

“If Congress can’t even pass a law to help save kids from sex abuse, what can it get right?”

Well, that is a fair question and a tough but necessary question. When you see what Chairman SCOTT is doing, it is easy to see why Congress’s approval rating is so abysmal. If a high-ranking leader of a House committee will block commonsense legislation that is directed at stopping child sexual abuse, how can the American people have faith in Congress’s ability to accomplish anything?

Now is not the time to play politics or use child sexual abuse victims as leverage. This bill is one step away from going to the President’s desk, and Congressman SCOTT is the only one standing in the way.

It is time to quit playing games and allow the Jenna Quinn Law to pass.

#### TRIBUTE TO CORY GARDNER

Mr. President, now on one final matter, we are less than 1 month away from the biannual changing of the guard in Congress before we gavel out for the year. I want to say just a few comments about our friend from Colorado who will soon be leaving the Senate, Senator CORY GARDNER.

Senator GARDNER has proudly represented the people of Colorado for 15 years, first in the State House, then in the House of Representatives, and now in the U.S. Senate.

Once you get to know CORY, it is easy to see how this “boy from Yuma” became such a trusted voice for his home State.

For starters, he is a prime example of what Ronald Reagan called a “happy warrior.” At the end of his speech in 1985, President Reagan spoke about the pursuit of high ideals like liberty, freedom, and fairness, and the reasons our country has to be hopeful and optimistic. He said: “So, let us go forth with good cheer and stout hearts—happy warriors out to seize back a country and a world to freedom.”

Those qualities of “good cheer and stout hearts” could not be a more appropriate description of our friend from Colorado. Senator GARDNER has maintained a very keen understanding of the challenges we have faced as a nation, and he channels his passion and his optimism in finding solutions to those challenges.

There is no question that he does get results. In the 6 years he has been in the Senate, CORY has accomplished more than some Senators have accomplished in double or maybe even triple that time. He has been a strong voice on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and has helped lead changes to counter some of the most pressing threats facing our country.

He helped pass the first-ever sanctions on North Korea to denuclearize one of the most untethered states and nations in the world. He fought to hold China accountable for their gross human rights violations, specifically those targeting the Uighur people. He has led efforts to strengthen the rela-

tionship between the United States and Taiwan.

But I think the accomplishments he is most proud of are those that hit much closer to home. Cory introduced legislation to designate 9-8-8 as a national suicide prevention and mental health hotline. It is impossible to know how many lives have been and will be saved by simply adopting this three-digit phone number.

This last year, he led in the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, the largest conservation bill in a generation.

A big factor in CORY’s success has been his relationships with his fellow Senators—not those backroom transactional relationships you think of, perhaps, when you think about politics, but I mean real friendships with folks throughout the Capitol Complex. If there were a Mr. or Ms. Congeniality contest in Congress, CORY would win by a landslide.

It is common to see him talking not only with Senators from both parties but staffers in other offices. He was once a staffer in Senator Wayne Allard’s office. So he can identify with them, as well as the Capitol Police, and the countless men and women who keep Congress running, from cafeteria workers to cleaning staff.

He greets every person with the same genuine smile and is glad to spend a few minutes chatting, asking about your family, holiday plans, or how someone’s day is going. That sincerity—his willingness to listen and deal with people on such a human and personal level—is something we need more of, not less of, here in Washington, especially these days.

So the Senate will miss our happy warrior and the trademark positivity he brings to even the most contentious debates. And while we are sad to see him go, I know this isn’t the last we will hear of or see of CORY GARDNER. The only thing more enduring than his energy is his drive to help people from all places and in all walks of life.

So, while our colleagues are sad to bid farewell to our friend CORY, we know that Jaime, Alyson, Caitlyn, and Thatcher are all eager to have him back home in Yuma and see more of him and spend more time together.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### IMMIGRATION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, millions and millions of people will breathe a bit easier on January 20. That relief will be especially sweet for those who suffered under Donald Trump’s cold-hearted approach to immigration and asylum.

The President has built a wall to immigrants, but it is not made of fencing or brick and mortar. The President has rebuilt the infamous paper wall, like that of the 1930s, which kept too many Jews out of the United States, trapping them within the murderous regime of Nazi Germany.

The paper wall was built on anti-immigrant regulations, including one targeting anybody who might become a so-called public charge. It was reinforced by racism, anti-Semitism, and nativism. It created bureaucratic roadblocks that had no purpose other than to frustrate applicants, block visas and refugees, and slow immigration to a trickle. That is awfully familiar to those who watched Donald Trump succeed horribly at repeating some of America’s worst immigration mistakes.

In the last 4 years, I have often thought about my late mom and dad who were refugees to America. My parents were German Jews who fled the Nazis.

Not all of our family got out. My great-uncle, Max, was one of the last to be gassed at Auschwitz.

When my father arrived here at 13, he barely spoke any English. He studied hard. When the war came, my dad, who wasn’t exactly built like Captain America, wanted more than anything to wear the uniform of the U.S. Army. My dad essentially talked his way into the service. He joined the Army’s psychological warfare division because, with his fluent German, my dad wrote propaganda pamphlets that our planes dropped on the enemy soldiers that were retreating further and further back toward Berlin.

I have seen those pamphlets, and—with a little son pride—they were smoking. They just told the Nazis they didn’t have a chance. In contrast, the materials their military dropped on our soldiers was written in mangled English—comical stuff. My dad has really been singled out. He is in the Holocaust Museum for his contributions for helping our Army beat the Nazis, and after the war, he became a journalist and an author.

My mom came in 1939, a few years after my dad. During the war, she served in the Women’s Army Corps. She was in England, France, and Germany, and on the wall at home is a picture of my mom in her WAC uniform. You can look at that picture, and you can see pride in serving our country from every single pore.

After the war, my mom had a long career as a research librarian, and she worked even harder raising her oldest son, who mostly wanted to play NBA basketball instead of hitting the books.

Both my parents felt so blessed that they could get out of Germany. They made it over the paper wall. They had a chance to become Americans.

Most Jewish families in the United States have stories just like these. Some were able to get out; others were left behind, and some were lost.

Many remember the MS *St. Louis*, a ship with nearly 1,000 refugees—mostly Jewish—fleeing Germany in 1930. Originally, they sailed for Cuba, but they were turned away when they reached Havana. Then they tried to come to America. They got so close. They could see the lights shining in Miami, but again they were turned away and sailed back to Europe. Hundreds of them died in death camps. Many more lives like those aboard the *St. Louis* could and should have been saved, but the paper wall—that paper wall—kept too many people out.

In 2020, caring people looked back and recognized that paper wall and our failure to save more people from execution at the hands of the Nazis. It was a staggering humanitarian disaster, a real stain on American history.

Donald Trump and his advisers, on the other hand, must look back and see the paper wall as a big success, a playbook for their administration. Under Donald Trump, the policy of the United States on immigration, asylum, and refugees—sum it up in one word: cruelty. Trump's worst legacy on asylum and refugee policy, without a doubt, is the kidnapping and abuse of youngsters—children—locking them in cages, losing track of them, and losing track of their parents. It is the forced sterilization of women in the custody of the U.S. Government. It is violating U.S. law and international treaties to turn asylum seekers into criminals.

I went to the border to see for myself what Trump's family separation policies looked like in practice. When you see it, you never forget.

I met a migrant woman who was almost 9 months pregnant and suffering complications. A pediatrician from Oregon who came with me was concerned that this woman's life was in danger, as well as her unborn child. She had been stopped at the border, along with her husband and their 3-year-old son, even though she had a legal right—a legal right—to make an asylum claim.

Our pediatrician, who worried that the woman was going to go into labor right there, had to make a judgment call about what we ought to do. So, fortunately, we got her case before the right border authorities. She was able to make her asylum claim, get medical care, and keep her family together.

At the time, I saw a little boy who had been detained for several nights in a cold, cramped cell—they call them iceboxes—and then sent back to Mexico. This youngster was so traumatized at the border that he became entirely nonverbal and afraid of adults. His father held my hand and cried, and he told us how helpless he felt as a parent. I will never forget that experience.

Children and parents on the southern border are experiencing the worst of Donald Trump's hostility, but it doesn't end there. His administration has relentlessly attacked and squeezed the traditional systems of immigration and humanitarian assistance and refugee resettlement as well. A lot has

gone into this paper wall. Anti-immigration policies have bookended the Trump 4 years. One of their first new policies out of the gate was the Muslim ban, which was a nightmare for many immigrants and immigrant families.

Now, in Donald Trump's final days, his administration has made the citizenship exam twice as hard and twice as long. Reportedly, questions were rewritten with Trump-friendly political bias and tricky language designed to trip people up. There wasn't any discussion about any exams here in Congress. When you read the old version of the test that existed before the Trump meddling, it was pretty darn challenging. There is no good-faith explanation for the changes. It was only about making it harder—making it harder to become an American.

Through his years in office, Donald Trump steadily lowered the cap on refugees allowed in the country. For 2021, he set it at the lowest number ever.

Then there is the DACA Program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival. We talked here in the Senate about the Dreamers, and when the program was created, there was a promise made that it would be OK for the Dreamers to come out of the shadows. You could apply without fear and have your application renewed in 2 years. I think the government has a moral obligation to keep the promise. Not on Donald Trump's watch—if not for court orders, DACA would be dismantled by now.

There are more than 11,000 hard-working young people in my home State that are DACA recipients. I have talked with a lot of them. They come to my townhall meetings. We meet on campus and meet in coffee shops.

Not long after the pandemic hit, one young Oregon DACA recipient started working with COVID patients. She just wanted to help during the pandemic—coordinating tests, working on followup, contact tracing. What a wonderful person doing essential work during the pandemic, but her temporary DACA status ran out just when the Trump administration blocked renewals. Fortunately, my staff and I were able to help her reapply and retain her status so she could keep working in the only place she ever called home.

The harsh reality is there are thousands and thousands of young Dreamers who have been faced with the same panic of losing their status, being ripped from their homes and deported. The fact is, Donald Trump has used these Dreamers like pawns.

Recently, he dusted off the public charge rule, using the past to discriminate against Jewish refugees. I consider it a wealth test for immigrants—a cruel system that pushes vulnerable immigrant families into destitution.

In Oregon, right now, it means that there are families who are just afraid to seek assistance they are entitled to receive, afraid to seek emergency medical assistance during a pandemic, and afraid to seek disaster relief after huge wildfires. These families—we talk to

them—they desperately need help. They are members of Oregon's collective community, but they can't get it because they are fearful they will be labeled a “public charge.”

Donald Trump revoked protected immigration status from hundreds of thousands of U.S. residents originally from countries ravaged by war, famines, and epidemics. Many of those people who have lived here for decades had planted deep roots. Nothing is accomplished by revoking their status and deporting them, other than shattering their lives and weakening their communities.

Then, the Trump administration adopted a “no blanks” policy so they could reject applications for visa and asylum if there were just simple paperwork errors. For example, let's say an only child filling out a visa application leaves a blank where it asks for details on siblings—they could be rejected. Even simple errors that mean nothing—writing in a dash instead of an “N/A” for an inapplicable question—leads to rejection. The policy, here again, has resulted in huge cuts to immigration and asylum.

During the pandemic, the Trump administration denied COVID relief to tax-paying, law-abiding American immigrants who secure America's food supply or save lives as frontline healthcare workers.

Next, there is a sabotage of the system of printing documents for immigrants, including green cards that allow residents to work and go to school. This affected tens of thousands, again, who did nothing wrong. Some of them were newly approved applicants, many others were longtime U.S. residents replacing green cards that were expired or lost. If an immigrant's green card expires, and they don't have the replacement, they are out of luck and technically in a kind of legal never-never land. It is all because Donald Trump wanted to break the system just to cause harm.

Now let's talk about those who work alongside our military overseas. You would think that if there were any group—any group—whose immigration status got a special level of care from our government, it would be those whose lives are in danger in their home country because they served courageously alongside our forces. That has not been the case under Donald Trump.

For example, there have been reports on an Afghan pilot on the run from the Taliban because his clearance to relocate in the United States was reversed. The U.S. Army pilot who trained him said:

He's marked as a dead man. He's done all he can there. . . . If anyone needs to be a U.S. citizen, it's him.

But the Trump administration, which initially approved his relocation, went back on its word. This pilot is now reportedly in hiding with his wife and their 4-year-old daughter. They are among tens of thousands of Afghans and Iraqis whose lives are in danger

waiting for the U.S. Government to decide on their immigration status.

The number of these courageous individuals brought to the United States has plummeted under Donald Trump, again, because of this anti-immigrant bias.

I remember the late-Senator John McCain speaking often about why our country needed to protect those who helped our men and women in battle. John McCain said it wasn't just a moral issue but also a national security issue. He said: Won't it be harder to get people to help our soldiers in the future if America abandons those who have helped us in the past? For Donald Trump, it seems hostility toward immigrants overrides even America's national security.

Donald Trump has often claimed he supports immigration. He once hijacked a naturalization ceremony, which is supposed to be a solemn event, no politics. He stole that moment from the group of people becoming citizens so he could go on and on about false claims about his position on immigration. He said he wanted "tremendous numbers of people to go in."

Over the last, I guess, 8 or so minutes, I have proved that sure is not true. The reality is, Donald Trump cut legal immigration in half. If I were to walk through every cruel and inhumane thing this administration has done to immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, we would be standing here until the beginning of January.

It is going to be hard work dismantling Donald Trump's paper wall, but it is a must-do for the President and Vice President-elect. I know they agree.

I want to close my remarks by talking a little bit about why immigration matters. As an Oregonian, I can tell that you that Oregon is clearly stronger today because of our openness to immigrants and refugees and asylum seekers. We call it, at home—people hear me talk about it here—the Oregon Way. It is about fundamental decency. There is no other way to describe the Oregon Way than those two words, "fundamental decency."

Here is an example of how the Oregon Way collides with the Trump policies pertaining to visas. Twelve years ago, an Iraqi boy named Mustafa came to Oregon to receive badly needed medical care. He was very injured. He lost a leg during the U.S. bomb strike. He needed complicated surgeries that couldn't get done in Iraq, so a group of Oregonians worked with a nonprofit to bring him to my hometown of Portland.

Mustafa got good care and was able to go home. The plan was for him to come back to Oregon, periodically, for ongoing treatment. Back home in Iraq, however, communication was difficult, and his family was displaced by Islamic State militants.

Miraculously, in 2016, Oregonians recognized Mustafa on the TV news from a refugee camp outside Fallujah. It was clear he still dealt with serious health problems. Again, Oregon citizens and

nonprofits went to bat for him. Again, they worked to bring him to the United States for care, except this time—this time, the Trump administration closed the door to Iraqis. They were out of luck.

My staff and I got involved, and together with all of these dedicated Oregonians, we were able to work with the Embassy and get key officials to get a temporary visa for Mustafa and his mom. He got the lifesaving care he needed. The Oregon Way actually beat back Trump's hostility to immigration.

Now, supporting immigration is not just the decent thing to do, it is also the smart thing to do for our economy. My State is a perfect example. From the high-tech economy in the "Silicon Forest" to our wonderful family farms all across the State, immigrants contribute every day to our economy.

Nationwide, on average, communities with more immigrants have stronger and more dynamic economies. Immigrants are more likely than those born in the United States to participate in the labor force. Immigrants are more likely to own a small business. Immigrants are more likely to move for employment and take jobs that otherwise go unfilled. Those immigrants, plug gaps in our economy. They plug gaps in our job market. Immigrants are more likely to be entrepreneurs. Their kids are more likely to want to just work and work and work, and they have shown that they are more likely to climb the economic ladder.

Immigration has also proven to be a big economic and population boost for our rural communities, which too often, in too many parts of the country, somehow look like people just are willing to turn them into economic sacrifice zones, compared to the focus on the cities and suburbs.

Our colleges and universities desperately need more foreign-born students. Most foreign-born students pay full sticker price and subsidize the students born in the United States. Due to COVID and anti-immigrant policies, fewer and fewer international students come to study in American schools. They are choosing to study in other countries instead. And you can bet those other countries are happy to welcome the bright minds at our expense and let them find a way to help their economies.

Our schools struggle to keep the doors open under these conditions. They have managed to block some Trump policies that are particularly harmful to students. I am very proud that my alma mater, the University of Oregon, led one of those lawsuits.

But still, many schools are likely to close. And if there are fewer international students coming here who are subsidizing Americans, the price that American-born students pay for a college education goes up. It is legislative malpractice for the lawmakers to allow that to happen when it is a crisis you know is headed this way. It is, obvi-

ously, in our interest to be a magnet for the best and the brightest.

Immigrants also protect vital safety net programs that Americans care so deeply about. With 10,000 people reaching retirement age every day, our country needs more workers, more people paying into Social Security, more people paying into Medicare, welcoming into the country more working-age people who can help shore up those trust funds. It can help to protect the Medicare guarantee and help ensure that Social Security pays full benefits. It is a big mistake to pass up that opportunity.

Finally, the economic boost isn't the biggest reason to support immigration. The biggest reason is immigration is about our national character; it is about our common history. Our country was founded by people with courage and audacity, people who picked up their lives and crossed oceans to start something new. Who are we to turn away all those who would follow in their footsteps? Welcoming immigrants from around the world makes us more youthful and resilient. It honors our founding.

America has always been a land of opportunity. It is why my parents loved the United States so deeply after they arrived here as frightened youngsters fleeing the worst of humanity. Decades later, because of the opportunity this country handed my parents, their son—a first-generation Jewish kid—has the honor of standing on the floor of the U.S. Senate, the honor of representing Oregon in the U.S. Senate. And what an honor it is to be able to be here this morning to talk about why the Wyden family is so grateful to the United States of America. If someday people around the world no longer see the United States as a land of opportunity, we will have strayed from America's character and purpose.

For now, the good news is that Donald Trump's Presidency ends next month. The attacks on our immigration system and on people who dream of becoming Americans will be nothing more than the angry tweets from a man voted out of office.

With the end of the Trump era, the United States can tear down the Trump paper wall and rebuild the coalition of Americans from all across the political spectrum who value the contributions of immigrants and who care for asylum seekers and refugees. It is an important part of what makes America so special.

I yield the floor, and I believe we have another speaker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

HONORING TYLER HERNDON

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I am here today to honor the life of Officer Tyler Herndon, a member of the Mount Holly Police Department in North Carolina, not far from where I live. He tragically lost his life in the line of duty last week, just days before his 26th birthday.