

the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKLEY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 240 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Burr	Inhofe	Rubio
Capito	Johnson	Sasse
Collins	Jones	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Sinema
Crapo	Manchin	Sullivan
Cruz	McConnell	Thune
Daines	McSally	Tillis
Enzi	Moran	Toomey
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Fischer	Paul	Young

NAYS—36

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Menendez	Tester
Coons	Merkley	Udall
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murray	Warner
Durbin	Peters	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Reed	Wyden

NOT VOTING—10

Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Isakson	Warren
Cassidy	Klobuchar	
Gillibrand	Markey	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 36.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sean D. Jordan, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, recently, I joined the Senate delegation to visit the southern border and view firsthand the migration and humanitarian crisis facing the United States.

We visited the Donna Holding Facility, the Catholic Charities Respite Center, the McAllen Border Patrol Station, and the Ursula Centralized Processing Center. Earlier this week, I held a roundtable discussion on my trip at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Highlandtown. The group was organized by the Latino Providers Network in Baltimore, which included rep-

resentatives from the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Catholic Relief Services, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and other nonprofits in the community that do work in Baltimore and at our border.

I was impressed by the Catholic Charities Respite Center run by Sister Norma Pimentel. The center provides a warm meal, a shower, a change into clean clothes, medicine, and other desperately needed supplies. These migrants are very lucky to make it there.

What I saw in McAllen, by contrast, was very disturbing. I saw many families huddled together in overcrowded conditions. I saw children behind fencing and, basically, in cages. Some children wore clothing that was soiled and had not been changed since they arrived in the United States. Children and families were supposed to be there in temporary holding only for a day or two, but we heard stories that families are being held for up to 10 to 14 days and, in some cases, even longer.

Why are migrants leaving their homes in the first place? These individuals are desperate. They are desperate because they are fleeing violence and persecution in their home countries. These families are often given a terrible choice to have their young son or daughter join a criminal gang or suffer the consequences as a family. That means being attacked, kidnapped, and even murdered. Even though it is a dangerous journey, these families feel they have no choice.

Let me remind my colleagues that these individuals are lawfully seeking asylum at our border and should not be treated as criminals. We need to respect their human rights, their rights under international law, and their rights under U.S. law.

These migrants are not trying to do harm to the United States. Indeed, government officials told us that the vast majority of those screened present no safety risk, such as being on a watch list for terrorist or criminal behavior, and that most migrants have not tried previously to enter the country illegally.

I am gravely concerned about the new metering system used by Customs and Border Protection for those seeking asylum and refuge in our country as part of the expansion of the Remain in Mexico program. Normally, a migrant would present themselves to a Customs or Border Patrol agent at the point of entry and ask to seek asylum. But under the Trump administration's new metering policy, Border Patrol agents will stop migrants at the border, oftentimes halfway across the bridge as they approach a legal border point of entry. Border Patrol will then give the migrant a number, and they will have to then wait for their number to be called before they can formally present themselves for admission at a legal point of entry.

How long is the wait for your number to be called? In some cases, it is weeks or even months. In the meantime, mi-

grants are told to wait in a border town and tent city set up on the other side of the border. One of most dangerous towns in all of Mexico is Reynosa, just across the border from McAllen Border Patrol Station. Migrants staying in these tent cities are subjected to violence, extortion, human trafficking, and even death at the hands of gangs that operate with impunity in the city, which are effectively not controlled by Mexican law enforcement authorities. In fact, the town is so dangerous that U.S. law enforcement personnel are forbidden by our government from visiting there or trying to meet with migrants on the Mexican side of the border. This is outrageous, and America can do better to live up to our values.

Migrants who are desperately fleeing violence and prosecution at home come to the United States in search of safety for themselves and their families. Now they are told they must wait indefinitely on the Mexican side of the border in, essentially, a lawless town where they are at the mercy of criminals, gangs, and traffickers who prey on the most vulnerable.

What happens next? Many of these migrants decide they have no choice but to cross the border illegally so that they can escape the camps in Reynosa. When migrants try to cross the border illegally, they face new dangers of dehydration, drowning, and even death.

Under the Trump administration, the United States is undermining our asylum policy and America's leadership in the world in welcoming refugees and those fleeing violence and persecution in their home countries. Indeed, the Trump administration is deliberately trying to hurt migration and legitimate asylum seekers and refugees by making it more difficult to seek asylum and deter refugees from coming to the United States in the first place. Proposed asylum law changes, such as expansion of the Remain in Mexico and metering policies, will make it more difficult for asylum seekers to apply if they have traveled through multiple countries as they make their way to the United States.

I believe asylum law should be changed to make it easier for migrants to apply in their home country, if safe, and expeditiously get an asylum determination from the U.S. Embassy so that they do not have to make the dangerous journey to the United States and try to cross our border with the uncertainty of what awaits them once they reach the U.S. border.

I am concerned, as well, that migrants who do not ultimately make it through the process of applying for asylum may not receive proper notice of their hearings before an asylum judge to make their case. These are people who are released in our country but have to show up for a hearing. The notices may be given out in English, which many migrants cannot read. The address may be incorrect or outdated in terms of where the migrant is heading in the United States to await their

asylum hearing before the judge. In other words, the information may be inaccurate, and they never get the notices to appear. They are therefore out of status and never had a chance to make their case.

NGOs in Texas made a strong case to our delegation to reinstate the Family Case Management Program, which the Trump administration has canceled. They explained that if ICE reinstated this program, we could see 99 percent compliance with immigration court orders without the need for expanded detention and overcrowding. This compliance rate is backed up by the track record and statistics of the Department of Homeland Security itself when the program was in use. This program is a promising alternative to detention that should be expanded instead of canceled by the Trump administration.

Let me say a word about the Border Patrol agents themselves. They are trying to do their jobs under difficult circumstances. The main problem is the Trump administration's asylum policies, not the Border Patrol agents. I hope that the recent emergency supplemental appropriations measure passed by Congress and signed by the President will help in terms of providing better and more humane care to children in Health and Human Services Department custody, under the auspices of the Office of Refugee Resettlement. The measure seeks to improve conditions for migrants in the Department of Homeland Security's custody by addressing the dangerous overcrowding found by the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general. The bill improves due process for migrants and seeks to ease the immigration court backlog by hiring new immigration judges to hear cases and giving migrants greater access to the legal orientation program.

What should Congress do to address the immediate needs of migrants, particularly the children, as well as addressing the root cause of this humanitarian crisis? I am a cosponsor of the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act. This bill would provide guardrails and minimum standards for the treatment of children and families, ensuring that government funds are not used to traumatize or harm asylum seekers. It would do so by dramatically reducing family separations, setting health and safety standards, ending the operation of refugee shelters by for-profit contractors, making it easier to place children with sponsors, and ensuring that unaccompanied children have access to legal counsel.

In terms of root causes, I have joined with my colleagues in introducing the Central America Reform and Enforcement Act designed to address the endemic violence and humanitarian crises that are driving immigration from Central America and also to smooth the path of those seeking asylum in this country. This bill would condition assistance to the Northern Triangle governments in order to address the

root causes of the violence and instability that are driving migration and crack down on smugglers, cartels, and traffickers exploiting children and families.

This legislation also enhances monitoring of unaccompanied children after they are processed at the border, provides a fair legal process for asylum seekers, and improves immigration court efficiencies. Those are some of the things we can do.

In particular, this legislation would reverse the ill-advised foreign aid cuts made by the Trump administration that are worsening the migration crisis in the Northern Triangle, which includes Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

I am concerned, however, that the President sees immigration and immigrants as a good political issue for the 2020 election. Congress needs a partner to take up and pass comprehensive immigration reform, which I believe could pass comfortably in both Houses if the President of the United States would join us in a constructive manner for comprehensive immigration reform.

This administration has shown just the reverse. The administration has proposed a Muslim ban, canceled temporary protected status, canceled the DACA—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival—Program for Dreamers, tried to institute an asylum ban, lowered and now seeks to eliminate refugee admissions, increased domestic immigration enforcement for nonviolent offenders, and sought to expand the program of expedited removal of residents in the United States without due process or a court hearing.

In many of these cases, the Trump administration's decisions have been subjected to successful legal challenges in court, and, thankfully, our independent judiciary has largely continued to uphold the rule of law and serves as an important check and balance against the worst excesses of the Trump administration as it disregards our laws and the Constitution.

I therefore urge the President to reverse course and work with Congress on comprehensive immigration reform, which must include sensible border security. Yes, we do need border security. In these times, when we have international terrorism and international drug trafficking, we need to know who is coming into our country. We have to have an orderly way to process those who want to work or live or go to school in the United States. But it must include an asylum policy for families who are at risk in their native country.

Let us build on the proud history of America and welcome those who seek refuge from persecution and want to help build a better America.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### DEBT CEILING

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, as I travel across Montana, I hear from folks who work tirelessly every day to make ends meet.

Many work long hours for too low wages, and they face ever-rising costs in housing and healthcare and other basic necessities, but folks in Montana are resilient, they are resourceful, they know how to live within their means, and they know how important it is to make the numbers add up at the end of the month.

I rise because, as usual, Washington, DC, could learn a lot from Montana. This week, we will vote on a bill that swipes Washington's credit card to the tune of about \$250 billion over the next 2 years—dollars that will come out of the pockets of our kids and our grandkids. Now, this \$250 billion comes on top of the \$1 trillion the United States will add to the national deficit this year because our budget is that far out of whack. The previous year to this year was \$800 billion that we added to the national debt.

So to put that in perspective, that is about \$2.2 trillion in just 2 years. If you are sitting at home wondering, \$2.2 trillion; how much is that, it is far more than \$250 billion.

With \$250 billion, half the students going to college for 4 years would not have to pay anything to go to school in the United States. We are adding \$2.2 trillion, and it is going to continue on until we get our budget in line.

Unfortunately, this sort of reckless spending by both parties has shown a disregard for its impact on the national debt, and it is now the norm in Washington, DC.

Folks on both sides of the aisle are calling for this agreement, and they are calling it a compromise, but in reality, the only thing it will compromise is our children and our grandchildren's future.

Montanans expect me to hold Washington, DC, accountable and fight back against irresponsible spending and poor tax policy. This falls on the irresponsible spending side.

The bipartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget projects that this administration's policies will add \$4 trillion to the debt over the next 10 years. I am here to tell you that is too conservative a figure.

At this point in time, we are going to be adding about \$1.2 trillion to the debt every year if things don't change. Our debt is skyrocketing, and guess what. We are not fixing the healthcare problems that need to be fixed; we are not fixing the high cost of education; we are not investing in our infrastructure, but our debt continues to skyrocket because of irresponsible spending and, quite frankly, a Republican tax giveaway for the wealthy at the expense of our kids and our grandkids.

I have listened to colleagues on both sides of the aisle during my tenure here