they affect the entire Uniform Code of Military Justice, is something that is necessary, in my view, and will be done—and I hope promptly—so that we can move forward with this legislation, not only to ensure that it passes but that it works for the benefit of the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen in our Armed Forces.

Passing something that sounds good but has not been thoroughly reviewed and thoroughly vetted and will not be implemented effectively for the benefit of soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen is something I don't think we should do.

I think, rather, we should wait for the committee hearings. I am confident that this legislation, with respect to crimes involving sexual misconduct, will emerge from the committee. There are other issues that we will consider.

With that, I would reaffirm my objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I respect the chairman and his need to carefully review this legislation, but we have been reviewing the legislation for 8 years, and we have been having hearings on this legislation and the issue of sexual assault in the military for 8 years.

We have been passing legislation through the committee for 8 years, but this vote has been denied every time.

In fact, when don't ask, don't tell repeal was being filibustered by the Armed Services Committee chairman and other Members of that committee, we ultimately took that vote to the Senate floor. It was an up-or-down vote to repeal don't ask, don't tell.

In this case, the committee has been considering this thoroughly and carefully for 8 years. And even if the chairman believes that he hasn't fully vetted it or reviewed it or had the careful consideration, many of the Members of the committee have. We have been diligently looking at this issue for 8 straight years. It is time to bring this to the floor.

I am confident that if we bring this to the floor, we will be able to reform how we deal with these cases; we will be able to change the system for the better; and that we will be able to finally begin to overcome the scourge of sexual violence in the military.

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. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR OUR COAST GUARD ACT

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I rise today in strong support of our U.S. Coast Guard.

For more than 230 years, the U.S. Coast Guard has watched over our shores, protected against foreign threats, lent a helping hand to those in need of rescue, and enforced the rule of law.

The Coast Guard lives by its motto, ''Always Ready,'' and has earned the trust and admiration of the American people. America could not do without this uniquely capable branch of our military.

The Coast Guard is so effective and so versatile that it is tasked with 11 statutory missions spanning the entire globe.

One of the best known Coast Guard missions is search and rescue. The Coast Guard carries out 45 search and rescue missions on an average day, saving the lives and property of Americans in dire need.

The Coast Guard also protects our ports and inland waterways, facilitating billions of dollars in trade and maintaining the navigation aids that make sea commerce possible. In today's global economy, 80 percent of international trade travels by sea. The Coast Guard plays a crucial role in screening commercial vessels, patrolling maritime infrastructure, and servicing aids to navigation, such as beacons and buoys. Each of these functions contributes to our Nation's prosperity and security.

The Coast Guard is also increasingly involved in homeland security. It is largely the Coast Guard's job to deter potential threats before they arrive in U.S. ports. Coast Guard men and women can be found in every major port in America, conducting security boardings and escorting passenger and cargo vessels into our waterways. The Coast Guard also helps to enforce U.S. migration laws and saves the lives of those who foolishly risk everything to travel on unseaworthy vessels.

Beyond this, the Coast Guard plays a crucial role in blocking narcotics and illegal weapons from entering our country. It is not uncommon for Americans to open their news feeds and read a report about the latest multimillion-dollar drug bust carried out at sea by the Coast Guard. In one recent example, three Coast Guard cutters joined efforts to intercept more than 11,000 pounds of cocaine valued at $220 million. That was a remarkable feat, but not unusual for the U.S. Coast Guard.

As the polar regions attract more interest from Congress, it should be known that the Coast Guard is America's surface presence in both the Arctic and the Antarctic waters. Coast Guard icebreakers carry out a wide range of operations, allowing us to have a sustained presence in Antarctica and conduct research in some of the most remote corners of the Earth.

If all of these roles were not enough, the Coast Guard is taking on greater responsibilities in national security. Partnering side-by-side with the Navy, today's Coast Guard conducts freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, provides maritime security in the Middle East, and deters illegal fishing in international waters.

This long list of responsibilities should make two things very clear: First, the Coast Guard is indeed capable and adept; and, secondly, it is being stretched increasingly thin. Today, the Coast Guard is being asked to carry out almost every maritime task imaginable, but Coast Guard funding has not kept up with these increased demands. The fifth branch of our military needs the certainty, predictable funding, and authorities necessary to accomplish all of its missions.

Congress has the ability to meet these needs, and I am asking my colleagues to do so by supporting a new bill, the Unwavering Support for Our Coast Guard Act. This legislation would essentially do five things.

No. 1, it would protect pay and allowances for Coast Guard members during the government shutdown. During the latest government shutdown, the Coast Guard members went without pay yet continued to serve admirably. This should not be allowed to happen again. We need to safeguard Coast Guard pay and allowances from failures here in Washington.

No. 2, the legislation would provide full funding to eliminate the shore-side facility maintenance backlog while building resilience into these facilities.

No. 3, the bill would enhance the diversity of the Coast Guard.

No. 4, it would support needed renovations at the Coast Guard Yard in Maryland.

And, No. 5, the bill would require the Coast Guard to tell us the assets and facilities it needs to complete all of its missions.

For too long, the Coast Guard has been asked to do more with less. Congress needs to understand the true cost of modernizing and recapitalizing our Coast Guard fleet to meet its mission requirements in the increasingly complex maritime domain.

I am proud of my State's role in supporting the Coast Guard's fleet recapitalization efforts. Mississippi is building two of the vessels that will be the vanguard of our Coast Guard for years to come: the National Security Cutter and the cutting-edge Polar Security Cutter.

The National Security Cutters have already proven themselves to be the most capable and versatile ships the Coast Guard has ever used. They can deploy all around the world and integrate seamlessly with our NATO allies, and use next-generation technologies, like unmanned drones, to extend their reach. These cutters are especially effective at countering drug smuggling, illegal fishing, and illegal movement of migrants.

America will also benefit significantly from the new Polar Security Cutters, which will be the first heavy icebreakers built in America since the 1970s. Our current fleet of icebreakers is aging and shrinking. We have fallen

far behind Russia in our icebreaker fleet, and the Arctic is quickly becoming a critical national security domain. A fleet of new Polar Security Cutters will allow us to maintain a heavy presence in polar regions and keep our adversaries at bay.

America needs a capable and growing Coast Guard, and the Coast Guard needs the support of this legislation. I look forward to working with my colleagues to provide the Coast Guard with the resources it needs to continue its exemplary service to our Nation.

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

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

JUNETEENTH

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the 156th anniversary of Juneteenth. On Saturday, we mark 156 years since June 19, 1865, when MG Gordon Granger announced in Galveston, TX, that the Civil War was over and that enslaved people were now free.

In his announcement, General Granger said:

> The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property.

In commemoration of this momentous day, June 19 became known as Juneteenth. In the years following the Civil War and in the early 20th century, Juneteenth has been celebrated as a holiday of independence.

While Juneteenth has been celebrated in States across the country, it carries a special significance in Texas, where Juneteenth celebrations began. In 1872, four men in Houston, my hometown, purchased the land for Emancipation Park, the oldest park in Texas, as the site for Juneteenth celebrations. In 1980, the State of Texas became the first State to make Juneteenth a State holiday. Today, 47 States recognize Juneteenth.

I am proud to cosponsor the Senate resolution designating June 19, 2021, as Juneteenth Independence Day to honor the historical significance this day has in the United States.

Juneteenth is an important day. It is a somber reminder of the original sin of slavery that our Nation inherited from colonial powers. Still, it is also a celebration of the fact that our country strives each and every day to make good on its promise to protect the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all men and all women, who are created equal. Our country was founded on that revolutionary idea, that revolutionary belief that all men are created equal, and that means no matter where we come from or what we started with, any one of us can live freely and achieve great things.

The story of America and the story of Juneteenth is a story of freedom, and while we have had many troubled chapters along the way, I, for one, agree with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that the arc of history is long and that it bends towards justice, and we have made significant progress on that arc.

On Saturday, as we commemorate the long-overdue announcement of emancipation made in Texas 156 years ago, let us together remember the God-given freedoms we all cherish as Americans.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, on Sunday, June 20, Joe Biden will have been President for exactly 5 months. In these 5 months, we have seen crisis after crisis after crisis. We have experienced a gas crisis, where we had gas lines and skyrocketing energy prices. We are on the verge of an inflation crisis, where everywhere we look, prices are rising on food, on housing, and on lumber. We have already had a war in the Middle East, and we have a border crisis that has been raging so intensely that we are on pace to see 2 million illegal immigrants come through our unsecured border this year.

Just last month, 180,034 illegal immigrants crossed the border. To put that in perspective, that number is a 674-percent increase over the number of illegal immigrants that crossed the border last May—a 674-percent increase—and that number is a 21-year high. The reason for this is simple: The crisis that has unfolded is the direct result of political decisions made by Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS.

No. 1, the first week in office, President Biden immediately halted construction of the border wall.

No. 2, that same week, President Biden reinstated the failed catch and release policy.

No. 3, most inexplicably, the Biden administration ended the ''Remain in Mexico'' international agreement, a historic agreement negotiated by President Trump with the Government of Mexico whereby the Government of Mexico agreed that those who crossed illegally into Mexico would remain in Mexico while their asylum proceedings were pending in the United States.

That agreement was a tremendous success. It produced last year the lowest rate of illegal immigration in 45 years. Let me repeat that. Just 6 months ago, our country had achieved the lowest rate of illegal immigration in 45 years. Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS come into office, they rip to pieces the international agreement that produced that success, and today we have the highest rate of illegal immigration in 20 years.

Meanwhile, as the crisis rages, Joe Biden is nowhere to be found, and KAMALA HARRIS is nowhere to be found. In 5 months in office, Joe Biden couldn't be bothered to go down to the border and see the humanitarian disaster his policies have created. KAMALA HARRIS, who was designated ''in charge of the border,'' seems determined to go anywhere she can but the border.

In the 84 days since she has been tasked with handling the border crisis, do you know how many press conferences she has given? Not even one—not a single press conference in 84 days.

She can't be honest about what is causing the crisis so she hides from questions. The one time she sought questions was with NBC's Lester Holt, where he asked her about going to the border. She responded with that now characteristic and, quite honestly, creepy laugh, where she said: ''We've been to the border.'' I am not sure who the royal ''we'' was, but that ''we'' doesn't include Joe Biden, who hasn't been to the border as President. That ''we'' doesn't include KAMALA HARRIS, who hasn't been to the border as Vice President.

And Lester Holt—to NBC's credit, Lester Holt actually asked a followup question, and it was a very simple question: ''You haven't been to the border?'' To which she responded, oddly: ''Well, I haven't been to Europe either.''

(Mr. VAN HOLLEN assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, we are not facing a humanitarian crisis, a border crisis, a public crisis, a national security crisis in Europe. We are facing it at our southern border. We are facing it in my home State of Texas. And the Vice President, it seems, cannot be bothered to go and see firsthand the failures that President Biden's policies are causing.

I also want to touch on one issue that greatly affects border communities, and that is our land ports of entry.

While Joe Biden has repeatedly encouraged this crisis of illegal immigration, he is at the same time preventing lawful border crossing.

Border communities are suffering immensely right now because important land ports of entry in El Paso, in Del Rio, in Eagle Pass, in Laredo, in Rio Grande City, in McAllen, in Pharr, in Brownsville remain closed to everyone except those deemed ''essential'' traffic.

Basically, Mexicans who have a visa to enter the United States legally cannot do so through these land ports of entry unless they are going to school, working, or somehow considered essential. Nonessential travel from the United States—into the United States from Mexico for shopping, for visiting family and friends, for casual visits are not allowed by the Biden administration.

Instead, the Biden administration has decided to keep our land ports of entries closed for nonessential travel until at least June 21, ostensibly because of the COVID–19 pandemic. This