

on critical industries and infrastructure represents a serious threat.

Less than a month before the ransomware attack on meatpacking, ransomware criminals hacked the Colonial Pipeline, which supplies gasoline and jet fuel to the east coast. The Colonial attack caused fuel shortages and drove up gas prices, with many consumers facing gas station lines that hearkened back to the oil crisis of the 1970s.

In today's society, where almost everything we do has a cyber component, ransomware and other malicious cyber attacks carry the potential to seriously disrupt our way of life.

Cyber security needs to be one of our top priorities. Private companies need to invest in cyber security, to keep their systems and customer data secure, and the Federal Government has to invest in it as a matter of national security. We can't afford to let hostile individuals or hostile governments hack key government databases or functions.

I was proud to be a lead sponsor of the HACKED Act, which became law as part of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. This legislation focuses on enhancing both public and private cyber security development. It bolsters science education and cyber security programs at multiple government Agencies, and enhances partnerships between universities and employers on cyber security workforce needs.

We need to continue to make cyber security training a priority. We also need to send a clear message to governments that harbor cyber attackers. It is obvious that Russia remains a haven for cyber criminals. Both the Colonial Pipeline and JBS attacks were the work of Russia-linked hackers, and we need to make it clear to Russia and other countries that we have no tolerance for the harboring of cyber criminals.

MEATPACKING INDUSTRY

The JBS attack also highlighted a second problem—the highly concentrated nature of the meatpacking industry. When one or more of a handful of companies controlling the meatpacking industry experiences a problem, whether that is a plant shutdown due to COVID transmission or a cyber attack, that creates a potentially serious problem for the entire U.S. meat supply.

We all remember seeing bare meat department shelves at times during the pandemic. Had meatpacking capacity been less concentrated, it is likely that we would not have seen such significant shortages.

This high level of concentration in the industry also creates a problem for livestock producers, who rely on meatpackers to buy and harvest their animals and get them to consumers.

If a meatpacker has to shut down a plant, that means that farmers or ranchers may lose out on getting their livestock to market.

The highly concentrated nature of the meatpacking industry also creates

the opportunity for market manipulation. In fact, serious concerns have been raised about market manipulation in the beef industry, owing to the substantial and ongoing gulf between meatpacker profits and rancher profits.

I recently sent a letter to the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee requesting that the committee hold an oversight hearing into potential anticompetitive behavior and antitrust violations of the meatpacking sector. This followed on my letter to the Attorney General, urging the Justice Department to disclose the results of its investigation into the meatpacking industry, and my request to the Senate Agriculture Committee to hold a hearing examining the challenges livestock producers have been facing.

I will continue to work to make sure any anticompetitive behavior in the beef-packing industry is addressed.

I will continue to support efforts to increase competition in the meatpacking industry, like my legislation to support small meatpackers, the Strengthening Local Processing Act. I introduced this legislation in February, along with Senator MERKLEY, to help strengthen and diversify national meat processing capacity by providing new resources for smaller, more local meat processing operations.

As I said, more than 80 percent of the beef-packing industry in this country is controlled by just four companies.

Encouraging more companies to get into this marketplace and encouraging small meatpackers to expand will dilute the power of these four companies and create more competition for ranchers' cattle, which will lead to higher prices for ranchers—higher prices for ranchers—when they bring their cattle to the market.

Plus, spreading out and expanding our Nation's meat processing capacity will make our Nation's meat supply less vulnerable to interruptions in situations like the pandemic or other natural disasters or the JBS ransomware attack.

South Dakota cattle producers work hard every day to deliver top-quality beef to our Nation and to the world. I am proud to represent them here in the Senate, and I will continue to fight to enhance competition in the meatpacking industry so that ranchers and all livestock producers can receive a competitive price for their livestock.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. 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.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the right to vote is the most fundamental

and essential feature of our democracy. As Abraham Lincoln said, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people would not be possible if it weren't for citizens who cast their ballot at every available election.

From city councils, to school boards, to Presidents of the United States, the American people have a right and, I would argue, a duty to make their voices heard. In 2020, a record number of voters did just that. Nearly 160 million Americans cast their ballot, accounting for roughly two-thirds of all eligible voters. If you compare that to 2016, just 4 years earlier, 17 million more people voted in the last election. This included higher turnout across all racial and ethnic groups—African Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics, Asians. Each had a higher turnout this election.

When Congress originally passed the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the goal was to eliminate common discriminatory practices that were in place at that time. It was and it is a landmark piece of legislation. There is no question it has been an overwhelming success, and I think that is something we should celebrate as a nation.

In 2012, for the first time on record, turnout among Black voters was higher than for White voters. In 2020, both Asian and Hispanic voters turned out at the highest rate on record. We certainly have come a long way, as the preamble to the Constitution says, in our effort to form a more perfect Union, but we should not tire, nor falter, nor fail in our progress to make sure that everyone who has the right to vote has an opportunity to cast their ballot.

Before every election—and 2020 was no different—there is a widespread effort to register new voters and encourage more citizens to participate. In Texas, we set new records in registering and turning out voters. We turned out 11.3 million voters, 66 percent of those registered. In the years to come, I hope we will set new records and get more voters to the polls. I think that goal should be shared by every American.

But in addition to this work, we have a responsibility to protect the integrity of the ballot. This became a focus in particular after the 2016 election when we actually saw Russia try to interfere with the Presidential election that year.

In response, Congress provided hundreds of millions of dollars to shore up State election security measures and to help local officials safeguard future elections. Our intelligence community and particularly the National Security Agency and Cyber Command made sure that there were no cyber attacks or minimized the impact of potential cyber attacks on election voting systems, including voter registries and the like. The postmortem reviews were that they were pretty successful in deterring those sorts of attacks that occurred in 2016.

But it is not just up to the Federal Government; across the country, States are also fighting to make sure that those who are legally entitled to vote can do so and ensure the integrity of their own elections. They are looking at ways to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat, which I think should be our goal. But those election security efforts have been mischaracterized, unfortunately, by many of our Democratic colleagues and many in the news media who falsely claim that somehow there are efforts underway at the State level to suppress minority voters.

We saw this play out in the case of the Georgia election law in particular. Our Democratic colleagues tried to frame this legislation as a way to suppress minority voters, but that was completely contrary to the facts, and it was completely contrary to the election laws in their own States.

The Georgia law, for example, set a deadline of 11 days before an election to request a mail-in ballot. In the home State of the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER from New York, voters only get a week—11 days in Georgia; a week in New York. And in New York, you have to give a reason for voting absentee. In Georgia, under the proposed changes to the State election law, you don't even have to give a reason to vote absentee.

Georgia also expanded early in-person voting to 17 days. In Massachusetts, represented by two of our Democratic colleagues, early voting lasts only 11 days.

The President's home State of Delaware won't even offer early voting until 2022. In other words, you can't even do it now, and it won't be available until 2022, and even then, voters will have only 10 days.

Well, I think this demonstrates the hypocrisy of some of the debate we are hearing and seeing.

New Jersey, represented by two Democratic Senators and a Democratic Governor, recently passed a law that expanded in-person voting to 9 days. As a reminder, Georgia just expanded theirs to 17 days. But the New Jersey Governor had the temerity to criticize Georgia for "restricting the rights of Georgians to vote" when it is more expansive than the voting laws in his own State.

We have heard similar lines of attack from many across the aisle who falsely try to brand this law as a form of voter suppression. Once you play the race card, it is hard for people to think clearly because it tugs at our emotions. It tugs at our collective, frankly, guilt, emanating from the earliest days of our country that we have come a long way to try to rectify.

But here is the bottom line: Each State has the authority to determine the "times, places, and manner of holding elections." Where does that come from? Well, that is article I of the Constitution of the United States of America. But our Democratic colleagues in-

sist on pushing for a one-size-fits-all mandate that turns federalism, including the Constitution itself, on its head.

Senator SCHUMER, the Senator from New York, has said that this month, the Senate will vote on a bill called S. 1, which is the Democrats' effort to commandeer control of elections from the States. The bill is so radical that Members of his own party have lined up against it, and it is easy, on superficial inspection, to see why.

In order to vote in person, 36 States require some form of voter identification. That was the recommendation of the Commission that former President Carter participated in, along with James Baker III—a prominent President, a Democrat, and a prominent Republican. They made a recommendation for voter ID, but this proposal, S. 1, would eliminate it.

In my State, Texas, there are several options to present voter identification. You can present a driver's license, a passport, a military ID, a citizenship certificate. If you don't have any of those, you can get another one issued by the State at zero cost. Those all work.

This Democratic proposal would stop States, would actually block the States from requiring voter identification—something you have to do when you buy a six-pack of beer or cigarettes, for those who still smoke, or get on an airplane or even enter a Federal building. You have to produce an identification to do so. But S. 1 would prohibit the States from making that requirement when exercising your most sacred right as a citizen. What would they require? Well, you sign a piece of paper saying you are who you say you are, and nobody can ask you any questions.

The invitation for fraud doesn't stop there because this proposed legislation also legalizes something called ballot harvesting. That means that mail-in ballots could be collected by political partisans, whether it is paid campaign staffers or anyone who has a stake in the outcome of the election—not an impartial third party but a partisan who has a stake in the outcome of the election. They could harvest those ballots.

It goes so far as to specify that the States "may not put any limit on how many voted and sealed absentee ballots any designated person can return." So there are no limits on how many ballots a political operative could harvest and turn in and count in the election. Well, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out how this can go wrong. Maybe the ballots get turned in with thousands of others. Maybe some of the ballots are altered. Maybe some are falsified. Maybe some end up in the trash. It is tough to know exactly what might happen.

S. 1, this Federal commandeering of State-run elections, is rife with opportunities for fraud. It mandates things like automatic voter registration and ballot drop boxes, while making it more difficult for the States to maintain accurate voter lists.

It would even go so far as to make it harder for the States to remove dead voters from their rolls. My State, like many States, has an unfortunate legacy of having candidates and political parties cast a ballot on behalf of voters who are no longer alive—box 13, for example. Arguably, that is the way Lyndon Johnson beat Coke Stevenson, by voting the cemetery vote. And that is not unique.

Why would Senator SCHUMER and Speaker PELOSI be pushing this takeover of State-run elections? Well, it is pretty obvious. They think that our Democratic colleagues will reap the benefits of hijacking State election laws. That is really their goal here. They want to put a thumb on the scale of future elections. They want to take power away from the voters and the States and give themselves every partisan advantage they can.

Those are just some of the features of S. 1. There are others. It would make changes to the Federal Election Commission, which currently has six members, three from each political party. This is intentionally designed to protect the Commission from partisan politics. Regardless of which party controls the Senate or the White House, the FEC will always be fair and balanced. Well, that doesn't serve the interests of our Democratic friends, so they want to change it. The election takeover bill would remove one of the seats held by a Republican and turn the Federal Election Commission into a partisan body—no more equal representation, no more consensus building. Why bother with that when you can steamroll an agenda with no opposition?

Then there is the taxpayer funding of elections. Instead of political candidates going out and making the case to prospective voters, instead of supporters voluntarily backing their preferred candidates with their hard-earned dollars, this bill would force taxpayers to bear the financial burden, even to the point of channeling dollars, your tax dollars, to candidates whom you disagree with who support policies that you do not support. And it is not even a dollar-for-dollar match. I don't know who came up with the idea of \$6 from the taxpayer for every dollar that is raised from voluntary donations, but that is the proposal. What a deal. That means if somebody gives a candidate 200 bucks, the Federal Government could match it up to \$1,200.

Our Democratic colleagues even managed to get on the wrong side of the American Civil Liberties Union. This bill would implement a new disclosure policy that the ACLU says "could directly interfere with the ability of many to engage in political speech about causes that they care about."

But as bad as this proposal is, S. 1, if that doesn't work—and it is looking like, from reading the news recently, it is not likely to work because of defections, even among Democrats—our Democratic colleagues have a plan B.

I want to remind you of what I said at the outset, that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was one of the most important laws passed in modern American history. It has been reauthorized a number of times over the years, most recently in 2006. I proudly cast my vote in support of reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act. But a new bill introduced by our friend the Senator from Vermont, the senior Senator, sometimes invoking the name of that civil rights icon, John Lewis, his proposal would radically change the law as well, this time putting the Federal Government, not the State, in charge of new voting laws again.

Just a reminder: Back in 1965, part of the Voting Rights Act required States and jurisdictions with a history of discrimination to receive Federal preclearance before they could put new laws into effect.

In 2013, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down the portion of the law that set the formula for which States were included in that requirement. The Court ruled that it was unconstitutional because the coverage formula was outdated. The Court said history did not end in 1965.

Indeed, what happened when the Voting Rights Act was reauthorized in 2006, the proponents of that bill made no accounting for the tremendous progress in minority voting turnout that we have seen since that time. In other words, the Voting Rights Act worked. It worked miraculously, and thank goodness it did.

But the Supreme Court, in striking down the 1965 formula as opposed to the current-day rate of minority voting, the Court said the Congress based the law on 40-year-old facts having no logical relation to the present day.

Here is an example: The formula in 1965 required States to receive preclearance before they could put their own voting laws into effect if they had any test or device, as it was called, that restricts voting. That included things like literacy tests or subjective determinations of moral character. But thanks to the Voting Rights Act, those practices are nowhere to be found today.

The bill introduced by Senator LEAHY, the senior Senator from Vermont, would change the formula with language so broad that virtually every State in the Union and every local jurisdiction would have to get their election laws precleared by the Biden Justice Department before they could put them into effect. The trigger for that is a vague number of voting rights violations that wouldn't even require a finding of intentional discrimination. Nevertheless, these State and local governments would be required to get the sign-off of partisan bureaucrats at the Department of Justice to exercise their own constitutional authority.

I think it is important to keep in mind that the Framers of the Constitution wanted the States to chart their

own course in elections, not Washington bureaucrats. To quote the Supreme Court of the United States, "The Framers of the Constitution intended the States to keep for themselves, as provided [under] the Tenth Amendment [to the Constitution], the power to regulate elections." Yet, in any instance where your local election official wanted to make a commonsense change in the way your elections were actually carried out, you would have to ask "Mother May I" to the Department of Justice.

Based on this proposal, you would think there have been countless unenforced instances of voter discrimination that cry out for this sort of remedy, but you would be wrong.

The Department of Justice already has authority under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group. During the entire 8 years of the Obama—the Obama—Justice Department, they filed only four enforcement cases in the whole United States under section 2—four.

So the narrative of widespread voter suppression is nothing but a propaganda tactic designed to support a political outcome. The push for a Federal takeover of elections is not about voter suppression at all. It is about unconstitutionally seizing power and never letting go.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today I come to the floor to talk about the crisis that is occurring at our southern border.

Joe Biden has been President now for about 4 months. In this time, illegal immigration at the southern border has more than doubled. We are now on a pace this year—this year alone—for the most illegal immigration in two decades. The numbers that we see, based on last month, we are talking about 2 million people coming to America this year illegally.

It seems to me that, on the first day in office, President Biden signed Executive orders that flipped on the green light that said: Come to America. He rolled out the welcome mat, and he sent a clear message that our borders are open. He shut down construction of the border wall, a wall that we have actually paid to have done, to be constructed. I have been there. The parts are lying on the ground and the workers stopped, on inauguration day, from putting up portions of the wall to close down the gaps.

He stopped all deportations for 100 days. He brought back the program known as catch-and-release. And since he took these actions—and I have talked to the Border Patrol on the ground, and they say the border has been overwhelmed.

Now, illegal immigrants are coming from all over the world. People say:

Well, it is an issue between Mexico and the United States. The people coming here are coming from all over the world. At the time I was there, we heard that over 50 countries have been represented in the people who have been captured, including Romania, Armenia, Bangladesh. People are flying to Mexico who can't come to the United States because of paperwork, who they are, what their intentions may be. They aren't allowed to get tickets to come to the United States so they fly to Mexico to come into the United States illegally.

The entire world knows that the border is open because that is the message sent out by this administration. And that, of course, includes criminals. Border agents have already arrested 95 convicted sex offenders. Border agents have arrested 95 convicted sex offenders coming into the country illegally, and this includes the last number of months.

And I will tell you, the sex offenders include a man from El Salvador who was convicted of raping a child in Washington State. We are talking about people who have been convicted in the United States, who are now out of the country, coming back in—conviction in Washington State. It also included a man from El Salvador who was convicted of sexually abusing a 9-year-old girl. This abuse took place in New York City, which is a sanctuary city.

This is what happens when our borders are open and the message is sent out around the world. And for the open borders crowd who like this sort of thing, some of whom are Members of the Congress of the United States, this is just collateral damage. It is all part of a political agenda.

It has been more than 2 months since President Biden put Vice President HARRIS in charge of the border. She has found time to make it to the Canadian border but not time to make it to the border between the United States and Mexico.

This week, and right now, the Vice President has been on her first overseas trip in the role as Vice President. She is going to Central America and to Mexico but not to the border. She has announced new gifts of American taxpayer dollars given to people from other countries.

When reporters asked her—and she did; I saw the sitdown interview and the video of it—if she was going to the border, she actually laughed. She thought it was a joke. It was very disappointing to see the Vice President acting in that way. She said: "I haven't been to Europe either," like it didn't matter. She hadn't been to Europe; there are a lot of places she hadn't been. The place the American people know she hasn't been is to the border between Mexico and the United States.

In reality, she knows. She knows that if she goes to the border—she knows that if she goes to the border between the United States and Mexico,