

I am a journalist's kid and very proud of it. My dad was a first-generation Jewish kid. He taught himself English and was a journalist. He always said: "Ron, the journalist's job is to ask the tough questions—the tough questions that really matter."

Robert Pear asked the tough questions, no doubt about that, but he always did it in a very unique way, a fair way, a thoughtful way, a way that embodied the gold standard for journalism that I have described.

So yesterday was particularly sad. We got the news in the morning. We had that healthcare hearing, which started about an hour after we got the news. The first thing I thought of as I came into the room was how hard it is going to be—and it is not going to stop hurting for a long time—to imagine that seat at the end of the press table not having the thoughtful, informed Robert Pear sitting there so he could get the facts to the American people.

So I just want to close today—we have had a number of colleagues speak already—to say, Robert, Robert Pear, you were the consummate professional. You were fair to the bone. It was an honor—an honor to get to work with you over the years in healthcare. We say goodbye to someone who was a true mensch, and this afternoon with heavy hearts, we think of Robert Pear and want the country to know what an extraordinary person he was.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I recognize the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I come to speak on another matter, but I want to thank Senator WYDEN for the kind words he had to say, as well, about a very distinguished journalist.

ATTORNEY GENERAL BARR

Madam President, yesterday, the House Judiciary Committee voted to hold Attorney General Barr in contempt of Congress. Mr. Barr has been transparent. He made the Mueller report available to them—99 percent unredacted in the obstruction section of that report. Instead of reading it, the Democrats, who voted for contempt, moved like lightning straight to the charge of contempt. To me, that is not good-faith negotiation.

In a similar situation, now a few years ago, in a Democratic administration, with a Democratic Attorney General, with a House of Representatives held by Republicans, the House only held Attorney General Holder in contempt after many months of negotiation over documents that were withheld on bogus grounds; and just for connecting that to an issue, that was the Fast and Furious investigation that I was involved in as well. We had a very good case against Holder. We attempted to negotiate with Holder for a long period of time before the other body held him in contempt.

This particular issue of contempt of this Attorney General is not a good case. I would like to say, as a person who promotes congressional oversight

of every Democratic and every Republican President to make sure they faithfully execute the law, that what the House Judiciary Committee did yesterday, just a few days after Mr. Barr didn't do exactly what they wanted him to do and comparing that with the negotiations we had with the executive branch of the Obama Attorney General on Fast and Furious, is going to make it very difficult in the future for Congress to conduct its constitutional role of oversight because future Presidents are going to use this as an example of a bad-faith attempt to negotiate with the executive branch of Government to get what you want. Maybe what they want isn't real information or real congressional oversight; they may be trying to make political points.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday, the Judiciary Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration that I chair held a hearing on the humanitarian and security crisis along the southern border. One of the witnesses we heard from was Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost, who leads the dedicated law enforcement officers who safeguard our Nation's borders every day. She has been with the Border Patrol for 25 years, and she has witnessed firsthand the ebb and flow of border crossings during that entire quarter century.

Chief Provost announced the most recent data that shows how dire the situation along our southern border is. She described these numbers as off the charts, which I think is a gentle way of putting it.

Before I get to the numbers, let me provide some context. In October 2018, the start of the fiscal year, Customs and Border Protection encountered nearly 61,000 migrants at the border. That is higher than any month in the previous fiscal year. At the time, we were all alarmed by the increase, but last month's numbers completely eclipsed those levels. Chief Provost announced at our hearing yesterday that in the month of April, CBP encountered more than 109,000 illegal immigrants along the southern border. From October to April, we jumped from roughly 61,000 to 109,000 per month, a 78-percent increase over just the 6-month period.

In addition to that enormous monthly total, she told us about the record-breaking daily total last week. Border Patrol apprehended 5,200 people in a single day—the highest number on record. The problem is that we can't

simply send these migrants home under the current state of the law. So the more individuals we apprehend, the more detention space we need. If we don't have the detention space, these individuals would simply just be released into the American population. We will never hear from most of them again, unless they commit some other crime.

But the fact of the matter is, we are overtaxing the capabilities of the Border Patrol, of Customs and Border Protection, of the local communities, and of the nongovernmental organizations that try to assist these migrants while they are in our country and in our custody. On certain days over the last month, CBP has had more than 14,000 people in custody, far greater than the capacity they are able to hold.

People may ask: Why do we have to detain people? Why can't we just let them go and tell them to show back up for a future court date?

We know from sad experience that the majority will not return for that court date, even if they have legitimate claims for asylum. We now know that there are more than 700,000—I think approaching 800,000—backlog immigration cases waiting to be heard by an immigration judge. This, again, is overwhelming our capacity to deal with these on an individual basis.

Back to the numbers, earlier this week the Rio Grande Valley Sector announced that their stations and processing centers were holding more than 7,000 illegal immigrants, and that is just one Border Patrol sector. In a recent television interview, Acting DHS Secretary Kevin McAleenan accurately described these facilities as being similar to police stations. Suffice it to say that CBP does not have the facilities or resources to manage that many people in a police station-like environment.

If you think that sounds pretty grim, just wait because it gets worse. We aren't only overwhelmed by the number of individuals coming across the border but by the types of people who are arriving. I am talking about children and families who are mostly from Central America. We were told that, all told, Border Patrol encounters, in a given year, individuals from 140 different countries.

Since the criminal organizations that smuggle people into the United States are open for business, they are more than happy to take a Bangladeshi, a Yemeni, somebody from Iraq or from Afghanistan or, for that matter, from Iran and bring them across the border into the United States.

When our detention facilities were built, they were designed to hold single adults for a short duration, which used to account for the majority of people apprehended. That is simply not the case anymore. The human smugglers and criminal organizations that charge \$5,000, \$6,000, \$7,000 a head to bring people into the United States have studied our laws and have learned how to exploit the loopholes and the gaps. That

is why the composition of these migrants has changed so much over the years from single adults to children and to families.

In April, 68 percent of those apprehended were either families or unaccompanied children. This has put the Border Patrol in a very awkward position. Chief Provost noticed that her agents were spending now about 40 percent of their time processing migrants and providing care and transportation. She had a picture—a chart—that she demonstrated with a Border Patrol agent nursing a baby with a bottle and another Border Patrol agent cradling an infant in his arms. In other words, instead of being on the frontlines against illegal drugs coming across our border—which contributed to the deaths of 70,000 Americans last year alone and where 90 percent of the heroin and synthetic opioids known as fentanyl come principally from Mexico—instead of fighting that scourge and stopping that poison from coming into the United States, our Border Patrol has now been diverted to being, essentially, a childcare center handing out juice boxes and diapers. They aren't processing or stopping illegal immigrants or the human traffickers.

Trying to deal with these record high numbers, we know that the numbers of people coming across are far exceeding the resources available for the Border Patrol. With so many more people to process and more manpower needed, the Border Patrol has been taken off the line, leaving areas of the border vulnerable to exploitation by human smugglers and drug cartels.

Think about it. If you are a leader of a drug cartel trying to move heroin, methamphetamine, fentanyl, or other illegal drugs into the United States, why wouldn't you try to flood the Border Patrol with children and families so they would be taken off the line and distracted to take care of these individuals, as opposed to stopping those drugs? Of course, this is part of a larger plan.

Unfortunately, the Congress is doing little, if anything, about it. I don't think it takes an expert to see that things are bad, and I hope my colleagues can recognize that we need to act before they get worse. This is a problem that the President can't solve on his own and the Border Patrol can't solve on its own. This is about the legal authorities that the U.S. Government has to deal with this chaos and this humanitarian crisis at our own border. It takes a change in laws passed by Congress. So we must act on a bipartisan and bicameral basis to respond or this is going to get worse and worse.

Yesterday Chief Provost compared the current situation to holding a bucket under a faucet. It doesn't matter how many buckets you have if you never turn the water off. Well, that is what we need to do—stop the flow of people trying to enter our country illegally.

Last week, Congressman HENRY CUELLAR—my friend, a Democrat from Laredo, TX—and I introduced a bill called the HUMANE Act, which would at least slow that faucet to a drip and provide serious relief for the personnel who serve along the border. It focuses on the problems posed by high numbers of unaccompanied children and families, whom we do not have the capacity to adequately care for. It requires the Department of Homeland Security to keep families together through court proceedings—something we all should agree to—and provides safeguards to prevent children from being placed in the custody of dangerous individuals—sex offenders, human traffickers, and the like.

It also requires the Department of Homeland Security to establish regional processing centers in high traffic areas and to improve the processing of humanitarian relief claims by requiring those to be processed at ports of entry.

Finally, it mandates the hiring of 600 new CBP personnel to alleviate the personnel strain and get more of these highly trained men and women back on the frontlines. I hope we will have the opportunity to review this legislation soon in the Judiciary Committee. Chairman GRAHAM has told me he is willing to do that, and I hope our friends in the House will take it up soon.

America would never think of sending our men and women in the military to war without providing them the training, the equipment, and the support they need in order to fight and win our Nation's wars. Yet somehow we have sent the Border Patrol into a battle that is designed for failure. They simply don't have the numbers. They don't have the resources. We don't have the facilities in order to deal with this. We can't just try to staunch the flow while it gets worse and worse and worse and worse. Instead of putting another bucket under the faucet as it runs wide open, we need to turn that faucet off, and the only way we can do that is by Congress acting. It is on us, and we must act and act soon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise in celebration of Public Service Recognition Week, a time to honor public servants at all levels of government for their dedication and outstanding service to this Nation. Since 2010, I have taken to the Senate floor to honor our particularly noteworthy government employees—a tradition that was first begun by my good friend Senator Ted Kaufman.

Today and during this week, I would like to continue this tradition by highlighting the contributions of three Virginians who have worked tirelessly to improve the functioning of our government and advance America's interests at home and abroad.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL KOZAK

Mr. President, I would like to first recognize Ambassador Michael Kozak from Arlington. Ambassador Kozak currently serves as Senior Bureau Official at the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. When I first read this, I did a double-take because Ambassador Kozak's remarkable career at State spans 47 years and nine Presidents.

Throughout his accomplished career, Ambassador Kozak has been a steadfast advocate for democracy and human rights abroad, serving at the forefront of many historical negotiations. During the seventies and eighties, he played a key role in negotiating the Panama Canal and Egypt-Israel peace treaties. In the 1990s, as chief of mission in Havana, he led the talks with senior officials from Fidel Castro's regime in Cuba before his appointment as Ambassador to Belarus.

Throughout his career, Ambassador Kozak has worked to combat anti-Semitism and promote human rights, and his work has been instrumental to promoting global peace and U.S. interests abroad.

Thank you, Ambassador Kozak.

TRIBUTE TO KARA DE CASTRO

Mr. President, next I would like to recognize Kara De Castro from Haymarket, VA. Through her work at the National Nuclear Security Administration, Ms. De Castro has led crucial programs to reduce one of our Nation's most significant national security threats—nuclear proliferation. Ms. De Castro has been instrumental in developing a “nuclear security culture” that is focused on the proper handling and use of nuclear materials. She is an Army veteran, and the Russian language training she received in the military has been put to good use through her work in the former Soviet Union. These efforts have led to the downgrading of 17 metric tons of highly enriched uranium, the equivalent of 446 nuclear weapons.

I thank Ms. De Castro for making the world a safer place.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN WAGNER

Finally, Mr. President, I want to recognize John Wagner from Ashburn, who serves as Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. For those of you who might actually follow some of this and are keeping score at home, John's name might sound familiar. He has been recognized before, including by me on this floor, for strengthening the passport control process through the Global Entry Trusted Traveler Program and the Automated Passport Control Program, which are widely familiar to many international travelers. That alone would have been enough to gain recognition and be good enough for a whole career.

Since then, John has spearheaded facial recognition systems at several major U.S. airports, which offer a fast and paperless method of screening incoming and outgoing travelers. To