

Hoeven, John Cornyn, Lindsey Graham.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 54.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Clifton L. Corker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Clifton L. Corker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Chuck Grassley, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, David Perdue, Ron Johnson, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Martha McSally, John Boozman, Richard Burr, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Johnny Isakson, Thom Tillis.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 175.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lynda Blanchard, of Alabama, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of

the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Lynda Blanchard, of Alabama, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

Mitch McConnell, Ron Johnson, Steve Daines, John Kennedy, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Cory Gardner, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts, John Thune, John Hoeven, Tim Scott, Mike Crapo, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Bill Cassidy.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 183.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Donald R. Tapia, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Jamaica.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Donald R. Tapia, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Jamaica.

Mitch McConnell, Martha McSally, Pat Roberts, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, John Barrasso, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Jerry Moran, Shelley Moore Capito, Deb Fischer, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, John Boozman, Chuck Grassley.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise to address one of the most pressing crises the American people are facing today. Our refusal to address the border crisis is inexcusable.

Right now, Texas and other border States are being overwhelmed by thousands upon thousands of illegal immigrants who are flooding into small communities monthly. The inaction of the U.S. Congress leaves these communities responsible for paying for where these illegal immigrants will stay, for how they will receive medical care, and for where they will go when they are released.

From Brownsville to McAllen, to Laredo to Eagle Pass, to Del Rio, to El Paso, and beyond, Texas communities are at their breaking point in terms of resources and manpower in dealing with this crisis. I am hearing from elected officials throughout South Texas—Democrats and Republicans—that the crisis has reached a breaking point.

Our hard-working Border Patrol agents are also struggling with the enormous influx of illegal immigrants. It has been reported that there are now more illegal immigrants in custody than Border Patrol agents on the southern border and thousands more being apprehended daily.

Since last October, over half a million illegal immigrants have been apprehended at our southern border, many of them having traveled through Mexico from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Over 200,000 of these illegal immigrants were single adults, and over 56,000 of them were unaccompanied children.

During this time, the Border Patrol also apprehended nearly 700 gang members trying to illegally enter the United States. In the month of May alone, the Border Patrol apprehended over 144,000 people coming through the southern border—144,000 in a single month. If that pace were to continue for a year, we would be looking at nearly 2 million apprehensions in just 1 year. That is a staggering number of illegal immigrants for Texas and other border States to take in.

Instead of acknowledging that this crisis exists, instead of doing the responsible thing and taking action, congressional Democrats instead have stubbornly clung to open-border fantasies. Speaker PELOSI has called the hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants coming through our border a “manufactured crisis.” Some of our colleagues on the Presidential trail have called it a “fake crisis” and “fearmongering of the worst kind” or have said that climate change is a more serious crisis. All I can tell them

is to go to the border. The crisis at the border is very real, despite what the Democratic talking points say.

Last week, I visited the Rio Grande Valley, as I have done many times in representing the State of Texas in the Senate. I have toured the Rio Grande Valley Centralized Processing Center, the largest immigration processing center in the United States. I also traveled to Rincon Village, which is ground zero for illegal border crossings near Mission, TX. What I saw there was staggering. When I was in the Rio Grande Valley, the RGV Sector Chief told me that in 2014, just 5 years ago, roughly 2 percent of single adult men crossing illegally into the Rio Grande Valley had a child with them. Today that number is roughly 50 percent. It went from 2 percent all the way up to 50 percent. The word is out among traffickers, among smugglers, among others seeking to illegally enter the United States that coming with a child is a get-out-of-jail-free pass. According to the Border Patrol, family unit apprehensions have increased by 463 percent since last year, with increases of 2,100 percent in El Paso and 1,034 percent in Del Rio.

I also learned of a recent pilot program that used rapid DNA tests to discover whether these family units were real. Nearly 30 percent were found to be fraudulent in the Rio Grande Valley. In other words, the adults bringing kids into the United States illegally weren't related to the children.

One of the most tragic elements of the crisis is the number of children who are being trafficked, who are being physically abused, sexually abused, and neglected. Often they are being used as pawns.

That is not all. In the Rio Grande Valley, 60 percent of Border Patrol Agents are now helping to process and care for children and family units. That means only 40 percent are dedicated to border security. More than half the Border Patrol agents in our Nation's busiest crossing point for illegal immigrants are not on the border stopping narcotics traffickers and stopping human traffickers because they are instead changing diapers. Instead, they are caring for children because the volume is so massive.

Just recently, the Rio Grande Valley Sector canceled their horseback patrol because they lacked the manpower because they are instead caring for the massive influx of illegal immigrants. On average, they make 30 trips to the hospital a day. On average, in the Rio Grande Valley Sector, one child is born each day to an illegal immigrant who has come over. Last week, 12 people died.

This is a crisis. By refusing to address our border crisis, we invite child smuggling and child abuse. That is shameful, and that is a tragedy. We know how many illegal immigrants are being apprehended. We know more and more illegal immigrants are trying to get into our country, and we know Bor-

der Patrol doesn't have the manpower or the resources to handle a humanitarian crisis of this scale. It is a fact, and it is a reality that our Democratic colleagues need to face.

Nobody who is compassionate, nobody who wants to be virtuous, nobody who cares about other human beings would want to perpetuate what is happening at the border for even a single day. We should be angry. We should be angry at politicians who say this is a made-up crisis. We should be angry at politicians who keep the loopholes in place that ensure that more and more children—more and more little boys and girls—will be abused at the hands of human smugglers.

While the passage of the \$4.5 billion border supplemental bill a few weeks ago was a good first step, Democrats in Congress need to finally do their job and work with Republicans and work with President Trump to secure our border. We need to build a wall. We need to enforce immigration laws already on the books. We need to reform our amnesty laws to prevent asylum abuse, and we need to support the brave men and women of the Border Patrol with all the resources they need to effectively secure the border.

I have introduced legislation to secure the border using the billions from El Chapo's criminal fortune that the Department of Justice is seeking to have criminally forfeited and use El Chapo's ill-gotten goods and those of other drug lords to build the wall. The EL CHAPO Act would reserve any amounts criminally forfeited to the Federal Government as a result of criminal prosecution of El Chapo or other drug kingpins for the building of a border wall and other border security assets.

I am also a cosponsor of the WALL Act, which would fully fund the border wall by closing existing loopholes that provide illegal immigrants with Federal benefits and tax credits, all without affecting the benefits and tax credits used by American citizens.

These bills are just two commonsense ways to secure the border. Everyone should support taking money away from murderers, from drug smugglers, and from human traffickers such as El Chapo and using it to prevent murder, drug smuggling, and human trafficking—all without costing American taxpayers even a dime or adding anything to the Federal deficit.

We also need more judges. We need to close the loopholes in our asylum system. Right now, immigration courts have a backlog of about 900,000 pending cases—nearly a million. Increasing the number of immigration judges and providing an expedited process for asylum claims is necessary so migrants who don't qualify for asylum can be quickly returned to their home countries rather than released into the United States.

These reforms are necessary, and they need to happen. We know how to solve this problem. We don't have to

ask theoretically because we have seen it happen specifically. In the first 6 months of 2017, right after President Trump was elected and sworn into office, illegal immigration dropped nearly 70 percent. It plummeted. I remember going back down to the valley in early 2017 and asking the Border Patrol agents: Why did the illegal crossings drop? We hadn't built a wall yet. We hadn't hired new Border Patrol agents. What changed? What those Border Patrol agents told me was the only thing that changed is the human smugglers, the traffickers, now believed there was an administration in office that would enforce the law that would deport them if they came here illegally. That one change—the traffickers believing the administration would send them home—dropped illegal immigration 70 percent.

Then what happened? Why did we see this enormous deluge we are seeing right now? Well, the answer is the Congress put loopholes in the law that mandate the release of children. In a short timeframe, and under a court decision called the Flores decision, adults with a child get released as well. That process is what is known as catch and release. It means someone who is apprehended is given a court date some months or years into the future and then are let go on the hope that they will magically show up. Far too many of them don't show up.

What happened in the summer of 2017 was illegal immigrants would pick up the phone and call their friends or family back home and say: The policy hasn't changed. They still let us go. We still get to stay. There are still no consequences. Come on over.

Even worse than that, smugglers learned that bringing a child is the ticket to crossing illegally into this country. There was a portion of the detention facility I saw in the valley that the officers refer to as "daddy daycare" because it was simply filled with young single men who had little kids with them. Five years ago, 2 percent of single men had kids. Today, 50 percent of single men have kids because if you grab a little boy or a little girl, you can come over. I will tell you because of the loopholes Congress has put in place, Border Patrol has been forced to release people who are convicted murderers, forced to release people who are convicted pedophiles, forced to release adults with sexual assault convictions and children in their custody. Why? Because it is so expedited that by the time they find out about the convictions, they have been forced to release them already.

This is cruel. It is inhumane. When the rapid DNA testing is showing that nearly 30 percent of the adults are not related to the kids, it explains why we are hearing more and more reports of children being rented or sold by the cartels.

This has to stop—the political posturing from the Democrats who are running for President and the Democrats in Congress who are refusing to

solve this problem. It is past time for those games. It is time to solve this crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, America's strength is in our values. In that vein, I rise to talk about human rights and America's historic role as a defender of universal human rights for all peoples.

I have been a member of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe for many years. It is also known as the Helsinki Commission. The Helsinki Commission is an independent entity that brings together lawmakers and members of the executive branch to represent the United States at the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which was created to explicitly promote human rights, democracy, and economic, environmental, and military cooperation among its 57 member nations, including the United States and Canada, all the countries of Europe, and the former Soviet Union countries.

When the Helsinki Final Act was signed in Finland in 1975, it enshrined among its 10 Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States a commitment to "respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

Few people have predicted the sweeping, largely unforeseen consequences of the adoption of this document. From this one provision, among the 10 that focus on human rights and fundamental freedoms, there were movements sprung that embraced the Helsinki process as a sword and as a shield. Independent civil societies coalesced around this basic principle and used the followup processes that were set in motion by the Helsinki Final Act to hold their governments' feet to the fire.

In 1976, Congress established the Helsinki Commission with the mandate to monitor and report on compliance with the Helsinki Final Act and, most importantly, to press successive administrations to make human rights and democracy priorities in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

In the subsequent years, Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, Solidarity in Poland, and Watch Groups in Moscow, in Kyiv, and in Vilnius sprang up to push for the release of political prisoners and to defend the rights of those who wanted nothing more than to worship and to have the freedom to advocate for reformers and others who sought to reunite with their families across borders.

Through what became known as the Helsinki process, Congress and previous administrations supported the rights of Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel, Natan Sharansky, and countless others

who emerged as leaders in their supporting of the historic transitions to freedom 30 years ago with the fall of the Iron Curtain, the end of communism, the unification of Germany, and as President Bush proclaimed, a "Europe whole and free." The Helsinki process of monitoring, reporting, advocating, urging, meeting, and witnessing was a catalyst for these historic changes.

Most importantly, at a time of historic transition, the countries participating in the Helsinki process all acknowledge that democracy was the only form of government that we could accept and that issues related to human rights and democracy were never matters of internal interference but were matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating states. This means, quite frankly, that we have, under the Helsinki Accords, the legitimate right—I would say the obligation—to challenge the failure of any one of those 57 states in its meeting of its Helsinki commitments. That is why it is right that we in the U.S. Senate speak out against Russia or speak out against Turkey or speak out against any member state in the OSCE when it violates these basic principles.

Over the July 4 work period, I was proud to participate in the largest delegation we have ever had to the annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The Parliamentary Assembly—facilitating lawmaker-to-lawmaker interactions and discussions—was established to complement the intergovernmental work being done. One of the OSCE's strengths is that there is a parliamentary dimension. It is not just government officials; it is also parliamentarians who meet to implement these commitments to human rights and good governance.

The OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly have been used to advance U.S. interests, including their support for human rights, free elections, combating anti-Semitism and human trafficking, and other initiatives that have come from the U.S. Congress that have then served as the foundation for U.S. positions and, ultimately, agreements that have been adopted by all 57 states that have participated in the OSCE.

I remember discussions in the Congress that dealt with fighting modern-day slavery and trafficking and fighting anti-Semitism. We initiated them in the Congress. Through the Helsinki Commission, we raised them in the Parliamentary Assembly. They then got raised in Vienna, which is where the Ambassadors who represent all of the states meet, and they were adopted as policy in all 57 states. We have had a very positive impact.

During this recent Parliamentary Assembly, I hosted an event called "Countering Hate: Lessons from the Past, Leadership for the Future." As I stated during the event—and I will underscore now—we have observed an uptick in hate-based instances across the OSCE region and beyond—from Pitts-

burgh and Poway to Christ Church. When we fail to act, we endanger not only the most vulnerable within our societies but the very foundations of our democracies.

Given how much has been accomplished by the United States and others through the OSCE over the past 30 years, it is deeply concerning to see our own American President embrace a drawback of universal human rights in our own country and embrace dictators around the world, who rule by promulgating fear and hate.

President Trump has called Turkish President Erdogan a "friend" and has shared love letters with the very brutal Kim Jong Un after calling him "very talented." Turkey, which has been a member of the OSCE since its inception and a member of NATO, has witnessed a dramatic acceleration in President Erdogan's efforts to consolidate power and hobble his political opposition.

His unrelenting pressure on the judiciary and purges of its ranks of judges and prosecutors have left respect for the rule of law and due process in crisis. Tens of thousands have been detained in sweeping dragnets following the failed coup, including independent voices from virtually every sector of society—opposition politicians, civil society activists, journalists, academics, and many more. These vast purges have had a chilling effect on the free press and the freedom of expression.

The Committee to Protect Journalists considers Turkey the world's worst jailer of journalists, with 68 documented cases, although a local Turkish press freedom organization lists more than 130 who have been detained. Reporters Without Borders ranks Turkey as the 157th out of 180 countries for press freedom—its lowest ranking ever. Under emergency powers assumed by President Erdogan after the coup attempt, the Turkish Government closed around 200 media outlets.

As for North Korea, Kim Jong Un has one of the most deplorable human rights records in the world.

According to Human Rights Watch:

Kim Jong Un—who serves as chairman of the States Affairs Commission and head of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea—continues to exercise almost total political control. The government restricts all civil and political liberties, including freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religion. It also prohibits all organized political opposition, independent media, civil society, and trade unions.

President Trump has been repeatedly willing to take the word of former KGB agent Vladimir Putin over his own intelligence services.

On March 3, 2018, in speaking about Chinese President Xi during a private fundraising speech at Mar-a-Lago, he said:

Xi is a great gentleman. He's now president for life—president for life. No, he's great. And look, he was able to do that. I think it's great. Maybe we'll have to give that a shot someday.