

In 2020, the American people turned out in historic numbers in the election, but they also turned out in historic numbers in protests in support of racial justice across America. John Lewis's march to Montgomery never ended. It has taken on a new life, a new generation of marchers, and more Americans than ever before are putting their feet to the pavement.

It is time to finish the work of John Lewis and the heroes of the civil rights movement. As we commemorate the 56th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, we can do no less. With his eyes wide open, John Lewis marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma knowing he was facing a deadly, hateful crowd. They broke down his body, but they could not defeat his spirit. The question we face today is whether John Lewis's spirit still lives in us.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

TRIBUTE TO ROY BLUNT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to take a moment to express my sadness about Senator BLUNT's announcement that he will not seek reelection in 2022.

He has been a leader within our conference ever since he came over to the Senate, and he will be sorely missed. I will especially miss having him as a Member of the whip team here in the Senate.

I came to the House of Representatives with Senator BLUNT back in the election of 1996. We began our service in January of 1997, and he quickly rose up through the ranks in the House and became the Republican whip in the House of Representatives. He has always been involved in leadership wherever he has been, and his list of achievements is long.

All Americans have benefited over the past year from his tremendous efforts to accelerate coronavirus testing and vaccine development. And less than 2 months ago, in his role as chairman of Rules Committee, he oversaw a very successful inauguration at a particularly challenging time.

The one good thing is that ROY is not leaving us immediately. He will be here for 2 more years, and I look forward to continuing to work with him and to seeing everything that he will accomplish.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. President, it has been quoted that "[t]he Senate works best when we work together. . . . The challenges we face are great. The divisions in the country are real. We have no choice but to try to work together every day to reward the faith the American people have placed in us."

Those are not my words. Those are the words of the Democratic leader on Inauguration Day. But I agree with him. The Senate does indeed work best when we work together. And, for proof, look no further than last week's debacle—a good example of what happens when, instead of working together, one

party tries to strong-arm its legislation through the Senate.

Last Friday was perhaps most notable for its 11-plus-hour vote on an amendment. Democrats held a 15-minute vote open for almost 12 hours—making it the longest vote in modern Senate history—because it had become clear that they were in danger of losing the support of one of their Members.

It turns out that when you force a massive, liberal piece of legislation through the Senate without committee review and without any attempt at soliciting input from the Senate as a whole, you start to lose support even from Members of your own party. It was an embarrassing moment for the Democrat leadership and a sad moment for the rest of the Senate.

In that same speech on Inauguration Day, the Democratic leader pledged:

[The] Senate will legislate. . . . And to my Republican colleagues, when and where we can, the Democratic majority will strive to make this important work bipartisan.

There was no evidence of that here. Democrats didn't try to make this bill bipartisan. In fact, they actively tried to make sure Republicans didn't have a voice in this legislation.

Remember that almost 12-hour amendment vote? Democrats held that vote open for nearly 12 hours solely because they were afraid that a Republican amendment might pass. Republicans were more than willing to work with Democrats on COVID relief, as we did last year on five separate COVID bills, but Democrats didn't want Republicans interfering with their legislation.

I want to talk about those previous COVID bills for just a minute. Prior to Democrats taking control of the Senate, COVID relief was a bipartisan process. Under Republican control, the Senate passed five COVID relief bills with overwhelming bipartisan majorities. Because both Democrats and Republicans had a voice in the legislation, there was no need to keep any of those votes open to engage in partisan arm-twisting. "The Senate works best when it works together."

The bipartisan process on those other COVID bills didn't just guarantee a bipartisan vote in the Senate; it also guaranteed that those other COVID bills were actually about COVID. Because both parties had to work together to get a result, neither party was able to hijack the bill for partisan purposes.

Contrast that with the bill the Senate passed on Saturday. While Democrats have tried to sell their legislation as a COVID relief bill, the truth is it isn't one. Just 1 percent—1 percent—of this bill actually goes to our top COVID priority—vaccinations—and less than 10 percent of this bill is directly related to combating the virus.

There has been a lot of talk about how this bill is a liberal wish list, which it is, but that is almost being too generous. A liberal wish list at least suggests some grand policy

schemes. This bill is mostly just a collection of payoffs to Democrat interest groups in Democrat States.

For the extreme abortion wing of the Democratic Party, this bill omits longstanding Federal restriction on using taxpayer dollars to pay for abortion. It makes labor unions eligible for loans designed to rescue Main Street small businesses. It bails out failing union pensions—a bailout even the New York Times describes as having "nothing to do with the pandemic" and as an "almost unheard-of" use of taxpayer dollars. That is from the New York Times.

It provides nearly \$129 billion for K-12 schools—despite the fact that these schools have spent just \$5 billion of the \$68 billion already given to them—while keeping teachers unions happy by making sure funding isn't tied to any requirement to actually get back to in-person instruction.

Then, of course, there is the money for the States. The bill appropriates a staggering \$350 billion for States, despite the fact that a majority of States already have the resources they need to weather the rest of the pandemic.

On top of that, the distribution formula for that \$350 billion is heavily weighted in favor of blue States, like California, which stands to see \$27 billion under this legislation, despite the fact that California's revenues are up by \$15 billion. Now, imagine the outcry if Republicans were directing funding to States that voted Republican in the last election.

And lest anyone thinks any of this was unintentional, Democrats doubled down on the partisanship when it came to amendments. They rejected an amendment that would have protected Americans from having their tax dollars used to pay for abortions, even though multiple Democrats broke ranks with their party to support this amendment.

They rejected an amendment to tie funding for schools to schools that actually are reopening. They rejected an amendment to ensure seamless support to nonpublic schools serving low-income students. They rejected an amendment to stop labor unions from taking loan money intended for small businesses. They rejected an amendment to provide greater transparency on nursing home COVID deaths, presumably in an attempt to protect the Democratic Governor of New York, who is under fire for seemingly deliberate attempts to obscure reporting of these deaths.

In a nod to the far-left environmental wing of the party, they rejected an amendment to reverse the President's cancellation of the Keystone XL Pipeline, which will cost thousands—thousands of American jobs.

I could go on for a while on amendments because there are a lot more.

Democrats passed an amendment that provides an incentive for some Americans to stay on unemployment by making more than \$10,000 of their unemployment benefits nontaxable.

Think about that. More than \$10,000 of their unemployment benefits is untaxable without regard to income.

Working Americans still have to pay their taxes, even if they are making less money than they would on unemployment. If you are a hard-working taxpayer in this country and you are not getting a tax break when the people who are on unemployment are getting a \$10,000 tax break, nontaxable income that is costing the Federal Government somewhere on the order of \$30 billion, you can imagine the average taxpayer in this country might find that to be highly objectionable when they find out about it. A substantial amount of unemployment benefits will be tax-free. That doesn't seem too fair, not to mention that the last thing we should be doing right now is discouraging people from going back to work.

In that speech I referenced earlier that the Democratic leader gave on Inauguration Day, he said:

As the majority changes in the Senate, the Senate will do business differently.

"The Senate will do business differently." Well, now we have a glimpse of what that looks like. And, apparently, it looks like ruthless partisanship in an attempt to completely silence the minority and the Americans they represent. It is deeply disappointing that Democrats have turned a bipartisan process into a totally partisan exercise.

As I mentioned, pandemic relief ought to be bipartisan, and it was last year, five times. Five times here in the U.S. Senate, we passed pandemic relief, coronavirus relief legislation, with overwhelming bipartisan majorities under regular order, where 60 votes are required, instead of under the procedure that was used by the Democrats last week to shut Republicans out of that process.

We could have passed a bill last week again with overwhelming bipartisan support, but that would have required Democrats to be willing to genuinely collaborate with Republicans. And, unfortunately, it is becoming clear that collaboration is not part of the new way of doing business in the Democratic-led Senate.

I hope my Democratic colleagues will change course in the days ahead and work with Republicans to unite our country. As the Democratic leader suggested on Inauguration Day, they owe the American people nothing less.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to oppose

President Biden's Executive orders on immigration.

Now, there are more than 11 million illegal immigrants in the country today. This is a group equivalent to the population of the entire State of Georgia, and this number has nearly tripled in the last 30 years. In fact, some experts say the number is a lot higher than that. Folks at Yale and MIT and the researchers there said it could actually be twice as high; it could be 22 million people in the country illegally. Well, that is more than the population of the entire State of New York.

So it appears to me that illegal immigration is making a mockery of our borders. Yet President Biden and this administration refuse to admit, even as of this morning, that there is a crisis at the southern border.

Now, if you talk to law enforcement all across the country, they will tell you that many of the problems that they face every day are problems related to our open southern border. The Drug Enforcement Administration has said for nearly a decade now that the vast majority of illegal drugs in America come here across the southern border.

Now, I am a doctor. I will tell you, these drugs have killed thousands of Americans. They kill thousands of Americans every year. They tear families apart. They lead to heartbreaking stories. They rob people of their God-given potential.

Our law enforcement, our Coast Guard, our border agents, they do heroic work every day to intercept drugs, to stop human trafficking. They can't do it alone. They need the support of the U.S. Senate.

Well, during the debate last week over the spending bill, we had a chance to give them support. Senator CRUZ introduced an amendment to prevent checks from going to illegal immigrants. Democrats blocked it. Senator COTTON introduced an amendment to cut the bailout funding to sanctuary cities. Well, these are cities that actively try to prevent Federal agents—actively try to prevent Federal agents from enforcing our immigration laws. Democrats blocked the amendment.

So no wonder we have a crisis at the border. Democrats seem to be advertising to the entire world: Come here now. If you come here illegally, you can get a check, possibly.

If you are an immigration enforcement officer, Democrats seem to block them from doing their own job. President Biden has already issued at least seven Executive orders on immigration. In just over a month in office, President Biden has already proven to be the most open-border President in U.S. history.

Now we face an entirely predictable crisis at the border. That crisis rests squarely at President Biden's feet. On his first day in office, President Biden shut down construction of the southern border wall. By the time the day was over, President Biden stopped all de-

portations for a hundred days. It didn't matter to President Biden what you were going to be deported for. No. Now, maybe you are a serious criminal. President Biden says: You can stay longer. A court has already stepped in and said this is illegal, this Executive order.

President Biden has, astonishingly, brought back the idea of catch-and-release—catch-and-release. He has ordered our immigration agents to release illegal immigrants into the United States, and he is doing it in the middle of a pandemic. Senator COTTON and I sent a letter to the President raising this concern. It is now harder to go to church in some parts of America than it is to cross the border into America.

Under President Trump, if you wanted to apply for asylum in this country, you had to remain in Mexico. That was the policy. The policy of "Remain in Mexico" was based on the standards of international law. To get asylum, you have to show that you can't live safely in your home country because of persecution—understandable. Yet the fact is that most illegal immigrants don't come here because of persecution. They come here for economic reasons. They want a better job. They want better schools for their kids. They are understandable motives; nonetheless, they are not standards for asylum.

Now, another requirement for asylum is that you have to go to the nearest safe country and seek asylum. You don't get to pick anywhere you want to go in the world. You have to go to the nearest safe country. Yet people around the world know that our asylum system here in the United States has become a sham. It is no secret that it is easy to game the system, and it is being gamed regularly in the Biden administration.

So they often stop in at least one other safe country, and they apply for asylum here. President Biden now says: You don't have to wait in Mexico. Cross the border. We will give you a court date years from now, years from now, and after they give you the court date, they release you into the United States. Even those who know they don't qualify and will not qualify for asylum, they come anyway because they know they get released into the United States. It happens all the time.

Just before the new administration took over, the Department of Homeland Security published a report about this. According to the Department, our border agents apprehended 3.5 million illegal immigrants along the southern border between 2014 and 2019. Only 8 percent of them—only 8 percent, 1 out of 12—ended up receiving legal protection from being deported, but the Department says half of them are still here in the United States. How does that happen? They didn't show up.

President Biden has also started an unprecedented expansion of the refugee program. The most refugees that this country has ever resettled in a single