

Senator SESSIONS has repeatedly denied the disproportionate impact of voting restrictions on minorities and has been a leader in the effort to undermine the protections of the Voting Rights Act.

Senator SESSIONS has spoken out against the Voting Rights Act, calling it "a piece of intrusive legislation."

Senator SESSIONS criticized Attorney General Eric Holder for challenging state election laws, claiming they are necessary to fight voter fraud.

However, evidence supports that voter fraud is almost nonexistent, with 31 confirmed cases out of more than 1 billion ballots cast.

As Attorney General of the state of Alabama, Senator SESSIONS fought to continue practices that harmed schools predominantly attended by African-American students.

Senator SESSIONS led the fight to uphold the state of Alabama's inequitable school funding mechanism after it had been deemed unconstitutional by the Alabama circuit court.

In the state of Alabama nearly a quarter of African-American students attend apartheid schools, meaning the school's white population is less than one percent.

Although Senator SESSIONS has publicly taken credit for desegregation efforts in the state of Alabama, there is no evidence of his participation in the desegregation of Alabama schools or any school desegregation lawsuits filed by then Attorney General SESSIONS.

Mr. Speaker, The United States has been blessed to have been served as Attorney General by such illustrious figures as Robert Jackson, Robert Kennedy, Herbert Brownell, Ramsey Clark, Nicholas Katzenbach, Eric Holder, and Edward H. Levi.

Nothing would do more to reassure the American people that the President-Elect is committed to unifying the nation than the nomination and appointment of a person to be Attorney General who has a record of championing and protecting, rather than opposing and undermining, the precious right to vote; the constitutionally guaranteed right of privacy, criminal justice reform, and support for reform of the nation's immigration system so that it is fair and humane.

Regrettably, Sen. JEFF SESSIONS of Alabama is not that person and he should not be confirmed by the Senate to be the nation's 84th Attorney General.

THE WALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is Thursday evening in the House of Representatives, and I continue to hear friends, fellow Members of the House, and reporters in anguish over the issue of a potential wall between the United States and Mexico; so I thought it was worth looking at some information about Mexico—our closest neighbor to the south. The data should be recent.

They have got nearly 120 million people in Mexico. The gross domestic product is around 2.1 trillion in pesos. They have 2.1 percent growth—terrible. It is about like the Obama economy. The average income is around \$17,000 per capita. Inflation is 4.0 percent.

Yet, you look at the economics of Mexico in the world, and you think, wow. You look at their resources—extraordinary resources, just extraordinary resources. We know they have got hardworking people because we know, from the people of Mexico who have come to the United States, that people constantly indicate, gee, they are the best workers we have, these hardworking folks from Mexico.

So you have got hardworking people in the nation of Mexico, and you have got incredible natural resources that have never been tapped—or not adequately tapped. We don't even know the full potential—oil, gas, copper. There are all of these different minerals that Mexico is supposed to have. You look at what people have done over the thousands of years—I mean, advanced civilizations. Why is Mexico not one of the top 10 or even top five economies in the world? It is listed 62nd in the world.

They have got plenty of land. I can personally testify that they have some of the most beautiful terrain in the world—beautiful beaches, mountains, farming regions; just magnificent land, minerals, and hardworking people. Why is it 62nd in the world as an economy? That is an interesting question.

It would seem to be because—from hearing people who have looked at Mexico and who have either tried to start a business there or who have looked at it to start a business there, to start manufacturing there—of course, there are many who have set up manufacturing shops down there, but they are easily persuaded out of it if they can find a more suitable place. The reason it is often easy to persuade people to set up shop somewhere else is because of the drug cartels, the corruption that the drug cartels bring to Mexico.

What is it the drug cartels are making billions of dollars off of that allow them to corrupt police departments? city governments? the Mexican border patrol? the Mexican military?

Obviously, the people in all of the Mexican Government are not corrupt. I have met too many who want desperately to make the nation of Mexico one of the greatest in the world, and it is possible that could happen but not so long as the drug cartels are, potentially, the most powerful entities in Mexico. I mean, they are right next to the United States. They really should be one of the top, at least 10—if not the top five or the top three or four—economies in the world, but they are nowhere close.

Drug cartels, we have found—and we know—make money, particularly off shipping illegal drugs into the United States. They have made a fortune off of it. I have heard from friends of mine in Texas who are in the drug enforcement business, both Federal and State. When the U.S. Congress took action to make it more difficult to get SUDAFED, which is used in the cooking of substances that are put together in order

to create methamphetamine, that meth lab became much more rare, especially in east Texas, where I live, where we have got lots of trees, woods—terrain where people can easily hide out, set up a lab, cook some methamphetamine, especially as developed during my time on the felony bench, where people in Texas learned how to cook methamphetamine, create methamphetamine with a cold cooking process that didn't subject them to quite the danger and didn't create quite the nasty smell that often got meth labs reported to the authorities.

□ 1945

By drying up so many of the meth labs, we were told it is going to be a great day for America. We dry up the meth labs by making it tougher to get Sudafed because you have to ask, give your driver's license, and you are restricted to a very limited amount of Sudafed. We were told that is going to dry up drugs. Methamphetamine is going to be a thing of the past. We will cut it out next to nothing.

Well, it is true. It is not as widespread as it used to be, but I am told that more pure drugs with much more devastating results and much more addictive are coming up from Mexico in greater numbers, greater quantities. It is even worse than it was when methamphetamine was being cooked because of the purity of the substances and the addictive nature. Also, as a result of drying up so much in the way of methamphetamine, we have much more of the heroin epidemic crossing America.

Additional drugs have come from Mexico across our porous border that seems to have grown during the Obama administration dramatically. Why? Because our border has really not particularly been all that enforced.

It turns out that it is not just other drugs that are coming across our border. Since we have been able to eliminate so many meth labs, especially in Texas, we see stories like this one from Bob Price, January 5, "Feds Seize Nearly \$7M in Meth At Texas Border." That is a story about the seizure of methamphetamine at two international border bridges in south Texas in 1 week. The Customs and Border Protection, CBP, that was assigned to the World Trade Center International Bridge in Laredo, this article reports how they had caught two drug traffickers with 200 pounds of crystal meth in one vehicle, and that was December 22, 2016.

We also know that the border security under this administration has become just almost nonexistent. We had an article from January 12, today, from McAllen, from Fox News, entitled, "Cartels, Smugglers Exploit Border Wall Fears Ahead of Trump Presidency." So apparently they are using this time before President Trump is sworn in next week to scare people into coming now. Bring your drugs now. Come illegally now into the U.S. before Trump becomes President.

I guess it is a bit akin to Iran. After holding American hostages for over a year under Commander in Chief Jimmy Carter, became so scared of a tough, independent-minded Ronald Reagan coming into office, they let those hostages go on the very day he was sworn in. So they didn't risk him taking military action against them.

This is another story from Jessica Vaughan, January 2017, that reports that "ICE Deportations Hit 10-Year Low." This is January 2017. DHS has hit a 10-year low in deportations.

We see stories about how border control is almost nonexistent on our southern border, stories that expectation of amnesty is attracting immigrants to our U.S. border.

Here is another story from January 10 by Brittany Hughes, "Border Agents Catch Another Wave of Illegal Aliens From Cuba Amid Escalating Spike." I have been told, when I am down there, they are seeing more and more Cubans coming across the Mexican border of all places.

So the insecurity—not mentally—of the United States, but the actual insecurity of the United States because of our vulnerability to people that hate us and drug cartels that want to make billions of dollars by hooking people on drugs that they will deliver, has reached insane levels. That is probably part of the reason that Donald Trump was elected President by an avalanche in the electoral college.

If you look at the counties that voted for Hillary Clinton and you look at the counties that voted for Donald Trump, it becomes very clear that the Democratic Party in the United States has basically become a fringe party. They won the fringes: West Coast, East Coast, part of Florida, part of the northeast, Chicago, Detroit, some of the northern cities, the southern valley of Texas. I mean, it is a fringe party. There are a few exceptions inside the country, but basically the rock-solid interior that the American people make up—in what some refer to as fly-over country in America—voted rather solidly for Donald Trump.

Here are numbers from the CIA World Factbook on Mexico:

Crude oil exports, a 2015 estimate, had 1.199 million barrels per day. Country comparison to the world, 13.

Crude oil imports, 11,110 barrels a day. Crude oil, proved reserves, 9.7 billion barrels, and that is just proven reserves.

If you look at natural gas from a 2014 estimate, 44.37 billion cubic meters. That is supposed to be 19th in the world, but when you consider how productive they could become once they began fracking, using more advanced technology, then you find out that, wow, this is a nation—the nation of Mexico—that really should be one of the top 10 economies in the world.

What is the excuse that it is not? It has hardworking people, natural resources that most of the world could only envy. Why is it not one of the top

10? We keep coming back to the drug cartels and the corruption that they have brought to Mexico and the billions of dollars that are generated by the drug cartels.

As we have talked about here in the House, the border patrolmen tell me—I have been there all night—there is not a single inch of the U.S.-Mexico border that is not controlled by one of the drug cartels and that nobody should cross the border unless they have paid the drug cartels, have the drug cartels' permission.

I have seen firsthand how it works. They will send a group across the river with coyotes in rafts when they are down on the Rio Grande. That keeps the Border Patrol busy. At another place, they send people with drugs.

I have been there and seen their look-outs, climbed up on perches where they can watch. When the Border Patrol goes by, they know they won't be back for a while, so they get surprised when I drive by in the middle of the night.

They are all over the place around our southern border. They are making billions of dollars. Whoever came up with the business model for the drug cartels that you could make such massive amounts of money bringing drugs illegally into the United States, it was really a business genius. But it would take a business fool in the United States to allow the kind of model that Mexico has set up for its drug business to even get a foothold in the United States.

As I have mentioned, one of the Border Patrol told me that the drug cartels call the Department of Homeland Security their logistics. They bring their drug dealers. They bring their drug traffickers. They bring their prostitutes. Unfortunately, girls are being forced, often, into drug trafficking or human trafficking, and they are going to be used as prostitutes to make money for the drug cartels. They send them across.

As a border patrolman said, they send them across, and then DHS here in America becomes their logistics. We ship them wherever they want them to go in the United States. All they have to do oftentimes is just have—I have seen them—a Xerox copy of the address where they are supposed to go, and DHS puts them on the bus—sometimes flies them, but usually buses—and ships them off to a city where the drug cartels want them to set up shop.

I have been there in the middle of the night when border patrolmen will ask how much they paid to be brought in illegally to the U.S. Some of the Spanish speakers in our Border Patrol are really incredible as they drill down and get answers to their questions that are not always on the list that DHS tells them to get.

"How much money did you pay?" They would say, "Well, you didn't have \$6,000, \$7,000, \$8,000. Where did you get that money?"

"Well, I was able to get \$1,000 from somebody in the U.S., \$1,000 from somebody in Mexico or Guatemala."

"Well, what about the rest?"

"They are going to let me pay that out after I am in the United States."

□ 2000

It becomes clear very quickly that, once again, this business model that the drug cartels have includes getting people in rafts where the Rio Grande River requires a raft, or just getting them across in unguarded areas, or areas where we need a wall and don't have one, getting them across, and then getting DHS to send them to the city where they want to set up shop as drug traffickers, human traffickers.

What a business model. You get the Federal Government of the United States to help you set up your business machine, your business model in the United States. They are shipping your employees around the country to different cities. Yes, it is normally under the guise of: I have a relative there, here is the relative's address. They are going to take care of me.

Perhaps you get delayed and have to wait for an immigration judge that was appointed by Eric Holder to give you a notice to appear for a hearing 4 years later, a year, 2 years later, and then you can go on to the city where the drug cartels want you to finish paying off what you owe them for getting you into the United States.

So to have a business model that requires your workers to pay you is extraordinary, but that is what drug cartels are able to do when you have a willing Obama administration here in the United States that will help you set up your drug cartel mechanism here in the United States. That is what has been going on.

In the meantime, back in Mexico, you generate so much money by having your workers pay you to work for you, and getting billions of dollars from the drugs that are sent into the United States, hooking people here in America, making them reliant on and addicted to drugs that destroy their lives. So basically the drug cartels get a two-for. They destroy the human infrastructure of the United States with poison that some would say, well, that is another name for illegal drugs. And then, in the meantime, you have got all of that money coming to you, and you use that money to buy off police. Thank God there are some stand-up police in Mexico that can't be bought. But if they go too strongly head to head with the drug cartels—we have seen the pictures—they can end up with their head on a pike as a message. We have had chiefs of police that were killed when they refused to kowtow to the drug cartels, and so the message becomes pretty clear.

It seems to me that the biggest reason that Mexico—with extraordinary people and extraordinary natural resources, a beautiful, fantastic country, a location that is just incredibly advantageous because they have got shipping that can go out on the West Coast like we do to the Pacific, shipping on

the East Coast into the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, ready access to North American markets, ready access to South American market, what an opportunistic location for Mexico. Yet, they struggle so far behind most nations, or so many nations in the world. Dozens and dozens, 60 or so, are before them because drug cartels have such a powerful part in Mexico itself.

So there are many Americans, especially friends of mine across the aisle here, who think it is an absolute outrage to talk about building a wall between the United States and Mexico. There are some Mexican officials that think it is an outrage to talk about building a wall between the United States and Mexico.

Now, some of those Mexican officials think it is an outrage because they haven't thought through the magnificence that may arise in Mexico once we have secured the border between Mexico and the United States and we can slow the drug trafficking to a trickle. So the drug cartels will not be looking at billions of U.S. dollars; they will be looking at thousands; and if they are extremely powerful, maybe millions. But if we get that down to thousands, then the Mexican people will be able to have control without corruption, without massive pockets of corruption, without a drug cartel that can buy soldiers, buy police, buy chiefs of police, and buy mayors. Again, thank God it is only a small part of Mexico, but it keeps Mexico suppressed from the great economic power that it could be. And the potential is all there.

You build a wall, then you shut down the drug cartels. And when they only have thousands of dollars to bribe police instead of millions or billions of dollars, then law and order will prevail and the drug cartels will not, and we will have the most extraordinary neighbor to our south all because we followed the example in Mending Wall, and we had a wall between us that we kept up, we took care of, we shut down, helped Mexico shut down the drug cartels by being a good neighbor, enforcing the border, and the standard of living in Mexico spirals upwards through the sky. The power Mexico would have as a nation in any international organization will be extraordinary, and the United States will reach an unparalleled relationship as a neighbor. That is worth building a wall for.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

OPPOSING WAIVER FOR GENERAL MATTIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I am a marine, just like James Mattis. While I was a grunt and he was a general, we both fought in Iraq. He is a man of social integrity and patriotism.

War shows the character of military leaders. Marines who served under Mattis in Iraq speak in glowing terms about his strength, intelligence, and ability.

Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I rise this evening to oppose legislation that would allow General Mattis to serve as our 26th Secretary of Defense. This might seem contradictory. It might appear partisan or unpatriotic. In fact, the opposite is true.

My position is entirely straightforward, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to something as basic as civilian control of the military, I believe exceptions should be granted for extraordinary circumstances, not extraordinary people.

For more than half a century, recently retired military leaders have been barred from assuming the top post at the Pentagon. The Members of Congress who enshrined this prohibition in law had fresh memories of the Second World War. They are wary of a decorated general slipping off his uniform and immediately stepping into a civilian role. They were apprehensive about installing a Secretary of Defense who could be perceived as partial to one service over others. They are also worried about whether the reputation of our military as a nonpartisan institution would suffer if its most respected leaders could transition directly into political positions.

The last time a recently retired military man, the great George Marshall, was permitted to lead the Pentagon, America was facing the prospect of a humiliating defeat in the Korean war. Even then, congressional leaders specified that his waiver was a one-time exception to the rule.

While our country must confront an array of threats today, none of our national security challenges remotely compares to a massive ground war in the Far East.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that many of my colleagues are eager to grant this waiver because they greeted the announcement of Mattis' appointment with a sigh of relief, a sigh of relief because it meant Donald Trump had picked someone who is known to be competent and patriotic, and someone who doesn't have a cozy relationship with the Russian Government.

That is an understandable reaction, and we are all extremely confident that General Mattis will do a much better job than General Flynn or some of the other alternatives.

We shouldn't let Trump's bad behavior and poor judgment compel Congress to lower the bar. If anything, we should raise the bar for Trump, not make exceptions just because we are glad he didn't go with someone like Flynn.

Mr. Speaker, a simple set of rules and norms form the fabric of American democracy. Since the founding of the Republic, leaders of every party and political persuasion have upheld this basic framework. For generations, American leaders have placed principle before party.

With remarkably few exceptions, Presidents from George Washington to Barack Obama have valued our institutions and our democracy more than private gain or personal advancement. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a President-elect who doesn't think the rules should apply to him. We have a President-elect who is brazenly breaking norms left and right. We have a President-elect who promises to make America great again, but is dividing the country as never before.

Here in the United States, we believe every American is entitled to equal justice under the law. But Donald Trump believes that a different set of rules should apply to him than apply to President Obama or President Bush or any of the other men who have held our highest office.

Unlike his predecessors, Donald Trump has stubbornly refused to release his tax returns. Unlike his predecessors, Donald Trump has irresponsibly meddled in our foreign relations throughout the transition. Unlike his predecessors, Trump has done nothing to diminish massive conflicts of interest stemming from his complex business dealings overseas.

Yet, instead of applying a check on this pattern of reckless behavior, House Republicans have rolled over time and time again.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans won't stand up to a President entering office with just a 37 percent approval rating because it is precisely that 37 percent of the public that scares them. In fact, that 37 percent has terrified them for 8 long years. It scared them into turning a blind eye to the racist birther conspiracy theories. It scared them into shutting down the Federal Government. That 37 percent even scared them into risking a debt limit default which would have immediately triggered an unprecedented economic meltdown.

Mr. Speaker, we need a President like Barack Obama who looks out for 100 percent of the American people. We need a President like Barack Obama who abides by 100 percent of the rules. We need a House majority that is willing to uphold its constitutional obligations 100 percent of the time.

Moving forward in this Congress, the power to check Donald Trump is in Republican hands and depends on Republican votes, but they have been too scared, too cowed, and too unwilling to do what these tough times demand.

If we, the Members of this great body, won't stand up for the norms that have sustained this Republic for 238 years, then who will?

General Mattis is a patriot, but now is the time for all of us in this Chamber to reiterate a basic truth in a democracy—rules matter. They shouldn't be discarded at the first sign of difficulty. They shouldn't be undercut by waivers. Important precedents must be upheld in good times and bad.

This is America, Mr. Speaker, not some banana republic where the incoming strongman gets to rewrite the rule