

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, 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.

What happens when title 42 goes away? An extra million people come into the country illegally, remembering that when all of those folks come into the country, apparently, the Biden administration also has no plan to deport them.

Where are we right now with the number of people that have illegally crossed our border, and where are they from? Let me give you a quick map.

This is a map of all the countries in the past year—just in the past year—who have illegally crossed our border. In the white there is the United States. In the red are the countries that we have seen people illegally cross our border. If you want to squint at that map, let me just give you shorthand for it. It is every country in the world.

Last year, we had individuals from literally every country in the world illegally cross our southern border. Yes, that includes China; that includes North Korea; that includes Iran. It includes them all.

Interestingly enough, just in the last—well, not the last 3 months but the last 4 months that we have had records on it—that would be October, November, December, and January—just in those last 4 months that we have those records, we have 6,400 Russian citizens who illegally crossed our southern border. Just in the last 4 months we have records, there were 6,400 Russian citizens.

We have people from all over the world who are illegally crossing our southern border because people know, if you get across the border, you are in. When title 42 goes away, this accelerates even more. It is an open invitation because 56 percent of the people were turned around, 44 percent of the people were released into the country—by the way, that is over a million so far—that goes away. Then they all get in.

What happens at that point? Those individuals are told that they can make a request for asylum, even though our statistics show 91 percent of the people who request asylum are actually coming for economic reasons, not actually true asylum—91 percent.

Those individuals are released into the country. They are told to be able to sign up for a hearing date, and they can do their hearing anywhere they want in the United States. They are given a hearing date, currently, 6 years in the future—6 years. So they will be traveling in our country anywhere they want to go for the next 6 years waiting on their hearing.

By the way, if they don't show up for their hearing, apparently there is no plan to be able to actually go get them, if they don't show up for their hearing, because, right now, ICE is not removing people. So they are just released, and when they are released into the country, they can immediately text friends back home and say: I am in. Here is what I said. Here is where I crossed. Here is the cartel member whom I paid on the southern border to be able to get me through. I am in. Fol-

low my same path; you will have the same result.

What can be done about this? Well, let me just highlight a couple of things, and then I want to talk about this more.

First things first—don't end title 42. We still have a worldwide pandemic. Until there is a plan of what is actually going to occur next on our southern border, don't end title 42.

This is the time for the President and Ali Mayorkas and all the leadership to put up a pause and to say: The chaos that happened last year was only 44 percent of the people crossing our southern border. We do not have, physically, the capability to be able to handle that many people. Do not cancel title 42.

The second thing is the "Remain in Mexico" policy. The "Remain in Mexico" policy that actually started under President Trump, President Biden set aside, and Federal courts stepped back in and told this administration: You have to put back in place the "Remain in Mexico" policy. So they chose to do it.

I have talked to this body before about what they did. The Biden administration said: OK. We will follow the court order. We will reinstate the "Remain in Mexico" policy.

They have reinstated that policy the last 3 months. They have put up three different facilities. Actually, now there are four total facilities. I visited one of them in Brownsville, TX. That facility has six courtrooms. Each courtroom is set up to handle 22 people at a time, plus their attorneys, plus all the ancillary services. Six of those they have got set up. They have individual meeting spaces set up for 120 people to meet individually with their attorney. So 120 rooms, 6 courtrooms that are all set up, and all the ancillary everything around it as well, and we have now got 4 different locations for that.

Of the half a million people who have illegally crossed our border in the time that they have set up the new MPP courtrooms—of the half a million people who have crossed illegally during that time period, so far, the Biden administration has pulled out 1,569 of them to evaluate if they would go into the "Remain in Mexico" policy. Of those, 893 they actually put in the system. Of those, they have actually had 494 of those who at some point came back and said: We have changed our mind. We talked to attorneys. We have a new way to be able to get out of it.

We are trying to get the actual number of people who have actually gone through the "Remain in Mexico" policy and who have actually qualified for it, while we have 4 different locations, each of them with 6 courtrooms, 120 meeting spaces. But what we are finding is, really, a handful of people actually have "qualified" for the "Remain in Mexico" policy out of half a million people during that time period.

The simple answer is that the Biden administration is spending millions

and millions of taxpayer dollars setting up the MPP Program that the court has required them to do, but they have made so many exceptions to it, no one actually qualifies. So they are trying to please the court by saying "We are following your order," waste American tax dollars, while we continue to see record numbers of people crossing the border. That is a waste.

If we are going to stop this, keep title 42 in place until you have a response to what you are going to do instead. Actually run the MPP Program as the court has instructed you to do rather than playing games with American tax dollars and with the system here.

I would also encourage you to put the "Safe Third Country" policy back in place. The previous administration had actually created a relationship with multiple other countries so that as individuals traveled through other countries to get to the United States, they could make asylum requests in those locations, because we understand—because we know the law in this body—the law is very clear on the international standards on this.

If you are going to request asylum, you go to the next safe country, and you request asylum. If they are traveling through five countries or they are traveling literally across the globe to get to the United States from everywhere else so they can request asylum, that is not asylum; that is economic opportunity.

By the way, don't blame them for coming to the greatest country in the world to get economic opportunity—except that is not asylum, and we all know it. So why don't we actually treat it exactly as we all see it?

If you would like to come to the greatest country in the world, wonderful. Go through the legal process of that. We allow a million people a year to legally become citizens of the United States, going through the legal process. Do that. But for the billions of people who wake up every day wishing they were in the United States, I don't blame you. But we welcome people when they come through legally in this process, and we do with open arms welcome people who come through legally.

There are ways to be able to address this, but my first concern today is to be able to speak to this administration and to be able to say: The title 42 piece is essential to maintain. Do not let go of this until you have a solution to what is happening at the border, or the chaos at the border will be even worse this summer than it was last summer, and it is on you for not enforcing the border.

I want to keep this conversation going in the days ahead, but as of now, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

SUNSHINE WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I come to the floor today to celebrate what we say annually is Sunshine