

the outrage and hurt I am feeling from the comments made by Senator JOHNSON that he would have been more afraid on January 6th if the insurrectionists would have been from Black Lives Matter.

I am blessed to be on your staff and have had the opportunity to serve as a staff member in the NJ delegation for 34 years, but this is the most painful thing I have ever heard being said by a US Senator.

I could not imagine that the horrible and painful events from [January] 6th could be replicated in a statement from a sitting member of the Senate.

However, Johnson's comment is worse than the image of the insurrectionists walking through the Capitol building with the confederate flag.

He is perpetrating the racist trope that the country should fear black people.

I have experienced what it is like to have a taxi cab pass you by in order to pick up white passengers who are further down the block of where you are standing.

Nothing can describe the feeling when you have entered a store and having store clerks watch your every step while shopping.

Sandy—

That is his wife—

and I have had the conversations with our sons when they were young about how to enter a store; not look suspicious; keep your hands out of your pockets until you make your purchase; or how to respond and talk to police officers in any interaction.

I have had the difficult conversation of explaining to a young black scouter in our scout troop why a white campground store clerk accused him of not paying for an item because he was black.

[This] type of hate speech is [not] new. The hardest part of what he said is that in 2021, a United States Senator would so freely express this type of hate out loud.

I am so grateful for our officers who endured so many injuries on [January] 6th, and I pray that they will recover physically and mentally.

They are going through so much right now, I feel guilty that my email to you might sound shallow because of the pain they are trying to overcome.

I understand that the Senate works best when both sides can find common ground, but how do [you] really reach common ground when [such views can be held]?

Again, I am sorry for reaching out late on Saturday evening, but I needed to share this with you.

Keith.

To read these pained words both broke my heart and boiled my blood. Thousands of people of color serve in the U.S. Capitol workforce. They are legislative staffers like Keith and Capitol Police officers and maintenance workers, cafeteria staff, and so much more. I should not have to stand here and remind anyone that many of them feared for their lives on January 6. But not Senator JOHNSON. He felt no fear. He wasn't afraid because, and I quote:

I knew those are people that love this country, that truly respect law enforcement, would never do anything to break the law, so I wasn't concerned.

People who love this country do not desecrate our most sacred democratic institutions and display symbols of racial hatred like the Confederate flag in the halls of Congress. People who respect law enforcement do not assault Capitol Police officers, beat them within inches of death, and hurl ugly epi-

thets at officers of color. And people who would never do anything to break the law would not try to overturn the rule of law, plot to kill elected officials, and stop the peaceful transfer of power as instructed by the Constitution of the United States.

Now, I know what some rightwing media pundits and some of my Republican colleagues will say. They say it every time they are asked to accept some responsibility for perpetuating the lies told by President Trump that inspired the violent events of January 6.

They say: What about Black Lives Matter?

They say: Well, what about it?

Well, I say: Well, what about it?

The violent picture they paint of this movement could not be more divorced from reality. At this point, several reputable studies have confirmed that the protests launched in the wake of George Floyd's chilling murder were overwhelmingly peaceful. I repeat: The Black Lives Matter movement is overwhelmingly peaceful. I know many people don't care about facts these days, but it is the truth.

One study out of Harvard University analyzed 7,305 Black Lives Matter protests. The conclusion? Allow me to quote Professor Erica Chenoweth. She said:

Only 3.7 percent of the protests involved property damage or [some form of] vandalism. Some portion of these involved neither police nor protesters, but people engaging in vandalism or looting alongside the protests. In short, our data suggest that 96.3 percent of events involved no property damage or police injuries, and in 97.7 percent of events, no injuries were reported among participants, bystanders or police.

Likewise, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project—an organization I might add is partially funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations—examined 7,750 different Black Lives Matter demonstrations across the Nation last summer. They found just 3 percent of those protests associated with any violence or property destruction whatsoever. They also concluded that police departments “disproportionately used force while intervening in demonstrations associated with the [Black Lives Matter] movement relative to other types of demonstrations.”

Indeed, on January 6, as we waited for hours for backup from the National Guard and other law enforcement agencies to come to the aid of Congress, I know that I am not the only one who could not help but think of the violent, government-sanctioned crackdowns that met Black Lives Matter protesters last summer.

The bottom line is that these lies casting Black Lives Matter as violent have already done real damage. They have convinced millions of Americans that they should fear those who march under the banner of this movement for justice, when really it is the resurgence of violent White supremacy that should be Americans' real cause for alarm.

Indeed, last October, the Department of Homeland Security issued a report confirming that White supremacists pose the most lethal domestic terror threat to the American people. Research from the Center for Strategic and International Studies finds that White supremacists and their sympathizers carried out two-thirds of terrorist plots and attacks in 2020.

In the weeks since January 6, we have learned that far-right extremist groups that regularly preach White supremacy, such as the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys, played a major role in plotting and executing the attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Every Member of this body owes their life to the sacrifices made that afternoon by Capitol Police officers, including officers of color. At least 100 officers were physically injured in the January 6 attack. One officer, a veteran and fellow New Jerseyan named Brian Sicknick, later succumbed to the injuries he sustained. Two others subsequently committed suicide. Hundreds of officers now carry with them invisible scars from the trauma they endured that day—scars that may not fade for years or even decades.

For one of our colleagues to cast those who attacked the Capitol as harmless patriots while stroking fear of Black Americans is like rubbing salt in an open wound.

Everybody in this body should know that when you perpetuate such racist tropes, you contribute to a culture that gives people permission to treat Black Americans as suspicious and their lives as expendable. We in the Senate are supposed to hold ourselves to a higher standard. We are supposed to advance America's long march toward a more perfect Union, not coddle and cater to those who would take us backwards, and we are supposed to stand up for the truth. That is what brought me to the floor today.

I hope Members of this body on both sides of the aisle will join me in making sure that we do not debase the institution and the people we are called to serve—all the people—for whom so much pain has existed for years and exists still today.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, on January 20 of this year, President Biden declared the repeal of an emergency action at our southwest border. He withdrew that and said there is no emergency that currently exists there and paused all funding for the border wall system construction—stopped it. Wherever it was that day, it ended that day.

The same day, he announced a 100-day moratorium on deportations in the country—stopped that. Within a few days, the courts stepped in and a Federal court said that you can't just stop actually executing faithfully the laws of the United States. The court halted

then his halt of a moratorium on deportations. In this case, his actual request for a moratorium on deportation halt was for those who had actually gone all the way through the court system and a Federal court had asked them to be removed from the United States. That is what President Biden was trying to stop.

Federal courts then stepped in and said that when the courts said they had to be removed, the executive branch can't just ignore that. They have to actually be removed.

That opened the flood gates. Those two announcements together—that we are not going to do any more border construction, that we are going to stop that, and the announcement of the moratorium—started the process of a stir in Central America among the human smugglers to get the word out to say this President is going to allow to let people in and it is going to be different.

Why would I say that and why would they say that? Because even in the time when I was sitting down with now Secretary Mayorkas in his hearings before he was actually confirmed, I asked him in those hearings: If there is a caravan coming to the United States right now with hundreds of people in it and growing, what is your message to them if you became the Secretary of DHS? What would you want to make sure those folks heard?

His response to me in that hearing was: I would tell them to wait. Not yet. Not yet.

The coyotes didn't hear it that way. They accelerated pushing people.

What is actually happening on the border?

Last weekend, I spent the weekend in Arizona just south of Tucson in Nogales, a small little town of 26,000 people that sits right on the border with Mexico. It is 26,000 on the American side, but on the Mexican side it is a city of 450,000. It is a very large community on that side and, literally, they have built up the community directly against the border.

Much of that border fencing has been there a very long time. They built properties directly against that fence. They are Mexicans. They can do that. That is their property to be able to do that. That is not the issue.

The interesting thing was to visit with folks from HHS taking care of the unaccompanied minors in the area, to visit with Customs and Border Protection that are actually handling the cross-border transition, and with Border Patrol leadership to go through that area and see it.

Let me tell you a couple of things I saw this weekend to help you get the context. The folks who I visited with at HHS, who are there taking care of the unaccompanied minors coming in—and we are seeing a significant surge of unaccompanied minors because the Biden administration has changed the policy and said that if you are 18 years old and up, because of the pandemic, we

are not going to allow you in. It is called title 42 authority. The Trump administration actually put that in place and said: During the time of the pandemic, we are trying to limit cross-border traffic. You can't just come in.

The Biden team changed that and said: If you are 18 and up, you can't come in immediately. If you are 17 and down, you can.

So we are seeing a massive surge of unaccompanied minors right now. It is literally an invitation to say: You can come, but don't bring your family with you.

When I sat down with the folks at HHS there, who are doing a fantastic job with the best they can to be able to take care of those kids, I asked them: What are you seeing?

The vast majority of the kids that they are seeing coming across the border are 16- and 17-year-old males. When you hear the term, "We've got all these kids coming across the border," sometimes, as Americans, we think these are 5-year-olds crossing the border. They are not. The vast majority of them are 16- and 17-year-old males coming across the border. They are also being transported to individuals who are here in the country who are family members and who are already present here in the country. Most of those are also illegally present in the country. They are uncles and aunts. They are cousins and brothers and sisters who are already here because we have separate categories of how we actually transition those kids to someone who can take care of them before we have the court hearing. Most of those court hearings will take 2 the years. They are crossing the border, these 16- and 17-year-old males, and being connected with an uncle who is already here and many times, illegally, as well. They will have the next 2 years to be here before they have a court hearing and be able to go through the process—if they come to the court hearing.

When I visited with the folks at Customs and Border Protection, they were frustrated with the lack of funding that has been given to them to be able to take care of the needs for that particular facility and help manage the number of people who are coming through. They need additional assistance because in that very old facility, they need additional barriers to just help them manage the flow of people as they come through.

When I visited with Border Patrol, we drove just a couple of miles out into the desert, just to the west of this town of 450,000 people, to go see the new fence that is being constructed. It may be hard to see it in this, but miles and miles of new fencing are going in.

But on the day of January 20, construction was halted. In this particular area, there are miles and miles of fencing except for these gaps in the fence. Those gaps were put in there to be gates. So if they have to take care of the fence, they can get access to both sides of this. These miles and miles of

fencing are done except for the gate area, and, literally, the steel for the gates are laying on the ground.

Why in the world would you do construction and have it stop to say you can build everything except close the gates?

The Border Patrol team has literally dug over some of the steel just to be able to stack it in front of the gaps that are in the fence here to keep vehicles from driving through and try to put different barriers there and try to slow down the traffic.

For every one of these gaps along these miles and miles of fence, they are having to assign a Border Patrol agent there just to be able to sit at that gap because it is the obvious place to literally be able to walk through the fence.

There is only one reason that you would have a fence like this for miles and miles and leave it open as a gap—to allow people through. Worse than that, all the way through this construction area is just a dirt path they used for construction. But in the contract itself, it was set up to allow for the fence construction first. Remember, this is a wall system. There is technology and wall.

Walls are medieval, I get that, but there is a reason we still use fences in our backyard and still a reason we use fences as barriers because they work. They slow people down from actually crossing that barrier.

But it is a wall system in place. For miles and miles and miles in the contract and as it is written, they put up the fence first, close up the gates second, and then they finish the road so Border Patrol can actually pass through here, even when it rains in this area, to have a simple road passage there. Then they put in ground-based sensors so they can detect when people are walking across. Then they put in lights and cameras—all the technology we talk about in this room. I can't remember how many times I have heard my Democratic colleagues say: Fences are old. Let's just do the technology. Technology can help manage this.

In this situation, the contract is out and done. The fence is already installed, except for the gates, but no technology is there. So, literally, the Biden team stops before what even they claim is the effective part to stop people illegally crossing the border. The \$1.6 billion was paused—that \$1.6 that goes to simply closing the gates and installing the technology. That is what remains. This is nonsensical.

I understand the Biden team and some of my Democratic colleagues want a more open border. They have been clear on that. This does not provide security for our Nation. This is the result of saying: I don't want any more wall.

This is a nonsensical system on our southern border, with literally open areas that you could drive a truck through and where Border Patrol agents have to then sit at. Rather than

monitor large areas, they are stuck monitoring the open door.

Listen, we can have arguments about immigration, but, supposedly, we all agree we should have border security—at least we used to. This doesn't make sense. But this is now the reality, and it will sit like this for we don't know how long—maybe forever—until we as a nation determine this has to change.

It is an open invitation.

Have things really changed significantly on the border? Let me give you an example that is pre-COVID—pre-COVID, February of last year, before COVID came through. So don't say that things have changed in COVID. In February of 2020, we had under 40,000 people who were apprehended crossing our southern border that month—under 40,000 pre-COVID. That is a transition and an arrest process.

This February, with the only thing changing being the change of Presidents, we had over 100,000 people illegally crossing the border. One year later, we go from less than 40,000 to over 100,000.

This is a manufactured crisis that is happening on our border: a halting of closing up the holes in the fence; statements that we are going to do a moratorium, that we are not going to have anyone deported anymore; changing the rules on unaccompanied minors to basically invite them to come into the United States; and, again, statements like, "Caravans, I will just tell them to pause; we are not quite ready for you yet."

That is really not going to be a pause at all. That is going to be an invitation. That is not me saying that. It is the thousands and thousands of people who are coming to be able to connect with relatives who are already here and to be able to walk through a process, to be able to go around our visa application process and go around legal immigration.

I remind us as a country that we allow a million people a year to legally come to the United States and become citizens—a million people a year. We are not a stingy nation in engaging with legal immigration. There is a right way to do it, and we welcome people to do it the right way. This is welcoming people to do it the wrong way, and that does not help our security as a nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

#### BUDGET

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk about President Biden's runaway spending proposals.

Of course, as a conservative Republican, when I look at this thing, I have to say: Wait a second. This is not something that I can support in any way.

We have a 50-50 Senate here in the United States. The Democrats have won a narrow margin in the House, but the Democrats in Washington are acting like they have won in a landslide

and have a national mandate. They do not. If there is any mandate when you have a 50-50 Senate and when you have such a narrow range in the numbers between the Republicans and the Democrats in the House, you would say it is a mandate to move to the middle. That is what the American people voted for. They said: Let's get to the middle. Let's find solutions to move our country forward.

It does seem, to me, what the Democrats are doing is an unprecedented overreach. The Democrats have only had control in Washington for about a month and a half, and it has already cost the American people \$1.9 trillion. It is an astonishingly large figure. It was supposed to be for coronavirus relief, but 1 percent of the money went for vaccines, and only 9 percent went to actually fighting the coronavirus. Yet, before they passed the bill, that is what the Democrats said it was for. It does seem to be the oldest page in the Democratic playbook.

We all remember the old ObamaCare bill and debate and discussion. They said it was a tax. When they needed votes in Congress, they said it wasn't a tax. Then they realized they were going to lose in court, and they said it was a tax all over again. Well, we have seen the same playbook here. They said we needed more coronavirus relief, and then they passed this liberal wish list. Once they had the votes, they admitted the bill was not about coronavirus medical relief, healthcare relief or vaccines or fighting the disease. No—a liberal wish list.

Now, don't just take my word for it. The Democratic majority leader, standing right there, called it a "turning point" that transforms the United States. The White House Press Secretary called it the "most progressive bill in American history." One Democratic leader in the House called it an "ideological revolution." I guess they forgot it was supposed to be about the coronavirus. It doesn't sound like coronavirus healthcare relief to me.

After the bill passed, Speaker PELOSI admitted this was the same bill that she put forward last summer. Back then, the New York Times looked at it and called it "more a messaging document than a viable piece of legislation." POLITICO called it a "Democratic wish list filled up with all the party's favorite policies."

This was never a coronavirus relief bill. They used the coronavirus to cover the payoff to all of the most powerful people in the Democratic Party: \$85 billion to union pension plans, irresponsibly run; \$26 billion for California Gavin Newsom; \$12.5 billion for New York and Governor Andrew Cuomo; a big payoff for teachers unions and potentially millions for Planned Parenthood.

President Biden signed the bill, and then he gave a speech a few hours later. In effect, he admitted the bill doesn't get us 1 day closer to reopening our country. This is what this was sup-

posed to be about—getting kids back to school, getting people back to work, and getting the virus behind us. President Biden said "there is a good chance" that small groups of people can get together outside in July. Well, he said, "that doesn't mean large events."

The Democrats spent \$1.9 trillion, and, once again, they moved the goalposts. Congress has already paid for enough vaccines for every American to get vaccinated by the end of May. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that getting vaccinated means getting your life back. This is what they told us. It means you can have indoor gatherings without masks. America needs to be fully open before the Fourth of July.

The Democrats haven't even finished their victory lap over the spending bill, and they are already telling us they want more. Here are just a few examples of what they propose to do, not with their money but with the American people's money—the taxpayers' money, the hard-earned dollars of the people who go to work every day and send their tax dollars to Washington.

In their \$1.9 trillion wish list, the Democrats tried to double the minimum wage by Federal mandate. They failed, but they are going to keep trying.

Now, of course, the Office of Management and Budget, which took a look at this thing, said: Well, if they had succeeded, it would have forced 1.4 million Americans who have jobs right now to be out of their jobs because, when you mandate a doubling of the minimum wage, small businesses are either going to have to close or lay off certain people so they can pay the wages to others in an effort to keep the doors open. It means less tax revenue overall for the country, and it means more spending for unemployment insurance. If you add it up, it would increase the national debt by about an additional \$54 billion.

In their \$1.9 trillion wish list, the Democrats also wrote a big check to the teachers unions.

Now, they actually didn't need the money because, in the five bipartisan coronavirus bills that we have passed in overwhelming majorities, we sent schools \$113 billion. The schools haven't even spent most of that money yet. In fact, they have only spent about \$16 billion of the \$113 billion. There is almost \$100 billion yet to spend. On top of that, the Democrats have just put up another \$170 billion in their wish list. If you add it up, that is nearly \$270 billion to spend with no promise—none—to reopen the schools.

The Democratic leader wants to forgive \$1 trillion in student loans. Subsidizing student loans just lets colleges raise prices. That is exactly what would happen if Leader SCHUMER's plan were to become law. Colleges don't need to raise prices. They need to lower the cost of education.

Senator SANDERS has an even more radical proposal. He wants to forgive