

must wear masks on all forms of public transit now blatantly contradicts the Agency's own policies and the Agency's own scientific research. It needlessly promotes fear and plays politics with the lives of the American people, not to mention it has imposed absurd expectations and serious consequences on children and families, especially families with children trying to travel.

You see, after the January mandate, the CDC issued a corresponding mandate that exempted only children over the age of 2, in keeping with their original mask-wearing guidance, guidance that is among the most stringent in the world and, I would add, the most unrealistic in the world, when you consider that they require it up to and including children as young as 2 years old.

So what have been some of the results of this guidance? Parents have been kicked off and banned from flights if their small children refuse to wear a mask. For parents of kids with disabilities and many parents of especially small children, compliance has been nearly impossible.

We already know that children, especially young children, are unlikely to contribute to the spread of the virus. What we do not know, however, is what scientific studies, if any at all, the CDC happens to be relying on in reaching this guidance—in reaching the conclusions underlying this guidance.

In fact, several of my colleagues and I sent a letter to the Agency with this very question more than 2 months ago, on April 22, 2021. And now, more than 2 months later, we have yet to receive an answer. It is a very simple question, and we have yet to receive any shred, any semblance, any scintilla of an answer. I find that unacceptable.

If the CDC actually believes its own research, then it should act like it. And if it believes in the vaccines, the very vaccines on which we have spent billions of taxpayer dollars, then it should act consistently and instill confidence in the American people, rather than fear.

And with the vaccine now free and widely available, Americans should be able to weigh the cost of the options before them and choose for themselves whether to receive the vaccine, whether to wear a mask, or whether to take their own precautions free of any mandates imposed by their government.

But if the Federal Government is going to have a say in whether or not there should be a mandate, it should be up to Congress, the sole branch of the Federal Government empowered to enact law and, not coincidentally, the branch elected by and held most accountable to the people at most regular intervals. It should be up to this branch of government, the legislative branch, to enact such a mandate.

To the extent that the CDC issued this mandate, it did so using authority delegated to it from Congress. We, in Congress, did not pass the mask mandate, and we do not have to defer to those bureaucrats who did.

The science—the science shows that wearing masks should not be Federal law, and we should act accordingly. We should, moreover, give Americans some reason to want to be vaccinated. When there is light at the end of the tunnel and when they can see there is some tangible, immediate benefit to them getting vaccinated, they are more likely to do it. If they can safely enter a place of mass transit without a mask, if they choose to do so, many more people will choose to get vaccinated if we give them that benefit or if we at least allow the operators of those modes of transportation to allow people to do that.

We can assert our rightful authority and promote sound science and common sense by supporting the bill introduced by my friend and colleague, Senator SCOTT of Florida. We need this to pass. The American people have suffered through a very, very long COVID winter. It is time for them to be able to make their own choices. That is what we do best as Americans because we believe in freedom.

We also believe that whenever the coercive power of government, especially the coercive power of the Federal Government is exercised, it must do so with the authority of Congress. We should never tacitly acquiesce to the authority of overlords within a bureaucratic Agency who are elected by no one and ultimately accountable only to themselves.

We are in charge here. We make the law. We shouldn't blindly defer to anyone, certainly not the CDC when the CDC ignores its own science.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Utah for his comments. I want to thank his continued commitment always to make sure that we, Congress, handles everything we can. We don't defer constantly to the executive branch in making decisions that we should be making.

This is a simple example of why we should be making this decision. This is following the science, and I am actually shocked that my colleague from the State of Washington does not want to follow the science.

I don't understand why my colleague from the State of Washington wants government to be dictating things. Why do we want to dictate to Americans how to lead their lives? Why does she think that the government—why has the government lifted mandates in States all across the country but not—and why is the CDC fine with every place but public transportation? It just doesn't make any sense.

Americans will do the right thing. It is not our job to dictate, to tell them how to lead their lives. If someone wants to wear a mask, so be it. They should do it, but the government has no right to tell them that they have to wear a mask. If an airline or another private company decides it wants to implement a mask policy, have at it.

We shouldn't prohibit them from wanting to do that, but we should not be dictating this.

So I am disappointed that my colleague from the State of Washington didn't go along, but I think it is important for us to always make sure we are doing the right thing for the American public and, right now, the right thing is eliminate the mask mandate on public transportation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of two critical nominations: Jen Easterly's nomination to be the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency—commonly referred to as CISA—within the Department of Homeland Security, as well as Robin Carnahan to be the Administrator of the General Services Administration, or GSA.

Our country is under attack. Nation-state actors and criminal organizations are relentlessly targeting our government, critical infrastructure, and key industries to infiltrate networks, steal information, conduct espionage, and demand ransom payments.

These cyber attacks pose a serious threat to our national security. As we saw from the SolarWinds hack, as well as the Colonial Pipeline and JBS ransomware attacks, cyber criminals are constantly looking to exploit cyber security vulnerabilities and find the weakest link. We must be vigilant about preventing these attacks, and we need a strong, coordinated approach from across the Federal Government to better secure America's networks. That means the Senate needs to confirm qualified cyber security nominees so that they can get to work immediately.

CISA is the lead domestic Agency for cyber security in the Federal Government. It is responsible for ensuring that Federal Departments and Agencies—our private sector critical infrastructure partners—and the American people have the resources to detect, to withstand, and to respond to cyber attacks. GSA provides a wide range of support to Agencies across the government. One of GSA's key functions is to provide funding and expertise to help Agencies both modernize and secure their IT systems and their networks. We need Senate-confirmed leadership at the top of these critical Agencies, and we need it today.

Ms. Easterly has served for over three decades in the Federal Government and the private sector.

Since 2017, Ms. Easterly has led the operations center for Morgan Stanley's cyber defense strategy. She was also a critical member of the Cyber Solarium Commission, which has made 80 recommendations for cyber deterrence, 25 of which have already become law.

Prior to joining the private sector, Ms. Easterly served as the Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Counterterrorism, the Deputy for Counterterrorism at the National Security Agency, and was instrumental in the design and creation of the U.S. Cyber Command.

On top of all of these incredible accomplishments, Ms. Easterly is a two-time recipient of the Bronze Star and retired from the U.S. Army after more than 20 years of service in intelligence in cyber operations.

Ms. Easterly is more than qualified for this position, and this body needs to confirm her nomination today to lead CISA.

Every day that this body delays confirming critical leaders like Ms. Easterly and Ms. Carnahan leaves our Federal system and our Nation vulnerable to cyber attacks. We have already seen the damage and the chaos from these attacks. The Colonial Pipeline attack disrupted the lives of millions of Americans, created fuel shortages, and saddled customers with high gas prices for weeks. The next major breach could be even worse.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Ms. Easterly's nomination to lead CISA and to take on the vital mission of strengthening our defenses and fighting back against the persistent cyber attacks that threaten our Nation each and every day. Cyber security and strengthening our Federal networks are not partisan issues. Cyber attacks put each and every one of us at risk.

I would hope my colleagues will allow these nominees to be confirmed today so they can keep us safe.

With that, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 176, Jen Easterly, of New York, to be Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Department of Homeland Security, and the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Reserving the right to object, I want to make one thing very clear. I am here today to ensure accountability to the American people.

I voted to support Ms. Easterly's confirmation in committee last week, and if Senator SCHUMER filed for cloture, like he has done for dozens of other nominees this year, I would vote to support her confirmation here on the Senate floor. This isn't about Ms. Easterly. This isn't about cyber security. Remember, we unanimously confirmed the National Cyber Director just last week.

I am here today because families in my State of Florida and across our Nation deserve accountability, and Presi-

dent Biden has shown a total lack of accountability when it comes to addressing the border crisis. That is why I announced last month that I would be holding all of President Biden's nominees for the Department of Homeland Security from being approved through our expedited process until he and Vice President HARRIS visit the border and they see for themselves the crisis their failed policies of open borders and amnesty have created.

I understand the White House has just announced that Vice President HARRIS will be visiting the border later this week. I hope that is true. The administration has made a lot of promises that they haven't kept, like not raising taxes, reopening schools quickly, being tough on Communist China—the list goes on and on.

Trust me, I am glad the Vice President seems to be taking my advice and finally listening to the American people. I truly hope that she gets down to the border to see the crisis firsthand that her administration and their failed policies have created.

I hope she meets with the National Border Patrol Council and hears from them what our brave CBP agents are going through every day to keep us safe.

I hope she meets with border community sheriffs who are responsible for keeping our families safe.

I hope she meets with ICE and CBP section chiefs so she can hear firsthand the impact on them.

I hope she takes an aerial tour, like I did, and sees the gaps in the wall.

I hope she sees where the lights and cameras are sitting powerless, without electricity, and unable to be used to monitor our border.

I hope she meets with families who have been the victims of trafficking and hears the horrific stories they have and what they have been through because of this crisis.

I hope she visits border communities that have been put in a position to house and care for the historic number of people illegally crossing our border.

I hope she talks with families who have tragically lost loved ones from the massive amounts of fentanyl that the cartels are moving across our border.

I hope she talks to the ranchers impacted by people illegally crossing their lands.

More than anything, I hope this isn't a political stunt. If she truly goes to see this crisis, I will lift all of my holds of DHS political nominees. It is that simple.

What is happening at the border is a crisis; there is simply no other word for it. It has been 3 months since I traveled to the southern border to see exactly how President Biden's open borders and amnesty policies are wreaking havoc. I took a tour with Governor Ducey. We did an aerial tour. What you see is a wall and then all of a sudden, these openings. They intentionally didn't put up the gates.

I remember my colleagues were saying: Oh, we don't need the wall. We have lights and cameras so they can monitor from someplace else.

They are out there; they are just not hooked up to electricity, intentionally. I mean, you can't make this stuff up.

It has been 3 months since I made clear that President Biden and Vice President HARRIS need to get to the border and see the crisis their administration has created. It has been 3 months since they pledged to visit the border. Since then, as you all know—you look at all the numbers—apprehensions at our southern border are at a record high. More than 180,000 illegal aliens tried to cross our southern border last month and were apprehended—the highest in 21 years. This is a crisis. It threatens our national security and the safety of American families. And we don't know how many people we didn't apprehend.

President Biden's immigration policies are putting unaccompanied minors at risk of human trafficking, violence, sexual abuse, and separation from their families. They are leading to an alarming increase in human trafficking and drug smuggling by cartels.

FBI Director Wray said this month that there is "no question" that cartel activity from Mexico is "spilling over" into the United States. We are seeing it here in Florida. I talk to sheriffs. What they are telling me is that unbelievable amounts of fentanyl are coming across the border and getting into our State, putting Florida families in danger. I was down at one lab, and they were telling me that two people died that week from fentanyl.

But instead of securing the border and finishing wall construction projects, President Biden is terminating all of the wall projects. Why would you be doing this?

The inaction by President Biden and Vice President HARRIS is inexcusable. I don't know what they are waiting for. Why can't they acknowledge that a secure border is the best thing for our Nation? If you talk to people around this country, they want a secure border. Why can't they stand up against the radical left and say that open borders are dangerous to American families?

Two weeks ago, the Vice President went to Guatemala and Mexico. While she was there, she was asked by Lester Holt when she was going to go to the border, and she laughed. I mean, this is not a laughing matter. This is a crisis, and people are dying because of this crisis. It should make all of us furious.

People are dying. Children are being exploited, and they are being abandoned in the desert. Earlier this week, two Ecuadorian children—two little girls, 3 and 5 years old—were dropped over a 14-foot section of the border wall. We all saw the pictures. They were abandoned there in the middle of the night, two innocent little girls, just 3 and 5 years old. Can you imagine how terrified they were? I mean, I

think of my daughters. I think of my grandchildren. We all do. We all think, how would our family deal with that? It just breaks your heart.

The Vice President claims the Vice President's trip down to Guatemala and Mexico was to talk about the root cause of immigration. I don't believe that. The Vice President's trip wasn't anything more than a poorly executed political stunt.

President Biden and Vice President HARRIS need to stop avoiding the crisis, stop laughing off this threat, get to the border, and take real steps. As I said, once they actually go to the border and actually see the crisis, I will lift my hold. This is all to make sure they go to the border. But as long as they refuse to help those risking their lives every day to keep us safe, as long as they refuse to visit the border and put an end to the humanitarian crisis they created, I am going to keep my holds on.

Those two little girls and all the people who have been trafficked—they deserve better. The millions of immigrants in our country going through a legal process—they deserve better. Our Border Patrol agents—they deserve better. All American families deserve better. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I would like to discuss Ms. Carnahan's qualifications further before asking for consent on her confirmation.

Ms. Carnahan has an extensive career spanning Federal and State government, as well as the private sector. During the Obama administration, she founded and led the State and Local Practice at 18F, a technology consultancy within GSA. In this role, Ms. Carnahan worked with State and local government agencies to improve and modernize their digital services. Prior to her tenure at 18F, Miss Carnahan served as Missouri's secretary of state, where she focused on modernizing IT infrastructure to improve service for hundreds of thousands of customers.

Ms. Carnahan is a nationally recognized government technology leader and in 2017 was named one of the Federal Government's Top Women in Tech.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Ms. Carnahan's nomination to lead GSA.

From modernizing and securing Federal networks to strengthening supply chain security, GSA plays a critical role in bolstering our national security.

With that, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following nomination: Calendar 175.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robin Carnahan, of Missouri, to be Administrator of General Services.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate and, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all without intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Carnahan nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, after months of unnecessary handwringing, Vice President HARRIS has finally announced that she intends to visit the U.S.-Mexico border.

She was, as you will recall, tapped by the President to lead the efforts to stem the current humanitarian crisis back in March. But 3 months in, she has spent more time trying to figure out how to support Central American countries than how to help American law enforcement and community leaders in Texas.

In the absence of any action from the administration—in fact, any acknowledgement of the crisis, at all—the humanitarian crisis has gotten nothing but worse. In March, the first month of her heading up the administration's response, there were 173,000 migrants that crossed our southern border. Then, in April, the number went up to 178,000 and, in May, 180,000 migrants. We are now on track to see the highest number of total yearly border crossings in two decades, according to the Secretary of Homeland Security, Mr. Mayorkas.

At the center of this crisis are unaccompanied children, who are brought to this country by cartels and human smugglers. We know that the migrant children endure a long and dangerous journey to our border, often arriving malnourished, abused, and in critical health. Some of the young girls even arrive pregnant, and we know that many of them have been sexually assaulted en route by these human smugglers who care nothing for their welfare. All they care about is the cold, hard dollar. I have talked to a number of these children and heard them retell their horrific stories about their journey from their home to our border.

Since January, since the time that President Biden and Vice President

HARRIS were inaugurated, more than 65,000 unaccompanied children have entered our country with no parent and no adult guardian, an absolutely devastating figure. These children are then placed with sponsors in the interior of the United States—sometimes a family member, sometimes a complete stranger. Thirty days after these children are placed with their American-based sponsor, not necessarily even an American citizen, a full 20 percent of them don't respond to a phone call or a wellness check when a person associated with the U.S. Government knocks on the door. And we have no idea what happens to these children once they are lost to the system.

The Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley Sector is the epicenter of this human crisis. Between October and April, that is where nearly half of all unaccompanied children were encountered. In the 3 months since the Vice President has been in charge of this crisis, I have visited the Rio Grande Valley Sector twice. I have spoken with law enforcement, elected officials, and nongovernmental organizations that try to be of assistance to the migrants while they are in the country, and a long list of other people who are trying to do everything in their power to manage this overwhelming number of humanity coming across our border.

On Friday, Vice President HARRIS won't get to speak with these men and women. Why is that? Well, she will be more than 1,000 miles away, down the border from the Border Patrol sector experiencing the worst of this crisis.

I know there are probably folks who are not from Texas who think that the whole border is exactly the same, but that is not true. I had the chance to travel to Tucson with Senator SINEMA, the Senator from Arizona, and I got a chance to observe how different the border is in the Tucson Sector from the Rio Grande Valley, which she traveled with me to see after we left Tucson. But since October, the Rio Grande Valley Sector has encountered nearly three times as many unaccompanied children as the El Paso Sector and more than seven times more family units.

The situation along the entirety of the U.S. border is challenging, to be sure, and El Paso has suffered during the crisis too, no doubt. Law enforcement, nongovernmental organizations, and community leaders in every border sector are struggling to manage the massive surge of migrants.

When asked why she hadn't visited the border yet, the Vice President said she wasn't interested in grand gestures. Yet here she is planning a trip in a way that reflects, again, that she doesn't really fully comprehend the magnitude of the crisis and where it really exists on steroids, which is in the Rio Grande Valley. It is not even fair to say that she is a day late and a dollar short. She is nearly 100 days late and 1,000 miles short.

By ignoring the Rio Grande Valley, the busiest Border Patrol sector along