

President Lopez Obrador announce that he would pursue legal actions to close Vulcan's operations. His baseless claim is that the company is operating illegally in Mexico after 30 years. That statement is categorically false.

Unfortunately, President Obrador followed through with his threat for legal action. Last week, Mexican Government officials unexpectedly presented local Vulcan employees with orders to immediately cease operations on Vulcan's own land in Mexico. I believe this shutdown, ordered by the President of Mexico, represents a baseless attack on a U.S. company and demonstrates a disregard for the rule of law.

But even before shutdown orders were issued, Vulcan was subject to public harassment and intimidation tactics from the President of Mexico, including the Mexican Navy sending troops to the entrance of the Vulcan facility for the last several days before last week, the Mexican Navy flying Blackhawk helicopters and drones over Vulcan's property, the Mexican Navy sending patrol boats to Vulcan's harbor, and the Mexican Government withholding the issuance of a routine customs permit from January through mid-February.

These actions by the President and Mexican Government are contrary to the most basic principles of international law and the free-trade agreements that bind our two countries together. These actions also go against the objectives and principles jointly set by the U.S. and Mexican Governments as part of the high-level economic dialogue established in September of 2021.

However, President Obrador's attack on Vulcan is bigger than just one company. It undermines the rule of law in Mexico, ignores international law and free-trade agreements, weakens our bilateral relationship, and will discourage future U.S. investments in Mexico.

We have all heard about the actions President Lopez Obrador has attempted to take against U.S. energy companies in Mexico. This latest action is an example of just how far he is willing to go.

These actions will also have a direct impact on the supply chain for major infrastructure projects in the United States. We cannot allow this to stand.

Back in February, Senator SHELBY and I wrote Secretary Blinken to express alarm over actions Mexico was taking against Vulcan. It turns out we were right to be concerned. So I urge the Biden administration to take appropriate action in order to ensure Vulcan, a great American company, is able to maintain critical operations in the country of Mexico.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this week, America commemorates National Police Week—a time to pay tribute to the men and women of law enforcement and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect and defend our communities.

One of the most emblematic reminders of that sacrifice is the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, which, of course, is here in Washington, DC. It is a beautiful tribute to the Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials who have died in the line of duty and features marble walls engraved with more than 23,000 names. Each of those names represents a hero to their community, to their State, and to our Nation. Sadly, the names of 90 Texans were added to that memorial this year. These officers gave their lives in service to their communities and to our country, and we thank them, and we thank their families for that service.

As we mourn the loss of so many of these heroes, this week is also a time to honor and thank those who continue to serve and protect our neighborhoods, our schools, and our places of work.

I am grateful for the dedicated police officers who work in Texas communities, from Brownsville to Amarillo, from Beaumont to El Paso, and everywhere in between. That includes not only the municipal police officers but also the sheriffs, the constables, the Border Patrol agents, and law enforcement officials of all types who keep Texans safe.

Like all of my colleagues here in Congress, I am also grateful to the men and women of the Capitol Police, who safeguard this building and the Members, the staff, the journalists, and many visitors who come here every day.

A career in law enforcement is never easy, but the past few years have really shown a light on the challenges America's law enforcement officers face.

First came the pandemic. While millions of Americans hunkered down at home to slow the spread of the virus, law enforcement couldn't do that. They had to be out and about in the community. They had to lace up their boots and go to work every day. The risk of the virus meant that even friendly interactions with the public could carry grave risks.

More than half of 619 heroes added to the wall of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial this year died of COVID-related causes. More than half of the 619 who died, died of COVID-related causes. It is a deep reminder of the losses our country has experienced over the last 2 years.

The stresses of the pandemic also led to a surge in drug overdose deaths and an increase in family violence, putting an even tighter strain on officers serving and protecting our communities.

At the same time, we have seen a shocking increase in violent crime and homicide rates across the country.

In addition to these challenges, conversations about racial justice and police brutality have put all of the law enforcement community under a bright spotlight. Sadly, this debate has, in part, perhaps inadvertently, contributed to a hostile environment for many of these officers—people painting with a broad brush, claiming that all law enforcement officers were somehow racist or that the system was rotten to the core with systemic racism. Well, that kind of rhetoric and those kinds of ideas undermine the morale and are a disservice, in my opinion, to the men and women who do not share any of those prejudices, thankfully.

Well, law enforcement has been the victim of violent attacks during this last year. According to the FBI, intentional killings of law enforcement officers have reached a 20-year high.

Now, don't get me wrong, there is no doubt we need to continue to work together to improve transparency and accountability within police forces, and we need to strengthen the relationship between the police and the communities in which they serve. I think those are things that all of us can agree on. But as a country, we need to remember that the actions of a few do not define the rest. The vast majority of our law enforcement officers are honorable, dedicated public servants who go above and beyond the call of duty to keep our families and our communities safe and are committed to improving accountability and trust in law enforcement.

We need to do more to support those brave men and women who are doing the right thing, who are serving honorably at great sacrifice to themselves and their family, and work with them to help rebuild public trust.

Here in the Senate, I have introduced a range of bills to ensure that our officers have the training, the resources, and the support they need to do their jobs.

Given the undeserved hostility many officers are facing, Congress should pass the Back the Blue Act, which makes clear our support for the public servants who have dedicated their lives to protecting our communities. This legislation adds mandatory penalties and makes it a Federal crime to kill or attempt to kill a law enforcement officer but also a Federal judge or a federally funded public safety officer, and it makes it a Federal crime to assault a law enforcement officer.

As I said, these men and women put themselves in harm's way every day to keep our communities safe, and we need to do more to make it clear that violence committed against a law enforcement officer will not be tolerated, period. The Back the Blue Act sends a strong message to the more than 800,000 law enforcement officers in America that they are supported, that they are appreciated, and that violence against them will not stand.

I am proud that last year, another bill to affirm our support for law enforcement was signed into law—the Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila Federal Officers and Employees Protection Act, which carries the names of two ICE agents who were viciously ambushed by a drug cartel while on duty in Mexico.

Special Agent Avila suffered serious, life-threatening injuries, and, unfortunately, Special Agent Zapata tragically lost his life.

Their attackers were convicted of murder and attempted murder in a U.S. court, but an appellate court reversed those convictions because of a jurisdictional loophole in the law.

I introduced legislation to close that loophole and ensure that justice does not hinge on where that attack occurred. This law now ensures that those who harm or attempt to harm a Federal law enforcement officer serving abroad, outside the boundaries of the continental United States, can be prosecuted in the U.S. court system.

Again, we have to send a clear message of zero tolerance to those who would attack our law enforcement officers. We need to send the message that we have their backs and that any attack on them will not be tolerated.

The last 2 years have also taught us that we need to do more to supply our law enforcement officials with the resources and the training and the support they need to do their jobs effectively.

Senator WHITEHOUSE and I introduced the bipartisan Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act, which created a dedicated funding stream for de-escalation training. I think we all would agree that force should only be used when absolutely necessary when law enforcement officials answer an emergency call and that those officers should have the training and ready knowledge of how to use alternatives to de-escalate that confrontation, both for their protection as well as the protection of the individual who is acting out. This will help train officers in these de-escalation tactics as well as the most effective and safest ways to interact with people experiencing a mental health or suicidal crisis.

Another bill Senator WHITEHOUSE and I have introduced is the Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Act which expands access to treatment in jails and prisons across the country. This program already provides incarcerated individuals with access to treatment for substance use disorders. It is coupled with programs to prepare these men and women for reentry into civic society and to provide community-based treatment once they are released. The changes included in this legislation will give incarcerated men and women the best possible shot at living a healthier and more productive life once they are released. This bill passed the Senate unanimously last year, and I hope that the House will move it soon.

There are a range of other bipartisan bills to better support law enforcement so they can do their jobs and we can demonstrate our support and commitment to them. I introduced the Public Safety Officers Support Act with Senator DUCKWORTH to provide better mental health resources for our law enforcement officers. This bill would also ensure that families of law enforcement officers who die by suicide that is work-related will receive the benefits they are entitled to.

Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have introduced the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Reauthorization Act to continue grants for mental health courts, crisis intervention teams, and other programs that promote public safety, as well as improve mental health outcomes and reduce recidivism.

Finally, I am working on a reauthorization of the Project Safe Neighborhoods Act. This has been a proven national partnership between Federal, State, and local law enforcement to use data-driven, evidence-based and trauma-informed practices to reduce violent crime.

It is inspired by a successful program initiated when I was Texas attorney general. We called it Texas Exile, but it actually originated in a U.S. attorney's office in Richmond, VA, known as Project Exile. It is basically going after people who cannot legally use or carry a firearm because of a prior felony conviction, and targeting those particular individuals has had a very important positive impact on gun violence in our communities. It is due for reauthorization at the end of September and I am committed to making it better, stronger, and more effective.

So today and every day, I am grateful for the brave men and women who answered the call to serve and to protect our communities. There is nothing we can do to adequately thank them and their families for that sacrifice, but we can take positive action to demonstrate our support for our brothers and sisters in blue.

I hope we can advance these bills to provide them with the support, the funding, and the resources they need to do their jobs. And on behalf of the great State of Texas, I want to say thank you to all of the law enforcement officers, men and women alike, as well as their families, who continue to put their lives on the line to keep us safe every day.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 7691

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I am offering this unanimous consent on

behalf of myself and Leader McCONNELL. Let me explain the unanimous consent.

As the war in Ukraine extends into its third month, we have a moral obligation—a moral obligation—to stand with Ukraine in its fight against Putin's immoral war.

Earlier this week, the House passed a Ukraine package with overwhelming bipartisan support. It should be no different here in the Senate. The package is ready to go. The vast majority of Senators on both sides of the aisle wants it. There is now only one thing holding us back. The junior Senator from Kentucky is preventing the swift passage of Ukraine aid because he wants to add, at the last minute, his own changes directly into the bill. His change is strongly opposed by many Members from both parties. He is not even asking for an amendment; he is simply saying: My way or the highway.

When you have a proposal to amend a bill, you can't just come to the floor and demand it by fiat. You have to convince other Members to back it first. That is how the Senate works. If every Member held every bill in exchange for every last little demand, it would mean the total and permanent paralysis of this Chamber. The junior Senator from Kentucky knows that perfectly well. He knows that is not how this Chamber works.

Again, when you have a proposal to change a bill, you have to convince Members to support it. The junior Senator from Kentucky has not done that.

So right now, in conjunction with Leader McCONNELL, I am giving Senator PAUL an opportunity to do just that. I am offering to hold a vote on his amendment, even though I disagree with it. Let the Chamber speak its will. Let both sides of the aisle have input. And, for Heaven's sake, let's get Ukraine funding done ASAP.

We must keep our promise to the people of Ukraine, and I hope the junior Senator from Kentucky does not stand in the way of keeping that promise. If Senator PAUL persists in his reckless demand, we will not allow him to insert his language into this bill without a vote, and all he will accomplish is to singlehandedly delay desperately needed Ukraine aid.

I yield to the Republican leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, as I said earlier today, the Ukraine people are fighting valiantly in a war they didn't ask for. Their brave self-defense has literally shocked the skeptics and inspired freedom-loving people all around the world.

Ukraine is not asking us to fight this war. They are only asking for the resources they need to defend themselves against this deranged invasion, and they need this help right now.

Sending lethal assistance to Ukraine is not just some kind of philanthropy; this conflict has direct and major consequences for America's national security and America's national interests.