

they are witnesses to a crime, whether they are parties to a lawsuit or defendants in a criminal case.

That is one of the primary reasons I have worked so closely with the Biden administration in helping to identify and recommend and support talented nominees for California's district courts.

Today, I rise to highlight three nominees to serve as Federal judges whose confirmation processes we are beginning today.

NOMINATION OF RUTH BERMUDEZ MONTENEGRO

Mr. President, Judge Ruth Montenegro is nominated to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California.

She is a proud daughter of Mexican immigrants who came to this country with only elementary school educations—just like my parents. Judge Montenegro understood early on—because of her parents' experience and their journey—the value of getting a good education and of public service, starting at a very young age. She was born and raised in the Imperial Valley, where she returned after graduating from UCLA Law School.

Like so many of us, you are trying to fulfill your parents' dreams, so you go on to college and get a good education. You graduate and have options all over and choose to come home to make a difference.

Judge Montenegro built a career in representing public agencies. She could have made a lot of money in the private sector. She chose to represent public agencies, ranging from the Imperial Valley Housing Authority to the El Centro Elementary School District. She has served for nearly 10 years now as a State superior court and Federal magistrate judge.

Judge Montenegro's extensive judicial experience and lifelong dedication to her community, I have no doubt, will strengthen the Southern District's bench.

NOMINATION OF FRED W. SLAUGHTER

Mr. President, next, I would like to highlight Judge Fred Slaughter, who is nominated to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

Judge Slaughter received his undergraduate and his law degree from UCLA, going on to a distinguished career as a prosecutor. For more than a decade, he served as an assistant U.S. attorney in Arizona, Oregon, and California, where he oversaw and tried hundreds of cases, including cases involving human trafficking, bank robberies, and the prosecuting of members of White supremacist groups.

Judge Slaughter has spent the past 8 years serving in the Orange County Superior Court. There, he is known for his compassion and leadership in juvenile justice. Judge Slaughter's long career demonstrates his legal excellence as well as his commitment to providing justice for all.

NOMINATION OF JACQUELINE SCOTT CORLEY

Mr. President, finally, Judge Jacqueline Corley is nominated to serve for the Northern District of California.

She is a native of Long Beach. She earned her bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley and her J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Judge Corley's nontraditional path to the bench displays her commitment to public service. After spending some time in private practice, she spent more than 10 years as a career law clerk for the Northern District of California. Based on her outstanding work in that role and the expertise that she built in private practice prior, Judge Corley was selected to serve as a magistrate judge for the Northern District. She has served there for the past decade and is known for her mentorship of current law clerks.

I celebrate each of these highly qualified nominees who will help Californians access justice throughout our State. When people enter a Federal court, they should feel confident in the promise of equal justice—equal justice that I know these three nominees will help deliver. The oversight and judgment of a thoughtful and fair judge is paramount.

Our democracy depends on the public's faith in the judiciary. That is why I am committed to building a bench of judges who will better reflect and understand the districts, the States, and the country that they serve. I am proud to take another step toward that goal by supporting the confirmations of these three judges, and I urge all of our colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF GEORGIA SHOOTINGS

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise today to reflect on a dark day in Georgia's recent history.

One year ago today, a hateful act of violence shook Metropolitan Atlanta and reverberated across our State, our country, and indeed the world. In the span of just a few hours, our sense of safety and sanctuary was pierced by bullets of hate and fear. Eight precious people lost their lives—eight people who were loved by their families, their friends, their children; eight people with their own successes and struggles, hopes, and dreams.

We speak their names: Soon Chung Park, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Yong Ae Yue, Delaina Ashley Yau Gonzalez, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng.

My heart aches for these Georgians and their families for whom I am sure the wounds are still fresh. They were the victims of unconscionable, senseless hate.

As a pastor, I believe in the sacred worth of every human being—that we are a strange admixture of dust and divinity, of sod and sky, of beauty and possibility.

So I will ask now for all of my colleagues and everyone who can to join me in taking a moment of silence to remember these eight Georgians and to pray, each in our own way, for their families.

(Moment of silence.)

Thank you.

VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIAN AMERICANS

Mr. President, importantly, I must mention that this unspeakable violence was visited largely upon Georgia's Asian-American community and especially on women of Asian descent. Unfortunately, this hateful act that horrified Atlanta is not isolated; it is part of a larger trend.

Last year, anti-Asian hate crimes increased 339 percent. Think about that—in 1 year, a 339-percent increase in anti-Asian hate crimes. It is a sobering statistic, and it should remind all of us of our shared duty in our democracy to stay committed to peace, an active peace, that recognizes that we are in this together.

It was Martin Niemoller, the pastor during Hitler's Third Reich, who said:

First they came for the Communists, and I did not speak . . . because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak . . . because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak . . . because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak . . . because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak . . .

So this is a tragedy, in a real sense, visited upon all of us.

As a student of history and a voice for our State and the Senate, I know Georgians understand all too well how hate and misplaced anger can hurt our communities and how certain parts of our community are so easily scapegoated and lose their sense of sanctuary. And then when that happens, all of us lose a piece of ourselves. So I want to say to my AAPI sisters, brothers, and neighbors that I see you, and, more importantly, I will continue to stand with you against hate and violence wherever it rears its ugly head.

That is why I cosponsored and fought to pass the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act and to get it signed into law, directing more resources to ensure our communities have what they need to seek justice whenever and wherever hate and crime rear their ugly heads.

I am especially proud that my colleagues worked with me to include a provision in this legislation that names and acknowledges the pain and experiences of Georgia's AAPI community specifically and makes sure we never forget the names attached to the lives and the families we lost in the horrific shootings in Atlanta 1 year ago today.

And that is why I am pushing here in the Senate to confirm a U.S. attorney for the northern district of our State, a post that is integral to helping Georgians stop crime and pursue justice.

The terrible act of violence and hate we witnessed on March 16, 2021, ought

to remind us all that we all have a stake in each other's well-being.

Georgia's greatest son, that great American, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said it best: We are tied in a single garment of destiny, caught up in "an inescapable network of mutuality." "Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." "I cannot be all that I ought to be until you are all that you ought to be, and you cannot be all that you ought to be until I am all that I ought to be."

And so let us continue working together to stop Asian hate, to stop the scapegoating, and to create what Dr. King called the beloved community—a community where everybody, no matter their skin color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religious background, can live a life of fulfillment and joy without fear of facing hate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Oklahoma.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, there are a lot of things going on in the world right now—a lot. What is happening in Ukraine; Russian aggression; continuing talk about the continual challenges of communist China; dealing with COVID-19 and its effects still worldwide, still here in the United States; still lots of people very frustrated on transportation mandates—on the masks, I should say; other vaccine mandates that are still out there; we have a 7—almost 8—percent now inflation rate that is in the country; cost of living is going up; all the energy issues—there are so many things that we are dealing with around this body of late.

I want to bring something to the middle of this conversation that I don't want us to forget about because the media seemed to have pushed it all to the back burner. And I have even had people recently catch me and say, Apparently, things are going much better on our southern border because I don't hear about it anymore. Well, it has not gotten better. And I want to bring a couple of issues and one in particular that I am very concerned about of where things are going right now, on our enforcement on the southern border.

This chart walks through the last 10 years of illegal crossings that had been actually apprehended, engaged—the new term is "encountered" that the Biden administration is using. This is over the last 10 years, and this is quarter by quarter of what has actually occurred.

You will see the rise and fall over multiple times. You will see spikes that have happened. But right there, that spot, is when President Biden was elected. That is that date. His election is there, and this is what has occurred since that time period.

Instead of seeing a big dropoff just in the last couple of months, we have only seen it go down, but not even close to the highest peaks in the past.

To give you a point of reference on that, since January of 2021, we have had 2,355,000 people whom we have "encountered" on the southwest border—folks who have illegally crossed our border. These are not just record numbers; these are alltime high numbers—nothing even close to the number of people who are illegally crossing the border.

Now, this is on the southern border. And there are two facts I want to be able to add to this, the first of which is what is happening inside the country: That would be ICE removals.

This is since 2015, the ICE removals that have been done every year during the Obama administration, during the Trump administration, and then during the first year of the Biden administration. So not only do we have 2.3 million people who have illegally come to our border and crossed it that we have encountered, but it is an alltime low of actual deportations that are happening right now as well.

So not only on our southern border are we seeing record numbers of high coming in inside the country, it is record-low numbers actually being deported out.

This is by design. This is not accidental. The policies that have been put in place on our southern border were put in place to encourage people, quite frankly, to be able to cross the border, knowing full well that when you get inside, you won't actually be deported.

There is only one policy that is set out there that has been in the middle of this that has changed the dynamic at all, and it is a policy most Americans never even heard of. It is called title 42 expulsions. Quite frankly, probably most of the folks in this room have never heard of title 42 expulsions. It is a new term, so I want to be able to walk through it a little bit.

Starting in March of 2020—just 2 years ago—when COVID started to accelerate worldwide, the Surgeon General made a recommendation through the CDC, through HHS, to the President to be able to say we have a worldwide pandemic that is occurring. Here is title 42 of the Public Health Service Act. It says:

Whenever the Surgeon General determines that by reason of the existence of any communicable disease in a foreign country, there is serious danger of the introduction of such disease into the United States, and that . . . danger is so increased by the introduction of persons or property from [that] country that a suspension of the right to introduce such persons and property is required in the interest of the public health, the Surgeon General, in accordance with regulations approved by the President, shall have the power to prohibit . . . the introduction of persons and property from such countries or places [that they] shall designate . . . to [avoid] such danger.

In March of 2020, the Trump administration said: We have got a concern dealing with individuals crossing our border illegally. They are coming from all over the world. There is COVID all over the world. There are some au-

thorities that you go through that you can actually say some of these folks can be turned around immediately.

The Surgeon General, HHS, and the President agreed that we are going to turn people around at the border immediately. So the Trump administration did that.

And, by the way, right there is President Biden's inauguration. His HHS also agreed with this same policy of title 42 to say: We have a serious risk from COVID, so we should also turn people around in numbers at the border and send them back home.

This is the number under the Biden administration of individuals who have been turned around.

Let me give you a perspective. Of the 2.3 million people who have been encountered at our border since the beginning of the Biden administration, 56 percent of those folks have been literally turned around at the border and told, You cannot enter under title 42 authority—56 percent of the people. So 44 percent of the people have been allowed to be able to come into our country.

Let me set this in context because I am throwing a lot of numbers out at everybody. I want you to remember all the news reports from last year, all of the overcrowding in the Donna, TX, facility that we saw, all of the people crammed underneath the bridge in the Rio Grande Valley, all of those folks who piled across the border in massive numbers that we saw coming into the United States—that represented only 44 percent of the people illegally crossing our border because they were allowed in.

I bring this up because as of right now, we have heard that DHS, the President, and HHS are considering canceling title 42. If that occurs, we won't have 1 million people illegally crossing our border and released into the United States; within months, we will have 2 million. And all that you saw last summer of the flood of people—that 44 percent—imagine what that looks like more than doubled this summer.

The conversation is we are getting toward the backside of COVID. Ironically enough, while the President just extended the transportation requirement for masks—again—while the President just asked for billions of dollars of additional money because we need vaccines worldwide to be able to distribute more vaccines worldwide to be able to fight COVID, while we are still dealing with all the additional surge rise and falls in other countries—in fact, just within the last couple of days, China has gone back into lockdown based on new COVID cases in China—while all of that is occurring worldwide, apparently, the President is looking to cancel title 42.

And when I have asked what will replace that policy, the answer has come back to me: We are not sure yet. That tells me nothing is actually the plan to replace this. That is a problem.