

Statement on the Bipartisan Senate Agreement for National Security Legislation
February 4, 2024

For too long, going back decades, the immigration system has been broken. It's time to fix it. That's why over 2 months ago I instructed members of my administration to work with a bipartisan group of Senators to—finally—seriously address the issue. And that's what they've done, working around the clock, through the holidays and over weekends. Now we've reached an agreement on a bipartisan national security deal that includes the toughest and fairest set of border reforms in decades. I strongly support it.

It will make our country safer, make our border more secure, treat people fairly and humanely while preserving legal immigration, consistent with our values as a nation. It would give me, as President, a new emergency authority to shut down the border when it becomes overwhelmed. It will make our asylum process fairer and more efficient while protecting the most vulnerable. It will expedite work permits so that those who are here and qualify can get to work more quickly. It will create more opportunities for families to come together, through short-term visits as well as increased permanent lawful pathways. It ensures the most vulnerable, unaccompanied young children, have paid legal representation. And it will provide the resources I have repeatedly requested to secure the border by adding border patrol agents, immigration judges, asylum officers, and cutting-edge inspection machines to help detect and stop the flow of fentanyl. While this agreement doesn't address everything I would have wanted, these reforms are essential for making our border more orderly, secure, fair, and humane.

The bipartisan national security agreement would also address two other important priorities. It allows the United States to continue our vital work, together with partners all around the world, to stand up for Ukraine's freedom and support its ability to defend itself against Russia's aggression. As I have said before, if we don't stop Putin's appetite for power and control in Ukraine, he won't limit himself to just Ukraine and the costs for America will rise. This agreement also provides Israel what they need to protect their people and defend itself against Hamas terrorists. And it will provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people.

There is more work to be done to get it over the finish line. But I want to be clear about something: If you believe, as I do, that we must secure the border now, doing nothing is not an option. Working with my administration, the United States Senate has done the hard work it takes to reach a bipartisan agreement. Now House Republicans have to decide. Do they want to solve the problem? Or do they want to keep playing politics with the border?

I've made my decision. I'm ready to solve the problem. I'm ready to secure the border. And so are the American people. I know we have our divisions at home, but we cannot let partisan politics get in the way of our responsibilities as a great nation. I refuse to let that happen. In moments like these, we have to remember who we are. We're the United States of America, and there is nothing, nothing beyond our capacity if we do it together.

I urge Congress to come together and swiftly pass this bipartisan agreement. Get it to my desk so I can sign it into law immediately.

NOTE: The statement referred to Sens. Christopher S. Murphy, James P. Lankford, and Kyrsten L. Sinema; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

Categories: Statements by the President : National security legislation, bipartisan Senate agreement.

Names: Lankford, James P.; Murphy, Christopher S.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Sinema, Kyrsten L.

Subjects: Bipartisanship; Border security; Gaza, humanitarian situation; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Immigration reform; Israel, U.S. assistance; Opioid epidemic, efforts to combat; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Ukraine, Russian airstrikes and invasion; Ukraine, U.S. assistance.

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