

Border Patrol were being returned to countries where they might be further persecuted or killed.

Under this law, unaccompanied children from the Northern Triangle countries I mentioned earlier are transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services and placed in deportation proceedings, giving them a chance to make their case to a judge as to why they are seeking protection in America.

Consider “Samuel” and “Amelie,” who are siblings, ages 3 and 6, from Honduras. They are 3 and 6. When they arrived in the United States, they were traumatized and refused to speak. After months of counseling, Amelie revealed that both children had been raped by drug cartel members. Without the protection of this law which the President condemned this morning, these children would have been returned to Honduras and almost certain exploitation or death.

Two weeks ago, there was a hearing on unaccompanied children in the Senate Immigration Subcommittee which I serve on as a ranking member. We examined the administration's claim that the law the President objects to is being exploited by gangs. Here is what we learned:

Unaccompanied children undergo multiple screenings and background checks when they present themselves at the border, and the law gives the government the authority to place any unaccompanied child in a secure facility if there is any notion of a threat. Since the year 2012, 6 years ago, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has processed more than 250,000 unaccompanied children. Of those, how many were confirmed or suspected of affiliation with the MS-13 gang that the President talks about nonstop? Sixty. It was 60 out of 250,000—60 over 6 years, which is 10 a year, fewer than 1 a month. The President says we have to separate these kids because of drug gang worries. I don't want a single member of any gang anywhere admitted into this country, period. For goodness' sake, 250,000 children and 60 over a 6-year period were confirmed or suspected of affiliation with MS-13? Instead of stoking fears, we should focus on preventing unaccompanied children from being recruited by gangs.

Sadly, the Trump administration's budget is slashing funding for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the government agency that is responsible for these important gang prevention efforts.

At our hearing, we also discussed the conditions in the Northern Triangle countries in Central America that are driving families to flee to our border. If people were migrating because of the so-called legal loopholes, which we hear so often about from this administration, they wouldn't be just coming from three countries; they would be coming from all over the region, but we learned more than 90 percent of the unaccompanied kids referred to the De-

partment of Health and Human Services are from three nations—the three of the Northern Triangle.

Instead of addressing the root causes that are driving migration from these countries, the Trump administration is making the situation on the ground worse. The administration's budget request for the region would slash aid by more than one-third, and the administration is terminating the temporary protected status for two of these countries—El Salvador and Honduras, forcing many people to return to them even though these countries are clearly unstable.

Last year, the administration also ended the Central American Minors Program, which permitted children from the Northern Triangle to apply for refugee resettlement from their home country. We said to mothers with their babies and their infants: Don't make this dangerous journey. If you are in danger in your home country and want to seek asylum or refuge in the United States, make the application from where you are before you have to make that journey. Unfortunately, that came to an end with the administration's request to stop the program.

There are many issues to come before the American people but few that have stoked emotions more than this issue. The notion that the United States of America—over 300 million good and caring people—would make it an official policy to separate these infants and toddlers and children from their mothers and fathers is not American. It is extreme, it is mean, and it is cruel. Sadly, it is the official policy—the so-called zero-tolerance policy that has been announced by Attorney General Sessions.

We learned a bitter lesson back in World War II. We ignored the realities of human suffering. People across the world asked: What is going on in America? What are their values? After that war, we tried to make it clear what we do stand for, the things that are clearly important, and now this administration has decided we can no longer afford to do that. We have to separate children from their mothers, separate them by thousands of miles, put them into foster care, remove them from their mothers, even if that parent qualifies for protection here in the United States under our laws of asylum.

This is a sad and cruel policy. I hope Americans across the board will stand up and speak up. We are a better Nation than this.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### BIG BANKS AND THE SECOND AMENDMENT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I rise today because, in my judgement, we are in the midst of a deeply troubling trend regarding banking and the Second Amendment. I know that seems a bit strange. What does banking have to do with the Second Amendment? I have wondered that myself. Allow me to explain.

We have 120 million gun owners in America. Like those Americans, I am alarmed by the activist anti-gun policies unveiled by the “we are smarter than you” financial elites who run two Wall Street banks: Citigroup and Bank of America. They have a political agenda, and those banks' political agenda stands to hurt many small businesses in my State of Louisiana that are going to lose their banking services simply because these small businesses choose to exercise their constitutionally protected Second Amendment rights.

On March 22 of this year, Citigroup issued a press release. That press release detailed how Citigroup will penalize banking clients who follow Federal, State, and local gun laws. Citigroup's new policy will tell businesses what kinds of firearms they can stock, what kinds of accessories those small businesses can stock in their stores, and who they can sell them to. I thought this was America.

This new policy has already taken effect all across Citigroup, and it has impacted hundreds of small businesses, institutional clients, and even their credit card partners.

Not to be outdone, 2 weeks later, Bank of America joined in. On April 10, Bank of America announced that it will no longer loan money to businesses that, in its opinion, are “deplorable” because those businesses manufacture legal semiautomatic rifles. Targeting firearms owners and business owners is not only an affront to responsible, law-abiding, constitutional gun owners across this country; it is a threat to the sanctity of our very Constitution and the Second Amendment.

I realize that the management of these two banks have a constitution whose bill of rights jumps from one to three, but I can assure them that in the Constitution read by the rest of America, there is a Second Amendment.

I have written to both the chief executive officers of Citigroup and Bank of America about my concerns, and they have yet to respond. I understand that Mr. Brian Moynihan, the CEO of Bank of America, is actually here in Washington lobbying folks on Capitol Hill this week. I suppose he was too busy to come by and address my concerns. Once again, I invite him to come by my office and speak about this in person.

I can't overstate the gravity of this issue. It is important for consumers and businesses all across America. Both Citigroup and Bank of America are considered by the U.S. Government to be “systemically important banks.”

That means they are too big to fail. That is why the American taxpayers had to bail them out in 2009.

The American taxpayers, many of whom Citigroup and Bank of America now condescend to across our great land, gave Citigroup \$476 billion of their hard-earned money—not \$476 million to bail out Citigroup, \$476 billion. And the American taxpayers, many of whom choose to exercise their rights under the Second Amendment and whom these banks are trying to now punish, gave Bank of America \$336 billion in 2008 and 2009 to keep them from going broke.

These banks are supposed to act as a source of credit for households and businesses and local and State governments and as a source of liquidity for the entire banking system, but that also means their corporate policies will have ripple effects through every corner of our economy, from consumers and businesses of all sizes to banks and nonbank holding companies.

If the banking system worked like a grocery store, I would still disagree with these new anti-gun rules by Citigroup and Bank of America, but I would respect their rights to enact whatever corporate policies align with their beliefs. But banks are not grocery stores. A grocery store doesn't need a government charter to operate. A grocery store doesn't have a government corporation backed by the taxpayers of this country to insure their deposits. A grocery store doesn't have a government bank that pays them interest. Banks do.

One grocery store doesn't get so big that it lends and borrows and buys and sells from nearly every other grocery store in the country. Citigroup does, and so does Bank of America.

A grocery store doesn't need an \$812.3 billion bailout from the American taxpayers, many of whom choose to exercise their rights under the U.S. Constitution, including, but not limited to, the Second Amendment.

Citigroup and Bank of America have decided to make banking a red-versus-blue issue by trampling on the Second Amendment rights of small business owners and therefore all Americans.

If additional big consumer banks come out with similar anti-Second Amendment policies, it will get harder and harder for businesses in my State of Louisiana and small businesses in other States and elsewhere to find banking services. We will have red banks, and we will have blue banks. I don't think that is what we want in America.

I want to make sure that the Federal Government isn't rewarding this behavior with even more taxpayer dollars. I think \$1 trillion to bail out these two banks by the American taxpayers is quite enough.

I have already petitioned the General Services Administration to cancel the Federal Government's \$700 billion contract with Citigroup, and I have urged officials in the State of Louisiana to

reevaluate all State contracts with any Wall Street bank that chooses to implement an extra-legal policy that infringes on the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Citigroup and Bank of America owe their continued existence to the generosity of the American taxpayer. If it weren't for the American taxpayer, there would be no Citigroup; there would be no Bank of America. I find it very disturbing that these Wall Street banks may be profiting from taxpayer-funded contracts at the same time they are pushing a political agenda—and that is what it is, a political agenda—and severing ties with law-abiding businesses in the process. Given the size of these banks, it is likely that the same is true in States across America.

I find it offensive—I find it offensive—that Wall Street banks are taking taxpayer dollars with one hand and condescending to them with their “we know better than you do” attitude by using the other hand to come after the guns those taxpayers lawfully own under the Second Amendment. Rather than impose its political agenda on law-abiding citizens, these Wall Street banks ought to remember how taxpayers spent billions of dollars—almost \$1 trillion—to bail them out after the 2008 financial crisis. They owe a tremendous debt to the American people, and it seems they have a very short memory.

We don't need red banks in America. We don't need blue banks in America. We need safe banks in America.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### TRIBUTE TO DENNIS WILLIAMS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to someone who has been fighting for working men and women his entire career.

Just for a moment, let's think back to 1977. The top movie that year was “Star Wars”—the original one—and the average movie ticket cost \$2.23. The Apple II computer went on sale. It cost \$1,298, not including the television you needed to use for a monitor. The space shuttle *Enterprise* took its first test flight, perched on top of a Boeing 747. And a young Marine Corps veteran and salvage welder at J.I. Case first joined UAW Local 806 in Rock Island, IL. He began fighting at that point for workers' rights.

A few things have changed since then. “Star Wars” and Apple have evolved, and the space shuttle has retired. Yet one thing hasn't changed: Dennis Williams is just as dedicated to the working men and women of the UAW today as he was four decades ago. Over the years, he has served them in a number of ways, including negotiating

the first contract at Mitsubishi Motors North America in Bloomington, IL; organizing Indiana State employees; helping Local 844 in Vermont, IL, obtain their first contract; and serving locals throughout the nine States of Region 4.

In 2010, he was elected UAW's secretary-treasurer. In 2014, he was elected United Auto Workers' president, a position he has held with distinction since then. It hasn't been an easy time to lead the UAW. The great recession hit the American automobile industry very hard. Some folks thought we should just let the auto industry go bankrupt. Instead, the United Auto Workers made sacrifices, stood strong, stood together, and weathered the storm. Under Dennis Williams' leadership, the UAW ended 2017 with a fiscal surplus for the third straight year and with more than 430,000 members—up 60,000 members since 2011. It is no surprise. Anyone who has worked with Dennis knows just how dedicated he is to his members and to the communities where they live and where they work.

Just ask the people of Flint. During the water crisis—which, by the way, continues on—UAW members from all over the country were some of the first ones there to help. They collected bottled water and distributed it in their own vehicles, going door to door to help, even traveling to Washington, DC, to demand action from Congress. We are so pleased that they helped us get action to help the families in Flint.

That tells us a little something about the character of the members of the UAW. Yet, it also tells us a little bit about their leader—a man who long ago signed up to serve his country and has simply never stopped. I think that Dennis would say it is about solidarity. He wrote in an editorial in the Detroit News last month:

We believe that no matter where you come from, who you are, what language you speak, or what religion you practice—being in a union is about working men and women standing up for each other. That's how it was in 1935 when the UAW was formed, and that's how it is now.

To Dennis Williams, thank you for your service, your hard work, and your dedication to making life better for working men and women so that we can actually have and sustain and grow an American middle class. I know that the members of the UAW join me in wishing you the very best in your well-earned retirement.

I know that my partner and colleague from Michigan will be coming to the floor in just a bit.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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