

House, another hundred-day goal. The experts tell us it is not only possible, but it has already been done across the country.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a report in January that said:

There has been little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission.

In short, the schools are not a breeding ground for COVID-19, and as long as proper precautions are taken, schools can reopen safely. In fact, it has already happened across most of Texas. Nearly two-thirds of Texas schools are fully in-person, and just 3 percent of districts are still fully remote. Two-thirds are fully reopened, and 3 percent are fully remote.

Unfortunately, in this case, the science is at odds with a key supporter of our Democratic colleagues, and that is the teachers unions. For months, teachers unions have fought a safe return to in-person instruction even though the experts and real-world evidence tell us that it is safe. It has gone so far that they have now gotten into some pretty sticky situations.

A leaked post from a private Facebook group for the Los Angeles teachers union warned teachers not to post pictures of their spring break photos because it makes it difficult to argue that it is unsafe to return to school. Well, it is tough to tell parents that it is not safe for their kids to go to school and then turn around and tell teachers it is fine to go on vacation; just don't post pictures. Trusting science and listening to the experts means doing so all the time, not just when it is convenient or politically expedient.

We are seeing progress every day in our fight against COVID-19. That is the light at the end of the tunnel that is getting bigger and brighter, and the question is not if we get there but when. How quickly can we get more vaccines into arms? When will our children—all our children—return safely to the classroom? How long until families can hug one another without fear of spreading the virus to someone they love?

We all know this is a community effort. It is a team effort. It is a personal responsibility effort. Each of us has a role to play in stopping the spread of the virus. But leadership matters too. The goals and benchmarks set by the administration will determine how quickly all of these things can happen. Now is not the time to walk back goals, set low bars, or bow to unions and political supporters. The administration needs to set clear metrics and targets for how we reopen and find our new normal, and these goals should be based on the science and the advice of the experts—nothing less.

So we are getting close to safely crossing the finish line, and we shouldn't let politics or any other consideration slow us down.

I yield the floor.

I would suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 928

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, in a moment, I am going to propound a unanimous consent request. But before I do so, I want to make some brief observations.

Earlier this month, Democrats passed their extreme partisan reconciliation bill—a bill that President Biden signed into law. When the Senate was considering the bill, I introduced an amendment to ensure that illegal aliens would not receive the \$1,400 taxpayer payments provided in the bill. Every single Democrat in this body voted against that amendment. It failed by a single vote. If even one Senate Democrat had voted for that amendment, it would have passed.

At the time, Senator DURBIN incorrectly told this Chamber that no illegal aliens would receive stimulus checks under this bill. It was clear then, and it is even more clear now, that that statement was very much in error, as even Senator DURBIN has admitted.

Last Thursday, I gave my Democratic colleagues a chance for a do-over, once it became clear that there was a very substantial number of illegal aliens who would be receiving these checks. Unfortunately, the Democrats objected again and put themselves on record that they are just fine with millions of illegal immigrants getting taxpayer stimulus checks.

There has been some debate as to the exact number, but, just this week, the Center for Immigration Studies released an economic report that catalogued that we are indeed talking about millions of illegal immigrants who are receiving these checks.

At the same time we were debating this partisan reconciliation bill, the Senate considered another amendment, which I had introduced and Senator CASSIDY had introduced, to prevent the payments from going to criminals currently incarcerated in prison. Again, unfortunately and astonishingly, every single Democrat in this Chamber voted against it. It failed by a single vote. If even one Democrat had demonstrated the common sense to say violent criminals who are currently in prison right now, today, shouldn't be getting \$1,400 taxpayer stimulus checks, that amendment would have passed. But every Democrat lined up in a party-line partisan vote to say no.

Today, I am going to give Democrats another chance at a do-over to recognize that that extreme position is a position, frankly, none of us could go home and explain to our constituents without being laughed at, even in the

bluest of States. And I am going to give an opportunity in this instance for Democrats to vote on stopping the funds going to criminals currently incarcerated and sending those funds instead to the Crime Victims Fund, a program that is run by the Department of Justice to compensate victims of crime.

So this is a choice the Democrats have: Do you want \$1,400 checks going to criminals in prison, or do you want instead to direct those funds to the victims of crime that have suffered at the hands of those criminals?

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 928, introduced earlier today. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, just two quick points. First, this is not really about prisoners. This is about disrupting payments to families all across the country who need the money to make rent and pay for groceries.

Here is why. The IRS administers the tax system for millions and millions of Americans. The Cruz amendment has the practical effect of keeping these folks who are hurting from getting that check that they are going to use to pay for essentials. That is because their check would be on hold while the IRS sets up the system envisioned by this amendment.

Now, I guess that is what my colleague from Texas wants. After all, he opposed the bill. He opposed these payments from the get-go. So if he passes this amendment, he gets what he wants, but for all those folks who are hurting, their checks are on hold.

The last point I want to make is that it wasn't always this way for Republicans and our colleague from Texas. Republicans were for these payments before they were against them. They voted for two rounds of relief checks going out to all the people who are being discussed here when they controlled the White House and the Senate.

Senator CRUZ voted for the CARES Act. It passed unanimously. There were 44 Republicans for the December relief bill, with no exception like the Senator from Texas wants.

Donald Trump was so happy with the checks going to prisoners that he put his name on them. The only difference between the CARES Act relief checks that Republicans unanimously supported and America Rescue Plan relief checks is the party in the White House.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, the Senator from Oregon, I guess, demonstrates the principle that hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue, because the Senator from Oregon suggests that somehow payments to people who are not criminals will be delayed if we don't pay criminals in prison. That claim, on the face of it, is absurd.

The Federal prisons are administered by the Bureau of Prisons. Government may not be good at everything, but I feel quite confident that the Federal Government can produce a list of currently incarcerated prisoners. I know the States can.

The IRS, likewise, is perfectly capable of recognizing whether it is mailing checks to prisoners in prison. This is not whether you have ever been convicted of a crime. It is, Are you sending the checks to Sing Sing? If so, don't send it.

The claim that somehow Joe Six-Pack at home is not getting his check because we don't want to send checks to prisoners is demonstrably untrue.

The Senator from Oregon also claims Republicans oppose stimulus checks, when he knows that is simply not the case. As he noted, this body overwhelmingly passed bipartisan COVID relief five times last year. It is only when Senate Democrats took the majority that bipartisan legislation ended because the Democrats decided to push a hard partisan bill instead.

A clean bill providing relief checks would have passed with an overwhelming bipartisan majority in this body, and the Senator from Oregon knows that.

We have now discovered, though, that given a straight-up choice between sending checks to criminals in prison versus sending checks to the victims of crime, Senate Democrats stand with the criminals.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 929

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I am going to suggest an even narrower situation. Perhaps we can't agree on victims of crime. How about murderers?

We just had a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on gun violence. We saw a horrific mass murder in Colorado. Can't we agree that murderers shouldn't get checks—\$1,400 stimulus checks—from the taxpayers? Let's take the money going to murderers and put it in the crime victims task force fund instead.

And so, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 929, introduced earlier today. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. WYDEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, there isn't information about this crime or these crimes at the Federal, State, and local levels. So, again, we are back in exactly the same place.

The Senator from Texas wants to hold up the checks to millions and millions of people in spite of the fact that he voted—he voted earlier—for a system that got the checks to everybody in a timely way. And when you don't have the information about the specific crimes at the Federal, State, and local levels, it becomes impossible to carry out what the Senator from Texas seeks to do. And the net effect is, again, that millions and millions of Americans aren't getting the funds that they need to pay for essentials, rent and groceries.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, you know, it could be hard in these partisan days to know what the truth is. Both sides yell at each other. They insult each other. It is hard to know who is telling the truth.

I ask the folks at home who are listening to this debate to exercise a little bit of common sense. The Senator from Oregon just told you the Federal Government has no idea who are murderers currently in prison. I want to suggest that doesn't make any sense.

I feel quite confident the Department of Justice could produce a list of currently incarcerated murderers in Federal prisons within 24 hours. I am absolutely certain the State of Texas could produce that list. I am confident the State of Connecticut could produce the list of the murderers currently in Connecticut prisons. I am even confident the State of Oregon could produce a list of the murderers convicted of homicide currently incarcerated in the State of Oregon.

The claim that we don't know who the murderers are who are in our prisons serving time for murder—it doesn't pass the laugh test.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 930

Mr. President, so let's see if we could agree in a different area—rapists, those who committed sexual assault.

Again, these are public records and the Department of Justice and every State criminal justice authority have a list of all the rapists. How about let's not send \$1,400 checks to rapists? Take the money and give it to the Crime Victims Fund so it can go to victims of rape.

Here is a choice for Democrats: Do you want to send money to the rapists or the victims of sexual assault? This ought to be a hundred-or-nothing choice.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 930, introduced earlier

today. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to read, specifically, what the IRS has told us, because I gather my colleague would like to just continue this for some time. But here is what the IRS says:

In the information the IRS receives from the Bureau of Prisons and State prison systems, we do not get the crime for which the person is incarcerated.

So we can have a host more of these amendments, if my colleague wants to do it. But I get why he is so anxious to have his amendment passed—because he was always for keeping people from getting checks, and his amendment, if passed, would put those checks on hold. So that is why I have objected, and we will put this into the record as well.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, once again, the Senator from Oregon has said something that is demonstrably false and that he knows is false, which is that he has suggested that I opposed sending stimulus checks to the American citizens, to law-abiding citizens. I not only didn't oppose it, I voted for it. Republicans supported it. He knows that. That is a red herring.

He just read a statement from the IRS Agency saying they get a list of prisoners from the Bureau of Prisons, and he said: But we don't know the crime.

The first unanimous consent request I put before this body is, everyone on that list in the Bureau of Prisons, don't send them a check. That doesn't delay your check. If you are not looking at bars, if you are not in a jail cell that is 5 feet by 10 feet, this doesn't affect you. This only affects criminals currently in prison.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 931

Mr. President, let's try one more time. The Democrats have objected to not sending checks to criminals in prison. The Democrats have objected to not sending checks to murderers in prison. The Democrats have objected to not sending checks to rapists in prison.

Let's try a group that I think may be the lowest of the low, which is child molesters. I spent a lot of years in law enforcement, and I think there is no more horrific offense than those who commit crimes of violence and sexual assault against kids. When I was solicitor general of Texas, the cases where people sexually abused kids I thought should be in Dante's Ninth Circle of Hell.

So here is a chance for some bipartisan agreement. Can't we all agree that the Federal Government shouldn't send \$1,400 checks to the child molesters in prison right now for molesting