing would stop them. It was sort of the perfect situation for sort of putting up some leverage and saying: OK. We know you want to loot the Treasury. We know you have these economic theories that debt doesn't matter. We know you think you can just send all this money, but what about this? We won't let you do it unless you secure the border.

So that is how the debate sort of began. And a lot of people say: Why don't Republicans stand up more?

See, in the Senate—the unusual and really creative thing that our Founding Fathers did was, in the Senate they didn't make it a majority rule; it is a supermajority rule. So if you ever have 41 votes in the Senate, you can block anything the majority wants to do.

So we have 49 Republicans. That means we have the power of 41. If we had interested leadership that wanted to use the strength of our 41, who wanted to use the strength of the minority to say: We will only let them shovel the money and flush it down the toilet and throw it away and give it to other countries—we will only let that happen if you secure the border. We have the leverage.

What ended up happening is we ended up getting what I would call fake re-

form. It was reform negotiated—and the mistake was doing it, I think, behind closed doors and with only one individual. Not that it is really all that individual's fault, but the individual really needed to come back to the caucus and say: Do you guys think—you men and women, you think you might support this border bill we are putting together? Instead, it was just sort of an all-done deal: Here it is. And almost of all of us said it is not accurate. Almost all of us said it is actually worse than the existing law.

So we were stuck in a conundrum, and then our leadership advocated it. They basically just punted. Our leadership said: We are not going to use the power of the minority, because we want and salivate to send the money to Ukraine also. This is the problem now.

In our country, some people say there needs to be more compromise.

Here is the compromise. You got it. You got 10 or 15 Republicans who side with the Democrats. They believe in Ukraine first and America last. They believe that we should borrow \$100 billion, whether it comes from China or whether the Federal Reserve prints it up. We are going to take \$100 billion we sent over there on top of the \$113 billion we have already sent.

And some might say: Well, you know, it is for a good cause.

Well, shouldn't we examine what they spend it on?

Shouldn't we have like a special inspector general, someone who is trained to look for waste? Shouldn't we have that person appointed to look at the waste?

I have advocated for it for over a year. I forced them to vote on it. The Democrats all voted no, and all the Big Government Republicans who love this money, they voted against it, too. They don't want scrutiny in how the money is being spent. I even helped them to pick who would be the inspector general—somebody who has been doing it for 10 years.

The inspector general that is in charge of Afghanistan is called the SIGAR, Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction. He has done a great job. He has a team of over 100 people that work for him—accountants and economists and people who look at this war spending and they know how to look at war spending and they know how to do war contracts and they know how to look for malfeasance. And he has found billions of dollars' worth of it.

Now, we spent a couple trillion in Afghanistan. That is not the inspector general's fault; that is Congress's fault. But he has done his best to try to police this. He has written entire books on the waste. As a consequence, the people who love sending your money overseas, they hate him. They hate the idea. They hate the idea so much they voted it down with a vast majority. They don't want an inspector general. But if you ask them: You don't want to oversee the money? They would say:

Oh, no. The Pentagon or the State Department or somebody who already has an inspector general, they will do it. And I said, Oh? You mean the Pentagon that can't be audited? The Pentagon that refuses to be audited? The Pentagon that says they are too big to be audited? You trust them to now oversee the money going to Ukraine, when Ukraine has a history of being in the bottom 10 percent as far as corruption—meaning they have had more corruption than the other 90 percent of countries?

I think that is kind of crazy.

Even if you were for the money, you would think the power of 41—41 supposedly conservative Republicans—could simply look them in the eye and say: We are giving you the money, but we want this, this, and this. We have the power to do it.

They have completely abdicated the power. They threw in the towel, and they said: We aren't going to do anything on the border, but we are not even going to ask for an inspector general on this. We are just fine. Just shovel it out the door.

So where is some of the money going? Inevitably, some of it is buying weapons. And to listen to the supporters of this bill, they are proud of the weapons and the profit that will go to the people who sell weapons.

This, to me, just boggles the mind.

They actually have a new name. They now call it the defense industrial base. Since the time of Eisenhower, it was known as the military-industrial complex, but they have renamed it the defense industrial base, and we are going to rebuild ours with war profits from Ukraine. So we are really not giving it to Ukraine. We are giving it to Ukraine, but they are giving it right back to American arms manufacturers.

See, it is this sort of mercantile, sort of—oh, yeah, looks like it is good for business. It is good for money. And it is like: Are these people not realizing we are talking about a war? A war that some estimate some 500,000 people have died. And they are thinking: Well, gosh, if instead of 100,000 rifles, we send them a million, that will be more profit and our companies will be bigger and more profitable and they will be able to make more weapons for us then—not acknowledging that a million rifles might kill more people than 100,000.

Or let's say we have 1,000 tanks. What if we give them 10,000 tanks? That will be more profit for the arms merchants. Wouldn't that be good? That would be great. We are reinvigorating the defense industrial base.

Really? You are going to make the argument that war is good? Or maybe war ain't so bad? Or maybe just a little war here and there? If we can get more profit for these guys, the big companies, the large multinational arms manufacturers—if they just get a little more profit—a little more profit will be good because that will reinforce the defense industrial base.

This is saying the quiet part out loud. This is saying something they

should be embarrassed by. This is saying something so reprehensible and so disgusting. But it has happened to the leadership on our side, the leadership on the other side. It has happened also with the Biden administration. In committee, they come to us and they brag about how: This isn't really money to Ukraine; this is money to America. We are giving it to Ukraine, but it is sort of a conduit. It is sort of a laundering scheme to get the money back to America, to our arms manufacturers.

So, under this logic, the longer the war goes on, the more weapons we sell, the better it is for our defense industrial base. So a 1-year war—let's say—we are closer to, I think, 2 years—a two-year war that has lost 500,000 people—which would be better for the defense industrial base, a 2-year war that loses 500,000 people or a 3-year war that loses 750,000 people? Well, it is a lot better for the defense industrial base to have a 3-year war.

And we ask ourselves: What would be the ultimate result of the war?

And I am going to say my sympathies are with Ukraine. Russia is the aggressor and Russia should be repelled and if I were Ukrainian, I would fight for Ukraine against the Russian aggressors. But the thing is, as they fight and as this war goes on, how many wars end in unconditional surrender? Virtually zero. World War II ended that way, but it was one of the few wars that ended that way. It ended in utter defeat through the drop of the atomic bombs on Japan, and there was complete and unconditional surrender, and I believe the same with Germany as well.

That is a rare war that ends that way. Most wars are fought to somewhat of a standstill and there is a negotiated settlement.

So, recently, the Commander in Chief in Ukraine reported to the public that he felt like the war was at a standstill.

Typically, when that is said, it doesn't mean he is willing to—I am sure he is a very brave soldier and is well-liked by the troops. But when that is said, that is an indication that, perhaps, negotiations can start. That doesn't make him a coward or weak; it actually makes him strong, because he knows that another year of war will grind—will be this meat grinder that will grind and torture and maim another group—another group of thousands of young men of Ukraine.

And if he felt it would be an imminent victory and that Ukraine could win and Russia would be defeated, then I am sure he would want to fight on. And he probably still wants to fight on, but I think what the indication is, is that there has to be some openness to negotiation.

I don't think Russia is strong enough to take Ukraine. Likewise, I don't think Ukraine is strong enough to push Russia out. They fought to a standstill. And the thing is, is that if our promise is unlimited weapons and unlimited money to Ukraine, I think it makes it

less likely that people will look for an exit ramp, will look for a possibility of a peaceful outcome for this.

There will be no complete victory in Ukraine. There is an infinite amount of money that can be sent—\$170 billion is getting close to infinite. We never sent that much money to any country ever. If we go another year and they burn through about \$10 billion a month—and they already think they are a couple months behind on that—within 4 to 6 months, they will be asking for more money again.

But shouldn't we, at least, ask where it is being spent?

Sure, some of it is being spent on arms, tanks, guns, this, that; but some of it is going to pay their government's salaries. Some of it is going to pay for welfare, disability, healthcare, first responders. I think we pay the salaries of 57,000 first responders. Do we have enough money to pay for the entire government of another government, plus all of their weapons? In addition to their government, we had been paying their pensions.

That embarrassed some of the people until they said, finally: Well, we will pay for everything else. We will pay for all your government, but, by golly, we draw the line at pensions.

So they excluded pensions on this after paying for the pensions for over a year. But billions upon billions are going to pay for their government. Look, most of us over here want a smaller U.S. Government. Now they want to ask us to pay for a bloated Ukraine government?

But it is worse than just paying for their government and all their programs. We are giving small business subsidies to Ukraine.

If you watched "60 Minutes" not too long ago, what you saw was a lady's bag—you know, a lady's handbag business getting subsidies from us.

Look, I am not even for subsidizing U.S. businesses. I am for profit and loss. You sell something good that somebody wants to buy, you become successful in business. I don't think we should subsidize American businesses. But now they are not asking me just to subsidize American businesses; they want me to subsidize Ukrainian businesses.

I think that is obscene. I think that is absurd. I think when I go home and I ask people: Can you believe they are sending money to a handbag factory, to a handbag shop in Ukraine? People are aghast. They are livid. They are like: Who are these people? We will vote them out.

And that really is what should go on. It is part of what this debate is about. People at home need to know who these people are. Every Democrat, save one, and about 15 Republicans. People need to pay attention. They need to look how their Senator votes on this or how their Congressman votes if he gets to the House of Representatives, because this is about people who are prioritizing Ukraine first and America last.

Some of the money that is going over there, in addition to going to small businesses, actually went to send six contestants to Paris Fashion Week for the famous fashion show of Paris.

So in the midst of this war, we are sending money to send some fashion brands—or whatever that is—from Ukraine to the Paris fashion show. In the middle of this war, their President had time to take some fancy pictures with Vogue. I don't know, but I think that kind of looks bad. I think that sort of just—you know, that one doesn't pass the smell test when we are in the middle of a war. Sure, he is wearing his great T-shirt and everything, but he is in Vogue, all right? He is at war.

About a month ago, he was in Argentina for the victory party for the new Prime Minister—no doubt, asking for money. But the thing is, I am a big fan of the new Prime Minister of Argentina, too, but I didn't go down there on the taxpayers' dime, and I won't take the taxpayers' dime to go down there. But the thing is, he is in the middle of a war. What the heck is he doing in Argentina? He is everywhere, all around the world, asking for our money.

My oath of office is to my country. It doesn't mean I don't have sympathy for Ukraine. It doesn't mean I don't want them to win. It is just that my oath of office is to my country.

This would be a different debate if we had a big pile of money and we ran a surplus, but I can't in good conscience send money to Ukraine that we don't have. That \$100 billion that is going out in this bill, in addition to the previous \$110 billion, is all borrowed. It makes America weaker; it makes us less strong.

You will often hear the debate, and you will hear people say: It is in our vital national interest to give money to Ukraine.

Well, that is merely an opinion. There is a debate on both sides of it, and I will give you the debate on the other side of this.

They say: We must support Ukraine or the dominoes will fall.

Well, that was a theory from the Cold War, which didn't turn out to be true even during the Cold War. The interesting thing is, it is useful to understand how the Soviet Union lost, and to my mind, it is very clear how the Soviet Union was defeated: The engine of capitalism defeated the engine of socialism, the engine of communism. There is no comparison. Capitalism, which is freedom—the freedom to exchange goods, the freedom to trade goods across boundaries—is so incredibly powerful that it has driven our success, but the Soviet Union couldn't keep up in the arms race because socialism just frankly doesn't work. It doesn't work for developing a strong military—they were always much weaker than we actually thought they were—but it also doesn't work for charity or anything else.

One of the great things about our country is its incredible wealth, all the

way down to our middle class, which exceeds the middle class of any country on the planet, but also because that great wealth has allowed such an amazing amount of charity.

Even our national parks—as you look around and see most of our national parks, a huge percentage of the land in our national parks was actually donated by capitalists. A lot of the land is being set aside in the Western States, and very wealthy people are buying the land so it won't be developed, and it will remain pristine. But that is capitalism. That is a result of capitalism. Socialism doesn't work.

The stories of socialism abound. There was a story in Poland of how price controls worked and how they always inevitably led to shortages.

A guy goes in to buy eggs, and he says: Are you the store that doesn't have eggs?

The guy says: No. We are the store that doesn't have toilet paper. The store across the way is the store that doesn't have eggs.

That is the story of socialism. It is scarcity; that is the story of price controls.

There has been a debate for a long time in our country about whether or not you can have a free market, a capitalist society, and have a large military industrial state. This was some of the division after the war between the Libertarians and the Conservatives, a little bit between Buckley and Murray Rothbard among the Libertarians. Rothbard and the other Libertarians were worried that if you had a big military state, the amount of money that went into it would cause us to lose our freedoms; that you couldn't have both; that really you need not have this massive military state. That argument still goes on.

I am one of the ones here who say that balancing our budget, spending what comes in, is so important that we should look at spending across the board. That spending would include military spending, and it would include entitlement spending. But it is part of the problem, and I will be very ecumenical in my criticism in that the debt is the fault of both parties. The Democrats are just completely oblivious. They don't care at all. The Republicans kind of pretend to care, and many of the Big Government Republicans who will support this bill are fine with sending money to Ukraine, but they also want virtually unlimited increases in military spending as well.

Really, it is the reverse of the current compromise that is actually needed to defend our country. The reverse of the compromise would be to say that everything needs a little bit of a haircut. You know, we are not going to balance the budget by cutting Sesame Street, so I don't go out there, saying: Let's just cut public television, and we will balance the budget. No. What I say is: Let's cut a little bit of everything.

The thing is, people are afraid of that. People say—you know, even peo-

ple running for office now say, like: You will raise the age of Social Security or you will cut entitlements.

Well, you have to look at everything. If you take entitlements off the table and you say "I am not going to do anything about the entitlements," it is two-thirds of the spending. You can cut the entire budget we vote on, which is a third of spending, and you don't balance the budget or you barely get there. And we are not going to cut the whole thing. So what we have to do is trim a little bit across the board.

It is amazing how unreasonable that is up here. I am an outlier. I am one of the few people—there are probably two or three people in the Senate who would cut everything across the board a little bit. It may be more than that. It might be 10 or 15. But the thing is that I think people would be open to it.

Look, Medicare—Medicare is a \$1 trillion budget. Could we cut anything out of it and still keep the Medicare benefit? I am not looking to tell poor people that they can't have healthcare or people who can barely afford it. No. I am saying: What could we do with \$1 trillion to spend it better? Absolutely, we could spend it better and save some money. Could you not save 1 percent? Could you not save 5 percent?

When we look at this—I will give you an example. I will give you an example of something that just tugs at the heart strings: Alzheimer's disease. I have had family members with it. It is sad to watch it progress among people. We give generously—the government does. They give your money. It is not their money. But the government gives generously to Alzheimer's research. We are a big, rich nation. We ought to be able to study Alzheimer's disease. We ought to be able to do something, sure. So I am not against it. But let's say they got \$100 million for research last year. Is nobody up here brave enough to say: Look, we are out of money. We will give you \$95 million next year.

This isn't like eliminating Alzheimer's research; it is saying: You get 95 percent. I would say that to everybody. Everybody gets 95 percent of what you got last year.

When I say that at home, not one person looks askance. Not one person criticizes. They say: You are right. Why couldn't we do that? That is so reasonable. You are not being draconian. You are not being radical. We will just spend 95 percent of what we spent last year.

To a person—businessmen and -women come up to me and say: Yes, we have had bad years before where we have had to cut 30 percent of spending. So they are like: Five percent would be no big deal.

It never happens in government. In fact, as times get worse, as the economy goes in the tank, government spending goes through the roof.

But these are the things we have to talk about. These are the things we have to think about.

Madam President, can you tell me how much time I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator has 16 minutes remaining.

Mr. PAUL. Good. Lots of time. I am just getting started.

Madam President, as we look at these things and try to make these decisions, it really is about having a government that sets priorities, and I can't emphasize enough how different it is from your local government to Washington.

Every mayor in the United States—I may not agree with their policies, but virtually every mayor—particularly smalltown America is this way—spends what comes in. Now, some of the bigger cities actually have a borrowing capacity and have gotten in trouble with loans, but most cities in America spend what comes in.

So when you go to the city council meetings, what do cities do? They do stuff you kind of want. They pave the roads, fix the roads, fix the stoplights, make sure the ditches are dug, and make sure the sewage works. We all kind of have agreed to have a certain amount of government, particularly at the local level. So, when you go to a city council meeting, there will be a budget. I know that is extraordinary. We don't do that up here. We spend \$6 trillion, and we don't have a budget. We don't pass a budget. We haven't had a budget for the last 3 or 4 years. No budget. Six trillion dollars and no budget. That is insane. Everybody up here who is for that should be fired.

I produce a budget every year on my own, one Senator, not on the Appropriations Committees. I don't often win. Actually, I have never won my budget, but my budget is fairly dramatic according to Washington's standards. Mine is called the Penny Plan budget—cutting 1 percent across the board. That used to be the Penny Plan budget. That used to work in balancing the budget over 5 years, but we spent so much money on COVID. We locked you up and gave you all checks. We put masks on you, four or five masks, earmuffs, goggles, and sent you checks and told you not to work. Crazy. We spent so much money, now to balance your budget, it would actually be a 5-percent cut over 5 years to balance your budget, but it would make us stronger, and we could do it.

How would we do it? One of the things I proposed is, why don't we give government workers bonuses for finding waste? Wow, that would be something—an incentive for a government worker to save money. So you are in charge of a \$12 million budget at the Department of Energy or Education. You are in charge, and you have your mission statement: Here is what you are supposed to do. If you think you could save \$1 million just by not buying the wrong stuff and not buying too much of stuff, we should give you a raise.

I have been trying to pass that for 12 years. I can't get Democrats to agree to it. Do you know what their sticking

point is? Well, if that person has a \$12 million budget and they save \$1 million, we should spend it somewhere else. Literally, I am trying to give people an incentive to save money. I would think that the money, since we are \$1.5 trillion in the hole every year, could go back to the Treasury, and their argument is, absolutely not. They must spend it somewhere else. Insane.

I remember a story of one Republican chairman telling me—when we took over a few years ago, they took over a chairmanship, and they went into one of the rooms, which was a big closet. They went in there, and there were like, I don't know, 5,000 printer cartridges, and they were like: Huh? I wonder what this is. Maybe they are saving money or they got a good deal on printer cartridges—which might have been true except for the fact that they didn't fit any computers or printers anymore. You know how it is with printers—everything changes. Some person had ordered something nobody in business would have ever done, and they had 5,000 printer cartridges they had to just throw away. This is how government works. You don't have the incentives.

Friedman put it this way. He said that nobody spends somebody else's money as wisely as their own. That is a pretty profound statement. I think that it is the most profound statement that you can apply to why government doesn't work very well.

It also goes in parallel with another statement, that government is a necessary evil. They go hand in hand because government is a necessary evil because you have to give up your liberty. We don't live in a perfectly free society. In a perfectly free society, nobody would tell you what to do at all. You would have no government, and you would keep all of your money. So we don't live there. We give up a certain amount of freedom to have safety and roads and things.

But those of us who understand and make this debate over liberty understand that we do have that liberty, and we are making a sacrifice to live in society. So we think our liberty is precious, so we don't want to give up too much. So we see government as a necessary evil, but we don't want too much of it because, if we gave up 100 percent of our income to have government, we would have no freedom—no freedom to enjoy the fruits of our labor. If we were to give up 50 percent, we would still think that is too much. So, somewhere, the pendulum is.

You know, those of us who believe in liberty are wanting more liberty and less government. We also want it because government is not very good at anything.

So, you know, I think it was Friedman who also said that only the government, if you put them in charge of the Sahara Desert, could have a shortage of sand because of just sheer incompetence. It is really not that people are stupid who work in government, al-

though sometimes it is a debatable question; it is that they don't get the same incentives.

In business, people are rewarded for success, and some people worry about this. Some on the left hate business, and they hate it because they see it as a dog-eat-dog world, but it is a dog-eat-dog world where the only people who succeed in business succeed by pleasing someone else.

It is the interesting thing about transactions in capitalism. People think that transactions in capitalism are equal. They are kind of equal and not equal. So, if I want these glasses—and they are very expensive; they cost me, I think, \$1.99—if I want these glasses, I will have to want the glasses more than my \$1.99. So the person selling them—he wants my money or she wants my money more than the glasses, and I want the glasses more. So, even though it is an equal trade, it is an unequal trade because we are both motivated to trade, and there has to be some kind of disparity that we see. But the people who make these glasses only succeed if they sell them at a good cost and sell them cheaply.

These are actually from a foreign country. I won't mention which country because everybody hates all the other countries now and wants to shut down trade. But I think I feel richer that I can get them for \$1.99. So I get them at like 20 at a time, and I leave them everywhere, and they break half the time, but for a \$1.99, it is not bad.

But capitalism works to distribute goods. Can you imagine what would happen—think of your life tomorrow if Amazon and Walmart were bought by the government or what if they started telling Amazon and Walmart they couldn't buy other companies? Oh, they are already doing that. They are trying to prevent the merger of companies.

These are the philosophies that we are talking about that have led us to the situation where we are, because these are the philosophies of people who don't believe in spending what comes in. They believe in an infinite amount of spending, but they also don't prize liberty enough to keep people out of our economic affairs.

Walmart is an amazing store because you can go in, you buy this pen, it is scanned, and someone in Benton, within milliseconds, is finding out you bought that pen there, and they are sending another one. The pen is going out the door.

But that is capitalism. If it were the government, let's say the Post Office, not quite so efficient. Nothing in government works very well. It doesn't mean we won't have any government; it means we should have as little and as small a government as we could possibly have because nobody spends somebody else's money as wisely as their own.

Another way to think about this is to think about the councilman, and the city council has been commissioned,

and they have something good. They want to build a theater or build something in the town. It is \$10 million, and they say: Well, it is a good cause; let's do it. And they vote for it.

But if you ask that city councilman for \$1,000 to invest in a business, which decision does the person spend more time with? Which decision does the person feel deep in his gut or her gut to give \$1,000? When it is their money.

Government can't operate with people's money. So I don't know that we can change government. We could try adding some incentives to government, but what we could really try to do is make government small, since we know government is inefficient, and try to keep government out of other enterprises.

I do worry that, on both sides of the aisle, the fear of foreigners and the fear of foreign countries—the anger toward foreign countries—is going to be to our detriment. When the average shopper goes to Walmart because of imported goods, they are \$1,000 richer because their money goes further. A lot of the stuff is imported.

On some level we get it; like, in my State, we have Toyota. I drive a Toyota Camry up here. Several of my staff drive a Toyota Prius. We are proud of Toyota. They are owned by a foreign country—by Japan—but 20,000 Kentuckians work for them. Those Kentuckians understand we don't have any anger with the Japanese, and we shouldn't have anger with the Japanese.

But, recently, the administration is—everybody is clapping. There are many others who are clapping. They are banning Nippon Steel from buying U.S. Steel. What if it makes U.S. Steel stronger to be joined with Nippon Steel? We like Toyota. Why can't we like Nippon Steel?

Nippon Steel buys a lot of metallurgical coal in my State already, and already employs people. They are already good for America. If we forbid them from buying in another country, what if that country goes bankrupt, and now Chinese steel is more important or bigger or more powerful?

We broke up U.S. Steel in the 1920s. We never should have. They would be so big and so strong now had we not broken them up that they would be more likely to compete.

People are now saying: Big Tech—we hate Big Tech. Let's break Big Tech.

What is that going to do? It is going to make their Chinese competitors better and stronger.

We need to just stay the heck out of it. If people voluntarily want to watch TikTok, if people want to buy a radio from China or Japan or Vietnam, let them. If you like getting the prices, good. Buy it. But the more and more we have the anger and the isolationism that comes with breaking up trade, the more likely we come to war.

With regard to this bill, I think this bill really is Ukraine First and America last. I think the American people agree with me.

We have spent 5 days filibustering this, and I know we will lose sometime tonight. We can each speak for an hour. I think we will get to 2 or 3 in the morning. So we can hold them off. We can draw attention to this, but this is about winning America. It isn't about winning this vote. It is about showing America that we care about your sovereignty, we care about your tax dollars, and we think that the priority should be here, the priority should be our border; that we should be concerned enough to stay up, to protest, to filibuster, to protect Americans from a bill like this, to say that America is important, that our voters are important.

One of the supporters of this bill said today—and I won't mention them by name. But they said that people at home can't understand a bill like this, that the elite foreign policy minds of Washington somehow can understand this more than the people. I couldn't disagree more.

I think every one of my acquaintances and friends and people I run into in Kentucky have as much ability, if not more ability, than the people in this room to make a decision on this. And I have yet to meet one who came up to me and said: I want Ukraine first.

They say: I want to defend America's border. I want to defend America, and I want to defend a country that leaves us alone, that leaves us free, that allows volunteerism to create the great and vast wealth that our country has become.

Madam President, how many glorious minutes do I have left?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. PAUL. All right.

A lot of votes up here—win or lose—don't change things. I do predict that this vote is transforming things.

People have asked whether or not there is dissension on the Republican side. I think there is a great deal of dissension because what has happened on this bill is that a minority of Republicans have decided to side with all the Democrats, or virtually all of the Democrats, despite the fact that the majority of the caucus is against this bill. I think that has led to the length of this filibuster and the support for this filibuster.

We are 5 days in, and we will probably make it 5½ days on this filibuster. The last 24 hours or so have been a talking filibuster. My colleague from Utah, Senator LEE, spoke for 4 hours on Saturday. We do this because we care about our country. We care about the looting of the treasure. We care about the destruction of the dollar. We care about setting priorities and saying we don't have enough money; we don't have enough to be everything to everyone.

What we need to do is obey our oath of office. Our oath of office is to America. It doesn't mean we can't have sympathy for other countries. Come back to me when you have a surplus. When

you are running a surplus, when you are running this country on a profit, when you are running this country and paying for the things you promised to our people, then come to me and ask me about another country.

But you don't borrow money for charity. You don't walk the street, and if you are a poor person and you have four kids, and you provide enough for your rent and food and your gasoline, and you are barely getting by, and you see a homeless person, you don't say, "Hey, honey, let's go to the bank and borrow \$1,000," and give it to that homeless person. Even if you are sympathetic, you might help them up. You might help them to the side of the street. You do not go to the bank and borrow money.

Ukraine can be the greatest cause in the world, but we are borrowing the money. There is no money. There is no rainy-day fund. There is no surplus, and there is no reason on God's green Earth we should be borrowing money to send it to Ukraine.

We are either going to print it up, which causes inflation and hurts the working class, or we are going to borrow it, and we go further in debt.

So I, for one, think that the American people are opposed to this bill. I think they are opposed to the concept of Ukraine first and America last.

I predict that this issue doesn't go away. I predict that the House of Representatives is not going to take up this bill. I predict that the vast majority of the Republicans in the House of Representatives are more conservative than the Republicans in this body, and I predict that this fight is not over.

During this debate and the fact that we were able to delay and talk about this for 5 days—5½ days—the Speaker of the House spoke out. I don't know that he would have been prompted to speak out, although he has spoken out previously against this. But the Speaker of the House spoke out today and said he is not taking this bill up.

See, they have put together border reform that actually would transform things, border reform that acknowledges that it is an emergency.

So I will be a no and continue to be a no on this bill because I think it puts Ukraine first and America last.

With that, I yield my time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I want to start by talking about Ukraine because we have a lot of different opinions here on it. So I wanted to take a moment and discuss this issue of Ukraine because there has been a lot of talk about it.

I have been watching. As the Senator from Kentucky has just pointed to a moment ago, there has been a lot of debate over the last 5 days about the topic of Ukraine.

I want to set the stage for why what is happening in Ukraine happened. But let me just, first, preface it by saying what is happening there is not irrele-

vant to this country and certainly not unimportant.

To set the stage, we have to go back a little bit. In 2014, Vladimir Putin actually invaded Ukraine. He didn't admit it was his people. He sent in these special forces. They were dressed in costumes. He pretended that wasn't his people, but it was.

The rationale was this. I want to go back for a moment with the history about Ukraine. Ukraine was supposed to join—wanted to join—Europe. There was this push inside of Ukraine to join the European Union and to become European in its orientation. Putin didn't like it and began threatening and pressuring the then-President of Ukraine. The then-President of Ukraine, under that pressure from Putin, backed down.

Upon backing down, he faced a fierce public resistance to that decision. As a result of that, the then-President of Ukraine ordered security forces into the street to attack protesters and crack down. Those protesters eventually overwhelmed the government, overthrew that government. Basically, the President had to flee under the auspices of Vladimir Putin's protection, and then Putin decided to take what they call "little green men," because they weren't dressed like the regular Russian military, and some of these separatist groups—again, supported by Vladimir Putin—to seize portions of the Ukrainian national territory.

In addition, the Russians did send their troops, dressed in these little green men costumes, to take a portion called Crimea. There are several reasons why that was important to them. The first is obviously access to the ocean, access to the sea, and for the Navy and so forth. And the other is because Crimea has been historically a pretty vibrant and profitable tourism site. So they believed it would add to their economy as well.

They even went so far as to conduct a fake referendum—a fake election—in which the people of Crimea allegedly voted to join the Russian Federation.

That was the status quo beginning around this time in 2014, up until the invasion that began almost 2 years now.

There was this line of demarcation between these separatist forces backed by Putin and the Ukrainian military. They faced off, and there were skirmishes and the like. Then Putin decided to invade.

Why did Putin decide to invade? Well, Putin—I am confident—was told by his people two things: The first thing he was told is that in the Russian-speaking areas of Ukraine, he would be greeted as a liberator; that people will come out into the streets holding up roses and greet the Russians as liberators. They wanted to be a part of Russia.

The second thing he was told was that Ukraine would collapse, that Zelenskyy and the leadership in Kyiv would abandon the country. They truly believed—the Russians and Putin honestly and truly believed—that within a

week, 10 days, they wouldn't conquer all of Ukraine but they would certainly conquer much of it, and a friendly puppet government would be installed in Kyiv. They would at least cut the country in half, if not more so, and bring it under the Russian orbit.

I point to Belarus as an example. Belarus is, theoretically, its own independent country, but their leaders do nothing without Vladimir Putin. In fact, when Vladimir Putin decided that he was going to station troops and nuclear weapons in Belarus, Belarus didn't have the right to say: No, we don't want you to do that; you can't do that here.

They have to do it. That is sort of how he envisioned this rump state that he is trying to carve out. That was the thinking that he had.

It is, by the way, one of the things that these authoritarian regimes suffer from. In these authoritarian regimes, no one wants to tell the leader that they are wrong. No one wants to tell them they are wrong. So they are always telling you whatever you want to hear.

The other reason why they tell you what you want to hear is because that is the stuff that gets paid attention to. The leaders—if you want your memo, if you want your intelligence product, if you want your advice and counsel to be listened to in an authoritarian government, then you are going to genuinely produce things that that person is going to like. You want to confirm their preexisting biases.

And Putin, honestly, believed that Ukraine desperately belonged to Russia, wanted to be with Russia, and that the Russian military was so powerful that they would be able to sweep in and take them out.

Well, it didn't work that way. Zelenskyy did not abandon Kyiv. The Ukrainian people did not greet them as liberators, and they resisted.

It is important to remember that they resisted before the flood of American aid and European aid went into Ukraine. Ukrainians were resisting, and they were fighting.

And the Russians suffered enormous casualties early in the war when Ukraine wasn't even well-armed. These are tough people with dignity, and they did not want to be a part of Russia and the Russian Federation.

That sets the stage for what we face today. We don't have time today—even with the hour that I have to speak and everything else—to go into all the depths of history, the way, for example—you know, Putin went on some tirade for 30 minutes in some interview last week with all these weird historical references about why Ukraine belongs to Russia and so forth. Suffice it to say that the history is complex. In fact, many Soviet leaders came from the Ukraine region, but it does not belong to the Russian Federation. It is a country that wants to be independent of Russia, with a substantial percentage of its population that wants to be

Western oriented. And Putin does not want a Western-oriented country that is not under his control on his border. And so he decided he was going to make Ukraine a rump state. But it didn't work out that way.

So people do ask me—and the previous speaker, the junior Senator from Kentucky, a moment ago was discussing—because people do wonder, like, OK, that is terrible what happened. Why is that our business?

And I heard a lot of talk here today, and so I think it is important that we bring a little bit of nuance and balance to this conversation. On the one hand, it is not true that this issue is completely unimportant. It is not true. It is important.

Why is it in our national interest? There are a number of issues why we should care about what is happening in Ukraine beyond just feeling sympathy for the people there. And there is a reason why, for example, what we give—let me begin with one of the reasons why we care.

The first is because if the Russian Federation would have been successful, if Putin had been successful in taking Ukraine or dividing Ukraine in half, it would completely unravel what is going on in many other parts of the world.

You see, for better or for worse—and I think for better—for the better part of the last 20, 30, 40 years, there has been a general acknowledgement, for the most part, that you can't just invade another country and take land away from them because you want it.

That is what started World War II, as an example. You can't do that. And what regulated that was a series of things: NATO in Europe, our alliances in the Indo-Pacific, the ability of countries to defend themselves, the condemnation of the international community. No one wanted to be a pariah. The bottom line is that for much of human history—up until, you know, the last 80 years—but for much of human history, it was basically defined by leaders who decided: We really like that land; we really want that land; and we are going to take that land, because our army is more powerful than yours.

In fact, if you just sit down and read history at all, all of the great historic figures—Alexander the Great, Napoleon—they were all conquerors. They were all people that basically—their greatness came not necessarily because of something great they did for the world or some extraordinary advances in their society—although, some of them did have advances in their society—but, largely, their fame, their reputation—they are judged by empire-building, by a desire to conquer as much land and territory as possible.

And it defined, virtually, all of the famous and great civilizations, for the most part, that we know about in human history. But after the Second World War, the world sort of got together and said: We don't want to live

in a world like that anymore. And we created not just rules and laws at the international stage to govern it, but we also created defense alliances to prevent it.

But what would happen now if, suddenly, Russia was able to go in, take Ukraine, just because, carve it up into a rump state—maybe there would be a little sliver of Ukraine left, but the core of the country would have been pulled into the—imagine they would have been able to do to Ukraine what they did to a part of Ukraine and Crimea. Other countries would be watching.

There are dozens of territorial disputes going on in the world right now as we speak. And they range from disputes between China and India on their border, disputes with China and its claims on Taiwan. It ranges from that to in our own hemisphere, where even as we are here gathered now late at night talking about these things, Venezuela and its Maduro dictatorship has decided that land that belongs to Guyana actually belongs to Venezuela.

Now, obviously, there are some rare minerals there and some really important materials, and they discovered a lot of oil. And Venezuela is threatening those oil rigs. They are threatening that exploration. But that is a territorial dispute right here, right in our region.

So if we live in a world where you can just go in and invade a country, take it, and nothing happens—except maybe a resolution condemning you at the U.N.—and you get away with it, other countries are going to do the same. And before you know it, we are going to be living in a world in which war is literally breaking out in every corner over territorial disputes.

So that, in and of itself, is of concern. The United States is too powerful, too big a country. Our economy, our daily lives are deeply intertwined with things that are happening all over the world.

We may not realize it; we may have taken it for granted. But things that are happening halfway around the world have direct impact on our everyday life.

Right now, the Houthis—a band of, basically, rebels, guerillas, pirates, religious zealots—but, unfortunately, Iran has provided them guided munitions and weapons and long-range rockets that are able to hit tankers.

And so today—and people are going to start to feel it soon—you will be paying more for a lot of things, particularly, potentially, oil and fuel because the insurance rates on shipping through the Red Sea is skyrocketing, particularly for vessels flagged by America or American allies.

So the insurance rate on the shipping goes up, prices go up for you—what is happening halfway around the world. That is just one example.

So what happens around the world does matter. And if war starts to break out in different parts of the world, you

will feel it in your pocketbook; you will feel it in your security; you will feel it in migration threats; you will feel it in all of this. We should care just because of that.

Imagine, for example, if you are sitting in Beijing right now, you are watching Ukraine very closely. What happens when the United States—and much of the rest of the world—says to you: We are warning you, do not do it, and you do it? What happens? Do they sanction you for a few months? Do they maybe provide weaponry for that country, but then after a few years, sort of give up and become fatigued and walk away? Because, if Russia, with an economy a fraction of the size of China, is able to weather sanctions and military support for Ukraine, China is calculating: We can certainly weather whatever the United States and other countries are going to throw at us the day we decide we are going to invade Taiwan. It is a very dangerous situation. So it matters because of that.

The second reason why it matters to us—and I will talk more about this in a moment—is our reputation does matter. And it doesn't matter as a matter of pride. It matters as a real consequence.

So right now, the Chinese, in particular—but others—go around the world and are openly saying the following—openly. I mean, obviously, I am paraphrasing for purposes of understanding this. But, basically, the Chinese message to the world is: America is a once-great power in decline. Their society is hollowed out. Don't you watch television? Don't you see the videos and the images of everything terrible going on in America right now? And their government is dysfunctional. And their society has turned upside down. And their kids are killing themselves, and people are drug-addicted. America is falling apart, and America is unreliable. America is unreliable. Didn't you see what they did in Afghanistan?

And, suddenly, if we decide we are done with Ukraine, they will point to Ukraine and say: This is what happens to American allies: They are with you until they lose interest, and they will walk away.

And so it begins to undermine a system of alliances, which really is the one big advantage we have over the Chinese. The Chinese don't really have any global alliances. The Chinese have no alliances anywhere in the world. The United States has an alliance system whose value cannot be quantified. You can't put a dollar figure on it. It is so valuable you can't even quantify it.

That alliance system would be deeply threatened if, all of a sudden, the United States, after about 2 years, decided: We are done with Ukraine; we are walking away; we are done with it. The damage would be quite significant. So it does matter. It matters. There is a national interest involved in Ukraine.

Now, I also heard some hyperbole. Because I think, when you make public

policy, you have to balance things. You have to determine to yourself: OK, if this matters, how much does it matter? And your investment and commitment must be commensurate to your national interest.

I love to believe in ideals. I love to believe in idealism. But, frankly, foreign policy is the work of pragmatism. Rarely in foreign policy do we get a choice between the perfect and the terrible. Oftentimes in foreign policy, we get two very bad choices, and we are trying to figure out which one of the two is the least worse for our country.

And so it is important to have a little balance here. And I am very confident in everything I am about to tell you, based on the amount of time I spend on these things and so forth.

The first is, no matter what, if tomorrow we were to walk away—and I am not arguing that we should—but if tomorrow we were to walk away and give Ukraine not a dollar more, not a penny more, not a weapon more, the Russian Federation would not be able to take all of Ukraine. They couldn't from the very beginning, and they can't now.

Would they be able to make gains beyond what they hold now? Maybe, probably, a little bit. But they would never be able to take the entirety of the country. If they couldn't do it back before we were helping Ukraine, if they couldn't do it back when their military still had capabilities they no longer possess, before they had to start begging the North Koreans for weapons and using Iranian drones and all these other things, they most certainly could not do it now.

I think it is also hyperbole to believe that the Ukrainians are going to completely crush the Russian military; not because they don't have the will to fight, not because they are not brave enough, but because the size advantage is extraordinary.

The Russians, at the end of the day, have an existing military industry that can produce weaponry. They are just a bigger country with a lot more people that they can conscript. They have more weight to bring, and they have more leverage on the international stage, primarily because they have a veto at the Security Council, and they have nuclear weapons—the largest nuclear stockpile in the world.

Another hyperbole is, if we don't stop this now, next, Russia will move against NATO. There isn't a single NATO country that Russia could defeat right now in a war. If they couldn't take Ukraine—they couldn't take Ukraine, who is not a member of NATO, who did not have a military that was well-resourced, whose territory they had already penetrated, whose intelligence services they had already deeply penetrated before this—if they couldn't do that and they can't do it now, how are they going to take any of these other countries?

Leaving aside the NATO alliance for a moment, Russia is in no shape to

take or invade anybody for a substantial period of time. Threaten? Yes. Maybe acts of sabotage, maybe, you know, destruction with agents or criminals that they hire, yes. But invade and take a country? The Poles would crush them. The Lithuanians would destroy them. The Germans—any of these countries. That is hyperbole. That is what is next here.

Hyperbole—in some case I have heard this referred to almost like if we are living back in 1939 and the Nazi war machine is pushing forward into helpless countries. That is just—I get it. There is always a desire to live in a historic time and claim, as some have here on this floor, this is a historic moment; the history of the world is going to be determined. No, this is important. This matters. This is a regional conflict with international repercussions that have a direct impact on our national security and our national interest. But it is nothing like the eve of World War II either. So it is important to have this balance.

Now, the greatest geopolitical threat, challenge that we face today is the emerging rise of an axis—a very loose alliance—it is not even an alliance—a partnership between China, Russia, Iran, and then some other junior partners. And their No. 1 interest of all these countries is to create a world—or a world order—that, at a minimum, is an alternative to the Western-led, U.S.-led world order—at a minimum, an alternative—but, ideally, a replacement. And while they have differences—the Iranians and the Russians have some differences—they both want to dominate Syria. They have differences—the Chinese and Russians have differences, historic and otherwise. The Russians do not like to be seen as the junior partner of the Chinese, but they are.

The Chinese have long claimed that Siberia belongs to them. In fact, there are a lot of ethnic Chinese now living in Siberia. So they do have some differences, but they have been able to somehow put that aside because they share a common goal that is important to their national interest; and that is, they want a world in which the world order is favorable to them and unfavorable to us, one in which they have more influence and we have less influence.

They want a world order in which the United States can no longer—and our allies—can no longer sanction Russia by denying them access to the banking system because they have their own banking system. They want a world in which the United States cannot threaten them with sanctions because there are alternatives to the dollar as the reserve currency. That is the world that they all want to live in. That is the world they all want to live in, so they are partnering in this.

(Ms. SMITH assumed the Chair.)

What do they want to see? If you are sitting in Beijing right now, what do their policy leaders—how do they view Ukraine? For that matter, how do they

view what is happening in the Middle East?

Here is how they view it. They view it as, we want America to be drained. We want America to be drained by the money and the attention they have to pour into Ukraine. We want America to be drained by the conflict that threatens to escalate in the Middle East.

The Chinese want America to be drained in these two parts of the world because they know that the more money we spend and the more attention we give to those parts of the world, the less money and the less attention we will have for the Indo-Pacific.

By the way, it is one of the reasons why the Chinese get so annoyed at the North Koreans, because every time the North Koreans launch rockets and give speeches about how they are going to blow something up and all these sorts of things and now partner with the Russians and therefore feel more confident in doing these things, they feel like it is more of an excuse for the United States to pay attention to the Indo-Pacific and deploy military assets to the region. So they want us to be drained.

On the other hand, if we don't commit to these parts of the world, particularly Ukraine, then they are going to go around and tell everybody: You see, we told you. These Americans can't be counted on. They will abandon you. They will turn on you.

So that is their goal—either drain us and if we pull out, hurt us, undermine our alliances so that our allies in Europe will decide: Listen, we are not going to partner with you anymore. You can't be trusted; so the nations in the Middle East will no longer cooperate with us because we can't be trusted, we are unreliable; so the nations in Asia and the Indo-Pacific will cut the best deal they can with China because America can no longer be trusted. That is their goal—drain us or undermine us.

What is our goal? What should our goal be? Our goal should be to remain committed to helping Ukraine so that we are not seen as unreliable and undermined in our credibility but do it in a way that doesn't drain us; do it in a way that does not distract us from our ability to focus on all these other parts of the world that are equally or more important in many cases. That should be our strategy, to retain our credibility and the strength of our alliances through the commitments we made in Ukraine but without being drained. That is the kind of balancing act.

By the way, I do want to say something. Again, of the people who will speak this evening, I may be the only one in support of helping Ukraine, at least at the level I do. Let me just remind everybody that no matter what the House decides to do, this spending can't be zero. The reason why it cannot be zero is because \$20 billion of the \$60 billion is to buy our weapons for ourselves. That is what a lot of people don't realize.

Part of the aid we have given Ukraine—it is not pallets of cash; it is—yes, we have rifles, we have guns, we have explosives, we have bombs, we have rockets, and we have anti-aircraft capabilities in our stocks that we had for ourselves, and we gave it to them. We gave it to them to use. But now we don't have it, so we have to buy it. We have to restock what we gave them. That is \$20 of the \$60 billion. At the minimum, it has to be \$20 billion because otherwise we remain vulnerable.

Ultimately, people who want that strategy—our strategic objective here is to be supportive of Ukraine but not in a way that makes us incapable of being able to concentrate on the other parts and other matters that matter to us.

As far as how this turns out, you know, I have long resisted—although I have long believed this be the case, I have long resisted talking about it in this way because I didn't want to undermine the position of Ukraine in any negotiated outcome, but ultimately the conflict in Ukraine will end in a negotiated outcome.

As I have already said, the Ukrainians are not going to wipe out the Russian military, and the Russians are not going to be able to concur half of Ukraine. I think the Russians already fully understand that their objectives the day they invaded are out of reach. What the Russians want now is to negotiate a deal, the best deal they possibly can, holding on to as much Ukrainian land as they can get their hands on, and to force and compel the neutrality of Ukraine.

In essence, what the Russians want at this point is to have enough military success so they can gain a little bit more territory but also force any future Ukrainian Government to be neutral, not to be a member of NATO, not to be allied with the West. That is the Russian goal.

In any negotiation, it is about leverage. Negotiation is about leverage—who has the most leverage, who has the most to give, and who is in the most desperate need of a deal. So part of the reason why we should not abandon Ukraine and give them nothing is because we want them to have the strongest possible negotiating leverage.

If we cut all of Ukraine's money and said we are done with Ukraine, we are finished, Ukraine would have no leverage. Russia would have all the leverage. The Russians would then be able to negotiate a deal that could very much leave us with a Ukraine that looks like Belarus, with a puppet government and with Russia holding significant land. Then multiple countries around the world are going to see that as an example of what they could get away with in their regional conflict. And that would matter, as I have already explained. That would have an impact on us as a country.

That needs to be our goal. You can't stop the help. We want to give them

enough help so they have the strongest possible hand in a negotiated settlement at some point.

Here is my problem with what we are going to be voting on here in a few hours. As important as all of this is, as important as what has happened in the invasion of Ukraine is, our country is facing an invasion too.

If I walked out these doors tomorrow, most of the people here will get on airplanes and fly home in the morning after whatever time the vote is here. You reenter the normal world outside the bubble of this place, and the overwhelming—I don't have to take a poll—the overwhelming majority of people would say: OK, I don't have anything against Ukraine. I actually hope Ukraine wins. I don't like Putin. I get everything you just said about our national interests. But how can we focus on that and not at least also focus on what is happening to us in our country at our southern border? Because it makes no sense to people.

It is not just isolated to this instance. When was the last time the Senate met over a weekend—Super Bowl weekend, of all things—for hours and hours and hours, basically said: We are going to stay here until we get it done because it is that important. Other than funding the government, when is the last time you saw Congress and the Senate spend that much time working on something that matters directly—a priority of the American people? It doesn't happen. It doesn't happen.

If I were to summarize what most people out there are going to say, they are going to say: Hold on a second. How can we be so focused on an invasion of another country and do nothing about the invasion of ours?

That is what we face at the southern border. There is no other way to describe it.

I will address some of the points that will be raised in response to what I said, anticipating what they will be because they were already made.

The first is, there was a bill, a bipartisan negotiated bill, and you rejected it.

Well, first of all, I didn't negotiate it. I didn't even know what was in it until the Sunday that it was released a week ago yesterday. There were some things in it that I think were positive. Generally, I rejected it because when I took the sum of it and I read the details—and I read the details. I won't spend all the time here tonight discussing all the problems I have with it. I am convinced beyond any doubt in my mind that had we passed that legislation, yes, we would have gotten some improvements on asylum language, which is something we should do, but it had other provisions that actually made things worse in the long term.

One that I continue to point to is that we were going to have in this country thousands of new asylum agents, basically, who would have the power at the border to either, A, give

someone an immediate work permit—today, even if you asked for asylum, you have to wait 6 months to get a work permit. This would give them a work permit on the spot. That would be an enormous magnet for more people to come. You mean I can come to the United States, say the magic words, and I get a work permit right away? You are going to see the numbers spike.

Here is the other thing these asylum agents would have the power to do: These asylum agents would have the power to give them asylum right there and then. It would be more efficient. It is not like asylum—yes, two differences between that and the process today. The first is, the process today would be an asylum judge, and that is taking a very long time. Those agents would make things more efficient, but it wouldn't make it better. It would actually incentivize more flow. Now people realize: We can get in, and we might actually have a pretty substantial chance—30 percent, 40 percent—of being given a work permit or asylum right there on the spot.

Once you have asylum—most people don't realize this—once you have asylum, it is basically the equivalent of a green card. Once you are given asylum, you are 5 years away from being a citizen, which is what many people on the other side of this aisle want. It is what many Democratic activists openly want. They want more citizens who are grateful because they know which party is the one that gave them asylum and citizenship because they will become voters for them. That provision alone would increase the number of people coming to this country.

Today, they come knowing they will be released, have to wait 6 months to get a work permit, and at some point, they are going to have to show up for an asylum hearing. Now, they will come knowing: We have a real chance not just to get released but to get an immediate work permit and maybe even granted asylum on the spot.

That would not make our system better; it would make it worse. That alone was a reason why I could not support that deal.

But I want to be clear. When people go around saying "We gave you exactly what you wanted and you turned it down; you are not serious about border security," you did not give me what I wanted. I can't speak for anybody else. I don't know what other people told you they wanted. I never even said I wanted a bill. I said I wanted the President to reverse the Executive orders that he issued that created the migratory crisis that we now face, that created this invasion.

Let me show you something in this graph, something I really wanted to point to. This is the year. This is the land encounters by month heading into the year at the end of fiscal year 2020. This is January of 2021. This point right here is the election of Joe Biden. Just look at this graph. From the mo-

ment he was elected in January, look at this spike and this spike. What happened? What happened between here and here and moving forward? I don't have a big enough board to show you what happened in the last year.

Explain to me this spike right there. What happened there? Something happened there. Look at—the line here was flat. If I went back further, you would see the line was flat, flat, actually down a little this way. What happened here at this moment in time that things shot up? If this was an EKG or some medical test, doctors would point to that and say: Something happened here, man. Something happened.

Look at this jump. I will tell what you happened here. A lot of things happened there.

On his first day in office—Biden gets elected. He issues a 100-day moratorium on deportation. We are not deporting anyone for 100 days.

First of all, throughout the time he campaigned for President, the whole world heard him say: I am going to get rid of all the Trump policies. So already people who want to come into our country were just waiting for the election to go.

I said the other day when I gave a speech that when I talk to you about the issues, this is not something I picked up from some briefing or document I read or experts that came in; I get this from the people who actually came. A lot of them live in Miami, and their relatives live in Miami. Their decisions about coming to the United States illegally are not built on legal interpretations of the law. Most of them don't even know what our immigration laws are. Many of them misunderstand our immigration laws. They come based on what they believe our policies are.

You have traffickers who are telling them things that aren't true, but you also have perception. The perception was that Trump was restrictive. Trump did everything to stop people from coming. Biden was going to do the opposite. He gets elected, and that leads to a spike, just his election did—but not just his election; his policies.

Something else happened in that period of time. Joe Biden became the first President in the modern history of our country who decided we would not detain virtually anyone who came into this country unlawfully.

People love to say immigration law is so complicated, so difficult, so hard to understand. It is. It is complex certainly to practice. But at its core, it is pretty straightforward. Here is what the law says, and I am paraphrasing. It says: Here are the people who are allowed to come into the United States. If anyone who comes into the United States is not supposed to be here, you are to detain them until removal.

Bottom line: You are either allowed to enter the country or you are not. If you are not and you enter illegally, they are supposed to detain you until they remove you.

Now, there have always been exceptions, and there are some very narrow exceptions that have always been applied on a case-by-case basis by every President. Obama applied it that way, and those exceptions for humanitarian concerns and things of this nature were designed for individual cases.

So a well-known figure in China or some other part of the world shows up and everybody knows who they are and they are being oppressed, they let them in—humanitarian. A person is dying; if you send them back and they may die on the flight home, you let them in. There has always been that exception. Biden made the exception the rule. He basically decided it is inhumane to detain anyone, and so we are going to release virtually everyone—85 percent, sometimes 90, in some months.

And so people realized very quickly—forget about the law, forget about the particulars of the law, people realized very quickly, if I can get to the border and I turn myself over to a border agent, my chances of being released into the country are 85 percent or higher. And they know it because they know people that did it. This is how this works.

I have literally had people come up to me and show me. Look at what I Zelle'd. Look at the Cash App payment that I made to some guy. It cost me 5 grand or 10 grand to get my family over here so they could come in. I paid them to bring them in.

They showed it to me. And I asked them, Well, how did you know about this? They say, Because I know other people that did it.

Somebody comes illegally; they turn themselves in; they are released. They are turned over to a nongovernment organization, a charity, and that charity tells you all the benefits you qualify for, depending on the jurisdiction they send you to. They may even give you a plane ticket or a bus ticket. They make it to wherever they are going, and they call home, and they tell everybody, Here is how I did it; here is how I came.

And more people come behind them and follow them. So this spike is easy to understand. Joe Biden changed the way we enforce immigration law through Executive order. He basically announced, We are not going to enforce immigration law. We are going to release everyone.

And people figured it out, and they started coming, and the invasion began. That is what created the problem—not a law. The law today is the same as it was that day right there. The law today—immigration law in America is identical. Our immigration statutes are identical today to what they were on this day, on this day, all those other years.

The numbers don't lie. Put aside the graph for a moment. In his first full month in office, almost 102,000 people were encountered at the border, just in his first month in office. That is double

the highest number of monthly encounters in the last year of the Trump Presidency—doubled in its first month. None of these other excuses people come up with: the end of COVID, climate change—did the climate change that much from one month to the next?

What changed was a new President that said, Come. We want you to come. We will release you.

The year 2021 from here forward, that ended with over 1.7 million total encounters at the southern border. During that 12-month period in 2021 of that fiscal year, the highest month was over 213,000 encounters at the border.

And if you look at the last year of the Trump Presidency, there were 458,000 encounters at the southern border. It went from 458 in the last year of the Trump Presidency to 1.7 million in the first year of the Biden Presidency under the same immigration law. The immigration law did not change. What changed is the President and his policies. And that is what created this crisis, and that is how you fix it.

Now, obviously, the President doesn't want to fix it, doesn't want to change it. There are reasons why he doesn't want to change it. The first is it would be admitting Trump was right. To change it back to what those policies were is basically to admit Trump was right about immigration and the things he did made sense, and he obviously doesn't want to do that.

The second reason he doesn't want to change it is because he has an activist base in his party that will go completely bonkers. He has an activist base in his party that believes we should have borderless countries, that believes people should be allowed to live wherever they want.

I am not telling you it is a majority—I am not telling you it is 30 percent, but it is a big and powerful activist base who will protest and heckle and threaten to vote against you because they believe humans have a right to live in any country they want. They should be able to migrate anywhere they want. They admit it openly; I have heard them say it to my face. And so he won't do it because of them either.

But that is what will fix it. Reverse the policies that happened right in this period of time. That is what would have fixed it. That is what I asked for. That is what I asked for. They didn't do it.

So I can't speak for anybody else, but don't tell me that you gave us what I wanted on the border. You did not. I didn't ask you for a law. The law can be improved, but the law is not the reason why we got that spike. As I told you, the law is the same here as it is here. What changed was those policies, and what will change that back is to go back to some of those policies, for Biden to use Executive orders to repeal the Executive orders that he put in place that created this crisis.

Now, this is where people tell me, Well, why can't we do both? America

can help Ukraine and can also deal with the border.

I agree with that. Not only can we do it, we should do it. My problem with this bill is it doesn't do it. It only does one of the two things. The choice we were given was here is this fake immigration enforcement. We are going to call it immigration enforcement, but it is not really immigration enforcement.

Here is this fake immigration enforcement bill, and here is Ukraine money, which is real money. And if you don't take it, then we are going to say that you voted against border security and we get what we want. They get what they want. What they want is to be able to not do anything on the border and be able to blame Republicans for it. It is a political ploy, and that is what we are faced with here today.

The problem I have with this bill, as I said, is we are not doing both. If we were getting from the President real changes in his border policies to bring this under control, we might not even be here tonight. We might have gotten this done already, and I would have been supportive. But we don't.

The other thing I have heard people say is, Now you are holding Ukraine hostage. You are holding up the important Ukraine hostage over our border.

Well, I would say a couple things about that. The first is, you are holding Israel hostage over Ukraine. If you put in Israel's aid bill on the floor right now—if you put a bill on this floor right now that said Taiwan and Israel aid, it would probably pass with 89, 90 votes. But they didn't. They held it hostage until they got Ukraine.

So they say we are holding Ukraine hostage over the border; they are holding Israel hostage over Ukraine. And they held Israel hostage over Ukraine. And so you are now faced with a bill that says, You want to help Israel? You have to do what we want on Ukraine, and you get nothing on the border. They are the ones holding hostage.

The other argument I have heard is, Well, these are just people that are helping Ukraine, and they are just using this as an excuse to kill the bill. I have already explained to you that is not me. You might be referring to other people, but not me. What I wanted us to do was what I said. I wanted us to do something real about our national security, about our invasion, about our border.

Is it leverage? Yes. In this process, in this place, this is the only way you sometimes get things done. The only way you get things done is by holding up something that you might support but the other side really wants in exchange for something that you want.

And in this case, there is no shame in telling you that, yes, it was used as leverage—unsuccessfully, unfortunately. I have no shame in saying that because the leverage of what I was asking for is what our people need, what our country needs. It is a priority for our country. It is important for our country.

What good are we to Ukraine? What good is America to NATO? What good

is America to the Indo-Pacific? What good are we as a nation now and in the years to come, to any other nation on earth, if we can't even take care of our own problems here at home?

And this is a problem. This is not a small matter. This is not a seasonal ebb and flow. This is not a transitory issue. This migration, this invasion of the United States, is going to get worse, not better. It is going to get worse in terms of numbers, and it is going to get worse in terms of severity inside of our country.

It already is creating a problem. No. 1, we are being overrun—not by a few thousand people, by over 3.5 million people that have been released in this country that we know about, 600,000 of whom either have criminal records or pending criminal matters.

And they will tell you, Well, we know who a lot of these people are. They don't even interview some of these people, but even if they did, they don't know who these people are—because I know enough about that part of the world to tell you, you can buy fake documents from over a dozen countries in the Western Hemisphere where, if you have enough money on you, you can go somewhere and get an official government document that says your name is Jose Alvarez or Raul Sanchez or whatever you want your name to be. And then you show up at the border, and that is who we think you are.

We have no idea who some of these people are. We have no idea if they have criminal records. You think the Venezuelan authorities are producing their criminal records in biometrics to us? You think the Cuban authorities are doing that? You think people coming from Africa, people coming from all over the world, that those places are actually providing that for us?

The only thing we can tell you is are you in our terrorist database. There are a lot of terrorists that are not in the database until they commit terror acts, and assuming they survive it, you get your hands on them. We have no idea who these people are.

People say, Well, but most of them are probably good people, here for hard work. I am sure, but that is not the point. The point is if you let in 3.5 million people, some percentage of them are going to be bad, some percentage of them are going to be criminals, I don't care where they came from. You take a million people from anywhere in the world at any time, some percentage of that million are going to turn out to be bad people at some point and do harm.

And you are already seeing it. We have a migrant crime wave going on in New York and in other major cities. They are not committing crimes because they are migrants; they are committing crimes because they are criminals. They were criminals in their own country. You think these people just got here the other day and learned how to pickpocket?

You think that 15-year-old that fired on the police officers—I don't know if

you heard this story. A 15-year-old went in to shoplift, confronted by a security officer, pulls out a gun, tries to kill a police officer—a block away, fires the gun again. They arrest him.

Another roving gang attacked two police officers at a train station, and those are the ones you have heard about. It is a crime wave, and it is going to get worse.

The Venezuelan community in south Florida has been telling me for the better part of a year that what was coming now are gang members. And I didn't know how to judge their claim or what they were saying. Now, I see they were right. They were right.

Some of them didn't come straight from Venezuela. They left Venezuela, and they were committing crimes in Peru. They were committing crimes in Brazil. They were committing crimes in Colombia. And when they realized they could come to America where you can steal even more, they saw their opportunity because Biden said, If you come, we will release you.

They came. Now, we have a crime wave, and it is only going to get worse. Now, we have cities—I saw the mayor of Denver the other day crying and complaining. He wants more money. Sanctuary cities, these are places that passed laws that basically said, If you come here and you are here illegally, don't worry. We are going to protect you. We are not going to arrest you. We are not going to ask questions. If you are arrested, we are not going to deport you. We are going to give you stuff and benefits.

So, of course, people go there. They go there, and it costs them money. Now, you have to close your schools. You have to spend money on migrant shelters. You have to spend money on all these things, and now, they are complaining about it. You were very proud to be a sanctuary community, and now, in this bill, they tried to get us—hey, we are going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to bail them out for being sanctuary cities. Meanwhile, they are not spending that money on the homeless Americans that live in their community.

They are taking that money out of services from the taxpayers of those communities. So people go to work; they work hard; they pay their taxes, and their money is taken and given to people that came into our country illegally.

And what about terrorism? I want to be careful because I don't want to say anything—or divulge—let me just say it this way, and I said this earlier before, so just use common sense. Do you think that terrorists around the world—do you think ISIS and al-Qaida and Hezbollah, do you think they are completely unaware of this?

You think those guys don't know that the most effective trafficking organizations in the history of mankind is operating off our southern border? You don't think they know that? And you don't think they are tapped into

that? And you don't think that they would push terrorists into this country that way? Well, I think common sense tells you they would.

In the time remaining, I want to briefly talk about Israel because it is part of this bill as well. You know, it was interesting, the last couple of days, this freak-out over something Trump said about NATO. Everyone is running around, freaking out: Oh, my God, he is going to get us out of NATO.

They forget Trump was already President once, and he didn't pull us out of NATO. In fact, he deployed extra troops to Poland. We increased our troop presence in Poland because Poland was contributing toward NATO.

Put that aside for a moment, because this whole notion of this theoretical—Russia is going to invade countries because Trump is going to encourage them. All these people on television with all the silliness—well, Israel is in a war right now. Israel is in a war right now, an existential war. Israel's enemies right now want to destroy Israel. They don't want to harm Israel. They don't want to defeat Israel's military. They want to destroy Israel. They are in a war right now, and we have a President who is undermining Israel—undermining.

You say no. OK, here is the stuff we are now reading. I just want to go off this article from NBC, which is a—you know, NBC, one of the most well-known, conservative outlets in America. Right? This is from them.

President Joe Biden has been venting his frustration in . . . private conversations . . . with campaign donors, over his inability to persuade Israel to change its military tactics in . . . Gaza. . . .

[He has been] trying to get Israel to agree to a cease-fire, but Netanyahu is “giving him hell” . . . [Netanyahu] is impossible to deal with.

“He feels like this is enough,” one of the people said of the views expressed by Biden. “It has to stop.”

[In some of his private conversations,] his descriptions of dealing with Netanyahu are peppered with contemptuous references to Netanyahu as “this guy.” And in at least three recent instances, Biden called Netanyahu an [A-something]—

I can't say it on the Senate floor—according to three people directly familiar with his comments.

It goes on.

[He] has grown steadily more frustrated with the rising Palestinian civilian death toll in Gaza.

[He] took a . . . sharper tone on Thursday and described Israel's military assault in Gaza as “over the top.”

So I guess this bill is funding Israel's “over the top” effort to defeat a terrorist group that didn't just massacre over a thousand Israelis, but whose organizing principle is the destruction of the Jewish State.

. . . frustrations with Netanyahu have also not led to a major policy shift, but his administration has begun to consider such options. Two weeks ago, officials told NBC News that the administration was discussing delaying or slowing U.S. weapon sales to Israel as leverage to get Netanyahu to dial down Israeli military operations in Gaza—

As leverage.

So you are going to vote for a bill to give money to Israel so Biden can use it as leverage against our ally Israel. This is an ally involved in a war right now—not theoretical, not a campaign speech, right now. You are worried about undermining NATO. Worry about undermining our ally Israel in a war right now, a real war.

And, you know, it goes on. I could go on forever.

[They] are drafting options for formally recognizing an independent Palestinian state.

The so-called two-state solution.

How are you going to reach—that is the ideal outcome in a perfect world. In the real world, how are you going to have a two-state solution with a group—groups—whose goal is a one-state solution? The Palestinian organizations—the PLO and the Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza—they don't have a two-state solution. They want a one-state solution. Their one-state is that “from the river to the sea” there not be a single Jew. That is their solution, and you want to give them their own territory where they can launch more attacks to achieve this goal.

I could go on, but all of this—how does this wind up in the press? This is a strategic leak. They put this out there to message their activist base, because there is an activist base within the Democratic coalition that is threatening to vote against Biden.

We have seen these reports. That is why he sent the White House aides to go meet with anti-Semites, pro-Hamas, pro-Hezbollah activists in Michigan last week, people who claim that our government is controlled by Jewish money. That is who they met with. These are the people disrupting his speeches, calling him “Genocide Joe.” That is who he met with, and this is designed to try to appease them because they are threatening to vote against him.

That is undermining an ally. That is happening in real time, right now.

And all this talk about cease-fire—we can't have a cease-fire.

Let me tell you how we can have a cease-fire: Hamas can surrender its weapons, and it can release its hostages.

But they won't. Hamas doesn't care how many Palestinian civilians die. In fact, they deliberately—deliberately—position military targets next to civilians so that civilians get killed. They want civilians to be killed. They steal the aid money.

Has anyone wondered: How much does it cost to build the tunnels they have built under the ground in Gaza? Millions of dollars spent building tunnels—not building hospitals, not building schools, not building industries, not creating jobs for the people of Gaza—tunnels for their terrorists so they could hide hostages, so they could hide weapons, so they can infiltrate and kill Jews in Israel. That is what they spend their money on.

We are going to send them more of that money when this bill passes. That is what you are voting for. It is in there.

Look, it is just—this is part of a broader problem here. People have to be watching this and saying: These people are completely out of touch with our priorities. They have abandoned all common sense. The list of things that prove this are extraordinary.

One of the things I see a lot in South Florida are people that have been in this country—they maybe came from Cuba 45 years ago. They have worked here their entire lives. They retire. They get \$800, \$900, \$1,000 a month from Social Security. And then they run into somebody who just got here from Cuba 3 months ago, 29 years old, doesn't work, and is given \$1,500 a month in benefits by our government because they are refugees.

That refugee, a year later, is traveling back to Cuba 15 times. So you are a refugee fleeing oppression from a place you now go back to and visit 15 times in the following year; and, in the meantime, we are giving you Medicaid, food stamps, healthcare for your children, cash payments from the refugee fund.

So imagine if you have been working here for 40 years, and your Social Security check is smaller than the benefits going to a 28-year-old, able-bodied person who just got here. That is real. That happens. That is happening every day. That makes no sense.

How about this one? Biden has issued a visa ban and sanctions against Israeli settlers. Where is the visa ban and sanctions on Hamas supporters who are here on student visas? We would never have given them the visa if they were Hamas supporters. But now that they are here, they can go up and down the street calling for "intifada," saying anti-Semitic stuff, tearing down posters. We haven't taken away a single student visa or any other visitor visa.

Go after the Israeli settlers but not after the Hamas terrorists and Hamas terrorism supporters in our own country? That is happening.

When the horrible events of January 6 happened, within hours, we had fences—the tallest fences you have ever seen—barbed wire, National Guard from multiple States. We had more National Guard members here than we had Members of Congress, 5 to 1—great people—sleeping in the kitchen, sleeping in the dining room. This place was protected.

When a State decides that we are going to build a fence and deploy the National Guard to protect our State and our sovereignty: Let's go to the Supreme Court and force them to tear it down.

So you will build a fence and flood this place with National Guard to protect yourself and this Capitol, but you won't do it to protect our country? That makes no sense to people. That makes no sense.

How about this? You know the leverage that Russia—do you know of Russia, one of the reasons why they invaded Ukraine? Because they believed Europe was so dependent on them for natural gas that they wouldn't do anything about it.

And so Europe is doing something about it, and the United States says: And we will export our natural gas surpluses to you so you don't have to depend on the Russians. And what does this administration do? They suspended LNG exports a couple weeks ago because a handful of TikTok influencers demanded it because of the climate. That makes no sense, but they did it.

On issue after issue, we either have lost all common sense or we are consistently ignoring the needs of everyday hard-working Americans and putting something or someone above them, over and over and over again. And that is why people lose faith in institutions. That is why they lose faith in leaders. That is why they lose faith in our process.

That is what leads to populism. In the history of the world—you look at it over and over again—when people believe that their needs—their legitimate needs—are being ignored by the people who run the government, in modern history they have gone in one of two directions, and they are both toxic. One is socialism, the promise of the victim against the oppressor and government is going to fix it all by controlling the economy and your lives. And the other direction they go is ethnic nationalism, the argument that all of this is happening because somebody of another race, another color, another religion—they are to blame. One of your fellow countrymen is to blame.

That is the danger in all of this, and that is why it is always so important that in a republic, a republic is capable of understanding and responding to the needs of the people. And in our country, it is a people that, for the better part of 25 to 30 years, were told: It doesn't matter that we are going to send our factories and our jobs halfway around the world to another country. Don't worry. You are going to learn how to code. You are going to find a new job making a lot more money.

Well, they never got to learn how to code, and they never found the better job, and they gutted our cities and communities and took them apart.

They are tired of being put in second place, and it has happened too often. And it is happening here again now, and that is why I am not going to support this bill, because it violates our most important responsibility, and that is to give voice to the people of this country and stop putting them in second place behind everything and everyone else.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, some of my Democratic col-

leagues want you to believe any opposition to their agenda is evil and unjustified. They have claimed for weeks that mere questions about the \$95 billion—\$95 billion—bill the Senate is now considering are rooted in some radical, rightwing, anti-democracy conspiracy, and the liberal press prints these lies as gospel. It has destroyed the Senate and ignores the history of our great Nation.

One of the first decisions facing our new Republic was whether to engage in the conflict raging between French revolutionaries and an alliance of European nations led by Great Britain. As we know, President George Washington ultimately decided to remain neutral in that conflict, knowing the new nation was not prepared to assume the grand responsibilities of supporting a cause, no matter how noble, while properly attending to the pressing matters facing his new government here at home. America was cash strapped and war weary.

In the centuries that have passed since that moment, our great Nation has evolved. The United States has grown into the leader of the free world, the true global superpower, representing the ideals of liberty, freedom, and democracy, and standing staunchly against oppression and tyranny wherever they are found.

We no longer must wrestle with these decisions the ways our Founders did, but we still face tremendous domestic challenges that I am sure Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson could never have imagined in April of 1793.

Today, we are once again cash strapped, and we are war weary. Like never before, Americans are questioning whether their Federal Government has lost its way and now fails to represent the people they elected.

I hear story after story of the decisions made by the Biden administration. People say: Who made those decisions?

Less than 25 percent of the country believes we are on the right track—25 percent. That is not good for government.

Decades of politicians in Washington being addicted to earmarks and pushing reckless fiscal policy have decimated the financial health of our great Nation—in last year's omnibus, 7,500 earmarks.

The United States is more than \$34 trillion in debt, soon to exceed \$35 trillion, and a budget deficit projected this year of nearly \$1.8 trillion.

I think, when Ronald Reagan got elected, the national debt was less than \$1 trillion.

Since 2019, the U.S. population has increased just 1.8 percent. How much do you think our Federal budget is up? If 1.8 percent increase in the population, what would you think? So 5 percent, 10 percent, maybe 20 percent? No, our Federal budget is said to increase by 55 percent.

Were Federal revenues up last year 5 percent, 10 percent? No, they were down 9 percent.

In the last 3 months, we lost nearly 1.6 million full-time jobs. Now part-time jobs are up. They are up more than 850,000 as more Americans can't find full-time work. Company after company after company doing layoffs. Americans can't find full-time work and have to work multiple jobs to make ends meet.

When they put out the real labor statistics numbers, and they say, oh, this number of jobs were created, do you think that is a full-time job for that person? That might be a part-time job by the same person—two jobs, three jobs.

Biden's bad economy and reckless policies have created massive inflation. It is up 17 percent since he took office. This causes immense pain for families every day, especially poor families like mine growing up. Go to the grocery store. Look at the cost of food. Go look at the cost of a house and the cost of a car. Then look at what the interest rate is or the mortgage rate when you want to buy a house or the interest rate when you want to buy a car or the interest rate on credit card debt.

Unfortunately, the world's evil regimes and tyrants will not wait. They are not going to wait for the United States to be in top fighting financial shape or fiscal shape to launch their attacks. And the weakness—the weakness—in the Biden administration has emboldened them to sow chaos in nearly every corner of the world.

Iran and its proxies, like Hamas, Houthis, and Hezbollah, are waging war against Israel and fighting the Jewish State and its people. Russia continues its war in Ukraine, creating instability not seen in Europe since World War II. Communist China continues to threaten the United States and prepare for an invasion of Taiwan that will up-end world trade and destabilize the Indo-Pacific even further.

I can't imagine why any American would ever buy a product made in communist China. They steal our jobs. They send precursors here. Madam President, 75,000 people die from drug overdoses every year. They threaten our allies like Taiwan.

America is weak under President Joe Biden, and our enemies—they know it. That is why American enemies are exploiting us and our great ally Israel.

Look where we are. There is a land war in Europe, Israel is under constant attack, and evil tyrants like Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin are watching and waiting to pounce.

The conflict in the Red Sea makes this fact indisputable. The increasing number of attacks by the Houthi militia in the Red Sea matter to every American family. The attacks are a huge problem because so many vessels going through this area are critical to world trade.

Right now, companies trying to get goods across the globe have a decision to make: Go through an area with a clear and present danger or choose a

much longer, more expensive route, which will lead to delays and huge costs to consumers. This is all because of Joe Biden's weakness.

This is what happens when you let terrorists and their sponsors, like Iran, run rampant and dictate how the world works. The result is always more violence, less scrutiny, less security, and serious consequences for American families for everything from the price of goods to their safety overseas. That is what we see today as Biden's weakness needlessly pushes America towards World War III.

This bill does nothing to hold Iran accountable. Let me repeat that. This bill does nothing—absolutely nothing—to hold Iran accountable.

Americans don't want war, but instead of standing up to Iran with a credible deterrent to prevent it, Biden has rewarded them. Biden has rewarded Iran with billions of dollars, which Iranians have used to enrich their nuclear program and fund terrorist enterprises like Hamas and the Houthis.

Before Biden took office, the United States oversaw the deployment of more naval assets, which was good for Israel, the United States, and global commerce. Now he is weakening this posture.

Biden started his Presidency by removing the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization. Why? He never could explain it. He did that on February 16, 2021, which was a massive mistake. This has empowered them to raise funds and grow in power as Iran's proxy against Israel. It wasn't until a few weeks ago that the United States finally redesignated these terrorist thugs as a foreign terrorist organization. It only happened after, week after week after week, the Biden administration tolerated their attacks, which just created danger and disruption to the global economy.

The United States and capable partners should have stymied these attacks before they started by destroying key assets months ago when they began terrorizing our trade operations. Biden would have been wise to have taken a page from the Trump playbook sooner and acted quickly and early to show U.S. strength and to deter ongoing attacks. For far too long, Biden refused to do any of this because he is a weak President.

For a President who ran on multilateral internationalism, Biden has proven completely ineffective in bringing along most of our allies in times of conflict. This is the reason the world is at war now.

Again, nothing in this bill is going to hold Iran accountable—absolutely nothing. It pains me to say this because we all want the President to be strong regardless of their party. But we know Biden will never be capable of being a strong leader. That is not who he is. That is just not who he is. He will never really stand up to terrorism, hold our allies responsible to truly stand beside us, not behind us, and

show the world the grave consequences of threatening the shared economic and security interests of the United States and our allies.

U.S. power and engagement ensure the freedom of the seas without interference from bad actors and make the world safer and more prosperous. That has been why Iran is not directly attacking Israel.

Currently, the U.S. Navy is the only military force in the world that can see and attempt to control the various battle spaces that exist or could exist. Our superiority and intelligence gathering allow our allies to cooperate in this effort to deter and, when necessary, defeat our enemies.

Right now, there is a serious disparity in what the U.S. taxpayers contribute toward this critical issue compared to other freedom-loving nations. I believe this needs to be fixed. This bill does nothing to address this issue.

The United States spends \$886 billion a year on defense to protect ourselves and our interests around the world. The European Union spends \$295 billion. On top of that, the United States has accrued a more than \$130 billion trade deficit with the EU.

Just as we forced NATO countries to agree to a minimum 2 percent on their own military spending, we must insist on support from all those benefiting from our protection of the seas. These nations need to boost military spending and fix these trade deficits with increased purchases of American goods. More importantly, we need the President to hold them to that. This bill does nothing to address these concerns.

Proxies in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen continue to escalate because the Biden administration has shown it will do little to stop them.

Communist China, Iran, and Russia want to use intimidation tactics to dictate the flow of goods and services around the globe. The United States must lead the free world to ensure these bad actors are deterred, but we should not do it alone.

As President Ronald Reagan said, the key to security and the preservation of our sovereignty is "peace through strength."

Joe Biden has never said that.

His words echo George Washington's Farewell Address to the Nation, who told us that if you want to live in peace, you must prepare for war.

Neither of these great leaders were warmongers, but both understood that diplomacy and international agreements without great strength do not secure peace; rather, it is having the means and the will to deter and defeat enemies that guarantee peace and our sovereignty.

While chaos continues abroad, America's national security is actually being threatened each and every day by an invasion of single adult males at our own borders—one that President Biden's lawless actions have created, encouraged, and maintained. These have been self-inflicted wounds by Joe

Biden. This is the sad reality for a nation under the weak leadership of Joe Biden, and it has forced this body to deal with world events in a way that I am sure many of us dislike.

I say all of this to put the moment we find ourselves in today into the honest context that it deserves but that is so often ignored or purposely manipulated by Democrats and their allies in the mainstream media.

The United States cannot ignore the massive threats we face to our national security and prosperity that I have just outlined. On that, I hope we can all agree. But as this body so often does, especially under the control of our Democratic colleagues, the Senate is about to again fail to meet this moment with responsible and appropriate legislation.

Rather than negotiating a bill for border security in the public, we were kept in the dark for months and ultimately failed to negotiate a border security deal with Democrats that could actually get Republican support and pass because it did not require Biden to secure the border.

This bill completely failed to deliver what most of our conference supported in tying the disbursement of Ukraine aid to real reductions of illegal immigration at the southern border. This bill was our only chance to get Joe Biden to do his job—our only chance.

Voters in Florida, my home State, want a secure border today, they want inflation to cease, and they want better paying full-time jobs.

Our Republican conference demanded a secure border before we helped Ukraine secure their border—makes sense. Our Republican conference supported tying the disbursement of Ukraine aid to real reductions of illegal immigration at the southern border.

In December, I and my good friend and colleague from Wisconsin, Senator RON JOHNSON, wrote an op-ed on this topic. We made clear this is where the Republican conference wanted us to go.

Let me read it for you:

President Biden's open border policy is a clear and present danger to America. We believe a U.S. president's primary responsibility is to defend the country's citizens and our Constitution. When it comes to border security, he is doing neither.

Rather than address and alleviate this clear and present danger, President Biden and his Democrat allies in Congress are the root cause.

Although the Biden administration and mainstream media are far from transparent when reporting on the current border crisis, what we do know paints a disturbing reality. Since Biden took office, approximately 9.5 million migrants have illegally entered America. Approximately 3 million have been returned, mostly under the pandemic emergency provisions of Title 42. That leaves over 6 million that have taken up residency in America under Joe Biden.

To put that number in perspective, 31 States have a population less than 6 million.

Even though New York City declared itself a sanctuary city, Mayor Eric

Adams now asserts that the 100,000 migrants who accepted the invitation will destroy his city. But the 100,000 migrants Mayor Adams claimed will destroy New York City represent less than 2 percent of the migrants Biden has allowed to enter. The other 98 percent are dispersed all over America, creating enormous burdens for cities of all sizes.

When the Biden administration took over, the border was largely secure. Once in office, the Biden administration claimed President Trump's policies that had secured the border were "inhumane," and they abruptly reversed course.

The very unfortunate result is that Biden's open border policy is now facilitating the multibillion-dollar business model of some of the most evil people on the planet—sex, drug, and human traffickers. It is hard to believe anybody would want to do that. The depredations caused by this trafficking occur in the shadows and go largely unreported. Overdose deaths, largely from fentanyl coming through the southwest border, topped 100,000 annually—100,000 annually.

There is nothing humane about Biden's policies. In addition to its inhumanity, the open border represents a huge national and homeland security threat.

Of the 6 million migrants who got in, 1.7 million were detected crossing the border and accounted for as known "got-aways." We obviously don't "know" who these people are or where they currently reside.

In a recent hearing of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, of which we are both members, FBI Director Christopher Wray stated in response to my questioning:

What has now increased is the greater possibility of one of these Foreign Terror Organizations directing an attack in the United States. . . . It is time to be concerned.

These are Director Wray's words. "We are in a dangerous period," according to Director Wray. "The terror threats have elevated" since Joe Biden took office. These were all Director Wray's words.

With an open border, it is obvious how and where foreign terrorist organizations would insert their fighters into our country. President Biden's failure to secure the border means it is up to Republicans to use any leverage we can—including his administration's desire to provide foreign aid to Ukraine—to secure it once and for all.

Regardless of how anyone feels regarding support for Ukraine, and we are skeptical, we believe securing America's border and protecting our citizens should take precedence.

A recent column stated that support for Ukraine combined with "modest immigration reform" would be a "win/win." With a President who actually wanted to secure the border and could be counted on to faithfully execute the laws Congress passes, that might be

true. Unfortunately, we have a lawless administration and a President who wants an open border.

(Ms. BUTLER assumed the Chair.)

Remember when the Supreme Court ruled that an eviction moratorium was unconstitutional? President Biden extended it anyway. SCOTUS also ruled that forgiving student loans was unconstitutional. President Biden continues to forgive them. As a result, the strongest border security legislation probably won't work under President Biden.

Republicans must insist not only on strong legislative language but also on making any Ukraine funding contingent on achieving benchmarks proving the border is being secured. The metric should be the number of migrants dispersed in America each month, which would include but not be limited to migrants encountered, processed, and released, regardless of the waiver or program used, plus the detected "got-aways."

Each month, the administration would be forced to significantly reduce the number of migrants getting into America, and its ability to disburse U.S. taxpayer money to aid for Ukraine would be tied to achieving those monthly goals.

Under existing law, President Trump went from peak to trough of illegal immigration in 12 months using "Remain in Mexico" and safe third country agreements in Central America. Using that precedent of releasing aid to Ukraine only as we ramp down to a secure border over a 12-month period is a reasonable expectation.

House Republicans should not consider and Senate Republicans should deny cloture on any Ukraine funding that falls short of this requirement. That is what we wrote then, and that is what we believe today. We made our position very clear, and nearly all of our fellow Republican Senators agreed with this when we spoke about it in our meetings. We all agreed.

I remain interested in negotiating and voting for a bill that secures our border today, that stops the flow of drugs across our border so fewer Americans die, and that stops more criminals, terrorists, and traffickers from coming into communities now in a fiscally responsible manner.

When I was in business, I negotiated and closed a lot of deals, and I knew that if I couldn't walk away from the table, I would never get a good deal. I also knew that I would never get a good deal if the people sitting across from me didn't want the same outcome I did.

We have to walk away from the table until we are negotiating with people who share the same goals as our conference—a secure border today.

The result, unfortunately, is what we have before us today—a wildly unaccountable foreign aid package that does absolutely nothing to secure the U.S. southern border and could funnel billions in borrowed money to Hamas

terrorists and into the salaries of Ukrainian politicians.

This bill claims to address the invasion of Ukraine while ignoring the invasion we face here in the United States. This bill could send billions in borrowed money into Gaza, which is still dominated by the Iran-backed Hamas terrorists who killed more than 1,200 Israelis and more than 30 Americans—30 Americans—and are still holding Americans hostage.

I am unapologetically pro-Israel. I have had the honor of visiting Israel five times as both Florida's Governor and as a U.S. Senator.

What happened on October 7 horrified the world and struck me personally. Two of my grandsons were staying with me that morning, and we watched with horror what happened. I told them about my visits to Israel and visits to one of the kibbutzim that was really close to the Gaza Strip.

In 2019, Ann, my wife, and I visited Kfar Aza—one of the kibbutzim that was the site of a complete massacre. As the early reports were coming out, I was really worried about the kibbutz because of its proximity to Gaza. It is only about half a mile away. I told my grandsons this. When I heard the news that it was the site of some of the most horrific and barbaric activities, my heart just sank. I wanted to vomit because I knew so many people there. My wife and I had spent an afternoon there, and it was one of the most peaceful places we had ever visited. I keep thinking about the moms and kids who played outside while enjoying the warm summer weather. It is gut-wrenching to think of the fate of the families we met that day.

I spoke with Chen, the lady who led our tour of the kibbutz, who fortunately was traveling outside Israel that day and survived. If she had been home, she wouldn't have survived. Most of the people on her street were murdered just because they were Jews. I was able to talk with her, and she had not yet been able to go home. She said it was unclear if she will ever be allowed back.

Can you even imagine? So many of us in this Chamber are so deeply connected to Israel, I will bet many of you will have a story like mine.

On the day I went to the kibbutz, we walked all around. We walked to where, you know, they take all their kids to school. It was moms and kids. The dads were all at work. We saw the bomb shelters, and basically what they were set up for is for missile attacks. They told me stories about how Hamas was sending balloons over, and they would have explosives on them, with the hope that kids would grab the balloons and get hurt. We were told that when the missiles came, they had 15 seconds to get ready to get into a bomb shelter. They said the kids learned, as soon as the sounds went off, to raise their hands because hopefully somebody would pick them up and take them to a bomb shelter.

We know people in the IDF who have been called to serve, many from my great State of Florida. We have friends all over Israel who have spent days in bomb shelters as rockets have been launched by terrorists intent on wiping Israel and Jews off the face of the Earth.

I have met with survivors and hostage families. I can give you one of the stories.

A young lady was out at the festival. She had been to the festival the year before, and she had had a great time. So she was going to go this year with her boyfriend, and she invited, I think, every friend she knew to the festival. Every one of her friends was killed except for two who were taken hostage. When I met with her, she didn't know what had happened to them, and she was just in shock because every one of her friends was dead, and it is because she invited them.

I have placed a poster outside my office that features the faces of the hostages being held by Hamas, and I am not going to take it down until they are home.

You know, we have these Hamas protesters coming to the Capitol, and they ask for a ceasefire. I think it is great to have a ceasefire the day after every Hamas terrorist is dead. Every Hamas terrorist should be killed. What they have done is despicable. These monsters—if you have seen any of the videos—beheaded children and babies. They raped girls and burned innocent civilians alive. Can you imagine? It is barbaric. They dragged innocent people through the streets and are now holding them as hostages in Gaza, which these terrorists absolutely control.

It is unimaginable that the United States would ever consider sending money to a place where we know that it will be used to help terrorists who are holding Americans hostage, but that is exactly what this bill does.

Do you know what I don't understand? I have not seen one picture of Joe Biden in the White House Situation Room, talking about what he is doing to bring home any American hostages—not one. In that first speech he gave when he talked about what happened on October 7, he talked about hostages like for 15 seconds. It is like he does not care. You know, you talk about the things you care about. He never talks about American hostages—ever. So how does it feel to be an American family, with a family member who is being held hostage in Gaza, and knowing that your President doesn't care?

I want to make sure everyone understands exactly what I am saying here, which is a fact: Every dollar—every dollar—that goes to Gaza directly benefits Hamas. How do they pay for all of those tunnels? How do they pay for all of those rockets? How do they pay for them? They take humanitarian aid and use it to do those things. You saw the attack in Israel. They had humanitarian aid—first aid kits—that they took with them.

I have spent every day since October 7 telling the stories of those being held hostage in Gaza by Iran-backed Hamas terrorists. I think it is important that the world never forgets, never forgets, never forgets what happened on October 7. I have a poster outside my office that features the faces of the hostages, and I will not take it down until they are all home.

Unfortunately, President Joe Biden has not done the same. I don't understand why the President of the United States isn't speaking every single day. He should be speaking every single day about Americans being held hostage by Hamas terrorists and what he is doing to get them out.

The IDF just rescued two American hostages in a mission that the Biden administration urged them not to do. Can you imagine? The IDF was urged not to do something by the Biden administration that rescued two American hostages. Who does this? What President would do this? What has Biden done to rescue American hostages?

Many of my colleagues recall the name of 9-year-old Emily Hand. Emily and her father Thomas lived in the small kibbutz of Be'eri, which was ruthlessly targeted and destroyed by Hamas during the attacks.

I guess quite a few of the individuals I have met with—hostages, people who survived the attack in Be'eri—said that by the grace of God were they alive, and they have not been able to go home.

In the days immediately following the attacks, Emily's dad was initially told that his daughter, who had spent the night at a friend's house just a few doors down, was killed.

I am a father of two daughters and a grandfather of seven grandchildren. Watching this father speak about the murder of his daughter is heart-wrenching.

He said to CNN at the time:

They just said we found Emily, and she's dead.

And what did he say?

Here is what he said:

And I went "Yes!" And I smiled because that is the best news of the possibilities that I knew. . . . She was either dead or in Gaza. And if you know anything about what they do to people in Gaza, that is worse than death.

This is the statement of a father of a daughter who thought it would be better for her to be dead than to be a hostage in Gaza.

Soon, to his relief and horror, Thomas learned that Emily was, in fact, alive and being held hostage by Hamas. This beautiful, innocent little girl spent 50 days as a hostage in Gaza.

If you go look at the poster outside my office, these are beautiful people, innocent individuals.

While I am sure that Thomas thanks God every day to have his little girl back in his arms today, he knows that the child he had on October 6 is no longer alive. Emily will never be the same as she was before she was taken.

It has been more than 120 days since the attacks, and some parents are still waiting for their children to come home. Can you imagine? Your child has been kidnapped, and you have no idea what is happening to him. All you can assume is the worst.

Little baby Kfir Bibas's first birthday was spent as a hostage in Gaza. His 4-year-old brother Ariel is also still being held hostage.

There is a group of individuals who put together milk cartons, with the pictures of the hostages—you know, like the kids who were on the missing list for Americans. They have done it, and they have distributed these around the country. I have one in my office with a picture of Ariel, a little 4-year-old boy.

Kfir and Ariel's parents have been waiting for more than 4 months to hold their babies again. Now, unfortunately, we have heard horrible reports that these innocent children may no longer be alive.

Why has Joe Biden given money to Gazans who are holding American hostages? What American President would do that? Why would we allow Biden to give more money to Gazans who are holding American hostages? I just can't believe this is happening. When will this stop? Why the heck are we allowing Biden to send more money to Gaza in this bill when we know that every dollar that goes to Gaza funds the terrorism of Hamas—more tunnels, more weapons, more rockets, more destruction? Hamas is there to kill Jews and destroy Israel, our ally.

What are we doing to get American hostages released? Do we have a daily report from Joe Biden on what he is doing? Do we have a report by General Austin as to what he has done? Do we have any idea what the Biden administration is doing to get American hostages home? I won't stop stating this fact: Every dollar that goes into Gaza directly benefits Hamas. So Hamas kills Israelis and Americans, they take them hostage, and Joe Biden gives Gazans money that goes to benefit Hamas. You can't make this stuff up.

That is the undeniable truth. That is why I have been fighting for years to pass my Stop Taxpayer Funding to Hamas Act, which prevents U.S. tax dollars from going to Gaza unless the Biden administration can certify that not a single cent will go to Hamas. It is pretty basic: They hold the Americans hostage, they shouldn't get money.

This isn't a solution in search of a problem. It addresses a very real threat of taxpayer money funding Iran-backed terrorism that seeks to destroy Israel and kill Jews and kill Americans.

We cannot allow an American family with a family member being held hostage in Gaza to see their tax dollars go there. An American family, your daughter is being held hostage, and your tax dollars go to the same people who are holding your daughter hostage—Joe Biden is doing that.

We have seen reports that the Palestinian Authority has been paying over \$300 million a year in monthly salaries to terrorist prisoners and in monthly allowances to families of dead terrorists. You wouldn't think that Joe Biden would want to give any money to the Palestinian Authority.

The Palestinian Authority who pays terrorists and their families should not receive U.S. tax dollars, but this bill will allow more of that. You can't believe this is happening with your tax dollars.

In 2021, President Biden's State Department said.

We're going to be working in partnership with the United Nations and the Palestinian Authority to "kind of" channel aid there in a manner that does its best to go to the people of Gaza.

Don't do your best. No dollars to terrorists, period.

The official went on to say:

As we've seen in life, as we all know in life, there are no guarantees, but we're going to do everything that we can to ensure that this assistance reaches the people who need it the most.

Zero dollars. Don't do your best. No dollars.

The Biden administration thinks the risk of resources going to Hamas terrorists is OK because "in life there are no guarantees." I completely reject that. I will not leave anything to chance when it comes to preventing U.S. taxpayer money from being sent to the brutal terrorists that have slaughtered so many Israelis and Americans—American citizens.

That is why I wasn't surprised, actually, in August 2021, when the Senate voted 99 to 0 for my amendment to a budget bill that would have made the Stop Taxpayer Funding of Hamas Act the law of the land.

But as we would learn soon after this vote, the Democrats only voted for it because they knew that in the final text of the bill, written by Democrats, my language would be mysteriously missing. They only voted for it because they knew it didn't matter.

I have tried twice more since then to pass a legislation in the Senate, and the Democrats have blocked it twice. Why would a Democrat want money to go to Hamas? I don't get it.

Look, I know the left has a big problem on its hands as so many Democrats rally for Hamas and against Israel in the streets of liberal cities and on the campuses of America's universities. You would think that Democrats would be eager to show that they don't support Hamas. Instead, they blocked my bill proving that there is no interest in the Democratic Party to stand up to these people who absolutely hate Israel and hate Jews.

That is why I asked earlier today to make my amendment to add my Stop Taxpayer Funding to Hamas Act to this bill. It is common sense. Democrats blocked even voting on this again today—just a vote.

I have listened to my Democratic colleagues talk about how we need a

cease-fire and how we need to make sure that the children in Gaza get support. Well, if you want aid to go to the children in Gaza, you would want to make sure it doesn't go to Hamas, and you would want to expect this administration to do everything they could to make sure money doesn't go to Hamas.

But as you have heard, they are going to work at it. But they are going to work in partnership with the Palestinian Authority. What do you think are the chances that that is going to work out very well?

We have also tried twice to pass the standalone Israel aid bill that would not send money to Gaza, but Democrats blocked that too. Each and every Democrat voted against aid to Israel. So don't tell me or my colleagues who oppose this bill that we don't stand with Israel when Democrats have twice blocked our bill, then all voted against it—which has already passed in the House—to immediately send money to Israel.

If they had not voted against it, it could have gone to Biden weeks ago, and Israel could have gotten more aid.

Let me be clear on one more thing: Since the day that Vladimir Putin launched Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine, I have stood strongly on the side of the Ukrainian people. But there are numerous unanswered questions. We don't know what has happened to the \$100 billion of aid that has already gone to Ukraine. We have no idea what our plan is. What is our plan to win? Why would we pay the salaries of Ukraine politicians with borrowed money?

Will Biden give Ukraine the weapons they need to actually win? If so, why didn't he do it in the beginning, when Ukraine could have absolutely destroyed the Russian military? They were all sitting ducks along the highway. Why didn't Biden give them the weapons to absolutely destroy the Russian military? Why not?

Why can't Congress pay for this with savings from other areas? And the most important one is, why is the Ukraine border more important than the U.S. border? Why is this bill being rushed through with no support for securing our southern border?

Ukraine must win, and Russia must lose; there is no question. That is what is in the best interest of America's national security. That is why I have said that we should continue to provide lethal aid—lethal aid—to Ukraine, paid for with seized Russian assets, so Ukraine can win its war and have a clear plan for how Ukraine will win.

We need to answer these questions and be strategic about how we protect our interests, especially as we add to America's 34 trillion dollars' worth of debt, soon to hit \$35 trillion.

The American people will no longer tolerate borrowing billions of dollars to pay the government expenses and salaries of the Ukrainian politicians. We are borrowing money to pay for the Ukraine politicians. It is not a loan; it is just a gift.

Nor will U.S. voters tolerate this government having no plan for how Ukraine will win, how U.S. resources will help it win, and how we are making sure that every dollar is spent with one mission in mind: defeating Russia.

Concern grows when we see that Ukraine has fired another top military official and seems to be struggling to show a clear path to victory.

Without more information, we are left to assume the worst—that this entire bill has no clear mission but to accomplish the appearance of unity so that American politicians can fly over with a giant check and deliver hollow speeches about moral righteousness.

It doesn't sooth our concerns when we hear the majority whip say on this floor that we must pass this now so that he can go to Munich this week and pontificate about a bill that the Speaker of the House has repeatedly stated will never become law.

Let me just read what the Speaker said today:

House Republicans were crystal clear from the very beginning of discussions that any so-called national security supplemental legislation must recognize that national security begins at our own border. The House acted 10 months ago to help enact transformative policy change by passing the Secure Our Border Act, and since then, including today, the Senate has failed to meet the moment.

The Senate did the right thing last week by rejecting the Ukraine, Taiwan, Gaza, Israel immigration legislation due to its insufficient border provisions. The Speaker said that the Senate "should have gone back to the drawing board to amend the current bill to include real border security provisions that will actually help end the ongoing catastrophe."

Instead, the Senate's foreign aid bill is silent on the most pressing issue facing our country. The mandate of national security supplemental legislation was to secure America's own border before sending additional foreign aid around the world. It is what the American people demand and deserve.

Now in the absence of having received any single border policy change from the Senate, the House will have to continue to work on its own will on these important matters. America deserves better than the Senate's status quo.

So what we are going to do, this bill is going to be rushed through with no amendments. There will not be an amendment on this bill. So a bill that was negotiated in the dark by a few people, changed—only a few people knew that—is now going to pass, and the Speaker of the House has repeatedly stated it is never going to become law.

This bill accomplishes nothing. If my colleagues were actually serious about aiding Ukraine in its war against Russia's invasion, they would work with us in good faith, sit down with the Speaker of the House and House leaders, and produce a bill that can pass here and in the House.

As I said, I want Ukraine to win, and I want Russia to lose. But that does not mean I am or should be willing to simply accept any offer thrown down by the Democrats that they claim but cannot prove would advance that cause, all while America is being invaded as a result of our open border.

So if you are a general, and your left flank is being invaded and you do nothing to shore that up, you get fired, and you lose the battle. We are being invaded.

I will not accept anything that ignores the most urgent threat to U.S. national security: Joe Biden's wide open southern border.

This should not need to be said here on the floor of the U.S. Senate, but securing America's border is more important than securing the border of any other country. We represent America.

We should be able to do both. And, frankly, the fact that we aren't using revenue generated from seized Russian assets to pay for Ukraine aid is ridiculous. But that is how things work here.

Your Federal Government cannot continue to stroke massive checks to borrow more money while providing zero accountability to the American people. The people of Florida are sick of this. I am sick of it. I think about all Americans are sick of this.

The deal has always been Ukraine aid for border security—not immigration policy, but real border security today.

Florida families are feeling the impact of this administration's lawless border policies each and every day as deadly fentanyl, criminals, terrorists, and human traffickers pour across Biden's open borders.

In 2021, how many children, 14- to 18-year-olds, died of fentanyl? Over 1,000—1,145. That is a classroom of students dying each and every week.

In 2022, I heard from a mom in Kissimmee, FL, whose son was in the Air Force. He came home to visit her and surprise her on Mother's Day weekend. He visited an old friend who he didn't know had begun dealing drugs. The friend convinced the young man to take a Xanax, which was unknowingly laced with fentanyl, and the mom found her son dead. Can you imagine?

It is heartbreaking, and there are more stories like this all over the country. I don't understand why Joe Biden doesn't care.

Over 100,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2021—72 percent of those from opioids like fentanyl. Families in Florida and every State across the Nation are being torn apart by these deadly drugs coming over the border. Think about how many families are being just torn apart as a result of this open border?

My Democratic colleagues seem to finally be acknowledging this crisis on TV, but they are not willing to stand up to this President and force him to do what we all know is right—secure the border today.

I can't imagine why. It is obvious to everyone that the invasion of our southern border is what Biden wants.

Let's take a look at the numbers. Joe Biden was inaugurated on January 20, 2021. He inherited the most secure U.S. southern border in modern history.

In some of his first acts as President, he used his Executive power to dismantle the policies that President Trump used to secure the border and sent a clear message to the cartels: The border is now wide open for smuggling, and President Biden is not going to do anything to stop you. The surge of illegal immigration started almost immediately.

In February 2021, right after Biden was inaugurated, there was more than 101,000 encounters of illegal aliens attempting to cross our southern border between ports of entry. That was a massive increase of what we saw the prior month.

From there, the numbers continued to skyrocket. March '21 saw 173,000 encounters with illegal aliens between ports of entry. By July 2021, encounters with illegal aliens between ports of entry skyrocketed to more than 213,000. That is more than 213,000 people attempting to illegally enter the United States in just 1 month.

I point this out to make something very clear: The border was secure, and then Joe Biden took office, and the cartels got their message loud and clear. The invasion hasn't stopped since.

In fiscal year 2022, the first full fiscal year under the Biden administration, there were more than 2.3 million encounters with illegal aliens between ports of entry. These aren't families searching for a better life; they are mostly single adults. Of those 2.3 million encounters with illegal aliens at our southern border, more than 1.6 million were single adults, most of whom are military-aged men. That is 70 percent of all people who are trying to illegally enter the United States.

Even more terrifying, 98 of the people caught trying to illegally sneak into our country in fiscal year 2022 were on the Terror Watchlist.

Here is another terrible stat for you from that period: CBP seized more than 14,000 pounds of fentanyl along the southern border. Now, just 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be a lethal dose, and they seized more than 14,000 pounds. That is enough fentanyl to kill 3 billion people. Think about how much fentanyl crossed the border without being seized.

In fiscal year 2023, things got worse, and we saw more than 2.4 million encounters with illegal aliens between ports of entry. Again, these aren't families searching for a better life; they are mostly single adults. Of those 2.4 million encounters with illegal aliens at our southern border, 60 percent—more than 1.5 million—were single adults, again, most of whom are military-aged men. And 169 people in the Terror Watchlist tried to illegally sneak into our country during fiscal year 2023.

And the drugs continued to flow into our country. Last fiscal year, CBP

seized nearly 27,000 pounds of fentanyl along the southern border. That is enough fentanyl to kill 6 billion people.

Last December—2 months ago—more than 300,000 illegal aliens were encountered trying to unlawfully enter the United States. This is an invasion and a clear and present danger to the safety of every American. Even Al Sharpton called it an invasion on his MSNBC show last week. But Senate Democrats and Joe Biden still won't do what is needed to fix it. Biden's open-door policy is a clear and present danger to every American family.

I have gone to the border quite a bit. I go down there—so right after Biden took over, I went down there, and you saw the wall being built. And then they didn't finish the gates. Still just laying there. People pour across. I was at one place where people were just able to fly into Mexico. They took a flight, took a bus up to the border, and they just walked across the border. CBP picked them up, and within days, they were anywhere they wanted to be in the United States.

Then we found that they could get on a flight right after they were released without any ID. By the way, they don't have IDs. Go to the Mexico side, there are IDs everywhere. On our side, there are no IDs. On our side, they don't have an ID. They are just given an ICE arrest warrant, and they can go on a commercial flight with you. And the Biden regulations say they don't have to have an ID. They don't have to have a picture. They can decline. They can say they don't want their picture taken.

But you try that. An American can't do that. You wouldn't get on the flight. This is a reality that Joe Biden refuses to go see.

I want to mention one more thing I talked about earlier again because this really needs to be driven home. My Democratic colleagues want to act like any criticism of the Biden administration is just Republican attacks, but here is what the FBI Director told me just a few months ago.

In a hearing at the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee last October, I pushed FBI Director Christopher Wray about the threats we are facing because of Joe Biden's open border. In his response to me, Director Wray said:

We went through a period where the traditional-structured Foreign Terrorist Organization threat in the U.S. subsided some in favor of this inspired, ISIS-inspired let's say, attack . . . to be clear that threat has not gone away. What has now increased is the greater possibility of one of these Foreign Terrorist Organizations directing an attack in the United States.

He went on to say:

It is a time to be concerned. We are in a dangerous period.

He also said that, since Joe Biden took office, "The terror threats have elevated."

Those are the words of FBI Director Christopher Wray. How can anyone ig-

nore what he said? At what point are my colleagues on the left going to be serious about this? I think the answer, unfortunately, is never.

The so-called border bill they negotiated in secret wasn't an honest attempt to do anything on the border. And when it was clear that the bill they wrote would fail, they totally abandoned the idea of border security and immediately moved to the bill before us today, which will never pass in the House, will never become law, and does nothing on the border.

Let's remember what Speaker JOHN-SON said. House Republicans were crystal clear from the very beginning of the discussions that any so-called national security supplemental legislation must recognize that national security begins at our own border. It will not pass the House.

The people of Florida refuse to ignore these threats, threats that are a clear and present danger to the safety and security of the United States. We will not pretend it is OK to take care of the border in Ukraine while doing nothing to stop the invasion we have right here in the United States.

I want to get something done, and I will always believe in the ability of our great Nation to answer the call and defend freedom and democracy wherever it is threatened by tyranny. I care deeply about protecting the national security of the United States. It is really very personal to me.

At 18 years old, I enlisted in the Navy to defend my country. My adopted father was 1 of the 3,000 American soldiers who did all four combat jumps with the 82nd Airborne and then fought in the Battle of the Bulge. I know there is evil in the world, and America must be the leader of the free world. There is no one else to rely on. But we have to take care of the families we represent first. We have to secure our border. This bill does not secure our border and has too many failures to say it will do what is needed to protect America and our interests.

The bill allows Biden to send billions to Gaza, which will go straight to Hamas terrorists, and billions to pay the salaries of Ukrainian politicians.

We all know no bill is perfect. It is nearly impossible. But this bill—this bill—is a horrible attempt to basically spend American dollars with no accountability and to do nothing to secure the American border.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. SCHMITT. Madam President, I rise to talk about the very ill-advised plan that we have before us right now that puts Ukraine first and America last. Now, for the—I am going to say 25 people in the country that may have tuned in to the last time I was on this floor earlier today to now, you might notice one big difference: I have a different tie on. So in between the last time and now, I worked out.

As you know, Madam President, you can't skip leg day. So I did that in

preparation, of course, for the Congressional Baseball Game, which is just a mere few months away now. So I figured while I was going to do that, I had a little time, a lot of energy, I have 1 hour to give to this that I would switch ties—so breaking news.

I will say, though, that standing here in a very sort of contrived effort that the majority leader has put forth—well, I guess I should say, actually, he is not making any effort to make this look like it is a real activity of the world's most deliberative body. There are no amendments being considered for a \$95 billion foreign aid package. It is being rushed to get done just before guess who gets to go to Munich. CHUCK SCHUMER.

So we want to get this done, without any amendments, so that the majority leader can glad-hand with other global leaders and talk about how he is delivering for Ukraine. All the while, the people that we represent are clamoring for action for something to secure our southern border.

And I know the figleaf that was offered last week that lasted about 24 hours before people could pick apart the language and realize it took us backwards on immigration law. That wasn't anything other than trying to get a few more votes for Ukraine. So if you want to understand why there is so much dysfunction about this whole process, all you need to understand is that the Ukraine piece of this has always been the center of gravity.

Israel aid is held hostage to it. This 4-month exercise to get some language that was rejected was about getting more support for Ukraine. So here we are—a mere, I guess, hours away from a vote that some of my colleagues have told me this is going to be the most important vote I will ever cast. I cannot help but think, as someone who has run statewide in Missouri three times in 6 years, what an utter disconnect what we are doing right now is to where real America is.

When I am back in Missouri—and I go back and forth every week, I live in the St. Louis area—what people want to talk to me about is what is going on in their family; the fact that when they go to the grocery store every week, they are hit with that sticker shock that has never really gone away. For a younger person who is trying to buy their first house, it is literally twice as expensive as it was just a few years ago.

We have got 9 million people who have come across our southern border. We don't know who they are. We don't know where they are at. Some of the most strenuous objections that we have are from immigrants who have come here legally, who wait in line, who did the right things.

The people who don't understand why our energy policy punishes working families who just want affordable, reliable energy, who are lectured by elites like John Kerry who fly on private jets

to Davos and then tell working families all the things that they should live without, that is what they care about.

Now, as a U.S. Senator, I don't believe that we shouldn't have a debate about Ukraine. But I can honestly say there has not been a person that has come up to me and said, You know what, ERIC, what I really want you to do up there is send another \$61 billion to Ukraine. That is what I really want you to do. My priority is for you to go up there and do that when our border is not secure, when terrorists are streaming across the border, when fentanyl is streaming across the border, when women and children are being raped and trafficked to the tune of \$100 million a week.

That is the economic value of the human trafficking alone.

The cartels have never had it so good. American families are struggling, but the cartels have become wealthy beyond belief because of policies from this administration that have devastated our border, devastated our immigration laws, and flooded our streets with drugs and crime.

Perhaps there could be no more emblematic image of all of this than what we saw just last week when a couple of people who came here illegally beat up cops, got out of jail in a couple of hours, and did the double bird to the camera, telling the American people exactly what they thought of them. I mean, I really can't think of a better symbol of what this administration has wrought on the American people than that. There will be all kinds of disingenuous stuff to shift blame, but people are smart. They know exactly what is happening.

I do come from Missouri, and before I was attorney general, I served in the State senate. Like in most States, there actually—for all the issues that every State has in working through things—our constitutional Republic and our democracy can be a messy thing. It is supposed to be that way. It is supposed to be difficult to get things done because our Founders believed that one of the ways you protect individual liberty is to spread out that power so it is not efficiently taking money from people and efficiently taking away their God-given rights.

So in Missouri, the one thing they have to do is pass a budget. It is the only thing they are constitutionally required to do. And there is a date. I think it is May 15. They have to do that. So the house—there is a consensus revenue estimate that comes out in December where they—I am sure this is true in California and other States—where the different parties and branches decide what they think they are going to take in, how much they have to spend, and then they craft the budget. That process begins in Decemberish.

They come in January, and the hearings begin in full force, and people come and they advocate and they make their arguments. Subcommittees re-

port to committees, committees then report bills out, and it goes to the house floor.

All the while, the senate is having their own hearings anticipating house bills because it has to originate in the house, and it comes over and they work on that. Then they have something, and they report to the senate, and they go to a conference committee. And guess what. They craft a budget. You disagree with it. It might be too much spending or might be not enough spending for your taste. It may not have done all the things you wanted to do. But there is a product that people can have an input on. They can amend things.

We don't do that here at all. We don't do it. I talked about it on the floor earlier today. It is a travesty for this constitutional Republic because the very frustration that you see in this instance or in CR debates and the deadline politics that this town has gotten used to is all because there are simply no vehicles. There is no way for people to advocate for the people they represent.

We go to lunches. Nobody told me about that, by the way, that we have lunch together every day. I love it. I love getting to know my Republican colleagues. I am sure the Democrats feel the same. But what if, actually, what we have seen here in the last couple of days, where Senators come out here and talk about the things that they believe in and there is more than just a couple of people at a time—what if we did that all the time? Maybe I am just the new guy, but what if we did that, and the Senator from California and the Senator from Missouri—we would offer amendments. Do you know what we might find out? That there are actually some things we could work on together or there are some things we are just going to be on a different team.

But guess what happens. There are a few people in charge who keep us very separated. They keep us in those lunches. And we spin around, and a couple of people negotiate a bill. We don't know the details. We are told: You can't offer amendments. We are told that the tree is filled.

What if 95 of us said: We are done with that. We are done with it. Instead of this Thunderdome you have created for this limited contact, we are going to disperse the power to individual Members like it was supposed to be, like when this place was created.

The U.S. Senate is a unique institution in human history. There has never been anything like it. It was conceived of an idea that we had three branches, but within the bicameral article I branch, there was going to be one branch that had 6-year terms, and they were staggered. You had to be a little bit older to serve. I don't know if they ever thought that the median age would be 68, but it is or I think it is something like that. Whatever. I digress.

No matter. We are supposed to sort of deliberate on these things, and then it would take a little more than just a simple majority. In fact, we didn't have cloture being filed for everything, like for some, you know, appointment to the Zoo Commission; there was a little bit of a social contract that happened in this place.

I know this is really process-oriented, and I am going to get to other stuff, but I do think it is important because I actually believe that what a couple of people in this place, including the majority leader, are really afraid of is that what if we actually get a taste for what it is like to have an impact on our own? What if we figure out we don't need them to tell us what to do? I don't need that. I don't need somebody telling me how to vote. I would think that the 100 of us who campaigned so hard and got around our States and listened to people—I don't need that. I am open to advice always. I don't think I have everything figured out. But I also think that, in talking to people—listen, I don't pretend to know everything. I think you have to approach this place with some amount of humility. I mean, talk about an honor of a lifetime. But in 100 years—I was the 2,000th Senator. I am not sure many people in 100 years will know that—maybe my grandkids. I hope my kids would tell my grandkids that, but I don't know.

The point is, our lives are finite. The roles we play here are very serious and important. But I just think this place can be so much more than what it is, and it is a hollowed-out shell of what was supposed to be the greatest legislative body ever conceived. We don't do those things. I lament that.

What I was trying to say was, I talk to plenty of people, and I try to meet and am going to meet with every Senator, Republican or Democrat, individually. It takes a little while with our schedules. We are not on the floor very much voting, but we are all very busy. I just found that there are really some unique conversations that you can have with people about not only what is important to them and how you can work together but a desire to sort of open this place up a little bit.

I think that what we are seeing play out here is kind of emblematic of it. Regardless of how you feel about this particular issue, regardless of how you feel about, you know, this is the most important vote you will ever cast or I can't believe that we are sending \$61 billion but we won't secure our own southern border—regardless of where you fall on that spectrum, I would hope that we could recognize individually and collectively that this is broken.

I mean, look at what is happening with the appropriations process. I don't know what is going to happen in a few weeks. We are going to presumably vote on this stuff and come back and then—guess what. We have another deadline. If you don't support this bill, you want to shut the government down.

Meanwhile, the majority leader in this place has spent 8 hours in 13 months on appropriations bills. Something tells me—I don't know; I am a lawyer, I am not a detective—that there is a reason for that. There might be a reason why he doesn't want those on the floor. He doesn't want an open discussion, and he is not alone. There is a very natural sense of desire to sort of aggregate power.

The Appropriations Committee voted out every bill. But, ERIC, they originate in the House. Well, we have a number of vehicles, not to mention we could just send a message about what our priorities are in the Senate, whether I agree with them or not, on Senate bills. I guess it is too hard, but I don't think that is really the reason.

I have heard: Well, Senators don't—they come to us and don't want to take tough votes. We are protecting them.

I don't believe that. I don't believe that. I think it is because this is the—who could imagine the power that somebody could have to unveil an omnibus before us, the flashing lights. Wait until I unveil this before you all. You won't have time to read it, and you can't amend it, can't really affect it. But the lobbyists in town know who to go to.

I just believe that is the source of some of the disconnect. I think there is a real danger in being insulated in this town, in this bubble here, you know, caring too much about what the New York Times or the Washington Post have to say about you, that somewhere along the way, and I don't care where you are from—whether you are in a deep blue State or a deep red State—you lose a little bit of what people actually at home are connected to, what they care about.

This bill here couldn't be more disconnected from American priorities. This bill sends \$95 billion to foreign countries. Debate the merits of that as you will without actually—think of the message that sends. We care so much—think about the issues that we are confronting as a country, all of them. This is what we are doing. This is what we have chosen.

And I don't care—like I said, I feel good from the workout—I don't care that I have to come out here for my time. That doesn't bother me. I wish I had more time. But this is how we are pressing people. We have to get this done.

(Mr. CARDIN assumed the Chair.)

I know in the back end of this is a trip to Munich. I am not going. I kind of wish I was. I would love to have some conversations with some of the folks who don't understand, who maybe want to look at people like me as like a zoo animal. Don't you understand? I do understand.

And, by the way, if it was such an existential threat, where has your country been? Why aren't you at 2 percent of your GDP?

I mean, I had a conversation with some high-level government officials in

a European country. They are pulling back from that number because they have to address the flooding that happened in their country this year.

Imagine that, putting the interest of their own country ahead of spending money on a foreign war. I am a little surprised, though, by the groupthink that sort of embodies anybody that raises legitimate issues or questions as being referred to as some sort of like Putin lover. To me, that is a very soft defense that reveals deficiencies in an argument.

I think we can have a reasonable conversation, like: To what end? What are we seeking to gain? How much will it cost us? Can we be effective? Can there be accountability?

All of those amendments are blocked. All of those conversations are blocked.

I think that the American people will be shocked to know the amount of time and energy we spend just on this issue. I know it is important to people, but, in my first 13 months, I have been shocked at the amount of time that is spent on this one thing—not on the border, not on energy policy, not on the government's willingness to suppress free speech, not on the fact that we are simply not turning our attention quickly enough to China.

I mean, pick it. The Presiding Officer might have 10 things. I might have 10 things. But they are all crowded out by the supernova, which is the Ukraine funding. And, you know, the truth is, it is probably going to get out of the Chamber sometime in the next, whatever, how many hours.

It is dead in the House, and I think the stubbornness to accept any kind of rational debate or meaningful amendments ultimately dooms all of this.

But here we are. And I will also point out that the insistence on some—and I hear Senator SCHUMER, in his comments in the mornings, speak glowingly about this and how important it is. Yet he often also, interestingly, casts half of the country, half of Americans, often in the light of radical, extremist, MAGA Republicans—othering half of his countrymen.

And do you want to understand why people are skeptical of this kind of politics—the “deplorables”?

I actually think there ought to be a drinking game in Washington. Every time CHUCK SCHUMER says “extremist” or “MAGA” or “Republican,” everybody in this town ought to take a drink. This town would be drunk by 10 a.m. It is insane. It is not helpful.

And for somebody who, by the way, talks about the importance of bipartisanship, let me offer this as a refresher. CHUCK SCHUMER, if he had it his way and he had two more votes, would end the filibuster and would pack the Supreme Court and would add States to the Union, and he would federalize our elections. I am not buying it.

And so he is ramrodding this thing through without any amendments. That is not what our Republic is supposed to be. It is not what the Senate is supposed to be.

So there are a lot of problems with this bill, but I want to point out that a lot has been said about, well, you talk about border, but you had your shot. You got everything you wanted—not what I wanted.

And my Republican colleagues who have been at the lunches can testify under oath about what I said all along. I don't believe that this administration is interested in securing our border at all, and I speak with some experience on this because I was attorney general of a State that sued the administration on a few different measures and had to go back in court to get them to abide by court orders. It is not in their DNA.

So we are getting exactly what this administration wants, and no language change is going to change that. So let's just be honest.

Now, I think that they might see how far gone this has gotten. Like many socialist enterprises, arguably well-meaning people realize they have created a total disaster. And that is what we have now. That is what we have at our southern border, because the open borders crowd is in charge.

So to my Democratic colleagues, you have opened up Pandora's box, and the ultimate head fake here about having some, you know, border bill that made things worse isn't going to cut it. Nobody is buying it. Just like nobody is buying that Bidenomics is great. Tell that to the single mom that is paying 40 percent more at the grocery store every week.

So for me, I just want the Biden administration to enforce our existing laws and go back to the policies that were working under President Trump. I didn't want some 400-page bill that did a couple of things that I sincerely objected to, the first of which was to empower these asylum officers to effectively grant citizenship at the border—to grant asylum at the border, and 5 years later they are citizens, outside of the judicial process and at a hurried clip we have never seen before. That is what would have happened—and, by the way, work permits that were immediate. You talk about a magnet for the cartels; that is exactly what that would have created.

The second big objection was how in the world could you possibly cut out courts of jurisdiction that have traditionally handled immigration matters forever, like in Texas? Where did they go? To some other border jurisdiction? No, legal challenges went to the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, perhaps the most liberal circuit in the whole country. I am sure that was just a coincidence.

So there were real problems, and in my view, it took us backward. I am not disparaging any individual about it, but as a Senator, you have the right to analyze the text, which, by the way, was withheld from everyone until Sunday night at 7, with CHUCK SCHUMER saying: Get ready to vote on Wednesday.

I don't know. I guess I haven't been here long enough to think that that is

OK, regardless of how you feel about it. No State does that.

So how did we get to where we are at? Ladies and gentlemen, this was, on day one, an effort by this administration to undo everything that was effective under President Trump. We had gotten to the lowest level of illegal immigration we had seen in a generation, in 40 years, in December of 2020.

And I spoke yesterday and used the analogy of, like, if they had the Super Bowl—and the Chiefs won, thank goodness—but it would be like having the best defense in the history of the NFL one year, and then there is a new coach who didn't like the old coach and said: I have got an idea. We are going to play without a defense next year, because of Trump—totally insane. Results totally predictable, although I am not sure anybody could have fully imagined 9 million people here legally. But that is where we are at.

And so from day one, Joe Biden was determined to undo all of the things that President Trump had done.

Now, there are a couple of reasons for it. One could be total and utter incompetence. I don't know. The President can't remember when he was Vice President. Maybe that is it.

Another reason could be just this reflexive desire to undo everything that Trump did. That is possible. Trump derangement syndrome is real. It is treatable, but it takes a lot of time to get over that, certainly not on day one. That could be it.

The other rationale could be the people who, even just a decade earlier, were on the fringes of the Democratic Party, who at the time were in think tanks, writing white papers about the benefits of open borders and how unfair it was that these arbitrary lines disconnect people, or that everyone has a right to live wherever they want, and they should receive government benefits, no matter what. Maybe those people graduated. Maybe they didn't just graduate from an Ivy League institution with a gender studies degree. Maybe they graduated to the highest levels of government. Maybe they occupy positions in the Oval Office and have broken through.

And if I don't run out of time, there is a very interesting article about this sort of behind-the-scenes debate happening in the Biden administration.

Look, I am standing in front of the desk of Harry Truman. Harry Truman was—news flash—a Democrat. There is no way under God's green Earth that the party of Harry Truman would be OK with this, but a lot can happen between here and the wedding. So here we are.

So, what happened? I don't know the motive. I can make a guess. Only God knows. But what I do know are the actions that took place.

In the myriad of Executive actions, reversals that have caused this historic crisis at our southern border—on January 20, 2021, “I, Joe Biden”—he gives the oath. First thing, first day, he ter-

minates the national emergency at the southwestern border, halting the construction of the border wall. Of course, we need to do that, right? That was Trump's idea.

On January 20, 2021, Joe Biden reversed the Trump-era Executive order and several proclamations that put restrictions on immigration from countries associated with terrorism.

Who thinks that is a good idea? In what world? What color is the sky in a world where we think that is a good idea? I guess because Trump—or you are open borders or you are incompetent.

On January 20, 2021, Joe Biden announced a 100-day moratorium on deportations and immigration enforcement. What? Why? Why would we do that?

Forever, including administrations—Democratic administrations, I may have disagreed with on a bunch of policy positions. It has been the position of Republican and Democratic administrations that our immigration policy is that if you come here illegally, you are detained and then you are deported, unless there is some exception to the law like, let's say, asylum that is legit—9 out of 10 are not legit.

So what did he do? We are not doing that anymore. We thought a lot about this, America. And we actually think that we shouldn't deport anyone anymore.

On January 20, 2021, Joe Biden revoked a Trump-era Executive order that directed the Federal Government to employ all lawful means to enforce the immigration laws of the United States, Trump Executive Order 13768. Let me repeat that. The position of the Biden administration was to not enforce the immigration laws of the United States.

I would love to hear one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle try to defend that to their voters in a town hall or something. But because Trump. Or because open borders. Or because incompetence. I don't know.

And that was just the first day, so get ready. On February 2, 2021, couple weeks later—so they took a break. The Biden administration, after on day 1 undoing all the things that kind of work or some of the things, had a little meeting, I guess, and said, Well, we have more to do. We can't just not enforce immigration laws, and we can't just prevent people from terrorist countries from coming here, and we can't build the border wall. What else should we do?

Issue Executive order that began processing asylum claims at the border. OK. Here comes the fast pass; here comes the express lane. Also in that same month of February 2021, the Biden administration stopped applying title 42 expulsions to children at the border. Title 42 was a very effective means of providing our Border Patrol Agents of turning people around.

That is gone. OK? Still more to do. Before President Trump implemented

title 42, migrants could cross illegally, ask for asylum, and allowed to be in the United States, and they will be processed. So title 42 changed that. Now we are back to the future.

All of a sudden now, what do we have? Catch-and-release. February 17—so the same month; we are not done yet—2021, the CDC exempted unaccompanied alien children from title 42 expulsion requirements—more of the whittling away of one of the more effective means of actually turning people away, because to this administration, everyone deserves to be here. You don't have to wait in line. Here are your government benefits. Can we give you Medicaid and Medicare? How about food stamps?

Of course, this is the humane thing to do, right, they would tell us. Hold on. It ain't.

On March 10, 2021, the Biden administration announced the reinstatement of the Central American Minors Program and expanded on it to June 15, 2021.

In April and again in October 2021, DHS canceled contracts to build the border wall. Well, it was Trump's wall. We have to end the border wall. What does that mean for taxpayers? Well, I will tell you what it means: \$140,000 a day—a day—to contractors to not build the wall.

Think about that for a minute. Materials have been bought. Contractors are paid \$140,000 a day to not build a wall.

Now, in a town that spends trillions, \$140,000 a day—well, where I come from, people still count their money. That is about three times the median family income in Missouri for a year. So don't tell me it isn't anything. It is an insult to taxpayers who literally—my dad worked 7 days a week and the midnight shift. He got a week off for vacation.

All that money taken out by the government that he, if he had more of it, would have spent on us and our family. It is taken out. And to tell taxpayers that you are on the hook to pay a contractor \$140,000 a day is insulting.

And, by the way, if that wasn't enough, they auctioned off the materials that were already bought that could have been built to have a wall. And in one instance, over 4 million dollars' worth of materials were auctioned off for just over \$100,000.

On October 29, 2021, the Biden administration canceled the migrant protection protocols. What is that? That is “Remain in Mexico.”

So when I was attorney general of Missouri, we filed suit, along with Texas, because my contention was every State was a border state. This was a very, very effective way of processing but also sending a very important signal to people who wanted to come here illegally by way of the cartels.

Listen, if you have any knowledge of what goes on at the southern border, the cartels are meeting these people as they traverse, threatening them, extorting them, sexually assaulting

them, abusing them. It is a nasty business. So don't tell me that this is humane; that, you know, A.O.C. crying, you know, in front of the cameras in 2019, you know, was the—was what your focus was.

NBC Nightly News, if President Trump were still in office and what was happening right now at the border—people are drowning and trafficked like they are—they would be camped out. They would be camped out at the southern border. But meanwhile, Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS can't be bothered to go down there.

You know what I wish? I wish CHUCK SCHUMER would cancel his trip to Munich and go to the southern border. He won't do that. He is going to be a god over there, which is why we are in at 1:15 a.m. Again, it doesn't bother me. Doesn't bother me.

So, anyway, with "Remain in Mexico," we file a lawsuit. We win. They had done it the wrong way, rushed it through. In fact, it goes all the way to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court says: Yeah, your preliminary and temporary injunction, it is in effect.

We send it to the lower court to keep this enforced and for a trial on the merits. Biden administration totally ignored it.

So when you ask me: Should we be negotiating with them about some new border provisions? I don't trust them.

So don't tell me: You got everything you wanted. It is not what I wanted. It is a bad bill, as far as I am concerned. But more importantly than that, we are dealing with an administration that is not interested in enforcing border laws. I lived it.

Now, eventually, the temporary wins on title 42 and "Remain in Mexico" went away, and the Biden administration got their way. So we fought as long as we could, but, ultimately, under our immigration laws, the President has immense discretion. And so that is why we have the problems that we have.

So it was a very effective deterrent. Having Mexico essentially as the waiting room did a couple of things: It deterred the cartels, but it also prevented the catch-and-release problem.

And I really hope—I don't know. I mean, it is hard to know because we are not on this floor debating things together, as much as we have these conversations amongst one another. I am on the Armed Services Committee. We try to work well together in a bipartisan fashion. That Committee actually functions, and we have amendments, and we had a bill; came on the floor; you disagreed; it went to the House; and we passed it. I am grateful for my opportunity to serve on that Committee.

And we got a lot of issues that we need to address as a country, including, you know, China that has a bigger navy—not a better navy but a bigger navy than we have.

And one of the reasons why I would like to see these things broken up is so

we actually have real debate on these things individually, but that ship has sailed for now. My hope is that we win the war, ultimately, on that, that people see the wisdom in that. I am going to keep fighting for that. I think it is the right thing to do.

I see the chair of the Appropriations Committee. I appreciate her work and the work of Senator COLLINS on the Appropriations Committee. I long for the day that individual appropriations bills can come out there, whether I agree with them or not. And I know they are working on that.

And I hear tales of a Senate of long ago like it is folklore, of a time where you could come out here and offer an amendment and have a vote and it was pending. And you would figure it out. You know, there would be some social pressure. If Senator LEE or something had 80 amendments—I mean, maybe that—you know, people would say, Senator LEE, how about 8 instead or something? He might agree to that, whatever. But the point is we would figure it out. We would figure it out.

We don't have to have one person as the gatekeeper for everything. Who comes from on high with tablets carved in stone. That is not what this place is supposed to be.

So "Remain in Mexico," as much as I fought it personally as an attorney general and had some temporary victories, went away.

On September 9, 2022, the Biden administration reversed the Trump-era public charge rule.

On December 13, 2022, the Biden administration sued the State of Arizona to force them to remove the shipping containers they placed to close the gaps at the border—the border wall that existed there. Sound familiar? Texas tried to do the same thing.

So when you have a situation where the Federal Government, who does a ton of things it is not supposed to do—one of the things it is supposed to do is secure the southern border. But what happens when they don't do that? States like Arizona and Texas are going to say: We have a population to protect. We have citizens who are at risk. We have fentanyl in our communities. We have high crime. We have human trafficking.

The Biden administration has shown their true colors. They will sue you. They will take you to court. If you do that, there will be hell to pay. Meanwhile, they don't do anything to stop it. And there is a lot more, and I can go on.

But these are the results of Joe Biden's actions, not because of some deficiency in the law. There isn't. We could improve the law. I am more than willing to have that kind of debate, but that is not the bill that we have in front of us. It wasn't.

And so it will be used as a way to sort of acolyte Republicans—but give me a break. No one in their right mind in this country believes that anybody other than Joe Biden is responsible for

9 million people being here illegally. Just like nobody believes in this country that our economy is in better shape for working people because of Joe Biden.

It is amazing how fast an hour can go. There is so much to talk about. But I do want to talk a little bit about—before my time is up—the foreign aid here.

I just want to again point out the real disconnect that the people of this country, regardless of who they vote for in a Presidential election or Senate races, feel with the amount of conversation we have here about foreign aid and borders of other countries and our unwillingness, again, to force the Biden administration to secure our own. There were a lot of ideas to do that. None of them were given an opportunity to really have a full airing.

And in many instances, we are funding both sides of these things. We are about to send—well, this Chamber—it is not going to happen, by the way, because it is DOA in the House. So like a bunch of hamsters on a wheel, alienating Members along the way who would like to work together, we are funding both sides of this because, on the one hand, \$61 billion could be going to Ukraine, but we are actually helping Russia by our ridiculous energy policy.

Joe Biden's war on domestic energy production is real. The restrictions he just put on LNG and the export opportunities we have as a country are real. If your mission is to disempower Russia and Putin, you have essentially sided with climate alarmists instead. No country in the history of the world has done either one of these things. No country has ever willingly opened up their border to the level that we see right now. And no country has ever willingly ceded their energy.

Since the beginning of time, tribes and nations have gone to war for natural resources. Conquest and war were predicated on the idea of gaining more. We have everything we will ever need right under our feet. We don't need to go anywhere. We don't need to be an imperial nation. We got it.

But here is the problem. You can't check the box anymore if you are on the Democrats' side about being virtuous.

It is insane. Let's be all of the above. Let's be dominant. Let's be independent. It is in our national security interest. Let's send it to our friends and allies around the world. We are not doing that. We are on both sides of that equation.

And as it relates to Israel, in my final couple minutes here, I do want to say, I had an amendment to pull Israel out of here, to have a separate vote on it. But they are being held hostage to Ukraine—cynical, but it is true.

I have been to Israel. Anyone who has understands the dangers, the proximity of the threats. All of us have had moving personal experiences there, including a mass I attended at the Church of

the Holy Sepulcher and a moving experience at the Western Wall with Jewish friends.

And to think about what happened there October 7, and to see—I don't think a lot of Senators had reservations about going to the private viewing of that video, but I thought it was incumbent on me to go as a Senator. And some of the things I saw in that private viewing for 55 minutes, you can never unsee.

So my contention and my argument here all along has been that I have never been in the category of lumping this together, just like I have never been in the category of lumping all the categories together in an omnibus or minibuses, quite frankly. I understand the constraints, but if we plan a little better or make some reforms, I hope we can do them individually, regardless of how it plays out in wins. I think that is important.

But in that same bill, helping the people who support terrorism in Gaza isn't solving any problems. We can't have it both ways here. The "pay for slay" program by the Palestinian Authority is real. They use government money to pay terrorist families for killing Jews and Christians. And the pivot by the Biden administration now for political reasons away from Israel is not unnoticed, but that is where we are at.

So, Mr. President, I would just say that the idea that we would be moving a bill that has America last, for all this debate over 4 months—more than that, quite frankly; for a year because this was involved in the CR debates—for all the debate we have had, this Chamber is about ready to pass a bill that sends billions and billions and billions, and billions and billions and billions of dollars to Ukraine to secure their border but does nothing to secure America's border. And the working folks back home that feel left behind by this town and their ridiculous priorities and being \$34 trillion in debt and shipping jobs overseas—they see it. It is a total disconnect. And I for one am going to stand with them. I am going to stand with those people—my people—the folks back home, and against permanent Washington that, come hell or high water, wants to send a disconnected package with billions to Ukraine, and nothing—nothing—for the American people.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, let me first start off and say how bad I feel for the Senate floor staff here. It didn't have to be this way. We could have—Senator SCHUMER could have easily sent us home, let people have a good night's rest, come back at a reasonable hour and continue this debate. But, unfortunately, Senate leadership is so hell bent to provide funding for Ukraine, they couldn't wait. They had to work you folks through the night, and I feel bad for that.

You will notice I have a chart here. It is the one I really started using back in about 2013, 2014, on the problems we are having at our border.

I wish that was the primary debate we were having right now: What do we need to do to secure our border? What should the U.S. Senate, what should Congress, what should this administration be doing to keep Americans safe?

Now, unfortunately—and I will get into that in much greater detail—this was pretty well taken off the table, not because Republicans were reluctant to join in a bipartisan immigration bill—we never asked for that. But what we asked for is, as long as the administration had a high priority of supplying another \$60-plus billion to Ukraine to help Ukraine secure its border, we thought maybe—just maybe—we could use that as leverage to force this administration to secure our border.

Now, it is important to recognize that President Biden has probably all the authority he needs to secure the border.

Why do I say that?

Well, President Trump, when faced with his crisis, which never ever hit 5,000 people a day—you see how sharp that peak was and how quickly it dropped. President Trump used what Executive authority he had—authority that the Supreme Court wrote in section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which exudes deference to the President in every clause. It entrusts the President with the decision whether and when to suspend entry "whenever [he] finds that the entry of aliens . . . would be detrimental to [national] interests."

It defers to him to make a decision on whose entry to suspend—"all aliens or any class of aliens."

For how long? "For such period as he shall deem necessary."

And what conditions? "Any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate."

The Supreme Court goes on to say: It is therefore surprising that we have frequently observed that section 212(f) of the INA vests the President with ample power to pose any restrictions in addition to those elsewhere enumerated in the INA.

Now, it is true that President Trump, in securing that border, met with a great deal of resistance. The radical, open-border crowd challenged virtually every action he wanted to take in court.

He eventually overcame all those. I will go through this history. I will come back in greater detail.

President Trump used existing authority and sheer will power, a little arm twisting with the President of Mexico, from peak to trough—from a little less than 5,000 people a day for only 1 month, but within 12 months brought it down to about 1,200 a day.

This is right at the beginning of COVID.

And then title 42 kicked in and dropped it from about 1,200 a day to a low of 570. That is what President

Trump did to use his existing authority.

What happened after that?

Well, the Presidential debates started heating up, and every Democrat candidate for President on the debate stage said we were going to end deportations and offer immigrants free healthcare. You had all these big city mayors declaring their city sanctuary cities: Come one, come all. We will protect you from Federal agents.

So, guess what. They started coming.

Unfortunately, President Biden won the Presidency, and he made good on that promise.

This marks President Biden's Inauguration and the explosion of illegal immigration into America. It is hard to get the exact figures because this President's Department of Homeland Security is not exactly what you would call transparent. They don't give up the numbers the American people deserve to know very easily. So we have to kind of cobble these things together from different sources.

I think it is pretty obvious in looking at the numbers that about 6 million people since the start of the Biden administration have entered this country illegally and have stayed. We really do not know who these people are. Who we definitely don't know "who these people are" are the close to 2 million "got-aways," known and unknown. By the way, the known "got-away" is kind of a misnomer. We have no idea who these people are. We have just detected them coming across the border.

So you have about 6 million people total. There are 31 States that have a population of less than 6 million people. My State of Wisconsin is on the bubble. We have about 5.8 million, 5.9 million people. That is the magnitude—the order of magnitude—of the migrant flow that President Biden—in using the same executive authority that President Trump used to secure the border, President Biden used that exact same authority to open it wide open and put our Nation at risk.

When you listen to FBI Director Wray and other law enforcement officials talk about the current threat level, Director Wray, during testimony in front of both the House and Senate, says that all the warning signs are flashing; that the threat of foreign terrorist organizations has not been higher since 9/11.

Gee, I wonder how a foreign terrorist fighter could enter this country? Is President Biden's softness on Iran—the coddling of the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism—in any way tied to what intelligence he might have of sleeper cells that are ready to be triggered if President Biden's response to their sponsor of terrorism is too hard? It is just a question, but I think it is a pretty legitimate question.

So President Biden opens up the border. He exposes America to these threats—a clear and present danger. He

did it, and members of the administration carry on the drumbeat of “President Trump’s secure border was so inhumane. It is so inhumane to enforce the law. It was so inhumane to stop or certainly slow, dramatically slow, the trafficking of humans—the sex trafficking, the drug trafficking.”

The fact of the matter is, as to this explosion of illegal immigration that President Biden and his Democratic colleagues here in Congress, who also want an open border, who also caused this problem—their open border policy is facilitating the multibillion-dollar business model of some of the most evil people on the planet—the drug traffickers, with over 100,000 overdoses of primarily fentanyl; the human traffickers; the sex traffickers.

How do you think these young women pay off their \$7,000 to \$10,000 to \$15,000 human trafficking fees? They involuntarily get put into the sex trafficking business. There is nothing humane about President Biden and the Democrats’ in Congress open border policy. It is grotesquely inhumane.

I mentioned drug trafficking. A few years ago—certainly in Wisconsin but I think this is all over the Nation—a big problem was methamphetamine labs. Dangerous labs were sprinkling up all over—in little towns and big towns all over the country. That is not a problem for law enforcement anymore because, with President Biden and his Democrat colleagues in Congress and their open border policy, now methamphetamine is so cheap coming in the southern border that those meth labs have been put out of business.

I recently sat down with the sheriffs in Winnebago and Fond du Lac Counties. They were talking about the drug trafficking and the explosion of it in the Biden administration years. They described how, prior to the Biden administration, there was a hub—a hub—of drug trafficking in Chicago, and the branches split out from there into Wisconsin. Now what has happened is the drug trade is flourishing to such a degree that now Wisconsin has hubs with branches springing out from those hubs as well. Again, I mentioned all of the overdose deaths—the tragedies—facilitated by the open border policy.

This chart is historical up to this point. This is the line from December of last year when, in one day, we experienced 14,509—14,509—migrants flooding our border. It averaged over 10,000 people a day.

Since the start of the Biden administration, the average—the average—has been over 7,000 illegal immigrants per day, every day, since President Biden entered office. I remember back then, during Trump’s crisis, there would be reports of these huge caravans of a couple thousand people. That used to be big news when President Trump was President—a couple thousand in a massive caravan. Now 7,000 a day is barely ever reported on. In fact, the only reason the current crisis is being reported on, the only reason President Biden

and his Democratic colleagues in Congress and their open border is getting a light shined on it now, is because you have mayors like Mayor Adams in New York and Mayor Johnson in Chicago—sanctuary cities, proud to be a sanctuary city; come one, come all—who all of a sudden found out it is not a very good idea.

Mayor Adams is dealing with less than 2 percent—about 100,000 to 110,000 people—of the 6 million people. Less than 2 percent of those illegal immigrants let in by Joe Biden and his Democratic colleagues here in Congress are going to destroy New York City. Mayor Johnson has similar comments in Chicago. So the media is forced to report that. They don’t want to. They would like to keep covering up for the President, but the conditions have gotten so bad that even the mainstream media—the liberal, the biased, the cover-uppers for President Biden—have to report on this. So now more Americans are awakened to this clear and present danger.

When President Biden proposed his security supplemental—funds for Ukraine, for Taiwan, for Israel, for the border—I believe his initial proposal for the border was about \$14 billion, not to secure it but to hire more agents to more efficiently and more effectively encounter, process, and disperse. That has been their solution to the problem. That is why Secretary Mayorkas says: We don’t have a problem. We have the border under control. It is because they tell the CBP that their goal is to encounter, process, and disperse within an 8-hour period. They have gotten very efficient at it. That is not a solution.

So when President Biden proposed his supplemental, a lot of Americans started making the point that, before we send tens of billions of dollars overseas—as sympathetic as you are or may be of those countries receiving those funds, and I have a great deal of sympathy. But before we start sending all of those tens of billions of dollars to help other countries secure their borders, maybe—just maybe—the right thing to do would be to secure our own border first; to eliminate that clear and present danger; to reduce the multibillion-dollar business model of the human, sex, and drug traffickers. Maybe we ought to do that first.

Maybe we ought to look at Americans and go: You know, we want to keep our own citizens safe and secure. We don’t want an underground economy. We don’t want illegal immigrants being abused and taken advantage of by unscrupulous employers and oppressed American wages. Let’s secure our own border first.

For the Republicans in Congress, our reaction was, Well, we don’t know how to force this President to use his Executive authority to secure the border. Maybe we ought to use that as leverage. So that is what we asked of our leadership. Now, our leader certainly wants to secure Ukraine’s border. It is

one of his top priorities. It took him a while to understand that the American people really do want a secure border and that maybe he ought to take that into consideration.

So we recommended that the conference—I was a little surprised at this because he definitely changed his position. We recommended, OK, we need to defeat cloture on this supplemental to show the President that we are serious about securing the border. I had my doubts as to how genuine that move really was. I really had my doubts when, all of a sudden, we started negotiating, entering into secret negotiations with the administration and Democrats here in Congress, who, again, by and large, want an open border, who caused this problem. That is a real impediment to negotiation.

I have done a lot of negotiating in my business career, and you only want to negotiate with people in good faith and only when you agree on the goal. The problem with secret negotiations with people who want an open border and who caused the problem is you have to recognize they are really not looking to close the border. That is not what they want. What they want is political cover. They were negotiating for political cover, and whether our leader realized it or not, that is what he apparently gave them.

Again, I don’t fault Senator LANKFORD. I think he is certainly knowledgeable about this. He was on my committee when I was the chairman of it. We held more than 30 hearings on this. We made multiple trips. He is knowledgeable. He gets along well with the other side. He negotiated something I completely supported, the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act, with Senator HASSAN. So he was not a bad guy to ask to do some of the negotiation for us; but you had to recognize what you were dealing with—a negotiating partner, again, who wasn’t looking to secure the border but was looking for political cover.

Then when the elements of the border bill—it wasn’t a border bill; it was an immigration bill—started leaking out, it became all too apparent that that bill was not going to secure the border. That bill was going to give Democrats political cover. It is not talked about much in that bill. There are all kinds of elements that have been very fairly criticized.

(Ms. CORTEZ MASTO assumed the Chair.)

The main problem with that bill is the 4,000 discretionary threshold. I mean, a lot of ink has been spilled on the 5,000 threshold that was mandatory—that the President stop processing asylum claims and send people home. In other words, at 5,000, it was mandatory that the President secure the border; at 4,000, it was discretionary. And that authority only lasted for 3 years.

So what is the problem with that?

Well, I mentioned earlier that President Trump ran into all kinds of resistance from radical left, open border

groups that challenged just about every action he took. By the way, the court systems have undermined that authority. We could pass a law to reverse those and restore that authority, but that is not what that border bill was about—not even close.

But if you set 4,000 as the discretionary, what you are implying is that the President doesn't have that authority. The Congress is now weighing in, and they are codifying the fact that the President can act to suspend asylum claims until we reach 4,000 a day on average for 7 days. Then that authority goes away after 3 years.

So I certainly can imagine the radical left open border groups running to court in 3 years—or in 1 year if we have a new President who actually wants to secure the border—and saying: Oh, Congress can't do that. Congress has spoken. Congress has said that the President cannot stop processing asylum claims even though the Supreme Court has ruled that 212(f) exudes deference to the President specifically on that.

If you would have passed that law, we would have neutered that authority. We couldn't allow that. The fact that Republican negotiators didn't understand that was more than unfortunate.

So, again, it wasn't people like me criticizing the bill that killed that bill; it was the public. Once the language was actually released and people realized that all the rumors were not only true, the bill was actually worse than what was rumored, that bill killed itself. It should offer no political cover. It was not a border security bill.

What this chart shows—again, this shows—going back here. That is President Obama's humanitarian crisis. That is when daily apprehensions—we called them back then—were a little more than 2,000 a day. That is when his Secretary of Homeland Security said that 1,000 a day was really a bad day for him. Later on, after he left office, he said 1,000 a day overwhelms the system. Yet the political-cover immigration bill would have normalized thousands. I can't tell you exactly how many.

There were tougher asylum provisions. There was more rapid adjudication. It wasn't all bad. There were some good elements there. But the bad overwhelmed the good, and it was worse than doing nothing at all. It doesn't say much about a border security bill, does it?

This chart would show Obama's humanitarian crisis, President Trump's, which he fixed, and then you have this massive inflow from President Biden.

Let's do a little history lesson here, just kind of going back to how we got to this point, because one of the problems in the Senate bill is that it does nothing to President Biden's abuse of the parole process.

Again, understand what parole is. Parole should be used on a case-by-case basis. Let's say somebody has cancer in a different country. They want to come

into one of our premier cancer centers and get treatment. They are granted parole. They come in, they get their treatment, and they go home. Maybe they have to attend somebody's funeral. It is for humanitarian situations.

Under the Trump administration, generally it was about 5- or 6,000 people a year who were granted parole. The Biden administration has granted parole to hundreds of thousands—a complete abuse of the process.

Where did he learn that from? Where did he learn his lawlessness from? From the Obama administration because what sparked all of this was the abuse of prosecutorial discretion, which is what President Obama did with the deferred action on childhood arrivals memorandum granting prosecutorial discretion to classes, to hundreds of thousands of people—an abuse of process. And that sparked all of this.

I mentioned earlier that I began working on these charts—a chart like this—back in about 2013, 2014, after the DACA decision in June of 2012. Back then, I was primarily concerned about unaccompanied children because that really seemed to be the real crisis. We have always had a flow of single adults—they are a lot easier to take care of—but unaccompanied children are an issue.

So the DACA memorandum, that abuse of prosecutorial discretion, what that did is it dramatically increased the number of unaccompanied children. It went from about 2- to 3,000, and then it started spiking, as you can see. That is in red.

Pretty soon, people got the word out that the immigration law changed in America, and so now people are coming in as families as well. That is in blue. You see, right now, that is the primary abuse.

One of the issues with the family units is that we really do not know whether that family or that group of people who present themselves as a family really is a family now. We don't do adequate DNA testing.

I have been down at the border. I remember seeing some little 18-month-old little girl being held by some scruffy-looking 50-year-old. I seriously doubt that was her father. I seriously doubt it. I hope it was. I seriously doubt it.

In testimony before my committee, we found out that they would sell children—they would sell children—for \$81 to form a family unit. They would leave little boys. One little boy was left in a 100-degree field, just abandoned. The only identification they wrote is a phone number on his shoe. Is that humane? There is nothing humane about the open border policy.

But, anyway, that is what sparked all of this. That abuse of prosecutorial discretion led to all of this eventually.

Back then, President Obama declared a humanitarian crisis. Again, 2,000 a day—a humanitarian crisis, and it was. It is. So President Obama started detaining families.

There was a decision back I think in 1996, if memory serves me right—it could be a different year—called the Flores decision. It involved unaccompanied children. Basically, there was a settlement over this one little girl named Flores. Basically, the settlement was the United States cannot hold and detain an unaccompanied child for more than 20 days. We have to process them through, turn them over to HHS, and find some sponsor family or do something with that child. We can't detain them within the Department of Homeland Security. We didn't have a Department of Homeland Security back then but within the government structure.

Of course, that was taken to court once people starting abusing our process and starting coming as families, and there was what they called the Flores decision reinterpretation, and that applied that settlement to not only just unaccompanied children but children in family units.

So even the Obama administration started separating families, whom they could detain, from the children, whom they couldn't. That, of course, was politically untenable, and they stopped. But the result of that stoppage, the result that you could no longer detain people, pretty well—you really ramped up catch-and-release.

That caused President Trump's problem. What President Trump did—again, against great resistance of the open border crowd—is he enacted some pretty smart policies.

I actually worked with Senator SINEMA on something we called Operation Safe Return. We had three Democrats join in that letter to DHS and a number of Republicans. This was something we worked on with DHS itself, trying to design a rapid adjudication process of asylum claims and a rapid deportation, safe deportation, back to their home countries when they don't qualify for asylum.

By the way, a very small percentage of people who come to this country actually qualify for asylum. It is a very tough standard. You have to be persecuted by the government, your government, on six different criteria. Economic migration is not a valid asylum claim, and that is the vast majority of people coming here.

Listen, I am sympathetic with them. I want a functioning legal immigration system so these people can't be abused.

Anyway, what President Trump did is he started addressing that. He took that Operation Safe Return, and that morphed into the migrant protection program, otherwise known as "Return to Mexico."

Now, that didn't work immediately because we weren't getting cooperation from Mexico. We also didn't have the third safe country agreements in place with Central America. But those got in place.

Then, because Mexico wasn't cooperating, finally, President Trump threatened tariffs against Mexico. That got

their attention, and lo and behold, problem solved—until Democrat Presidential candidates started talking about they are going to end deportation, give free healthcare, and then, even worse, President Biden took office and opened up the border.

Again, as you can see, I just recreated the Obama humanitarian crisis in comparison to a normalized flow. This is about 4,500 a day. Maybe it would only be 3,900 a day. Under the 4,000 discretionary limit, it is going to be thousands a day, which is why that bill had to be defeated.

Again, I wish we were debating a true border security bill. I wish we were giving the American people what they want, which is a secure border, being more concerned about Americans' safety than we are the safety of foreigners. I wish we were doing that, but we are not. Instead, we are debating this supplemental, and the largest chunk of that spending is going to Ukraine.

Just like I have somewhat of a unique perspective on the border crisis because I was chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs for 6 years—I have made multiple trips down to the border—I also have a different perspective, a unique perspective, on the whole Ukraine situation.

I served as the either the chairman or ranking member of the European Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for about 10 years. I have made multiple trips to Ukraine. My first trip actually was in I think June of 2011. We went to Georgia, which had already been invaded by Russia, then to Ukraine, and then up to the Baltic States.

Back then, the main issue in Ukraine was the corruption within the wheat markets and the corruption in their news media—the news oligarchs, they called them. I thought that was kind of interesting because I look back at America and go: Well, we have billionaires who own the media, too. We just call them billionaires; we don't call them oligarchs. We have the same corrupt and highly biased media in America, so we shouldn't be throwing stones.

Anyway, that was the big issue back then—corruption in the media, the media oligarchs, and corruption in the wheat markets.

I was the only Member of Congress who attended Zelenskyy's inauguration in May of 2019. I went back a few months later with Senator MURPHY, who was also either chairman or ranking member of the European Subcommittee. We did quite a bit of traveling together into Europe.

I think two things stuck out about Zelenskyy in those meetings. The first is, I do believe he was sincere. We attended his speech at the high court of—I can't remember the exact name but the high court fighting corruption. He made a very heartfelt plea laying out his goal. He wanted to "defeat"—that is the word he used—he wanted to "de-

feat" corruption, but the problem he had is he was a political neophyte. The long knives were out immediately, and he was never able, really, to accomplish that goal.

The other important thing to remember and certainly what I remember about this is that back then—you have to remember this was 2019—Vladimir Putin has already illegally annexed Crimea. He was already in firm control of eastern Ukraine. But even at that point, President Zelenskyy described to me—told me that he wanted to do a peace deal with Putin. He understood there was no way Ukraine could dislodge Russia from those areas. There was just no way.

Now, he realized it wasn't going to be popular. I mean, of course, it was not going to be popular. You have an invading force in your territory. But he was practical enough to realize that Russia is a much larger country. It has four times the population of Ukraine. It has a much larger industrial base. It has a powerful navy. So he understood that he did not have the wherewithal, he did not have the capability, Ukraine didn't have the capability of pushing Putin out, so he was intelligent enough to realize: I have to do a peace deal.

How is that relevant right now? As much as it pains me to say this—and I don't like this reality—Vladimir Putin is an evil war criminal. Make no mistake about it: We all agree on that. Vladimir Putin is an evil war criminal. He did not have to invade Ukraine. There is no justification for what he did, but he did it.

We are now about 2 years into this bloodbath. And now, we are in a bloody stalemate. And the reality I think a lot of my colleagues who are supporting this aid package are ignoring is that Vladimir Putin will not lose this war. Losing the war is existential for Vladimir Putin.

Again, Russia has four times the population, a much larger military industrial base—or industrial base just in general. They can produce 4.5 million 155-millimeter shells. They are shooting 10,000 a day right now at Ukraine. It is a bloody stalemate, primarily a war with artillery. Ukraine can only fire a couple thousand a day. I don't think the West manufacturing capability has exceeded a million a year yet.

By the way, a little factoid: Russia produces those 155-millimeter shells for about \$600 apiece. Our military industrial complex charges us 5 to \$6,000 apiece—an order of magnitude higher. We are spending 880-some-billion dollars a year on defense. Are we getting our money's worth out of that? Are we asking that question? Are we doing the oversight? We should be.

China, it is hard to say exactly what they spend, but it is about \$300 billion a year. Now, purchasing power parity, they are probably getting more for the 300 billion. We are spending almost 900 billion. They are spending 300 billion. In the briefings I get, they are building up their military rapidly.

The next 13 nations combined spend less than \$700 billion combined. So I would ask: What are you spending that money on? You know, we are saying—by the way, I think it is a depraved justification. It is depraved to say one of the rationales for spending \$60 billion for Ukraine is that, Well, it is really not going to Ukraine; it is being used here in America; it is creating jobs in your State.

Why do I say that is depraved? Because if you are really concerned about the Ukrainian people—that is my concern, the Ukrainian people—if you are really concerned about the Ukrainian people, you ought to be concerned about what is happening to their country.

It is hard to get the exact statistics, but I have got something like 70,000 Ukrainian soldiers killed in action, 10-to-40,000 civilians, 100-to-120,000 Ukrainians wounded. I have heard other estimates far higher than that. Russia has about 120,000 soldiers killed in action; wounded, almost 200,000. This is a bloody stalemate. I have seen some estimates of the destruction of Ukraine approaching—if not surpassing—a trillion dollars.

So again, the awful reality that we need to face, if we are really going to vote to add \$60 billion to add fuel to the fire of a bloody stalemate is, what result is that going to be? The only way this war ends—because Putin is not going to lose this war—the only way it ends is in a negotiated settlement.

And every day that goes by, the settlement gets worse and worse. It doesn't get better; it gets worse. More Ukrainians will have died by then. More Russian conscripts. And I take no joy in that. I take no joy in the death of a Russian conscript, some young man yanked out of his village by Vladimir Putin, sent to the front as cannon fodder. I take no joy in that. None of us should. And more of Ukraine gets destroyed.

Our policy should have been, for quite some time now, to use whatever influence we have in Ukraine not to fuel the flames but to try to reach a peace agreement. Again, I am not Pollyannaish. I realize how hard that is going to be. There have been atrocities created, war crimes. You don't just kiss and make up. That just isn't healed overnight. That will take generations. But we better start now.

That is one of the main reasons—as sympathetic as I am for the Ukrainian people—I don't see how sending another \$60 billion helps their plight because I see no strategy whatsoever on the part of the Biden administration to actually try and end the war. I see no strategy whatsoever on this "spend more money and send more munitions and stoke the fires, fuel the flames of the bloody, relentless stalemate." Again, unfortunately, that is just the stark reality of the situation.

It was interesting, we did an X Space—I think that is how you pronounce it—with David Sacks, associate

of Elon Musk. Elon Musk was on with a couple of Senators: Senator VANCE and Senator LEE. And I did mention, I just read the new book about Elon Musk by Walter Isaacson. And in that book, Walter Isaacson describes what Elon Musk has developed; he calls it an idiot index.

It is a very interesting concept. I am in manufacturing. It really resonated with me. I kind of look at things the same way. Basically, you take a look at any product, and you calculate what does the raw material cost that product. You know, this desk, maybe you have got \$10 worth of wood in there, maybe you have 20. I don't know what it is. The next question you ask is: Well, what is the price? And it is the price divided by the raw material cost, and that gives you your idiot index. The higher that number, the more opportunity there is for dramatically reducing the cost of that product. And that is what Elon Musk is a genius at.

I was being interviewed by a Wall Street Journal reporter—I haven't verified this, but this is what the reporter told me. He said that Elon Musk—through the use of things like idiot indexes and his just relentless pursuit of questioning every requirement and driving costs out just maniacally, quite honestly—he has taken the cost of a launch of a rocket from a billion dollars to \$70 million. And he has come up with the technology to land the boosters synchronously in pads right next to each other. So that is what the private sector does.

We talked earlier about spending 880-some-billion dollars on defense, 5 to \$6,000 per 155-millimeter shell versus Russia spending \$600. It is time for Congress, it is time for the Senate to do oversight, start putting pressure on our military industrial complex to deliver a whole lot more for a whole lot less as opposed to being driven—as President Eisenhower warned us—being driven by the military industrial complex into all of these foreign entanglements.

While I have time, I do want to provide a little retrospection of America's foreign entanglements. Let me first say I truly believe America is a good country because Americans are good people. The reason we supported the Ukrainian people is because we want to help anybody fighting for their freedom. That is who Americans are.

As Colin Powell and others famously said, We don't send our sons and daughters halfway around the world to conquer land. The only land we ever asked for is enough to bury our dead. We send our sons and daughters overseas to help other people fight for what we have—freedom, for those universal goals and values that we all cherish: safety, security, prosperity, opportunity.

That is what Americans want for not only ourselves and our children but for everybody on the planet. We are good people. We are a good country. But we have had leaders, we have the military industrial complex, we have Agencies

that are far from perfect—but I think more they led us astray. As a nation, we better start taking a look back and going: What was the result of that intervention?

I was just recently in Hanoi. What wonderful people. We did a trip to Singapore, to Thailand, and then to Vietnam. Singapore per capita GDP is about 75,000. It is a wealthy country, and you can tell. Go to Thailand, it is a tenth of that: 7,500. And you see squalor. You see highrises. There is wealth. There is the income gap. But you see squalor. You go to Vietnam, half of Thailand's GDP, you don't see squalor. You see an incredibly industrious people. We were told a poll recently of Vietnamese, and 96 percent of Vietnam has a positive opinion of America, because we are good.

We never should have gone to war and bombed Vietnam. And that is no way denigrating the service and sacrifice of the finest among us. Fifty-thousand paid the ultimate price. Was it worth it? What has been the result of Afghanistan? What has been the result of Iraq?

I recently saw a meme. The title was, this just shows—to describe it better, it showed a picture of Iran, and it had all of these U.S. military bases surrounding Iran. It was basically saying, Well, you can see why we find Iran so provocative, because they put their country so close to our bases. Again, I don't apologize for the moles. They are the largest state sponsor of terror. They provide the IEDs that were responsible for more than 600 American soldiers dead. Do we ever look back and say, Was that worth it? Did we take the right actions?

Ukraine—listen, I was as big a cheerleader as anybody, as those freedom-loving Ukrainians took to the Maidan, demanding freedom, asking what we have—prosperity. They wanted to link up with the West which we, of course, were happy to accept them. Then I did walk the streets with John McCain, and I saw the bullet holes in the lightposts. I visited the memorial to the more than 100 Ukrainians who were slaughtered by their own government.

Now, the price of freedom is high. Those people are obviously martyrs for the cause. That was 2014. Fast forward. I truly think this war never had to happen. I remember being briefed in a SCIF. And afterwards, I was talking to two of my colleagues. I said, I think there is still a way of avoiding this war, but we won't take those actions. We either declare that we will never allow Ukraine, at least in the foreseeable future, to become a partner in NATO—we could declare that. We could say we are not going to bring Ukraine to NATO membership. The other thing we could have done is probably take U.N. troops and put them in as a tripwire. We certainly didn't very visibly show Putin all the defensive weaponry we were providing for Ukraine to deter it from invading. But we didn't do that and Putin invaded.

I still am very interested to find out exactly what happened in Istanbul, when they were sitting down trying to bring the war to a quick conclusion and Boris Johnson flies in. What happened there? I don't know. All I know is the result has been awful for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

I guess my time is up—not quite, unless you are really anxious.

We need to understand and accept reality. As much as we hate it, you cannot create good policy living in a fantasy, world constructing your own reality. You have to accept the hard realities of the moment.

And just to repeat, with my remaining minutes here, our first priority should be to secure our own border, to protect Americans, to keep Americans safe, to keep our children safe. This surge—this catastrophe—is not just impacting cities like New York and Chicago. There is a small little city in Wisconsin—Whitewater, WI. I was called down there with the chief of police and county sheriffs. It has 15,000 in population. They have hundreds of migrant children in their school system speaking a different dialect of Spanish that their bilingual teachers don't understand. So they have to hire another interpreter. It costs them a hundred thousand dollars plus.

Police calls are taking three or four times the normal time. So other law enforcement activities are way down as they are responding to the migrants. Migrants are crowding into apartments unsafely, 12 to an apartment. They are trying to grapple with it. Now they are asking for help, for funding.

I am sympathetic with them, but the solution isn't to spend billions on sanctuary cities. The solution is to reduce the flow to a trickle so we don't have to spend those hundreds of billions of dollars taking care of this catastrophe. That is what this is. Six million people—it keeps rising by a couple hundred thousand a month; probably more than 7 million by the end of Biden's, hopefully, only term.

This shouldn't be that hard. This didn't require a monstrosity of a Rube Goldberg immigration bill. All we asked for was some enforcement mechanism tied to Ukraine funding to leverage that funding to force President Biden, who wants an open border, who caused this problem, to use the Executive authority he already has to secure the border, and oh, by the way, recognize how much easier it is for a Democrat President to secure the border versus a Republican.

President Trump, again, faced strong resistance from the open border crowd and no help from Democrats here in this Chamber to override court decisions, for example. President Biden, I know he may face similar resistance, but he would have Republicans here more than willing to pass a quick little law by unanimous consent to override a wrongful court decision like the Flores reinterpretation.

It may not be widely known, but President Obama's Secretary of DHS,

Jeh Johnson, completely disagreed with that court decision—completely disagreed with it, wrongfully decided. What President Obama should have done is come to Congress and asked for us to write a very focused law, a very targeted law, to instruct the court that you are wrong. We can detain families with their children. That is the humane thing to do, as opposed to initiate a massive catch-and-release, facilitating human trafficking, sex trafficking, and drug trafficking that goes along with it—again, a reality that I know my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't want to face. They don't want to admit what a crisis, what a catastrophe, this is.

Secretary Mayorkas—how many times has he been before the Senate and House? When we ask him: Secretary Mayorkas, will you recognize this is a crisis? No, Senator. At least a problem? No, Senator, it is a challenge. It is a challenge we are rising to. We have control of the border, Secretary Mayorkas says. And again, his definition of control and their solution is billions of dollars to sanctuary cities, billions of dollars for more CBP officers, not to secure the border, not to stop the flow, but more efficiently and effectively encounter, process, and disperse, and create a problem for cities large and small that is going to be with us for years, if not decades. This has to end.

It is a tragedy that this body, this Senate, couldn't rise to the occasion and actually construct a real border security bill, one that would bring this down to a trickle.

Do what President Trump did in March and April of 2020. Bring this flow down to way under 1,000 a day. That is what the American people expected. That is what we should have delivered. That is what we have failed miserably to do. And now we are about ready to send \$60 billion to Ukraine—no border security whatsoever—and we will fuel the flames and prolong the destruction of Ukraine and the killing of its citizens and Russian conscripts.

This is a pretty easy “no” vote for me. It boggles my mind that so many of my colleagues here are actually going to vote yes on this without first securing our border.

I yield to the good Senator from Nebraska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. RICKETTS. Madam President, I rise today to join my colleagues in talking about the catastrophe at our southern border, what has happened under this Biden administration, how it was created by Joe Biden because of his policies. This self-inflicted wound has been created by Joe Biden and his policies.

Let's step back a little bit to see: How did we get here? How did we get to this situation where we have a flood of illegal immigrants coming across our southern border?

As my colleague from Wisconsin just described, under the Trump adminis-

tration, President Trump brought the crossings of illegal immigrants to a 45-year low, less than 1,000 encounters per day. He did that with the same tools that President Biden has available to him today. But instead of taking the same policies that President Trump used to control that border, President Biden was in a rush to undo those policies. He promised a pathway to citizenship for 11 million illegal immigrants that are in this country. He promised to stop “locking people up.” He said: For those who come seeking asylum, we should immediately have a passage to absorb them and keep them safe until they can be heard.

And he said those who cross the border illegally “should not be the focus of deportation.” Well, certainly on that last point, President Biden has been accurate. If you look at the September numbers, there were about 270,000 contacts along our southern border and only about 10 percent of those folks were deported. He is certainly living up to his promise.

In his first 100 days of office, President Biden issued 94 Executive orders on immigration. He stopped the construction of the border wall. He halted deportations. He suspended the “Remain in Mexico” provisions.

He repealed Trump's interior enforcement Executive order that prioritized immigration enforcement. President Trump's order encouraged States and local jurisdictions to enforce Federal immigration laws. Part of it was to revive the Secure Communities Program, which ordered the Department of Homeland Security to consider stripping Federal funding from so-called sanctuary cities and encourage additional criminal prosecutions for illegal entry into the United States.

Under the Biden administration, Joe Biden has abused the process of parole. I want to be clear what we are talking about when we are talking about parole. We are not talking about parole as in, I have been in prison and now I have done enough of my time and have shown good behavior in prison, so that I get paroled and released into the public with supervision from our criminal justice system.

No, that is not what we are talking about here. Parole is a function that the executive branch can use to be able to allow people to come into this country. The way the law is written, it is supposed to be on a case-by-case basis; that it is only to be used in cases of extreme humanitarian need or in the best interest of our country. And if we look back over the Obama and Trump administration, on average, about 5,600 people were paroled into this country.

So these are people who are not U.S. citizens. These people were paroled into our country in a given year. That was a just—again, it was being used on a case-by-case basis by the previous two administrations. Under this President, he has absolutely abused parole. This is a lawless administration. President Biden has paroled, last year, into

this country, 1.2 million illegal immigrants—1.2 million. To put that in perspective, that is about two-thirds the population of my home State—two-thirds the population of Nebraska.

Again, let's take a step back and compare that 1.2 million people in the last year versus an average of 5,600. This is absolute abuse of executive power, of taking a law that was to be on a case-by-case basis and applying it to whole classes of people to allow people to come in here. President Biden is handing out this parole like it is Halloween candy.

I mentioned the September statistics were that about 10 percent of the people had been deported. It turns out about 85 percent of the people who will knock on our door are getting into our country. That is creating the incentive for people to come here. It is not hard to understand. If you were not allowed in the country in the previous administration, now this administration is saying: If you come across that border illegally, I am very likely to parole you into this country.

As soon as you cross that border, you are picked up by Customs and Border Patrol, you get processed and released. The first thing you are doing then is calling or texting your family members at home saying: I was able to get into the United States. I didn't have to follow the regular process, which takes years for people who follow the process legally. I didn't have to do that; I could just walk across the border and be able to get into this country.

Why are we surprised—or, rather, we shouldn't be surprised that there are millions of people who are making that dangerous trek to get here.

Of course, again, as described by my colleague from Wisconsin, it is a dangerous trek. This open border policy has facilitated human trafficking, sex trafficking, women being sexually assaulted, children being trafficked.

One of the things the Biden administration has done has stopped the DNA testing of children coming across the border, and that just facilitates the cartels in trafficking those children.

The scenario is, if you come across the border with a child, you are a family, and so the administration won't detain you. Guess what. The cartels know this. They take advantage of that. So they take these unaccompanied children, put them with an adult, and send them across the border.

On my last trip to the border—I have been there four times, and we will talk about that a little bit more—on our last trip to the border, we talked to the Customs and Border Protection people. They told us that sometimes 30 or up to 50 percent of the kids who came across that border were not the kid of the parent or the adult who was with them. The child did not belong to that adult. DNA testing at least would help us be able to verify whether that child actually indeed was the kid of the adult who claimed to be the parent.

When I was down on the border, I saw this for myself firsthand. There was a

man there who claimed this little girl who was with him was his daughter. We questioned this man, and he said: Yeah, this is my daughter.

I am a father myself. I have two girls. This girl was terrified. As a dad, you can kind of tell, right? You know when a little girl is with her father, and it was clear that there was not that kind of relationship, that this girl was afraid. She was terrified.

After more questioning, the man said: Well, I am actually not her father; I am her uncle.

Because of Biden's policies, the Border Patrol could do nothing. They did not have the ability to do the DNA testing to see if that child was indeed this man's daughter. So what does that open it up to? They come in, they get processed, they get released, and that child gets sent back to Mexico and gets used with another adult to come back across the border.

This is the type of humanitarian crisis that President Biden has created. He is absolutely responsible for every case of sex trafficking and child trafficking that is going on along this border because of his open border policies. He is responsible. He made the decisions to undo the policies that had reduced the trafficking and the illegal immigrants coming across our border. It is absolutely terrible.

So let's talk a little about that. What has happened under this administration? Since Joe Biden has been President, there have been nearly 6.6 million encounters at our southern border. When he undid those policies, he sent a message to people not just south of our southern border, not just in Central America, not just in South America, but to the entire world: Our borders are open.

In fact, my colleague from Wisconsin has just talked about the open border crowd. It is a very real thing. There are people in this city who want open borders, and with this President, they are getting it.

When the people of the world heard that, they started flooding to come here.

As was previously mentioned, President Trump brought those encounters down to under 1,000 a day. Now we see 5,000, 10,000. In December, we saw days of 11,000, 12,000. In December total, there were over 300,000 encounters at our southern border. Again, let me put that in perspective. That is larger than the capital city of Nebraska. Madam President, 300,000 encounters is more than the population of Lincoln, NE, my State's capital. That is how many people are coming across.

I mentioned people from all around the world. The night I was on the border last, this group of illegal immigrants crossed the border. They were apprehended by Customs and Border Protection. We had folks from El Salvador primarily, but there was a couple from Moldova. Think about that—Moldova, Eastern Europe. They had traveled through half a dozen different

countries to get to the point where they crossed our border.

When I was in the Rio Grande Valley on a previous trip, they said that the number of people crossing from China had been up 400 percent. We are also talking about people from Syria, Iran. These are countries that have terrorists who are committed to killing our people.

In years past, we would have single-digit numbers of people on the Terrorist Watchlist who crossed our southern border—six, seven, eight, nine. Last year, under this administration, 169 people just at the southern border crossed who were on the Terrorist Watchlist.

So how many people have crossed in the intervening years? Total encounters by Customs and Border Protection in fiscal year 2021 was 1,734,686; in fiscal year 2022, 2,378,944; and in fiscal year 2023, 2,475,669. That is roughly almost 6.6 million encounters by Customs and Border Patrol. But what that does not count is the approximately 1.8 million "got-aways." What do I mean by "got-away"? These are the people who crossed the border and who, for whatever reason, Customs and Border Protection could not get to, to apprehend.

So what happens is, often people come across the border, and they surrender themselves right away, such as I saw on my last trip. A family came across or individuals, a couple from Moldova with their little baby came across the border, and they surrendered right away. But there are people who are evading apprehension.

By the way, the cartels understand the system, and they try to game it. Customs and Border Protection has told me what they will do is they will understand we have limited resources, flood a certain number—like a large number of illegal immigrants across one part of the border, and then in another part of the border, they push through their high-value people or cargo.

We have been talking about people coming across the border, but it also includes drugs, and that is why now every State is a border State. Because of this humanitarian and national security crisis, we see people coming across the border who are impacting our communities. We see illegal drugs coming across the border that are impacting our communities, and it impacts not just States like Texas or Arizona but my home State of Nebraska.

In the last 2 years I was Governor, we saw a dramatic increase in the amount of drugs, specifically fentanyl. And I want to take a step back here for a moment because as we talk about the drugs coming across the border, there are two big ones that are impacting my State: fentanyl and methamphetamine.

Fentanyl is the leading killer of Americans age 18 to 45. The leading killer of Americans age 18 to 45, our young people, is fentanyl. That fentanyl is manufactured in precursors or it starts as precursors in China, gets

shipped to Mexico, where then illegal labs that the cartels run turn it into fentanyl, and then it gets pushed across the border.

When I was Governor, just to share with you how much has changed under the Biden administration in his rush to undo the policies that had brought these crossings to historical lows. In 2019, law enforcement in Nebraska confiscated 46 pills that were laced with fentanyl—46. By 2021, that number had jumped to 151,000—in just 2 years going from 46 to 151,000 pills laced with fentanyl. That is another example of Joe Biden's failed policies. He is directly responsible for this huge increase in fentanyl coming into our country because of his open border policies.

These policies have real-world impacts on people. I mentioned how many people have died because of fentanyl, the leading killer of our young people. But every one of those cases is not just a statistic; it is a person—a person like Taryn Lee Griffith.

Taryn Lee Griffith was a young mom in Lincoln, NE. She had two kids. She went out one night and took a pill she thought was Percocet. Turns out it was laced with fentanyl—a lethal dose—and she died that night, leaving her two little children to have to learn about their mom from pictures and stories from relatives. That family paid the price for Joe Biden's open border policies. It is killing our people. And that is why my colleagues and I said: Let's see what we can do to stop this.

Actually, as Governor, I did the same thing. I said: This is impacting us in the State of Nebraska. How can we stem this tide of people coming into our country, this tide of drugs coming into our country?

So as Governor, I sent my State patrol—25 of our troopers—down to assist the Texas Department of Public Safety in doing law enforcement. They weren't doing border patrol but were doing law enforcement to help out the overwhelmed and overworked law enforcement at our southern border.

When they came back, they told the stories of how, again, these folks crossed the border. They are being victimized by the cartels, and when they get across, most of them are surrendering themselves to our law enforcement because they know they will be safe with our law enforcement. They don't want to be left up to the mercies of the cartels. They know they will be safe with our law enforcement.

Our troopers told the stories of providing that safety to these people who came across the border.

That is also part of the human impact this open border policy is having.

And we continue to see the effects of it in my State today. In January, News Channel Nebraska reported on a man from Mexico who was sentenced to prison in Bellevue, NE, after being convicted of conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. Talked about fentanyl, but methamphetamine is an

even bigger problem in the State of Nebraska.

This 43-year-old man was in the country illegally. He was arrested in a motel room with \$15,000 in cash, and 11.5 pounds of methamphetamine, and he had previously been deported for drug charges.

This was a problem that became apparent to me early on when I was Governor—and not just me, many of my colleagues as well. And so what we did was 26 of us got together, and we sent President Biden a letter saying: President Biden, your policies are impacting our States.

Now, remember, this is early on in the administration of President Biden. This was his first year. We are like, your policies are impacting our States. Will you please meet with us to talk about the impacts in our States and what potential solutions would be?

And President Biden absolutely refused to meet with us. He absolutely refused.

So we went down to the border, and we talked about the solutions that had worked in the previous administration. We had a 10-point plan that would address the border issues that we have, and we listed those out, and we knew they would work. You know why we knew they would work? Because they had worked in the Trump administration.

Those 10 points included: Continue the title 42 health restrictions. About 18 to 20 percent of the people who were crossing the border at that time—this is September 2021 that we sent that letter. We heard nothing back from the President. We went down to the border in October of 2021.

And about 20 percent, 18 to 20 percent of the folks crossing the border tested positive for COVID. One report estimated about 40,000 illegal immigrants were sent to our cities with COVID-19. And you wonder why big cities had problems controlling that.

We said: Reinstate that. Second, we said: Fully reinstate the migrant protection protocols. This was established, again, in the prior administration that basically said: If you are seeking asylum in our country, you have to stay in Mexico. And now this is a big deal because when somebody comes here illegally, they know, hey, I am going to have to wait years to get into the country just to have my court date, that is a disincentive to come here.

When they know they can just come here, maybe get a court date that is 4 years down the road, maybe 10 years down the road, that is a good deal for them. They will come here, get released right away, and say, hey, I have got a court date that is years down the road. And then, guess what, not many of those folks actually show up at their court date when it comes up. So they, basically, get to this country without going through the regular process that so many legal immigrants do to come to our country.

We said: Finish securing the border; finish building the wall. President

Biden stopped the construction of the wall. Now, the wall by itself is not going to solve the whole problem. But when we talk to Customs and Border Patrol folks they say, Walls do work. They help. They help limit where you can come across and that helps them do their job.

End catch-and-release. Again, if you know that you can come into this country and get released back into our country, what is your downside? You come; you get processed; you get released; your court date may be years away.

So we said, part of how we address that also—this is point No. 5—is clear the judicial backlog; devote more resources to processing the asylum claim; get more judges in there so we don't have this long backlog.

Again, if the incentive is to come here and you know you are going to get released, people are going to come. If people come here and they get processed and they are told: You don't qualify for asylum, and they get sent back, that word will get out, and people will stop coming here.

That is part of the problem. We create these incentives for people to come here. The backlog is part of them. We needed to address it.

And, by the way, again, I have been down to the border. When I talk to people coming across, by and large, what they are saying is that they just want a better job. I am certainly sympathetic, but a better job is not a reason for asylum in this country. Asylum is for people who fear for their life in their own country—and not just in their neighborhood. You have to fear that their Federal Government is trying to harm them. There is no place safe in their country. That is a reason for asylum. That is not the vast, vast majority of people coming across the border. They are just looking for a better job.

And then, No. 6 on our 10-point list the governors put forward was: Resume the deportation of all the criminals. The Biden administration should enforce all of our deportation laws. As I mentioned, again, in September, only about 10 percent of the people were being deported.

No. 7, devote more to Federal resources. Again, this is where my colleague from Wisconsin said he would find allies in Republicans in the U.S. Senate to get more resources for Federal officials to go after the criminals at our southern border. We need to get after them. Stop this trafficking—stop the sex trafficking; stop the drug trafficking; stop the child trafficking.

One of the other policies the previous administration was to work with the northern triangle countries—Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador—and then Mexico to address the issues there for people who were fleeing those countries and work with them to keep the folks in their countries and address their issues and not let them cross through to Mexico to get to our southern border.

Again, the Biden administration got rid of that as soon as they came into office, got out of that agreement.

No. 9, of course, send a message to everybody trying to come here that there is not a free ride. If you were coming to this country and you were forced to remain in Mexico for, say, 3, 4 years before your court date, you weren't likely to come and do that. Send that message.

But this administration did just the opposite. They sent the message that our border is open. Come here, you will get in.

And, of course, No. 10 is: We need more help for Customs and Border Patrol. We need more officers. We need more equipment. We need more technology.

When I was down there, they said the cartels actually have better drones than we do. We saw aerostats, which are basically these balloons that go up with cameras on them to help monitor the border. They said they are very effective; they just don't have enough of them.

There are things we can do to be able to address. So that is what we did as Governors to address this crisis.

And then I come to the U.S. Senate. And what I want to do is continue to work to keep people safe, like we did in Nebraska. And so we have had this long negotiation on a border bill.

Now, again, to be clear, President Biden has access to the same laws that President Trump did. But my colleagues and I wanted to do more to secure our border. For example, end this abuse of parole. We wanted to stop this flow of people coming into our country. But the bill that we got did not get the job done. It didn't address parole in a meaningful way that was going to stop the people coming across the border.

It set the level of an emergency at 5,000 encounters a day. Folks, that is not an emergency; that is a catastrophe. Remember, Trump brought it to less than 100—or less than 1,000. That is the emergency level, not 5,000. And we weren't doing enough to detain people.

And by the way, here is the other kicker: Our leader scheduled the vote on the border bill before we even had a cost estimate from CBO. So we are supposed to vote on a bill that we don't know how much it is going to cost? How crazy is that?

Lots of people understand that there is a cost-benefit tradeoff, that you just don't pay an unreasonable amount of money for something if it does not have the value. We don't even know what these policies were going to cost, yet we were asked to vote on them. And that is why I voted no on that bill.

Now, one of my colleagues from South Carolina came to me and said: Hey, I have been in contact with the Border Patrol Council, Brandon Judd, president there. He sent me a letter.

I want to read this letter from Brandon Judd into the record:

Dear Senators Graham and Cornyn: I am responding to your questions regarding how

to improve the border security provisions in the emergency national security supplemental. Simply put, defining an emergency at the border as 1,000 encounters a day would be a substantial improvement. It is apparent that 5,000 encounters in a day is a catastrophe, and 1,000 encounters a day is a true emergency.

This is [in] line with what former Secretary of Homeland Security for President Obama, Jeh Johnson, said [when he said] that one day of 1,000 encounters was a very bad day and “overwhelms the system.” If you could lower the number to 1,000 encounters on average over a 7 day period and require that the President shut down the border at that level of encounters, that would be a substantial improvement to the legislation.

As to the question of how to end catch and release, detaining single adults and families rather than referring them to non-custodial removal proceedings—

And, again, non-custodial removal proceedings, “non-custodial,” that is just letting people go—
and enrolling them in Alternatives to Detention—

Again, letting them go—

would be a giant step forward towards that goal.

Don't do that.

The system of non-custodial proceedings created by the provisions in the supplemental would not effectively curb the catch and release policies of the Biden administration for single adults or aliens in a family unit. Therefore, changing the bill to provide for detention of families as well as single adults would be a tremendous improvement in stopping catch and release.

Finally, the idea of putting a cap on parole would be a game-changer on ending parole abuse. As you indicated, under the Trump administration and the Obama administration, grants of parole by Customs and Border Protection at the southern border averaged around less than 6,000 a year. Under President Biden, grants of parole across the Department of Homeland Security has skyrocketed to over 800,000 a year. A cap on parole of 10,000 grants a year would be a check on their ability to abuse this authority.

In summary, redefining emergency from 5,000 to 1,000, requiring actual detention instead of Alternatives to Detention, and a 10,000 a year cap on parole would make this bill exponentially better. Thank you for your questions and interest. Sincerely, Brandon Judd.

I see my colleague from Ohio is here, so I want to be respectful of his time because I know he is anxious to also speak upon this issue. But as I wrap up here, what I am hearing from my constituents is that they understand this is a catastrophe at our southern border. It is a humanitarian catastrophe, as we describe. It is a national security catastrophe. They want a secure border.

They also understand that under the Trump administration, that we had this. This wasn't a problem. This has become the No. 1 issue in my State. People know what is going on. As I said, every State is a border State. And they want us to take action.

This bill does not get the job done. This bill does not make meaningful reforms. And that is why I voted no on the border bill.

We must continue to look for solutions in the U.S. Senate. But at the end

of the day, the responsibility for this catastrophe lies squarely on the shoulders of our President, Joe Biden. He is responsible for every case of human trafficking, sex trafficking, child trafficking, drug trafficking that comes across our border, every single one because of his open border policies. He is responsible for these deaths.

We didn't even talk about the thousands of illegal immigrants crossing the border who have died crossing the border. He is responsible for those too.

My colleagues and I have introduced a number of pieces of legislation to address this. Because I want to allow my colleague from Ohio to have the opportunity to be able to talk about this, I won't go into them, but the one that I introduced was called: The Ensure Uniform Border Inspection Practices Act to make sure we were doing the right things across the entire border, but there were a number of other pieces of legislation introduced by my colleagues that would have addressed the drug trafficking, the asylum abuse, upholding the laws at our border, the sanctuary cities that are also draws, all of these things could be addressed.

This administration could do it. I call this administration to stop these open border policies. Use the powers at your disposal to secure our border.

That is what the American people want. President Biden, secure our border. The American people demand it.

You have the tools. I call on you to use them.

With that, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VANCE. Thanks to my colleague from Nebraska, who confided in private to me that he didn't think he could go for the full hour, but I would have welcomed at least another 20 minutes of speaking from my friend from Nebraska.

But it is 3:15 in the morning, and we are here discussing sending another \$61 billion to Ukraine as part of a \$95 billion security supplemental. I think it is important to at least give some context to the four people who are also currently still awake as to how we got here and why we got here and why we managed to fumble, I think, a great opportunity in this Chamber to actually do some real border security.

First, months ago, my Republican colleagues and I discussed the possibility of doing a border security package as a point of negotiation with our Democratic colleagues over Ukraine. The basic setup of the negotiation went something like this: Republicans are unified—at least allegedly—in our view that the border is a national security crisis. This is allegedly a national security supplemental, and the border is the most important national security issue that we confront. On the flip side, Democrats are united in their view that Ukraine must receive another \$61 billion or even more of American aid. There were the seeds of a potential deal that could be cut between Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans.

Now, there are a few problems with this, as we learned. The first was that while our Democratic colleagues might agree that the border has some problems, they apparently did not agree it is quite the same crisis that we do. That is one problem.

Another problem is that apparently our Republican colleagues are not nearly as united as we thought we were or as we pretended to be. In fact, the closer we got to an actual resolution of the negotiation, the more we learned that our Republican colleagues—at least a small subset of them—cared a hell of a lot more about the Ukraine package than they did about securing the American southern border.

It is negotiation 101 that if you go into a negotiating posture where you desperately want the thing the other side of the table also desperately wants, you are not in an especially good position. If Republicans are as desperate to send \$61 billion to Ukraine as Democrats are, then it isn't very shocking that the Democrats were not willing to give us a large amount on border security.

Now, this is what, of course, everyone knew. This is what, of course, everyone now knows because after a mere hour of debating a border security package as part of a broader supplemental, Senate Republicans joined with Democrats to immediately move on to a discussion of Ukraine's supplemental—literally an hour.

If you had dreamed up something from the fever swamp conspiracy theory of the American conservative movement, you could not have come up with something more egregious than this fake negotiation, what it produced, and how it immediately led to a debate—not about our southern border but about Ukraine.

Now, there are a few problems with this particular negotiation, a few problems with the way that it unfolded.

The first. The first is that it was done in secret. A border security—and by the way, this is problems from the perspective of conservatives, problems that the Republicans in our conference who were supporting this should have been mindful of if they wanted to actually get to a security package that could have gotten a majority of Republican support, because after many months of negotiations, there was a border security package that received, I believe, four Republican votes. And now we have a Ukraine supplemental that received far less than the majority of the Republican conference.

If you wanted to get a majority of Republicans to support this border security package, you should have observed a few basic rules.

The first is that you should not have done a secret negotiation. Many of our voters and many of our colleagues are mistrustful of secret negotiations. They are mistrustful of the people who participate in secret negotiations because if you are not getting the details of a plan out as it unfolds, you are not doing a few things.

First of all, you are not actually allowing people who know the immigration law best within the conservative movement to understand what is in it, to offer feedback, to try to improve the bill, to ensure that whatever text is coming together actually matches the terms of an alleged negotiation deal.

No. 2, you are denying the American people an opportunity to actually understand what is in the border security deal that is unfolding.

No. 3, you are denying Senate colleagues a real opportunity to debate the merits as they came together.

What actually happened was not, you know, you negotiate for a couple of weeks, and this is where the Democrats are and this is where the Republicans are, and maybe you can find some seeds of a compromise here. What actually happened is that after months of negotiation, Senate Republicans started asking: Well, what is in this deal? What shape is it taking? What are the Democrats giving? What are the Democrats asking for in return?

This was all mediated through a very, very small number of channels, and that process bred mistrust before we even knew any of the details of what was in the border security package.

Now, if you were a cynic, you would say this was by design, that we designed a package that was meant to create mistrust, that we designed a process that was meant to create mistrust and was never meant to lead to any significant majority. And I hate to say it, but I think that is actually the package that was produced.

So after months of secret negotiations, after months of denying some of the smartest immigration experts in the world the opportunity to critique and offer feedback on this package, after months of breeding mistrust within the American body politic, the details of an immigration grand bargain started to leak out, and the details were pretty troubling.

There were some good things, of course, some things that we liked and some things that we think were necessary, but it is interesting that even in the most generic terms, the details of the immigration plan started to create some backlash among most Republicans. Again, if you can't pass a border security package without the support of most Republicans, then it is not actually going to pass.

So here we are, early 2024, with a promise of a grand bargain on border security and a national security supplemental to boot. Yet every single detail turns out to have not been manifested in the text, turns out to have not produced something in the text that would have actually meaningfully secured the border.

So if you were serious about border security, the first thing you would want to do is to limit the President's ability to parole close to 1 million illegal migrants a year. If you go back to the Obama administration, the Obama

administration paroled about 5,000 illegal aliens every single year. Senate Republicans think that is too much, but 5,000 a year is far less than the 750,000 or close to 1 million a year the Biden administration has decided to parole.

Now, it is not just the direct effect—you are taking close to 1 million people a year who have violated our immigration laws and giving them what amounts to effective legal status—you are also sending a message all across Central America and all across the world that America is open for business.

This is why, when you put a camera or a microphone in front of somebody who is crossing the southern border illegally and ask "Why are you coming now?" they will say "Because Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS invited us in."

The parole policy has thrown open the floodgates, and this grand border compromise contained almost nothing that would meaningfully reduce the number of paroles that the President of the United States can issue.

It required a report, I believe, but nothing that would limit the President's discretion to grant parole en masse, as he has done for the last 3 years of his administration. That was the first problem.

The second problem is that the grand border compromise did very little on the question of asylum. It pretended to do something on the question of asylum. It changed the asylum standard. It increased that standard from a credible fear to a reasonable fear. But it also changed who was enforcing that standard to CIS agents, who are among the most pro-asylum people in the entire U.S. Government. So you changed the standard, but you created a person who is enforcing that standard who has almost no reason to meaningfully enforce American asylum laws.

Why is this a problem? Well, because we have fundamentally at the U.S. southern border an economic migrant crisis that is pretending to be a massive asylum crisis. People who are traditional economic migrants come into our country at ports of entry or elsewhere, they claim asylum. They say that they are persecuted, they say they are fleeing persecution, and then the asylum officer usually will tell them: You have to come back in 6 years or 12 years or however many years down the road to have your case adjudicated before an immigration law judge. And, of course, for those 10 years or maybe more that they are in the country, they effectively have legal status. They are in our country, and many of them never show up for their court date even though the court date is years later. So the asylum process has turned millions of economic migrants into alleged asylum claimants.

I find it interesting that when you look at who is actually coming across the southern border, it is very, very often young men between the ages of 20 and 35, unaccompanied by women or

children, because if we know anything about world affairs, it is that when people are politically persecuted, it is always the young, unaccompanied men who are the most politically persecuted, not the women or children. And my colleagues will forgive my sarcasm there.

Why is it that the people who claim the greatest persecution, the people who are flooding across our southern border—why are women and children so poorly represented among them? Because this is not about asylum, and this is not about political persecution; this is about manipulating America's laws to turn an economic migration crisis into an asylum crisis. It is a legal arbitrage that immigration attorneys in the United States of America have cooked up.

Oh, and by the way, one of the great things about the grand border compromise is that we decided to pay immigration attorneys who are undercutting our immigration laws massive amounts of legal fees from the American taxpayers because why not have a handout for the immigration attorneys who have helped create a system where we undercut our immigration laws?

That was the second major problem with the grand border compromise.

A third major problem with the grand border compromise is that it did not meaningfully increase the President's authority or, frankly, force the President's hand into deporting anyone who is currently here illegally.

Just a couple weeks ago, in New York City, a group of illegal immigrants violently assaulted a police officer. Those people, as far as I know, are still in our country because we don't deport people—even those who violently assault police officers. We deport an incredibly small number of the people who come into this country illegally.

A fourth problem with the grand border compromise cooked up by my colleagues is that it had an emergency border shutoff authority, which was really an effort—an admirable effort—to force Secretary Mayorkas's and the President's hand. The way it went was basically something like this: If border crossing reached a certain threshold—5,000 a day, I believe, in the text that we received—then there is an emergency shutdown authority that applies for a certain number of days per year—270 days in the first year, less in the second year, and less in the third year.

Now, that sounds not too bad, right? Once you hit a certain threshold of illegal border crossings, you should shut down the border. I happen to think that number should be close to zero but whatever. Opinions will differ on where we should set that authority. Yet that authority, set at 5,000 a day, which effectively says that you could have nearly 1.9 million illegal aliens come into the country before you trigger that authority—it has multiple provisions that would allow us to waive it. It has a 45-day emergency waiver authority for the President. It has a 180-

day discretionary waiver for Secretary Mayorkas. For those who are good at math, 180 days plus 45 days is 225 days. So in a 270-day border emergency shutdown authority, 225 days can be waived by the President or the Secretary who refused to enforce our immigration laws. That is not much of an emergency authority if they only have to use it 45 days in the first year given what is going on at the American southern border.

The fundamental problem, as so many of my colleagues have recognized and as so many of my colleagues have noted, is, how do we get Joe Biden and Secretary Mayorkas to enforce the border law when they clearly don't want to? This is a forcing function because the real negotiation here, as was obvious to anybody from the start, was, how do we force Joe Biden to do his job, and what leverage do we have in order to force that very thing?

Instead, we went into a negotiation where—again, it was in secret—our colleagues who were negotiating fundamentally didn't understand or didn't enforce this fundamental insight. They wanted to give Joe Biden additional authorities. Well, he might not use those authorities even if you give them to him. They wanted to give Joe Biden a number of discretionary, “get of jail free” cards, where even if you create authorities for him to enforce the border, you give him the discretion to get out of it. We don't need to be granting Joe Biden more discretion. We need to be constraining his discretion because it is Joe Biden's discretion that has led to the border crisis that we have.

Now, a number of my colleagues have mentioned the terrible consequences of the border problem and what it looks like for so many of our citizens. There is no overstating the catastrophe that is going on at the American southern border. There is the fentanyl crisis that is killing over 100,000 citizens of our country. Of course, the fentanyl is now transitioning to other drugs just as the heroin transitioned to the fentanyl and just as the prescription pills transitioned to the heroin. One of the many gifts of our wide-open southern border is a virtually limitless supply of increasingly more powerful synthetic opioids to kill our citizens.

If you read anything about the history of the opium war, you wonder if we are witnessing right now the reverse opium war where precursors to synthetic opioids come in from communist China, and the Mexican drug cartels manufacture them and then ship them across the southern border.

If you were actually serious about addressing this crisis, the first thing that you would want to do is limit Joe Biden's and Secretary Mayorkas's authority to open the floodgates and invite millions of illegal aliens into this country. You would limit their discretion. That was always the only pathway to meaningful border enforcement under this administration.

As so many of my colleagues have mentioned, Joe Biden clearly doesn't

want to enforce the border. So, ladies and gentlemen, how do we force the President to enforce the border?

The basic deal that was offered by a number of my colleagues and friends went something like this: If the Democrats are so desperate to send another \$61 billion to Ukraine, then what we could do is meter the money based on border enforcement metrics. This is, in fact, what was discussed in the Republican conference, and it received support from Ukraine supporters, like JIM RISCH and RON JOHNSON, to people who were more skeptical of the conflict, like me, to people who were in the middle, like TED CRUZ.

The basic idea was, we are going to force as much as possible Joe Biden to enforce the southern border, and unless he gets illegal border crossings under a certain level using his existing authority, maybe with some additional tools, then we will not provide support to the security supplemental. In other words, if he wants his \$61 billion for Ukraine, Joe Biden is going to have to do a little border enforcement despite the fact that he obviously doesn't want to.

That was the deal that we thought was on the table, and that, unfortunately, was not the deal that was actually on the table once it was advanced by our leadership team.

Of course, on Sunday night, February 4, we received the text of the grand border compromise. Typically, with a field of law as complicated as immigration, you would expect days, weeks, months of committee markups, of debates, of negotiation over text; of trying to understand how one provision influences another provision; of how another provision affects the other. This process of legislative policy-making is what was completely short-circuited by this secret negotiation.

So, on Sunday, the text dropped, and on Wednesday, we were expected to vote on it. So, for 3 days—from February 4 to February 7—my staff and, I imagine, the staffs of nearly every Republican Member worked long nights to try to understand what was actually in the border security package. They identified many of the problems that I just repeated that actually exist within the policy. Even where it looked good on the surface, it very often contained provisions where Democrats had, frankly, outnegotiated Republicans.

It reminds me a little bit of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, where the President's negotiators took to the New York Times to brag afterward that while then-Speaker Kevin McCarthy had gotten a lot of concessions out of the White House, those concessions had fallen apart when the concessions were translated to legislative text. That is a problem. If the legislative text isn't very good, no matter how good the headline promises of the legislation are, then you shouldn't support the legislation. That is, of course, what happened.

On Wednesday, Republicans decided as a conference that they would not

support the border security package that came out. A curious thing happened then. If you had really been serious about border security, if you had really wanted to advance the ball in any negotiation, the other party comes with an offer. You consider the offer. You read it. You try to understand it. You decide it is not good enough. What do you do if you are serious about the problem? You then go back and say: Well, you know what, this just isn't good enough. We need to keep going down this pathway. We need to keep on fighting for a way to secure the border.

But that never happened. Why that never happened is because too many within the Republican conference were desperate—desperate—for money for Ukraine—so desperate that they were willing to short-circuit any meaningful border security. That is the fundamental truth.

As much as I am frustrated at my Democratic colleagues for not doing more to secure the border, as much as I am frustrated at Democrats writ large and the President of the United States for not doing his job, on this particular negotiation, the simple truth is that too many Senate Republicans cared far more about Ukraine than they did about their own country.

You heard it earlier today or earlier this evening when one of my colleagues said that this was the most important vote that any of us had ever taken in the U.S. Senate. I can't imagine what leads a person to think that sending \$61 billion to Ukraine at this moment of crisis for our country is the most important vote we have taken. My God. Maybe we should take some far more important votes that actually solve the problems that confront this country. Maybe we should confront the mental health crisis in our country, the fact that our teenagers seem to have rising depression rates, the fact that our young people have rising suicide rates, the fact that we have a wide-open southern border, the fentanyl and sex trafficking crisis. All of these things are substantially more important than what we are about to vote on in the U.S. Senate and what we voted on last night—but not, of course, if your main priority is securing Ukraine's border rather than fixing the problems of your own country.

This is unfortunately where we are. This is unfortunately the problem we are confronting. We have a Democratic Party that wants an open border, and we have a Republican Party wherein most of us want to fight for border security, but a few of us actually care more about Ukraine. Therein is the seed of the real bipartisan compromise that we have in this country, which is constantly focusing on the problems of other countries instead of on the problems of our own.

So let's talk a little bit about the Ukraine policy because that is now—after the border security deal fell apart, now we are on to focusing on Ukraine. Of course, this has become

the main focus of so many of my Senate colleagues. This has become the reason for breathing, the reason for waking up in the morning, the reason for coming to work in the U.S. Senate—to ensure that we send another \$61 billion to Ukraine.

There are so, so many problems with our Ukraine policy, and I am going to start from the most obvious all the way, hopefully, to the unintended consequences if we have enough time and if I am still standing.

Let's start with the most obvious problem of our Ukraine policy: There is no strategy.

A year ago, I spoke with Secretary Blinken, and I had a number of private conversations with people in the administration. What was the goal of our Ukraine policy? Then the goal was to ensure that Ukraine had enough weapons so that they could launch a much-anticipated counteroffensive. That counteroffensive would allow them to gain large amounts of territory. It may even allow them to push the Russians out of Crimea.

Then, of course, you could have peace settlements where Ukraine was from a position of strength and Russia was from a position of weakness. We would, in other words, throw the Russians back to close to the 1991 borders of Ukraine, and then we would try to negotiate with them.

This leaves out, of course, an important historical detail, which is that back in April of 2022, as everybody from Gerhard Schroder, the former Chancellor of Germany, to a number of our NATO allies has pointed out, the Russians wanted to negotiate back in April of 2022. The negotiation was possible back then, but Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister of the UK, and, of course, our own administration refused to engage in that negotiation. We wanted the Ukrainians to fight and to fight on. Of course, they have at great cost to themselves and at great cost to the American taxpayer.

Now, here is the problem with this idea that the Ukrainians would ever throw the Russians back to the 1991 borders: They are massively outmanned and massively outgunned.

Ukraine has a population today of about 28 million people. Russia has a population today of 145 million people. Russia manufactures far more artillery shells not just than Ukraine but more than the United States of America—an economy that is 10 times as large. Russia is not going to lose the war. That is a fundamental fact that everybody needs to accept. They are not going to lose. It is existential to them. It is the main focus of Vladimir Putin's. They are bigger, and they have more weapons.

So the question then becomes, How do we preserve as much of Ukraine as possible? How do we prevent as much innocent loss of life as possible? How do we ensure that this war comes to a negotiated peace in a way that prevents a number of negative con-

sequences? That is the goal here—a peace that prevents as much bad from happening. But that is not our strategy. Our strategy is to throw money and weapons at the problem indefinitely.

So, if a year ago we were praying for a counteroffensive, we could ask ourselves: How did that counteroffensive go? Well, the Ukrainians lost tens of thousands of soldiers; they gained miles of territory—not hundreds of miles; miles of territory—in a country that is massive; and they lost some of their best troops and some of their best equipment. That was the result of the counteroffensive. That was the lynchpin of the American strategy.

So, having failed to accomplish what we set out to accomplish, did we say: Well, maybe our experts are wrong. Maybe we should revisit some of our assumptions. Maybe we should design an actual strategy that is achievable. No. No. We just moved on to the next thing. Without even blinking an eye, without even addressing the American people, the Biden administration just went on to the next thing.

The next thing is, well, we are just going to try to give the Ukrainians as much as possible to hope that they don't lose. That is now the strategy, such as it is, of the American President with Ukraine—throw resources, throw weapons, and throw munitions at the problem and hope against all hope that something good will happen.

What is that good thing that will happen? Well, we have no idea. The war is at a stalemate, and, as I already mentioned, Russia has more money, more manpower, and more weapons. So we have no strategy.

Why are we giving \$61 billion to Ukraine when we have no strategy for how they are going to use it, we have no sense of how they are actually going to bring this war to a close, and we have no realistic possibility of getting to any reasonable goal within any reasonable timeframe?

We are America's legislative body. Our only real role in foreign policy is to approve nominees the President makes to his own government—posts, of course, that have importance in foreign affairs. That is No. 1. No. 2 is we control the purse strings. The point of controlling the purse strings gives us leverage to ensure that the people's business is actually being done. What are we doing with that leverage here? We are writing, effectively, a blank check, with no guarantee that it will produce a strategy, with no demand that the President actually tell us what this \$61 billion is meant to produce.

We know where this will end, ladies and gentlemen. We know exactly where this road ends. This road ends at some kind of a negotiated settlement. The only question is, How many Ukrainians die before we get there? How many American dollars are wasted before we get there? How many American weapons are spent not for our own national

security but for the national security of another nation? That is it. How much death and destruction do we promote on the path to peace? My answer is, we should be promoting as little as possible. We should be promoting a negotiated peace. We should be trying to get there as quickly as we possibly can.

Where, I wonder, is the anti-war left?

It is interesting that in Washington, DC, in 2023, 2024, you hear a whole lot about the bipartisan consensus on Ukraine. Yet you never hear people asking: Where has that bipartisan consensus led in the past?

I am 39 years old. In the 1970s, the bipartisan consensus was lined up behind the Vietnam war, a conflict that killed nearly 60,000 Americans over the span of a decade and a half.

In early 2000, the bipartisan consensus was not just that we should knock out Osama bin Laden's terrorist network in Afghanistan but that we should rebuild Afghanistan into a flowering Western-style democracy. We should put resources into training the Afghan population to think about gender roles as Americans do in the 21st century, to promote the creation of democratic institutions to train an Afghan army.

For 20 years, American blood and treasure was committed to that project, and that project fell apart in a matter of weeks. It turns out the Afghans don't want Western-style democracy. It turns out the Afghans don't want to fight for a country that, apparently, very few of them actually believed in because it took about 3 weeks—3 weeks—before the Taliban rolled over their country.

The bipartisan foreign policy consensus got us exactly there. That same bipartisan consensus got us to Iraq under the pretense of weapons of mass destruction. Many of the people in this Chamber who supported the war in Iraq are now supporting limitless supplies of arms to Ukraine. It is interesting how that bipartisan consensus works out.

That same consensus supported knocking out Libyan dictator Qadhafi, which led, of course, to incredible chaos and destruction in that country.

The bipartisan consensus led us to get involved in Syria and yet another quagmire in the Levant.

And that bipartisan consensus has found a new passion project—limitless war, limitless weapons, and limitless money to Ukraine.

Why is it that we think that the same people who have been wrong for a half a century are somehow right about this question? Why do we not learn the lessons of Iraq? One of the most important lessons of Iraq—as the great, late GEN Colin Powell pointed out—is that we didn't have a defined strategy. What is the mission? What are we trying to accomplish? What is America's blood and treasure actually trying to do? And how long must we be required to spend it?

Never has that question been answered in Ukraine. Never have we tried

to answer that question over the last 40 years of failed foreign policy experiments.

I look at this country over the time I have been alive, and I look at what its leadership has accomplished, and it is hard to not think that the bipartisan consensus in American foreign policy has led to, effectively, graveyard after graveyard after graveyard, \$34 trillion in debt. We have purchased on the backs of our children and grandchildren a number of graveyards all across the world. I don't know what we have accomplished beyond that.

Yet people in this Chamber, including my friends on the left, who used to have a real anti-war sentiment—the left used to have a real understanding that war has terrible unintended consequences, that it enriches all of the wrong people, that it kills many innocent people. There was no meaningful pushback on this conflict from the left. I find that shocking.

I find it depressing, frankly, because those of us on the right who are sick of war, and sick of our children and grandchildren paying for it, would actually like some allies in pushing back against this latest conflict.

In fact, just to meditate on this point about strategy a little bit longer, if you look for the arguments for why we should be in Ukraine, they all boil down to: Unless we send continual resources, something terrible will happen. The Russians will overrun the Ukrainians when they don't have enough resources, and they won't stop at Kyiv, we are told. They will go on to Poland. They will go on to other NATO allies. And then it will be Americans who are on the frontlines of Germany defending against the terrible aggression of Vladimir Putin.

What must be said is, first of all, this is a fantasy. No credible military expert, no person with a thinking brain believes that Vladimir Putin has the capacity to march all the way to Berlin. He does not have the capacity to march all the way to Kyiv. Of course, he can't march all the way to Berlin. So the fearmongering doesn't work. That dog just doesn't hunt.

Now, of course, if Vladimir Putin could—let's just entertain this thought experiment. Let's just assume that Vladimir Putin could march all the way to Berlin. What would that mean about our NATO allies?

One thing it would mean is that they are a lot weaker than they pretend to be. Another thing it would mean is the fact that we know that NATO needs to step up and spend a lot more resources on their own national defense.

If Vladimir Putin could march all the way to Berlin, that suggests that the Germans have got to do a lot better at defending their country, and they have to step up.

NATO was never meant to turn Europe into permanent welfare clients of the American taxpayer. It is time for Europe to step up.

Some of my colleagues give the Europeans far too much credit for doing

their part over the last 18 months of conflict in Ukraine. They point to charts that say if you include humanitarian assistance and economic assistance, the Europeans have actually spent about as much as the Americans—maybe even more than the Americans—on Ukraine. Well, that chart misses a couple of important facts, the first of which is that the most critical thing is not money; it is weapons. And the United States has supplied a disproportionate share of the weapons to the Ukrainians at great cost to ourselves and at great degradation of our defense capability.

The other thing it leaves out is that NATO has, for decades, sucked on the teeth of the American taxpayer. Trillions and trillions of dollars have gone into American defense budgets that have been an implicit subsidy to NATO—an implicit subsidy to NATO. So forgive me if I am not impressed that the Europeans are stepping up a little bit for a war that is literally in their backyard.

The other thing this misses is that the war in Ukraine hasn't been going on for 18 months. It has been going on for a decade. Of course, the conflict that brought us to Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine has been going on in Ukraine since at least 2014.

If the Europeans want to compare who is spending more, the relevant point of comparison is 2014 or maybe 1992. It is not 2022. So we are bailing out the Europeans—\$61 billion to bail out the Europeans on a preposterous set of circumstances, on a preposterous subsidy.

By the way, many of our European allies—thanks, in part, of course, to our subsidy—have managed their own financial houses much better than we have. The Germans have far lower budget deficits and far lower public debt than we do. If any time was the time for them to step up, it might be now that we are \$34 trillion in debt.

So every argument for why we should support limitless war in Ukraine ultimately falls apart. It ultimately boils down to fearmongering—fearmongering that doesn't have any basis in reality.

Again, I would ask: If the goal is to prevent Vladimir Putin from overrunning Ukraine, the question has to become: For how long are the American taxpayers on the hook? What if this goes on another 10 years? Are we on the hook to the tune of \$500 billion of security assistance and \$1 trillion of reconstruction?

At what point is enough enough? At what point do we say the war is a stalemate? It is going to end in a negotiated settlement anyway. Let's stop wasting lives. Let's stop wasting money. And let's get on with the peace.

That is what American diplomacy could be used for. Unfortunately, the President seems uninterested in that.

But I am worried more about the unintended consequences in Ukraine. A friend of mine made the observation today, actually, in a public conversa-

tion that I hosted, that we are seeing the acceleration of an economic and military alliance that will challenge the United States over the coming decade and the coming generation. The cooperation between Russia and China has accelerated significantly over the last 2 years.

We have attempted to set off a financial bomb using America's incredible financial power. The rules-based international order has given America's financial system great power, and we used it to try to set off a bomb in the Russian economy. But that bomb appears to have fizzled.

The Russian economy has consistently defied growth expectations and forecasts. Our own leadership has admitted that its sanctions haven't worked nearly as well as we wanted them to. And the Russian economy, now put on a war footing by Vladimir Putin, is producing weapons at a faster rate than the United States, which, of course, has an economy ten times the size of Russia.

So if the goal was to weaken Russia here, we have catastrophically failed. What we have done, actually is created an alternative financial system around Russia, China, and other countries. And we have created an accelerating military alliance between two of our most dangerous adversaries in the world. That is the net effect of our policy. That is unintended consequence No. 1.

Unintended consequence No. 2 is that we are, at this very moment, destabilizing governments all over the world with higher fuel prices and higher food prices.

I made this observation earlier. So my colleagues, hopefully, will forgive me for repeating myself. But one of the most interesting conversations I have ever had was with former President Barack Obama, just days before he left the Oval Office, about a week before Donald Trump and Mike Pence were inaugurated.

Obama made the observation that though he was obviously more a fan of—I will call it mass migration—than I am, that he knew that if you created too many immigration pressures in a country, it could destabilize that country. He made this observation in the context of the 2015 European refugee crisis, telling me—I am paraphrasing here; I don't want to violate any confidences—that he felt that the 2015 refugee crisis that actually destabilized a number of European Governments, in fact, had led to the election of his political adversary, Donald Trump, in 2016.

I thought that was a smart and insightful observation from the former President. Of course, I disagree with his politics and his immigration policies, but it was an interesting and a very self-reflective observation.

What, I wonder, happens—if the European refugee crisis of 2015 destabilized Europe, what happens when we

apply massive energy and food price increases to the entire continent of Africa—1.5 billion people, almost all of whom have a much lower quality of living than the average American or the European?

We know exactly what would happen. If you take 1.5 billion people—most of whom are just good people who want to feed their families—and you make it impossible for them to feed their families in their own country, they will move. And where are they going to move? They are going to move to Europe, and they are going to move to the United States of America.

Can we, at a time of a historic border crisis, possibly absorb hundreds of millions—at the very least, millions—of starving people moving?

And why are they starving? They are starving because Eastern Europe is the bread basket of the world—especially that part of the world—grain prices, barley prices, wheat prices have skyrocketed over the last 2 years.

We are creating the predicate for a refugee crisis that will destabilize Europe and destabilize the entire world.

We are also, while we are at it, enriching Vladimir Putin. While we spend \$61 billion in Ukraine. We are enriching Vladimir Putin with idiotic energy policies.

We are actually funding both sides of this conflict. Putin's economy depends substantially on natural gas, on petroleum. And our energy policies, our refusal to empower America's energy producers—the Biden administration, just a couple of weeks ago, blocked additional exports of liquid natural gas. That enriches Vladimir Putin's Russia. Every time you take an action that drives up the cost of energy, you are enriching Vladimir Putin's Russia.

So with the one hand we pursue energy policies that enrich Vladimir Putin, and with the other hand, we send \$61 billion to Ukraine. I don't think we should fund either side of this conflict, but it is the height of idiocy to fund both sides of the conflict simultaneously, and that is exactly what we are doing, thanks to President Joe Biden's energy policies.

Another unintended consequence—we have already seen this, by the way. Allied governments in Slovenia, in Poland, and other countries are under an incredible amount of pressure because food prices and energy prices are really high. Food prices and energy prices destabilize governments. How many American allies will have their country's politics destabilized because we are pursuing policies that ensure higher food and higher energy prices? Inflation is bad in the United States. Inflation is bad, in part, because we are pursuing policies in Europe that inflame the cost of food and energy.

It is always funny when I hear my Democratic friends say that inflation is not Joe Biden's fault; it is the fault of what is going on in Eastern Europe. Well, if Joe Biden was a little bit smarter and used diplomacy more ag-

gressively, perhaps what is going on in Eastern Europe would not be quite as prolonged, and perhaps we could bring it to a quick close.

That is unintended consequence No. 3. We are impoverishing our own people on this conflict. So \$34 trillion in debt—we are on the hook now for close to \$200 billion to Ukraine. But that doesn't include the reconstruction assistance they will certainly need. That doesn't count the numerous ways—energy prices, food prices—that this conflict is putting pressure on the wallets of American citizens. It doesn't count all of the ways in which we are distracted by a conflict in Eastern Europe and are unable to pursue smart policies elsewhere in the world.

We are impoverishing a generation of Americans. We are making it harder for them to achieve their American dream. And we are doing it to empower defense contractors and to bring a war to effectively a never-ending stage. That is what is happening. We know this conflict has no end in sight. We know that only America, using its diplomatic power, could apply the leverage necessary to bring it to a close. We are instead using our financial military and diplomatic power to prolong the stay as much as possible.

There are other unintended consequences. And I worry that we have no statesmen left at the senior leadership of this country. For a generation, we have been told that the important thing is to thump our chest, to talk tough, to act tough, but not actually do the things that are necessary to strengthen our country and make our country more powerful.

You hear my friends on both sides of the aisle say that if we don't show resolve in Ukraine, that it will invite Xi Jinping to invade Taiwan. And, of course, I believe a Taiwanese invasion by Xi Jinping would be one of the worst things that could happen on the world stage. Our colleagues are right to worry about it.

But the argument is that they will invade—the Chinese will invade—unless we show resolve in Ukraine. But the unfortunate truth is that the Chinese don't care about our resolve; they care about our strength. In classic foreign policy schools, deterrence is the combination of resolve and capacity. You have to both want to do something, but most importantly, you have to have the ability to do that thing. And we have no capacity to deter the Chinese in East Asia and help the Ukrainians fight a war in Eastern Europe.

For many generations, our leadership shipped our industrial base, our manufacturing jobs overseas. And that has left us in a place where we don't produce enough weapons; we don't produce enough missiles; we don't produce enough artillery shells; we don't produce enough of the critical munitions that are necessary to fight conflicts all over the world.

So every time we spend critical resources on Ukraine, we ensure that

they will not be available to a contingency necessary for the United States of America. That is not hypothetical, and that is not abstract. We, even now, are sending weapons to Ukraine far faster than we can make them.

Why are we sending cluster munitions to Ukraine right now? Again, I will ask: Where is the anti-war left? What happened to the left that was worried about sending cluster munitions to various conflicts all over the world? Why are we sending cluster munitions to Ukraine? It is because we don't make enough artillery shells to send to Ukraine, to Israel, and to other partners.

We cannot fight a war on multiple fronts because of the leadership made, frankly, by some of the Members of this Chamber, we don't have a strong enough manufacturing base to support both of these conflicts.

Now, my colleagues will say that this particular bill—this particular legislation—has billions of dollars designed to rebuild the American industrial base. But you can't rebuild the industrial base by making weapons and sending them to Ukraine faster than you make them for your own country and for your own defense purposes.

The question is, If we start rebuilding our defense industrial base tomorrow, how long does it take? Three to 5 years at the very least. Call it 3 years if we started tomorrow before we could support contingencies in Eastern Europe and East Asia.

So what do we do in the interim when our country, by every metric, does not produce enough weapons to support a multipronged conflict? What do we do in the interim? The solution and the answer, apparently, of this Chamber is: We send everything possible to Ukraine. We get as much as possible to Ukraine; consequences—let's not worry about those. Let's not worry about the fact that we do not have enough weapons to deter aggression all over the world right now, and we have no viable pathway of getting in there for the next 3 years.

I think that a lot of my colleagues are living in a boomer paradise where America can do everything all the time without limits and without constraints. And that is not the world that we live in. Frankly, it is not the world we live in, in part because decisions made by people in this Chamber and the leadership of this country over the last generation.

But we are in this situation. Let's rebuild our own country before we overextend ourselves in a multipronged conflict. This is something out of every history book for how empires fail. Countries allow themselves to become eroded. They allow internal division to weaken their resolve. They allow economic might to degrade. And then, at the point when they are weakest, they overextend themselves militarily.

That is where we are right now. We are at the weakest point in a generation. In the 1980s, our relative power

and manufacturing was significantly stronger than it is today. My colleagues on the other side will say, Well, you know, it is weaker; it is a bipartisan problem. It is not just Democrats' fault that our manufacturing base is weaker.

And I would grant that point every day and twice on Sunday. It was a bipartisan failure that led our manufacturing economy to grow so weak, but it needs to be a bipartisan solution to figure out what to do until we rebuild it.

No one has offered a solution for how to rebuild our manufacturing base quickly, and no one has told me what we are going to do while we are rebuilding that manufacturing base. We cannot supply unlimited arms all over the world when we don't even make enough for our own purposes. Yet that is exactly what the U.S. Senate proposes to do later this morning.

Now, one final observation here about where we are in Ukraine. I am going to read just a brief summary here produced by my staff. The \$60 billion in Ukraine aid included in the \$95 billion supplemental would be the largest single Ukraine aid package Congress has passed to date.

Nonetheless, it was put on the floor with less than a day's notice and could obstruct future efforts to bring the war in Ukraine to a peaceful conclusion. The bill will commit \$60 billion for Ukraine over multiple years, and it will provide nothing to secure America's southern border. If enacted, it would represent 34 percent of the total appropriated supplemental Ukraine aid, almost as large as the first three supplemental bills combined.

It represents a 26-percent increase over the largest previous supplemental bill at a time when Ukraine's prospects on the battlefield have grown significantly worse. And it has done all this with less than a week of real debate. I am trying to think of any amount of money where we have not adequately debated, reviewed, amended, and corrected such a large spending package to Ukraine—or to any other country.

I mean, normally, these bills spending \$100 billion of American taxpayer money, normally, you might expect a real debate. We received text on this on February 7. Wednesday, February 7, is when we received final text on the package that we are voting on today; \$100 billion and 5 days of debate, most of which, of course, was occupied by the Super Bowl media cycle.

The American people have been deprived of an actual debate on these matters from their elected legislature. The U.S. Senate has deprived them of the debate. And why? I don't know why. I think maybe the reason why we are pushing this so quickly is because a few of my colleagues are desperate. They are desperate to get to Munich next weekend and tell the leaders of the world that, yes, they did not secure their own southern border, but they did the most important thing: They got the \$61 billion to Ukraine.

It is shameful. It is shameful to conduct foreign policy through blank check writing to never-ending war, and it is extra shameful to do it while ignoring the problems of your own country.

Can I ask how much time I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The Senator has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. VANCE. I hate to keep my distinguished colleague from Utah waiting, but I will keep going here for another few minutes.

I want to make, in the time that I have remaining, a political observation. When you craft legislation that is 370 pages long and you deprive the American people and your Senate colleagues of a debate, you oftentimes find that there are things in the legislation that were unintended—or maybe they were intended, but they should have been corrected and taken out.

In 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives impeached Donald Trump under a spurious and ridiculous argument. But the argument went something like this: that there was money that had been appropriated under the USAI—the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative; the USAI had appropriated money, and Donald Trump refused to spend it exactly as it had been required by law.

And the argument is, because he had violated this appropriations requirement and because it is in the requirements of the Impoundment Control Act, Donald Trump had violated the law and had to be impeached.

It was a ridiculous argument then; it is a ridiculous argument now. But I find it interesting that given that Ukraine aid is a hotly contested political item for the 2024 elections and given that Donald Trump was already impeached for the exact same reason that so many congressional Republicans seem desperate to tie the President's hands in the next administration—because built into this “Ukraine First” supplemental is money that will be spent in '25 and '26—money, just as in 2019, that was appropriated and will tie the hands of the next administration. And whether it is a Democrat or a Republican, I think we ought to empower the next administration to do diplomacy as they would like to.

So for my colleagues who are desperate to send \$61 billion to Ukraine, one request that I would make is—because this is going to come back from the House. The House will not pass this package as it exists. One request that I would make is, let's cut off the end of funding at the end of 2024. For my Republican colleagues, it may save Donald Trump a spurious impeachment trial. For my Democratic colleagues, it may save the next President the ability to conduct diplomacy on his or her own terms.

Now, we should not be doing this with such little debate and such little consideration. There are all kinds of things—all kinds of beautiful gems—that I am sure that we will identify in this legislation in the coming weeks.

As NANCY PELOSI once said: You have to read a piece of legislation after you pass it. I would prefer that we read a piece of legislation before we pass it. But, most importantly, I would prefer that we debate and challenge the legislation before we pass it.

You cannot write \$100 billion worth of checks in 4 days of public debate. You need more time. You need to correct it. You need to fix it. You need to address the problems, like what I just mentioned, that we put an impeachment timebomb for the next Trump administration in this legislation. You need to fix problems like this. And a real process is how you fix it.

Now, I appreciate that some of our colleagues prefer a fake process because that process has empowered Senate leadership. Well, you know who it hasn't empowered? It has not empowered the American people. This is ridiculous. And this is ultimately, in my view, a farce.

I have been in the U.S. Senate for a year. It is the professional honor of my lifetime. And I serve across the aisle with distinguished colleagues, with brilliant people, people who are publicly minded, despite our disagreements. But I think this process is an insult to them. We can do better. We should do better.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, a little more than 3 months ago, Senate Republicans came together and reached something of a conclusion. We concluded it made a lot of sense to make a commitment to each other and a commitment to those whom we represent and a commitment to those in the other Chamber just down the hall from here that we wouldn't be sending another penny to Ukraine without achieving border security in our own homeland.

After all, the conflict in Ukraine is about helping Ukraine maintain its own defensible borders. It is about helping Ukraine with its own national security.

Meanwhile, we have a border that to describe it as porous is an insult to porousness. It is a border through which an estimated 10 million people have entered our country unlawfully just over the last 3 years since President Biden took office.

And then, now, through the efforts of a faithless few, we are poised to treat our promise to Americans the same way President Biden has treated his solemn oath to protect our country's borders as somehow expedient, expendable, and apparently now expired.

We cannot send billions of dollars to Ukraine—many, many tens of billions of dollars to Ukraine—while America's own borders are bleeding, while they are wide open, and while we have many thousands upon thousands of the 10 million or so who have come in over the last 3 years—who are coming in under circumstances that make them highly suspicious, to say nothing of the

millions of others who came here. But just in the last few months alone, we know that thousands have come in from countries that are not in Latin America; from countries like Syria, Afghanistan, China, and a lot of other countries where we have a lot of people who don't like this country, who don't share its values, who don't share its vision, don't share its commitment to the rule of law, and who have come in here. We know nothing about them. They come in unvetted; in some cases, unseen.

But in some respect, it is even more troubling with the ones who come in that our government knows about. They are processed and then released—"processed," meaning take down a bunch of information about them, then release them into the country, either under the pretense that they have applied for asylum and might be deemed qualified to receive that form of relief or, alternatively, under the theory that they can be brought in under what is known as immigration parole, a category that is never supposed to be used—in fact, by law, it can't be used, categorically—to treat all people from a certain country in a certain way.

No, it is there to be used in unusual circumstances, either for humanitarian, compassionate need, like somebody's loved one has passed away and they need to attend a funeral or they need to come to attend to a critically ill loved one; or, alternatively, a public-use exception under immigration parole, such as somebody speaks a foreign language that is badly needed, where they need an interpreter and very few people speak that in this country, and they have found somebody outside the United States. This is a way of getting them into the country for a short period of time.

Sometimes, they are brought in under the asylum theory, others under the parole theory, others still are brought in under "withheld removal" or just told: You don't have to leave now. In many of these circumstances, the people who are released into the interior of the country are told: At some point, you will have a hearing before an immigration judge. We hope you will come to that, and, by the way, your immigration hearing before the immigration judge may well be in the 2030s, may well be in 2035 or later. But in the meantime, have fun. We will get you a plane ticket to the U.S. city of your choice.

By the way, those pesky things that American citizens have to worry about when traveling from one part of the United States to another, like airplane tickets, we have taken care of that, also identification papers. Americans have to produce a photo ID establishing who they are at an airport. You don't have to worry about that either. We will fly you anywhere you want. Have fun.

Well, it is not long before international drug cartels pick up on the fact that this is a great source of revenue for them.

This is a great source of revenue and also a great source of facilitating their other businesses when they can traffic human beings in large numbers. You see, these drug cartels are making many tens of billions of dollars every single year smuggling in human traffic into the interior of the United States, and why wouldn't they? People want the American dream. People like the Opportunity to live here. Maybe for some, it is perceived as a great way to earn more money that can be sent back home. Maybe some want to live here permanently and make it their home. Maybe others want to inflict harm on the United States. We don't really know because we have thrown caution to the wind.

Under the failed leadership of President Joe Biden, we have just brought them in by the millions. It has been a really good deal for the drug cartels that have made tens of billions of dollars a year as a result of this criminally negligent approach toward enforcing the border.

Now, their approach to enforcing the border in these respects is not enforcement. It is deliberate, willful non-enforcement, inuring to the great detriment, to the great harm, and presenting incredibly indefensible risks to the American people.

This has gone on now for over 3 years. It kicked in, as I remember, right as President Biden took office. He started issuing Executive orders, undoing things like the "Remain in Mexico" program, the Migrant Protection Protocols, the Safe Third Country Agreements carefully negotiated by the previous administration, which also had some migrant surges and surges of illegal immigration.

But, to its credit, the previous administration did something about it by putting in place these programs to guarantee that if someone coming into the United States without documentation across the southern border by land, if they claimed asylum, they would have to wait in Mexico—remain in Mexico—while his or her asylum application remained pending.

Why does that matter? Well, statistics tell us that for every 10 people who apply for asylum, fewer than 1 will actually receive it. Some say it is around 90 percent. Others say it is in the high nineties, the percentages of people who apply for asylum who are deemed ineligible for asylum. They are not eligible to receive it, and yet we receive all of these people in here.

Anyway, President Biden takes office. About that time, somebody asks Secretary Mayorkas either just before or just after he was confirmed by the Senate—I don't remember which. They asked him a question: What would you say to people who are part of these migrant caravans—that were by then traveling through southern Mexico, making their way toward the United States. What would you say to them?

Now, the kind of answer you would hope and expect and that we should be

able to demand we would receive from the chief immigration law enforcement officer in the United States should have been: Don't come. Don't come. Why? Because the risks are myriad. We don't want you to enter this country with your first step into the country being an act in violation of our law. You don't want to subject yourself or your family members who may be with you to great risks to life and limb. You don't want to subject anyone, but especially women and girls traveling in those caravans, to the risk of sexual assault.

The statistics vary on this wildly. At the low end, some say that the number is around 30 percent of the women and girls who are sexually assaulted in the journey. Others say it is much more likely to be in the mid-60 percent range of women and girls sexually assaulted along these horrible, dangerous journeys. And, of course, women and girls are not the only victims of sexual assault along the way. Men and boys also have that happen to them.

What is even worse, a number of these individuals—disproportionately women and girls, more than men and boys; but I believe there are some in each category—end up being subjected to a form of sex slavery. You see, it costs many thousands of dollars to be trafficked into this country by a drug cartel—many thousands of dollars. The higher the risk you are, the more distant the country you come from, especially if it is separated by an ocean from the Americas, the more likely you are to have to pay tens of thousands of dollars. If you are from Latin America, some are able to make the payment with a few thousand dollars—\$4,000, \$5,000, \$6,000, \$7,000 maybe. Others pay a little bit more. Others pay a lot more if they are deemed high risk and they have to be smuggled in, and they can't, for whatever reason, appear through a point of entry.

Where do they get this money? These are people who—those of us who have been down to the border as I have many times—many times even in the last few months—know that the people who are arriving under these circumstances, having made this long, dangerous journey, they don't have a lot of money. They don't have expendable sums of cash. It is not like they can just go into their local bank and dip into their savings account and come up with 5, 6, 7 grand in U.S. dollars to come up here—no.

How do they pay for it? Well, some of it they are able to scrounge together, perhaps from contributions from friends and family. Maybe they sell everything they have. Maybe for some, that comes close. For a lot of them, it doesn't. So how do they pay it?

Well, there is a word for this, and it is a word that has fallen out of use in commonly spoken American English for more than a century and a half, but the word is "indentured servitude." It is a word that we had all—I certainly had—relegated to the history books.

That is why I was stunned during my last trip to the border down in the McAllen, TX, area, where I lived, served, worked among the poorest of the poor as a missionary back in early 1990. That is where I learned Spanish. I learned to love the culture down there. It is an amazing place with wonderful people. During my most recent visit, as I was visiting with Border Patrol agents, they told me that, for the first time since the Civil War, and certainly since the adoption of ratification of the 13th Amendment, which prohibits slavery and indentured servitude, we have in this country, in the United States of America in the 21st century, a significant population of indentured servants in the United States. Of these, many are living in what is, essentially, sex slavery. Others are living in another form of indentured servitude, required to live their lives subject to the will and whim and wishes of these international drug cartels who make money smuggling these people across and then benefit from, essentially, slave labor from them.

One of my colleagues who made an even more recent trip to the border, who just came back from the border a week or so ago, recently told me that for those subjected to the form of sex slavery to which these women and girls are subjected, it may take them 6, 7, 8 years to pay off what they owe. They are housed in what can only be described as a rudimentary prison; it also doubles as a brothel. And while they are nominally paid, in the sense that they are given credit for each thing that they do, they are also charged sometimes exorbitant fees for room and board to house, clothe, and feed them.

There are detailed records that have to be kept, right down to the cost of doing something as simple as removing an ankle bracelet given to them by the Department of Homeland Security to monitor their whereabouts. I am told that the cost for that is set at \$30. But this is one of the reasons why they may have to work 6, 7, 8 years in sex slavery inside this country after they have arrived illegally and unlawfully, in order to pay off their debts to the drug cartel, who are profiting to the tune of tens of billions of dollars a year.

Most of the men are put to a different type of work. One way or another, moving parcels from one destination to another, with their whereabouts closely monitored by the cartels the entire time.

But let's get back to the fact that we have a significant population of indentured servants here in the United States once again. Why? What master are we serving by doing this? What good is being advanced by such lawlessness? And at what cost? At what price?

Let's think about what this does to neighborhoods, communities, to schools, to churches, all those people out there who do everything they can to lift up the hands that hang low, to serve their fellow beings, to find those

less fortunate than themselves and figure out ways to help them, with their soup kitchens and their homeless shelters, even their church pews. Even their schools become overrun. They are less able to do what they need to do.

And I fear that we as Senate Republicans, having made this commitment to each other and to the American people and then having abandoned that commitment, as we have done in connection with this and we will have done, should this legislation pass into law without a single shred of border security enforcing language in it, we will have done them a grave disservice. We will have done them a grave disservice after promising to help them. That saddens me.

I don't understand why we would do that to them. I don't understand why we would do that to ourselves, why we would do that to the American people after having made that commitment as we did. This isn't trivial. It isn't light. These aren't things that are just fun to talk about. In fact, I detest talking about things like human trafficking, about sex slavery; it is not pleasant at all. But we must talk about them because if we don't talk about them, we cannot fix them.

We alone are in charge of funding this government. We alone in this body are equipped to recognize that there are not many ships that pass this direction that are of such import, that have so much of a head of steam behind them, that they are likely to pass.

And this was a uniquely good moment for Republicans to recognize, look, the Democrats have something that they really, really care about. Some Republicans do too, as we have come to find out. But this is an issue that, by and large, unites the Democratic Party and those in the U.S. Senate who are part of it. They really, really want to send more money to Ukraine. We will talk about that more in a moment, but it is something that they really, really want to do, even though we have already sent the \$113 billion there; even though it is more money than any other nation on Earth has sent; even though the military aid that we have sent far eclipses not only that of any other nation since this war started but of every other nation combined. But that is something they really want to do.

We also knew that securing our border is something that Republicans care a lot about. I wish it were not only Republicans who cared about our border security, and I am sure that on some level a number of our Democratic colleagues do, too, but maybe not in the same way that we do, not enough to call out the President from their party. I know that can be difficult, but maybe that makes some of them uncomfortable. I don't know; it is not for me to say.

But the point is this: Most Republicans in Congress feel, or at least profess strongly to feel, a strong need to secure the border, and most Democrats

feel very passionately about securing Ukraine's border. There is some overlap between those two, I get it. It is an overgeneralization, perhaps, but it is a point that Republicans in the Senate saw, and we realized: Gosh, maybe, just maybe, we can cobble together and harness this desire to send more funding to Ukraine on the left with a corresponding desire among Republicans to secure our border.

So it was on that basis that we made that commitment about 3 months ago. Sadly, after we made that commitment, we were told that a few Senate colleagues were trying to iron out a compromise. Now, I know and like each of those colleagues; I have great affection for each of them; I have worked with each of them on different pieces of legislation; and I consider each of them friends.

I don't know how it went in the Democratic caucus, but I can tell you from my vantage point, in the Republican conference, we were kept completely in the dark on the contents of that legislation until a week ago Sunday at 7 p.m.

It wasn't until a week ago Sunday at 7 p.m. that we first got to set our eyes on that document that they had spent 3 or 4 months negotiating.

Now, it had a lot of provisions in it, a lot of language in it, but the border security portions of that bill didn't do what we committed to do. I don't mean to suggest bad faith on the part of any individual negotiator, but it didn't do what most of us understood the deal to be.

What we asked for was not a Ukraine supplemental aid package with an immigration overhaul attached to it, or even an immigration overhaul package containing some provisions of immigration law that might, in the future, under a different administration, prove to be potentially helpful in securing the border—kind of what this was, certainly how I perceived it. But it wasn't something that would actually force this administration to secure the border and provide consequences if it didn't. To up the ante, to make it more difficult for this administration to continue this pattern of enriching the international drug cartels to the tune of tens of billions of dollars every single year through aggressive non-enforcement of the border, it did not do that.

So, look, this was the predictable, foreseeable, and by some of us foreseen and warned of consequence of having a negotiation in which one person was asked to negotiate on behalf of 49 people and also asked not to keep those 49 people apprised of the precise contents of that draft legislation.

For many of us, this was unthinkable. I don't know how you can possibly negotiate on behalf of anyone, much less a group of 49, without regularly informing them of exactly what is going on and even providing text that you have been drafting. But, alas, that was not my decision, and I have reason

to believe it was not even the decision of our lead negotiator for whom I have great respect and admiration. It was the decision of the Senate Republican leader.

It was the decision of the Senate Republican leader, apparently, to keep us in the dark, and also to insist on provisions like those that could have withheld funds from Ukraine or, at least, delayed the release of some of the Ukraine aid until such time as certain objectively verifiable border security metrics, benchmarks, indicia of operational control of the border had been achieved for a specified period of time.

At one point or another, I think I heard half or more of the Senate Republican conference specifically asking for that and explaining that that is the type of thing that we would need, either that or something so direct, so clear, so precise as the border security package passed by the House of Representatives, H.R. 2 or, at least, its core provisions. Some combination of provisions like those found in H.R. 2 and something like the border security metrics package that I mentioned, perhaps even with something in there putting teeth behind provisions in existing law, prohibiting noncitizens from voting in Federal elections. Things like that would have gone a long way; I think could have brought most—an overwhelming majority, perhaps—of Senate Republicans, depending on the precise contours of the bill—could have brought them into the fold and onboard with the topic. But that is not how it worked.

So when we discovered that was not the legislation that we got, even though it was the legislation that we asked for and that we anticipated and that we committed to each other and to the public and to our voters and to our colleagues down the hall who felt the same way—upon discovering that that is not what it was, within 24 hours, it appeared that that bill was going to go nowhere.

Within 48, maybe it was 72 hours of the release of that text, all but four Senate Republicans had voted against that measure. What we should have done, what we could have done, what I still don't understand why we didn't do, is then turn forthwith to putting together a package that would, in fact, accomplish what we set out to do, which is force the issue of border security on the Biden administration as a condition, making the release of additional Ukraine aid subject to the achievement of border security, operational control of the border that would be in place as a condition precedent. This didn't happen. But after that didn't happen, oddly enough, 17 or 18—I think it is back down to 17 now—of my Senate Republican colleagues, having made that commitment to each other, to their voters, to our colleagues down the hall, to the American people, to the Governors, to communities, to school principals, all these people who are relying on and affected by our deci-

sions, especially in communities that are being overrun by people not of our land, people entering not according to our laws and, in fact, contrary to our laws—we let all of them down.

Seventeen Republicans then decided: Well, you know what, notwithstanding that commitment—to heck with it—let's just go ahead and pass all the foreign aid stuff. Let's pass all the foreign aid without any border security. Let's help Ukraine with its border security problems. Let's leave ours out there.

This may well be the last real opportunity we have to do that in this administration. How many more illegal aliens will be brought in? How many more people will come in who are on the Terrorist Watchlist? How many other people will come in from countries that themselves raise suspicion given the concentration of people who hate our country in those nations from which they came?

So why would these 17 Republicans just decide to turn their backs on the promise that we had made and on the people who were relying on that commitment? I really don't understand, nor do I understand why, once we got on the bill—once we approached the bill, we were told by a number of those 17: Well, don't worry about it. Once we get onto it, we can have an amendment process. We can process amendments. We can have votes on amendments. It will be fair and open as an amendment process. Don't worry about it.

Then we got onto it, and we were told: No, sorry. It turns out we don't really need your votes anymore because 17 Republicans agreed so eagerly, so willingly, to go along with us even without any of those commitments. We don't really owe anything to you.

So I came to the Senate floor and was here most of the day on Saturday. I stood here for 4 straight hours talking about different amendments that I want to propose, calling up amendment after amendment—most of my amendments were germane to the bill—asking that they be made pending.

They received objections each day—not from Republicans but from Democrats on the floor. Those Democrats who voiced objections voiced them again and again and again, saying in essence: You as Republicans had your chance. You blew your chance. You had your chance at a border security reform package in this bill, and because you didn't take it, you don't get any input into this bill.

There was nobody else here at the time who was offering up amendments, asking that they be made pending, so it wasn't a question of the Senate being just flooded with people wanting their amendments to be pending at the time. This wasn't one where we had bipartisan objections to it. No, these were just Democrats, not Republicans, doing it.

What was even more shocking is that after that happened, after amendment after amendment, germane amendment after germane amendment was rejected

from consideration, was not allowed to be made pending—you see, when we make something pending, we sort of put it in a queue of sorts that says: This is something we are going to dispose of, something we are going to address. Maybe we will dispose of it by rollcall vote, maybe a voice vote. Maybe it will be disposed of by a point of order, a motion to commit, or a motion to table. Maybe, if it is a non-germane amendment and we haven't disposed of it by the time cloture is invoked, by the time we decide to bring debate to a close on the bill, then it will fall out and just won't be covered.

But, no, this was just too much to ask. But what was really shocking and really disappointing was the fact that even after that happened, a number of Republicans—even some of the same Republicans who had said, Yes, we will stand with you. Not another dime for Ukraine until we get the border secure and then had said, Yes, we will stand with you now that the border security deal that we received for the first time a week ago Sunday at 7 p.m. and that all but four Republicans voted against—now that that failed, don't worry, we will have an open amendment process.

Then those same Republicans—a number of them—blamed the failure for us to process even a single amendment on this not on Democrats who had made those objections but on the same Republicans, on people like and including me. I hadn't objected to a single other amendment being processed—not one—and yet I was told that I was part of the problem. I don't get it.

Sometimes, I wonder why somebody would run as a Republican, only to take one of the issues that really should be bipartisan, used to be bipartisan, that has now become partisan but apparently now a lot of Republicans don't care about that much because, by golly, they are going to make sure that Ukraine gets funded, and they don't want any conditions attached to it, and then they are going to dismiss, denigrate any Republican who expresses concerns with the bill.

Not all of those concerns, in fact, most of them related—on the amendments that I tried to make pending the other day, a lot of them dealt specifically with things that don't have to do with the border. I had others that did. I talked about those. Those were rejected that day, but so, too, did my amendments that deal specifically with the Ukraine portion of the bill.

For example, I raised some concerns about aid that might—inevitably will—flow to Gaza and end up helping Hamas, possibly to the tune of \$9 billion or so on the high end. We know what happened when billions of dollars of humanitarian aid over the years flowed into Gaza. Under no circumstance did we say: Oh, here is a check from the United States of America to Hamas. No. They were funneled through different aid programs, a lot of

them through multilateral, multinational institutions like the United Nations.

The thing is, you send money to that part of the country—Gaza is unlike anything we have ever experienced, those of us who have grown up in the United States and lived our entire lives here. To describe Gaza as a failed state is an insult to failed states everywhere. It is not even a state.

Nonetheless, Hamas rules Gaza with an iron fist, and if you send money to Gaza, it is literally impossible to keep that money, keep those benefits, out of the hands of Hamas and to prevent it from benefiting Hamas. It is one of the reasons why October 7 was made possible, this elaborate network of tunnels. All sorts of things, all sorts of benefits under the banner of international humanitarian aid that went to Gaza helped Hamas, it strengthened Hamas, and, yes, it led to October 7.

Now, lest you think that that was the end of it, October 7 was just a prelude to other things to come because by the time Hamas and other Iranian proxies in the region have their say, what happened on October 7 in Israel will look like a Sunday picnic.

So I raised concerns about that in one of my amendments. In another one of my amendments, I raised concerns about the fact that, of the roughly \$8 billion or so going to Ukraine under an economic security package, there is no restriction in there preventing that money from going to pay the salaries of Ukrainian bureaucrats; no restriction in there preventing it from funding Ukrainian social welfare programs; no restrictions in there preventing it from going—as similar funds from the United States have gone over the last couple of years in the past—into programs that result in purchase with U.S. funds of things like concert tickets for Ukrainian concertgoers, things to shore up clothing stores in Ukraine.

These are things that we are funding over and over again specifically as a result of this largesse we are pouring into Ukraine. We are doing all of this at a time when the American people are suffering under the oppressive yoke of Bidenomics, where it costs the average American household an additional \$1,000 every single month just to live—just to put gas in the car, groceries in the fridge and pantry, to afford everything from housing to healthcare, gas to groceries, and everything in between.

You see, when you print multiple trillions of dollars a year, every year, for several years in a row more than we bring in, inevitably it starts to have the same effect of just printing off more money, which is essentially what we are doing. What that means is that every dollar you have in your pocket, every dollar you receive in every paycheck, every dollar you might have in your bank account, it buys less—significantly less—than it did just a few years ago.

Now, for the rich, this isn't as much of a burden because they have more.

When you are rich, if you are enterprising, you can find a way to get richer—a lot richer, in fact—during periods of inflation like this one. This one just hurts everyone else. So, look, it is great to be rich at a time like this, and figures from Wall Street will tell you that.

President Biden cavalierly says—whenever people bring up economic troubles, he and those in his administration love to say: Oh, no. How can you say anything is wrong with the economy when Wall Street is doing great?

That is some cold comfort. That shows a tone deafness that I am not sure what to do with.

This hurts them a lot when they see their neighborhoods overrun, their schools struggling to keep up with the influx in many communities of new populations of people who don't belong in this country, who have entered this country unlawfully at the invitation and with the blessing of the Biden administration.

The American people know something is wrong, deeply wrong, even if they are not privy to exactly the same details that we have been discussing here. They know something is wrong, and it is a profound insult to them that those of us in this Chamber would look so cavalierly at their plight, especially after some of us, nearly half of this body, made a commitment that we have now completely flouted, ignored, neglected.

So back to Saturday, it was Senate Democrats who objected every time I raised one of these amendments, even considering any kind of amendment. My Democratic colleagues said that “MAGA extremists had their chance,” implying that when Senate Republicans rejected the border bill, we somehow forfeited our right to offer amendments.

When did that become the principle of this body? When did we accept that if you disagree with the legislation before the Senate, that if you don't plan, intend, or irrevocably commit to supporting that legislation in the end, that you forfeited your right to offer amendments, to offer improvements, to make changes to the bill, to make one provision better or another provision less bad so that we first do no harm, as is our obligation.

When did we become slaves to that principle in this body?

When did that become our governing principle?

When did we accept that if you disagree with the legislation before the Senate, you can't try to fix it?

Where was that written in the Senate rules?

When did that become a custom here or even acceptable here?

I would hope my Republican colleagues would unite to completely and emphatically disavow this view, which, to the extent accepted, will continue to trample on the rights of the minority party and disenfranchise the voters we

represent. But I am afraid that some of my Republican colleagues are entertaining this view and, in fact, fanning its flames, becoming some of its chief advocates.

One of my Republican colleagues, the senior Senator from North Carolina, reportedly said:

You don't put forth 80 amendments & say you won't negotiate on time agreements & be taken seriously. . . . That's what's happening here. Those folks are going to vote against it no matter what.

As if that were the end of the matter.

Madam President, do you understand what is implied with that statement? It suggests that if someone is going to vote against a bill, this body should not even consider your amendments.

Now, I would hope that this particular colleague is one who I would assume he didn't mean that or that he was quoted out of context. Maybe he didn't think it all the way through. The only problem is I have heard him say it several times now in private and in public, and he stands by it.

I don't get it. This isn't acceptable. This is a rejection of the Senate's best traditions and its longstanding protection of the rights of the minority, whether they be part of the minority party or whether they be people who disagree with whatever is popular at the moment.

This view must be rejected so that the Senate can once again embrace an open amendment process where the American public can see our deliberations in public.

Instead, Majority Leader SCHUMER is obstructing a fair and open amendment process by filling the amendment tree and preventing any Senator from making amendments pending on the floor. This procedural tactic prevents Senators from offering their amendments and allows Senate leadership to screen every single amendment before it is offered from the floor and to dole out punitively and sometimes punitively those privileged few opportunities for amendment consideration. It allows Senators to avoid any tough votes, to avoid surprises, and, in short, to avoid any real debate.

Now, when I became a Senator in 2011, this was not the standard practice. Sure, there were sharp disagreements between the parties as there are now, but Members could, by and large, come down to the floor, call up an amendment, and make it pending. This change that we have seen was pioneered by Democratic leadership about a decade ago and then gleefully adopted by Republican leadership as well. In some ways, it got more pronounced and even worse over the next few years, after Republicans gained the majority. It has gotten steadily worse still since then. It has been the practice that leadership on both sides of the aisle have used for too long to stifle debate, and it must end.

I offered a motion to table the amendment tree yesterday—or I guess it is the day before yesterday now,

given that it is now Tuesday morning—so that my colleagues could make their own motions, their own amendments pending. But every Democrat and, unfortunately, some of my Republican colleagues voted against this.

This vote shows that Democrats are not serious about the “fair and open” or the “fair and reasonable” amendment process that we were promised before getting on this particular bill. So I had hoped and I had asked that Republicans unite and demand a better process from our Democrat colleagues. I urged that we demand an open and honest amendment process on the Senate floor so that the American people can see where we stand.

Now, my good friend the Senator from Ohio has dug very deeply into this disastrous bill and sounded the alarm. This legislation contains provisions requiring the next President to keep funding a proxy war in Ukraine, even if the circumstances have changed and even if the American people elect a President specifically because he promises to find a peaceful end to this conflict.

It is clear that the GOP has been suckered into setting up yet another ridiculous, baseless impeachment attempt against the next Republican President, should he become the next Republican President, which many of us hope that he will, including me.

How could any Republican or any conservative or anyone who values the rule of law support this?

Well, earlier in the day on Monday, we saw how supporters of this terrible bill have resorted to calling their own constituents uninformed idiots. One Member of this body said: “Our base cannot possibly know what’s at stake” compared to well-informed U.S. Senators.

Really? Rank-and-file American voters couldn’t possibly be as smart, as well informed, as capable of processing these concepts as a U.S. Senator? They couldn’t possibly be as well informed as any of us?

Well, forgive me, but I haven’t seen much reason for a Mensa club on Capitol Hill in the last few years. And our own minority leader is attacking the “dimmetest and most shortsighted views” of people who don’t want to throw \$60 billion—\$60 billion more—to prolong the Ukraine conflict.

These are not words of people who wish to be elected lawmakers much longer, let alone one day take the majority of the U.S. Senate.

Madam President, like many of my colleagues, I made a commitment, and I think it is important that we, as Republican Senators, acknowledge that we made that commitment and not just pretend it didn’t exist, as 17 of my colleagues seem hell bent on doing. That is why I didn’t support cloture, and that is why I will not vote to send aid to Ukraine without securing our southern border.

On Sunday, I came down to the floor again to ask again that a fair and open

amendment process be held. So I made a motion to table the motion to recommit. I did so, you see, because I care about the rights and the perspectives of my colleagues in this Chamber. I believe that filling the amendment tree and being forced to cave to the demands of the leadership of the opposite party was something being forced on us, quite unfairly, quite wrongly.

When I ran for office, I understood that I may have to take tough votes from time to time. As we are often told, if you don’t want to fight fires, don’t set up to be a firefighter. If you don’t want to take the tough votes, don’t run for legislative office. This is just part of the job.

So I asked that each Member of this body be able to offer amendments and debate those amendments as he or she chose. My colleagues decided to decline that proposition, voting against it.

The Senate passed its final cloture vote to end debate a few hours ago. Republicans, as we approached that time, continued to ask for more amendments but continued to be blocked.

My colleagues, I remind them, we didn’t have to vote for cloture. Not a single Republican had to vote for cloture last night. The bill, as drafted, doesn’t have to pass even today. Even though cloture is invoked, it doesn’t have to. But as of last night, Republicans couldn’t resist the temptation—17 of them—to help. Democrats couldn’t have passed it on their own; 17 Republicans chose to help them.

If we were to stand together and we would have voted against cloture on the underlying bill, it would have prolonged the debate, enabling the opportunity for us to pass germane amendments of which there are many—of which I had introduced many. It could remove or fix many of the flaws I have previously outlined.

So while as deeply concerning as all of this is, I do maintain some hope in the fact that Speaker of the House MIKE JOHNSON has been clear. The bill, as drafted, is dead on arrival in the House.

So I ask the question, in closing: Why would we vote to send a bill—why would Senate Republicans, 17 of them, play any role in sending a bill to a majority-Republican House, one that is destined to fail in the House? Doing so is counterproductive and doesn’t advance the interests of the Republican majority in the House.

I hope that, as we move forward, we will do things differently. And I hope that on this vote I would ask once again for Republicans to stand together and oppose this bill. Even if they voted for previous cloture motions, they don’t have to vote yes on final passage.

In any event, this debate shouldn’t conclude, and we should remember that we should not pass legislation that fails to secure our border and ignores the interests of the American people, even while shoring up the borders of Ukraine.

As their elected lawmakers, as those who have been sent by States to represent their interests in the United States Senate, I know we can do better.

A “no” vote is a vote to stand up for those who can’t stand up for themselves, those objecting to the servitude of sex slavery, those whose communities, whose soup kitchens, whose homeless shelters, whose church pews and classrooms are being overrun. We stand with them. By voting against this bill, I stand for the rule of law and against lawlessness, cartels, and all the horrors that go along with them.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I understand why many Americans would like to find a quick way to end the horrific war Russia unleashed on Ukraine. It is tempting to think we can ignore it and hope it will not affect us down the line. However, whether we like it or not, Vladimir Putin’s Russia has launched the largest war in Europe since World War II, and if not stopped now, it will only expand until U.S. allies and U.S. troops are dragged in. I want to prevent that from happening.

Russia is not our friend, nor is Russia neutral toward the United States. Putin, with his roots in the KGB, has identified us as an adversary and actively works to undermine the United States. All the way back in 2005, Vladimir Putin said, “The demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.” Obviously, for those countries previously held captive by the Soviet empire, and now free and independent, the collapse of their Soviet prison was anything but a catastrophe. Putin’s lackey, former Russian President Medvedev, has recently threatened our NATO ally Poland with losing its statehood. Putin likes to repeat the phrase that “Russia’s borders do not end anywhere.” A billboard was recently spotted with Putin’s face and that phrase just before the border crossing with Estonia, another deeply pro-American NATO ally. Maybe this is all bluster, but history shows that we should take it seriously.

Some people on my side of the aisle have suggested that we should deny Ukraine the arms and ammunition they need to defend themselves and push the Ukrainians to negotiate an end to the war. But we already tried that. This was the Obama policy, and it failed miserably. Remember, Putin invaded Crimea and parts of the Donbas in 2014. President Obama responded by refusing lethal aid to Ukraine and urging negotiations, effectively locking in Russia’s territorial gains. Far from ending the conflict, this led Putin to conclude that he could get away with invading all of Ukraine, which he did in February 2022. I am very surprised to see some Republicans now urging a return to the dangerously weak and failed Obama policy. That would be a huge mistake. I also want to be clear that I do not wholeheartedly support

President Biden's handling of Russia's invasion. If the Biden administration had made the decision to send key weapons sooner, the Ukrainians might have been able to take back even more territory.

Both Putin and most Western analysts expected the mighty Russian army would take Kyiv in days. The Ukrainians shocked the world with their will to defend their homeland. Western support trickled in, with some of our European allies leading the way. Ukraine was then able to take back half of the territory Russia initially captured in its full-scale invasion. Today, Ukraine remains in control of roughly 83 percent of its territory. That is a remarkable success, thanks to the support of Europe and the United States and the fighting spirit of the Ukrainians. The United States has been spending about 5 percent of our annual U.S. military budget to arm Ukraine and U.S. intelligence believes the war has severely degraded Russia's military power and its ability to threaten NATO allies. However, Ukraine is now running out of shells. Europe has now committed double the amount of aid to Ukraine in dollar terms as the United States. The United States ranks 15th in aid to Ukraine relative to the size of our economy, with some European allies providing many times more than us. But Europe's military production capacity is not as great as ours. In the short term, Europe cannot fill the gap in military assistance if the United States does not chip in.

The frontlines have not moved much in months, which has led to the false impression that the situation is stable and ripe for a settlement. Russia has shown no indication that it will settle for less than its stated aim of toppling the freely elected Government of Ukraine and either installing a puppet government or occupying Ukraine outright. On the Ukrainian side, after uncovering the massacres at places like Bucha and Irpin after being liberated from Russian occupation, public opinion has swung overwhelmingly against ceding any territory to Russia. The Russian occupiers tortured, raped, and killed anyone who espouses Ukrainian national identity. As we have been reminded lately and as I spoke about in the Senate a year ago, Putin ascribes to a twisted Russian nationalist view of history that denies the legitimacy of Ukrainian national identity. In this, he comes from a long line of Russian imperialists that for centuries have tried, and failed, to convince Ukrainians that they are really "little Russians" and not a separate nation. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian children have been abducted and taken to Russia, where they face indoctrination to forget their Ukrainian identity and become Russian. As I have spoken out about, Christian denominations other than Russian Orthodox are persecuted by Russian occupying forces. Evangelical Christians, which are seen as linked to

the West, have been disproportionately singled out for torture and repression. We should not urge Ukrainians to accept this fate, nor would they if we did.

It is clear that, with continued Western military aid, Russia is unlikely to make significant territorial gains. But, if Ukraine continues to face a shortage of artillery shells and the lifesaving Patriot missiles, Ukraine could gradually lose in a painful attritional war. This would mean even more death and suffering and more genocidal Russian war crimes like we have seen.

Keep in mind that the United States and Russia signed the Budapest Memorandum, in which Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union in return for a guarantee of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia is in violation of that agreement and at least two other treaties with Ukraine. As a signatory, the United States should not look the other way, nor should we simply trust Russia to adhere to any future agreement any longer than it takes to rearm.

Putin faced no consequences for his invasion and occupation of part of Georgia in 2008. The weak response to his partial invasion of Ukraine in 2014 led him to embark on a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. If Putin is not stopped in Ukraine, he will be emboldened to attack NATO countries down the line, and it will cost much, much more—potentially including American lives. Those who worry about World War III should take a lesson from World War II. Appeasement encourages further aggression. Agreeing to let aggression pay off in return for a temporary halt to fighting is not an anti-war position; it is likely to lead to a wider war before too long.

I should also add that there is a lot of inaccurate talk about "\$60 billion for Ukraine." In fact, about 80 percent of that money will be spent right here in the U.S. This is a U.S. national security bill to protect Americans. Much of the money in the bill actually goes to beef up our military, not Ukraine's. For instance, \$20 billion of the so-called Ukraine money is actually for DOD to buy weapons here at home to replenish our stockpiles with new, updated weapons; \$8.3 billion is allocated to greatly expand American military production capacity. This gets put under the Ukraine heading because Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine was a wakeup call that our munitions production capacity is not where it should be in the event we get into a major war. But we need that capacity for our national security whether we help Ukraine or not. In fact, \$344 million from previous so-called Ukraine bills has already gone to Iowa. The Iowa Army Ammunition Plant loads the explosives into shells, including the much in demand 155mm artillery ammunition. The dedicated workforce at the Iowa plant has already doubled production, and these modernization investments will greatly increase the capac-

ity to surge production much further if needed to keep our country safe. I am proud of Iowa's role in keeping America the "arsenal of democracy."

I remember in the Truman administration, Republicans blaming Democrats with the slogan "Who lost China?" Republicans at that time were blaming the Democrats for China becoming communist. So how does that relate to Ukraine? There was an editorial in the Washington Post recently titled, "Will the GOP become the party of retreat and surrender?"—meaning surrendering Ukraine to Russia and Putin. So my admonition to my fellow Republicans is this: Do we want to make the same mistake the Democrats made 70 years ago?

I, for one, have no intention of doing so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). The Senator from Washington.

VOTE ON H.R. 815, AS AMENDED

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the bill.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 70, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 48 Leg.]

YEAS—70

Baldwin	Grassley	Risch
Bennet	Hassan	Romney
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Rosen
Booker	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Boozman	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Hoeven	Schumer
Butler	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kelly	Sinema
Capito	Kennedy	Smith
Cardin	King	Stabenow
Carper	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Casey	Lujan	Tester
Cassidy	Manchin	Thune
Collins	Markey	Tillis
Coons	McConnell	Van Hollen
Cornyn	Menendez	Warner
Cortez Masto	Moran	Warnock
Cramer	Murkowski	Warren
Crapo	Murphy	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Murray	Wicker
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Ernst	Padilla	Young
Fetterman	Peters	
Gillibrand	Reed	

NAYS—29

Barrasso	Cotton	Hagerty
Blackburn	Cruz	Hawley
Braun	Daines	Hyde-Smith
Britt	Fischer	Johnson
Budd	Graham	Lankford

Lee	Ricketts	Scott (SC)
Marshall	Rubio	Tuberville
Merkley	Sanders	Vance
Mullin	Schmitt	Welch
Paul	Scott (FL)	

NOT VOTING—1
Lummis

The bill (H.R. 815), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it has been a long night, a long weekend, and a long few months. But a new day is here, and our efforts have been more than worth it.

Today, we have witnessed one of the most historic and consequential bills to have ever passed the Senate. It has certainly been years, perhaps decades, since the Senate passed a bill that so greatly impacts not just our national security, not just the security of our allies, but the security of Western democracy.

As I have said, if we want the world to remain a safe place for freedom, for democratic principles, for our future prosperity, then America must lead the way.

And with this bill, the Senate declares that American leadership will not waiver, will not falter, will not fail. With this bill, the Senate keeps its word to Ukrainians in desperate need of supplies and ammunition, to innocent Palestinian civilians in need of relief, to Israelis in need of support, and to U.S. servicemembers on patrol in the Indo-Pacific, the Red Sea, and around the world.

Today, we make Vladimir Putin regret the day he questioned America's resolve, and we make clear to others like China's President Xi not to test our determination. And we send a clear bipartisan message of resolve to our allies in NATO.

With the strong bipartisan support we have here in the Senate with this vote, I believe that if Speaker JOHNSON brought this bill to the House floor, it will pass with the same strong bipartisan support.

I thank all of my colleagues, Democratic and Republican alike, who supported this bill. Thank you to Senators MURRAY and COLLINS, MURPHY, SINEMA, LANKFORD. Thank you to Leader MCCONNELL, and thank you to all the Senators and staffs, including my own great staff, who worked through Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Year's and even the Super Bowl to get this done.

Finally, these past few months have been a great test for the U.S. Senate to see if we could escape the constant centrifugal pull of partisanship and summon the will to defend Western democracy when it mattered most. This morning, the Senate has resoundingly passed that test.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 468.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jacqueline Becerra, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 468, Jacqueline Becerra, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie K. Hirono, Tina Smith, Gary C. Peters, Amy Klobuchar, Raphael G. Warnock, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 470.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of David Seymour Leibowitz, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 470, David Seymour Leibowitz, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie K. Hirono, Tina Smith, Gary C. Peters, Amy Klobuchar, Raphael G. Warnock, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 455.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Hampton Y. Dellinger, of North Carolina, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, for the term of five years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 455, Hampton Y. Dellinger, of North Carolina, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, for the term of five years.

Charles E. Schumer, John W. Hickenlooper, Tim Kaine, Angus S. King, Jr., Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard Blumentahl, Chris Van Hollen, Tammy Baldwin, Edward J. Markey, Mazie K. Hirono, Laphonza Butler, Richard J. Durbin, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jeff Merkley, Peter Welch, Gary C. Peters.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, February 13, be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate