

from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 84, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 116 Ex.]

#### YEAS—84

Alexander	Feinstein	Murray
Baldwin	Fischer	Nelson
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Reed
Booker	Hassan	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Brown	Heitkamp	Rounds
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Cantwell	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Cardin	Inhofe	Schumer
Carper	Johnson	Scott
Casey	Jones	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kaine	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Smith
Corker	King	Sullivan
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Leahy	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	Manchin	Udall
Daines	McCaskey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Durbin	Moran	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Young

#### NAYS—11

Gillibrand	Menendez	Stabenow
Harris	Merkley	Warren
Hirono	Peters	Wyden
Markey	Sanders	

#### NOT VOTING—5

Coons	Heinrich	McCain
Duckworth	Isakson	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 84, the nays are 11.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Annemarie Carney Axon, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending question is the Axon nomination postcloture.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I see nobody else seeking the floor. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

#### FORCED FAMILY SEPARATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for those of us who read history, we know that throughout history, including at times in our own country many years ago,

the forcible separation of families was used as an instrument of terror.

I struggle to imagine a more damaging and inhumane governmental policy than to forcibly and needlessly tear children away from their parents. For decades, the United States has rightly led the world in condemning such practices as flagrant abuses of government power and human rights.

Yet, today, in an extraordinary breach of our most basic values, the Trump administration is now regularly employing these very tactics. It is true that some children were separated from their parents during the previous administration. I vocally and forcefully opposed it then, because I believed and I am still convinced that there are alternatives that are far more humane and effective than the tearing apart of families.

But the family separation we are seeing today is so vastly different both in purpose and in scope than what occurred during the Obama administration. There is no comparison. Separation is no longer limited to narrow circumstances where it is arguably in the best interest of the child. Separating children, even infants, from their parents is now being carried out as a blanket policy. It is frightening. This disturbing policy is happening by design.

The Trump administration's decision to criminally prosecute every adult who arrives at our border without documentation establishes a de facto family separation policy that is going to rip thousands of innocent children away from their loved ones. The administration's claim that this policy is necessary to deter illegal border crossings rings hollow. The administration has also separated families who follow the rules and lawfully present themselves at ports of entry with claims of asylum. They are asking for asylum.

There is simply no way we can sanitize the cruelty of this policy. The anguish we are inflicting is evident in the story of each parent who is losing a child. Let me tell my colleagues a couple of those stories.

Here are the words of Maria, who was separated from her children, ages 7 and 2, just last month when she sought asylum at the San Ysidro Port of Entry.

She said:

[A]t about 8 a.m. they called just my two children and I went out and they said, "Miss, only they are going." . . . [T]he officer said, "They are here for them. Can the little one walk?"

"Yes," I told the officer.

"Let him down," they told me.

The older one took his hand and they started to walk. Then they turned around to look and when they saw that I was not going after them, they cried.

I will tell another story, the ordeal of another mother with two sons, age 4 and 10. She is seeking asylum from El Salvador.

I was only given five minutes to say goodbye before [my sons] were torn from me. My babies started crying when they found out we were going to be separated. It breaks my heart to remember my youngest wail, "Why

do I have to leave?" . . . My youngest cried and screamed in protest because he did not want to leave my side. My oldest son was also confused and did not understand what was happening. In tears myself, I asked my boys to be brave, and I promised we would be together again soon. I begged the woman who took my children to keep them together so they could at least have each other.

This is a description from a father seeking asylum at the San Ysidro Port of Entry:

I was told I was going to be separated from my son. I suffer from high blood pressure and felt as though I was having a heart attack. . . . I feel like I was in shock and do not remember what happened next or even how I got to the detention center after that. All I can remember is how much my son and I were both crying as they took him away.

The anguish inflicted on these parents and children at the moment they are separating is excruciating. For those of us who are parents, it is inconceivable, but it is just the beginning. Parents are given limited information—sometimes none at all—about where their children are being held, in whose care, or for how long. Some have begged the courts for information, frustrating judges who know little more than the parents. Some are deported while their children remain in unknown locations in the United States. Pediatricians describe the trauma that can be inflicted on these children as toxic stress. It results in lasting damage to a child's health.

Who here would tolerate such a thing if it were happening to American children? Who would defend such an abhorrent practice that was happening in another country—say, Russia or any other country? None of us would. We would condemn it.

But all of this lays bare the ugly truth about the true intent of this policy: to strike fear into the hearts of families who are seeking refuge from gang violence, chaos, murder, and rape in their home countries. The message could not be clearer: If you try to seek refuge in the United States, which is your right under international law, if you seek your right, if you seek refuge, if you seek the right you have under international law, we in America will punish you and punish your family because you are not welcome here.

This policy unquestionably flouts our domestic and international legal obligations. Worse, it flies in the face of who we are. In the past, we have shown the world that protecting our homeland is not incompatible with providing refuge to the vulnerable. We have proven that being a nation of laws is not antithetical to being a country of compassion. We have demonstrated that our unmatched power is derived in part from how we treat the most powerless among us. But President Trump's policy abandons our principles. Actually, it abandons our identity as a moral beacon for the world.

Republicans and Democrats must speak with one voice to condemn this cruelty. Family separation is no more a Republican policy than a Democratic

policy. It is neither. It is an un-American policy.

The United States, this great country that beckoned my maternal grandparents to come to the United States and Vermont, or my great-grandparents, paternal grandparents to come to the United States and Vermont—this great country must not be seen as terrorizing children to score political points. That is beneath the greatness of the United States. It is wrong. It is abhorrent. We must not be seen as pursuing policies with the intent of inflicting pain and anguish on vulnerable people, on children.

I hope Senators of both parties with join me in condemning this outrageous practice of forced family separation. We are a nation that is better than this. We have always thought of ourselves as better than this. Well, it is time we acted like we are better than this.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE REPUBLICAN-LED CONGRESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the May jobs report came out last Friday, and here are some of the headlines.

This is from Bloomberg: "U.S. Payrolls Rise 223,000; Jobless Rate Matches 48-Year Low."

This is from CNN: "Unemployment rate matches lowest point in half a century."

From the New York Times: "We Ran Out of Words to Describe How Good the Job Numbers Are."

In other words, the May jobs report was more good news for American workers. The economy created 223,000 jobs in May. The unemployment rate dropped to 3.8 percent—the lowest rate since April of 2000. That is right. The last time unemployment was this low, the iPod hadn't even been invented.

When the Republican-led Senate passed tax reform in December, there were estimates that this historic legislation would create nearly 1 million jobs for the American people. Well, the economy has already created more than 1 million jobs since tax reform was passed and 3.6 million jobs since President Trump was elected. The Republican pro-growth, pro-jobs agenda is working.

Government cannot create prosperity. It can't create the jobs and opportunities that Americans need for a secure economic future. Only businesses can do that. But government can create the conditions for economic prosperity. It can make sure businesses are free to create jobs and opportunities by making sure they are not weighed down with burdensome taxes and regulations.

As everyone knows, the economy stagnated during the last administration. Recovery from the recession was historically weak. Wages were stagnant, and opportunities were often few and far between. A big reason for that was the fact that businesses large and

small were weighed down by burdensome regulations and an outdated Tax Code. So when President Trump took office, Republicans and President Trump made reversing our economic decline a priority. We rolled back burdensome regulations, and in December, we passed a historic reform of our Tax Code.

Before the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the Tax Code was not helping businesses grow and create jobs. In fact, it was doing just the opposite, and that had real consequences for American workers. A small business owner struggling to afford the hefty annual tax bill for her business was highly unlikely to be able to hire a new worker or to raise wages. A larger business struggling to stay competitive in the global marketplace, while paying a substantially higher tax rate than its foreign competitors, too often had limited funds to expand or increase investment here in the United States.

So when it came time for tax reform, we set out to improve the playing field for American workers by improving the playing field for businesses as well. To accomplish that, we lowered tax rates across the board for owners of small- and medium-sized businesses, farms, and ranches. We lowered our Nation's massive corporate tax rate, which up until January 1 was the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. We expanded business owners' ability to recover investments they make in their businesses, which frees up cash that they can reinvest in their operations and their workers. We brought the U.S. international tax system into the 21st century so that American businesses are not operating at a disadvantage next to their foreign competitors.

Now we are seeing results. Company after company has announced higher wages, better retirement benefits, bonuses, increased investment, new jobs, and more.

A recent survey from the National Association of Manufacturers reported that 77 percent of manufacturers plan to increase hiring as a result of tax reform, 72 percent plan to increase wages or benefits, and 86 percent report that they plan to increase investments, which means new jobs and opportunities for workers. Meanwhile, a recent survey from the National Federation of Independent Business reports that 75 percent of small business owners think the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will have a positive effect on their businesses.

The Republican economic agenda is working, and Republicans are going to keep working to ensure that American businesses can thrive and that American workers have access to the jobs and opportunities they need for long-term economic security. While we are doing that, we are also going to continue to focus on the rest of the work the American people elected us to do. As I have said before, Congress can walk and chew gum at the same time.

While we have been laser-focused on removing obstacles to economic growth

and job creation, we have also accomplished a lot of other things so far this Congress.

By the end of the Obama administration, our Nation's military was facing a serious readiness shortfall. So this year we made the most significant investment in our military in 15 years, and we are going to continue to make sure that the men and women of our military have the resources they need to meet and defeat the threats of the 21st century. We recently passed legislation that makes much needed reforms to ensure our veterans have access to the healthcare they need, when and where they need it.

We also took action to preserve healthcare for children in need by enacting the longest extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program in history, and we repealed ObamaCare's burdensome individual mandate which forced many, many Americans to buy health insurance they didn't want or couldn't afford.

We passed legislation to fight sex trafficking, to combat opioid abuse, to help community banks, to increase school safety, to keep energy affordable, and more. Of course, we confirmed a number of highly qualified judges to fill vacancies in our judicial system.

Republicans are working to honor the trust the American people have placed in us. We are fighting to make life better for hard-working Americans. We have accomplished a lot so far this Congress, but we know there is a lot more work to be done. We are up to the challenge.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### REFUGEE CRISIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, history is a great teacher, if you learn your history. The history of the United States, when it comes to refugees, is a checkered history.

Back during World War II, there were people who came to the borders of the United States and begged for our mercy, begged for our help. Nine hundred of them were on a ship called the *SS St. Louis*. They were Jews who came from Europe seeking refuge in the United States from the Nazis. Sadly, the United States turned them away. Several hundred of them were forced back to Europe and died in the Holocaust. On the floor of this U.S. Senate, a Democratic Senator from New York,