

House of Representatives. In fact, I dare say it hardly ever happens that any one Member of this body immediately, automatically feels great about every jot and title, about every section, every syllable, every paragraph of a bill that comes over from the House of Representatives.

That is exactly why we have the rules we do. That is exactly why parliamentary procedures, as they have evolved over the centuries, generally have as their central feature the protection of Members of any body such as this of the right to offer amendments, to offer helpful suggestions. But under our rules in the Senate, that cannot operate, it will not operate, it is not available, it doesn't exist unless we first vote to proceed to the bill.

So I invite my colleagues across the aisle—I challenge them—if they want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, vote to get on this bill. If they care about America's national security, there is a way to prove it. There is a way to prove they mean what they say when they say they want to keep it funded. Vote to get on this bill. It doesn't mean they have to agree with me, but it was not only acceptable but entirely appropriate and even necessary for the House to act to protect the constitutional order and to do so by restricting the President's ability to spend money to implement his Executive amnesty program.

People don't have to agree with me on that, but if Members want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, they can and they must and they will vote to proceed to this bill. Now we may disagree on what amendments you offer, but the Senate majority leader has repeated his offer, to make sure that we have an open amendment process, and we will.

In light of that, there is no excuse—there can be no excuse for my Democratic colleagues to continue to insist on the one hand that they care about our Nation's security and funding the Department of Homeland Security, while voting on the other hand against proceeding to this funding bill to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded. There is no excuse and there can be none.

It is most unfortunate that we have gone now 2 weeks without being able to proceed to this bill—2 weeks in which we could have offered amendments, 2 weeks in which my Democratic colleagues may well have succeeded in getting rid of some or perhaps all of the provisions they don't like added by the House of Representatives. They may have ended up with a piece of legislation that is exactly what they would have written had they started it over here, but they didn't do that.

Meanwhile, they have the audacity to accuse Republicans of causing this problem. This is something I don't understand. There are those among them who insist that Republicans did this very thing in the last Congress. Well, there were times when Republicans

voted in the last Congress not to proceed to something, but overwhelmingly—and if I recall correctly, perhaps entirely—when Republicans stopped their motion to proceed, when Republicans blocked cloture on a motion to proceed to the legislation, it was on the basis of a well-founded complaint that there would be no open amendment process. But there is no such argument to be made here. That argument has thankfully been taken off the table by our majority leader, who has thankfully opened up the Senate once again and made an amendment process possible.

Perhaps my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are still fearing the shadow cast by the previous leadership exercised in the previous Congress in the Senate that blocked out the amendment process, that made amendments impossible. If that is what they are afraid of, they have no need to fear. The Sun is now shining. The opportunity to offer up amendments and have those amendments considered has been restored to the Senate. There is no reason to be afraid. No reason to be afraid, of course, unless we somehow do the unthinkable—unless we continue to kick this can down the road farther and farther until we have no options left on the table.

We have just a few legislative days remaining between now and the time the existing funding for the Department of Homeland Security will expire. Our next vote has been scheduled on this, as I understand it, a week from Monday. I would implore each of my colleagues to reconsider their current strategy. Whether you like it or not, the way our system is set up is that the House of Representatives starts our spending bills. They have to pass spending bills first. If you don't like everything in the Homeland Security bill that the House passed—fine, vote to proceed to it and then change it. Change it back however you want. Propose amendments. I might not vote for all of them, I might not agree to all of them, but propose them. Have them aired out, have them considered by this body, by the American people, and let's have the debate, because our clock is ticking and our Nation's homeland security is too important for us to continue to put this off. But that is what we have been doing. That is what my colleagues who have been voting against cloture on the motion to proceed have been doing every time they voted no on this important issue.

The time has come for this body to accept the fact that a new day has dawned and we now have the ability once again to offer amendments, and because that opportunity now exists again, there is no reason to be afraid to move to legislation that has been passed by the House of Representatives to keep one of our government's important departments operating—no reason to fear whatsoever. In fact, if you are worried about what you should be fearful of, you should be fearful of not proceeding to this bill.

The next time we cast a vote on this, I encourage each of my colleagues to vote yes. Let's get on the bill and have an open, robust debate and whatever the outcome of that debate, we will get something passed. We will get it to the President, and we will make sure we keep this Department funded.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARASSO). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEE

RAMIRO GARZA, JR.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, here in Congress, as the Presiding Officer knows, we do a lot of oversight. Oversight is focused on what is going right as well as what is going wrong in our government. There is a lot of each, actually. That oversight is critically important work. It is sometimes overlooked, but critically important.

I think it is also important to stop and recognize where things are going right from time to time and the people who are doing the right thing. Following in the footsteps of one of our former colleagues here—I don't think the Presiding Officer ever had a chance to work with him, but Ted Kaufman was a Senator who served here for 2 years. He succeeded JOE BIDEN who went off to do some other job—Vice President, maybe that is what it is. And then, before Senator CHRIS COONS was elected 2 years later, Ted Kaufman was our Senator, a great guy. He used to be Senator BIDEN's chief of staff for 20 years or so.

Ted used to come to the floor pretty regularly and talk about different Federal employees who are doing exemplary work; people who had gone above and beyond to achieve the mission of solving problems and giving the U.S. taxpayer something to be proud of.

When somebody has a good idea, I like to steal it, and I think Ted Kaufman had a great idea. I have not really stolen it, but we have taken an idea and we have focused it a little bit, to focus on some of the people the Presiding Officer and I, along with Senator RON JOHNSON, met with this last weekend on the U.S. border with Mexico. I have decided to take the Ted Kaufman idea and focus it, put a spotlight on a number of employees within the Department of Homeland Security.

As many of us know, the Department of Homeland Security, which does important work—sometimes heroic work, dangerous work—they suffer from low morale, but it is filled with men and women who, frankly, deserve, I think, in many cases, a lot more credit than they receive.

Today I wish to speak for the next several minutes about one of the people we met, a fellow whose name I think the Presiding Officer will probably remember. His name is Ramiro Garza, Jr., and he goes by Ram. I think he has probably gone by Ram all his life. I will always remember him as Ram. He is an outstanding Border Patrol officer whom we met last week in McAllen, TX, while we were visiting the Mexican border in South Texas—the three of us, the Presiding Officer, Senator RON JOHNSON, and yours truly.

This is Ram. Some of my colleagues may remember the pictures last summer, when an unprecedented surge of Central American children and families arrived at our Texas border. They are the kind of pictures that really burn into our memories for a lot of us. The pictures we are more used to seeing may be from war zones than to see here in our own country, with hundreds upon hundreds of unaccompanied minors and a lot of mothers with young children in search of protection, literally turning themselves in to our Border Patrol agents; not running away from them, but turning themselves in and asking for asylum.

The Rio Grande Valley in South Texas is where Agent Ram Garza works. Ram is the acting patrol agent in charge of the Rio Grande Valley sector of the U.S. Border Patrol. The Rio Grande Valley where Ram works is the epicenter of that humanitarian crisis we witnessed last year. That is because most of the migrants were from the northern triangle of Central America, and they were fleeing violence, fleeing economic desperation, and fleeing a sense of hopelessness in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

These migrants had to travel some 1,500 miles through Mexico, risking life and limb to get to the United States. The shortest route—though by no means an easy one—runs up the east side of Mexico from Central America to the South Texas border, and many of the people who are making that 1,500 mile trek did it on top of a train. In fact, they did it on a series of trains—freight trains, not passenger trains—where people actually get on top of the trains and try to hold on for a 1,500 mile trip. Some of them succeeded and some of them didn't. Some of them fell down between the trains and cars and lost their lives. Some made it to the border. Some fell off the train. Some got hurt. Some got on another train. Some didn't make it. But many of them rode on top of those trains to get here, and they suffered violence. If they made it safely on the train, a lot of them suffered violence at the hands of predatory gangs along the way.

When these children showed up in South Texas, they literally overwhelmed the Border Patrol stations along the border. These stations are only supposed to hold detained migrants for a short period of time as they are processed for removal back to where they came from, or for deten-

tion. Usually along the border, they deal with the young men. However, last year stations were packed with mothers and young children who were trapped there for days as our government struggled to find suitable shelters and decide what to do with them. There were no adequate meals, no clothing, no diapers. There is literally no room at times for someone to lie down, either.

Faced with this human crisis, Customs and Border Protection agents sprang to action. Among their leaders was our agent here today whom I especially want to put a spotlight on: Ramiro Garza. With the help of his colleagues, Ram went above and beyond to process the arrivals, according to the law, while also responding to the human needs of these people. Agent Garza helped create an emergency operations center to manage the crisis and worked to transfer unaccompanied children to the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Perhaps most impressive, though, he worked with his colleagues to convert an enormous abandoned warehouse that we visited in McAllen, TX. I will not soon forget that. It is just a few miles from our border with Mexico. He turned it into a processing center for detained migrants and they did it in 18 days. They looked at a place—and they described what it was like before they started working on it, and then what they did in 19 days, they did pretty remarkable stuff. And Ram, whom we honor especially here today, and those who worked with him deserve our recognition.

This processing center helped greatly relieve the crowded and inadequate conditions in multiple Border Patrol stations along the border. When Senator RON JOHNSON, our Presiding Officer, Senator SASSE, and I visited this past weekend the extraordinary processing center that Agent Garza helped set up, we were amazed to see a cavernous, orderly center equipped with the humanitarian necessities needed for hundreds of children and their parents. The center also had space for Central American officials to work with Customs and Border Protection in order to properly identify migrants and arrange for speedier repatriations, in many cases to their home countries, where appropriate.

Agent Garza was instrumental in designing the processing facility and getting it up and running quickly. Today he is in charge of that facility.

This is just the latest achievement in Agent Garza's career with the Border Patrol. As I said, known most of his life as Ram, he grew up in the Rio Grande Valley. There he attended high school and the University of Texas-Pan American. He joined the Border Patrol in 1996. His first assignment was to the Brownsville station in the Rio Grande sector. In 2004, he was promoted to supervisory Border Patrol agent at the Rio Grande City station. That was followed by tours at the Rio Grande sec-

tor's intelligence office and at Harlingen station.

Agent Garza also worked on detail here in Washington, DC, where his duties included supporting the agency's efforts in biometric collection—something we think is very important. While he is helping to humanely process migrants apprehended at the border, Agent Garza also cares for his own family—his wife and their own two children. We thank them for sharing with us their husband and their dad—a very good man.

The Department of Homeland Security and our Nation are truly blessed by Ram's exemplary service.

Agent Garza, if you are out there listening, we want to thank you for what you do each and every day for all of us. We thank you for your tireless service to our Nation for all of these years.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. CARPER. As the Presiding Officer, along with Senator JOHNSON and myself, met the men and women of the Border Patrol last weekend, including Agent Garza, we heard about their work, and it is hard to ignore the fact that they might not know if they will be getting a paycheck next month when the continuing resolution which funds the Department of Homeland Security expires in actually about 2 weeks, on February 27.

Many of them don't know if they will be able to obtain the technology or supplies they need to do the jobs as effectively as possible either. This is not the way we would want to be treated if we were in their shoes, but it is how I think we are treating the men and women who work around the clock to protect our borders and to keep our Nation safe and secure. Those of us here in Congress can change that, and I think we should.

Two of our colleagues—Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN of New Hampshire and BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland—have introduced a clean appropriations bill that would fund the Department of Homeland Security for the balance of the fiscal year, up through the end of September. Overall, the funding provisions in their bill, S. 272, which I understand both Democrats and Republicans on the Appropriations Committee agreed to in December—just 2 months ago—provide just under \$40 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Homeland Security for the remainder of the fiscal year. I think that is an increase from year to year of about \$400 million. It sounds like a lot of money. It is about a 1-percent increase above 2014 funding. This bill would ensure that Department employees get their paychecks on time and have the resources they need to best meet the Department's critical mission and the security needs of our Nation.

The clean bill put forward by Senators SHAHEEN and MIKULSKI would