

will never forget that you sided with drug dealers and with sex traffickers over your own citizens.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 925, Alan M. Leventhal to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark; that there be 10 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form on the nomination; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and I certainly hope we don't have to prolong this for very long, but I can report to Members of the Senate that there are Members on this side who have concerns about this particular nomination. Perhaps those matters can be resolved in short order. I certainly understand my friend from Massachusetts and his support for this nominee, and I respect that. In addition, there are larger issues involving actions and conduct of the State Department in Europe writ large that go beyond this nominee. Again, I hope the State Department will work with us on those important concerns. But for those stated reasons, I do object at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I just want to say that I appreciate the position of the Senator from Mississippi, but I will say this on behalf of Alan Leventhal: He is a favorite son of Massachusetts. He has left an indelible mark on our community, on the surrounding community, and he has done just incredible work in his life.

He is in a senior position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has worked to train the next generation of innovators and leaders. He has received broad accolades for his transformational work as chairman of the board of trustees at Boston University.

In every professional, philanthropic, and personal endeavor, no matter how big or challenging, Alan has embodied excellence.

The men and women of our Foreign Service and locally employed staff in Copenhagen will have an exceptional advocate and an accomplished manager and Ambassador, and our strong ally Denmark will get a committed partner with a direct line back to Washington to further strengthen our bilateral relationship. This is critical, as we rely on Denmark—a key member of NATO

and of the European Union—to sustain its leadership role in defense of Ukraine in the wake of Russia's invasion.

So I think it would be invaluable to have him on duty right now, especially at this critical time in European history. I understand the objection of the Senator from Mississippi, and I look forward to working with him and other Senators in order to find a route to removing the objection to this extremely qualified candidate as Ambassador to Denmark.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, over Memorial Day weekend, I spent a chunk of it in Yuma, AZ. In Yuma, AZ, it is 107 degrees in daytime, 102 at sunset. Those of us from Oklahoma are not used to that kind of heat, but it was very helpful to be there, to be on the ground and to see what is happening at that particular border area.

You see, each area of the border is a little bit different. But what we are experiencing right now on our southern border is a continual rolling, chaotic crisis there.

I have people who will catch me occasionally in Oklahoma and will say: It seems like things are going better because I don't hear the media talking about what is happening at the border anymore. And I will smile at them and say: Well, you remember last summer when the media was focused on the southern border? We had 6,000 people illegally crossing a day at that time. Now we have 8,000 people illegally crossing a day—8,000. In fact, last month, we had a quarter million people that illegally crossed the border in 1 month. That was a record, by the way. The previous record for a 1-month illegal crossing was the month before. Things continue to get worse.

But each area of the border is a little bit different. Now I had not been to this particular border crossing in Yuma, AZ, to be able to see how things are different there, but this is either the No. 1 or No. 2 most trafficked areas for illegal traffic across the entire southern border at this point.

What you see first when you are in Yuma, AZ, when you get there to the fencing area, you notice this: You notice in Yuma, AZ, that you have got a port of entry there; and at that port of entry, you have miles and miles of border fence and then a gap in the fence, where on January 20, 2021, construction was on to be able to complete this, but literally, that day, it stopped. And so that gap has never been closed, and so border crossings look like this.

Another picture of it is a picture like this. This scenario where there is a dam on the Mexico side, and on the American side there is the fencing—or at least there was going to be fencing. There is fencing on both sides of this. So individuals literally step over the dam, walk over and walk right up into

the country. And you ask, well, why is this not complete? Is it because we ran out of materials? Actually, if you go just a mile from that last picture, in the desert you will see this: just stacks and stacks and stacks of steel, 30-foot sections all cut and ready to go to be able to close those gaps. But those gaps are not being closed because the Biden administration a year and a half ago determined they were not going to close those gaps; they were just going to leave them open. So there they sit open.

So that is one of the issues. That is different in Yuma than in some of the other areas where they just literally left the steel sit horizontally in the desert rather than being installed vertically—what it was designed for.

The second big issue is in this area because of those gaps in the fence, individuals, as they fly into Yuma—they are not coming in long caravans to come in—they are literally flying into Mexicali, Mexico, taking a charter bus that the cartels have organized for them, where they will pick them up at the airport, load up into a charter bus. They will drive them up to the gaps in the fence with the bus and allow them to be able to step across the border. They were literally—I could see it—they will literally step across the border and wait for the Border Patrol to come and pick them up, like it's Uber XL coming to be able to pick them up at their spot. And they know if they just stand here on this side of the fence and wait long enough, Border Patrol will come by, pick them up in a van. They will take them to the processing area where they get processed and then within a couple of days released into the country wherever they want to go.

These individuals are traveling from all over the world. In fact, when I met with some of the leadership there in Yuma, AZ, I just asked the question: How are things going? What is happening in different spots? What are you seeing?

One of the folks there said: Well, last week—last week—we encountered people from 50 different countries crossing just in this spot.

Why is that? Because the border remains open and people from all over the world know they can fly to Mexicali, Mexico, pay the cartels—and the current rate is between \$7,000 and \$15,000 a person for that section of the border. They get on the buses, drive up to the border, and then they step across.

It is a different kind of thing. We see sometimes pictures of people who have traveled 3,000 miles in a caravan. And by the way, there is another caravan that is actually organizing through Central America right now and coming through Mexico. The current caravan has an estimated 6,000 people in it that are walking their way up and traveling their way up through Central America and Mexico right now.

But the folks coming through Yuma, AZ, are not like that. They step across

the border, and they are carrying luggage with them. In fact, Border Patrol has had to actually limit the weight that they can actually bring in luggage to no more than 50 pounds. They come into the process area. They are bringing their luggage with them. They are dressed in nice clothes. They are clean. They just got a shower the day before.

They come across the border. They wait on Border Patrol. We take them to the processing area. In fact, when I got to the processing area, one of the Border Patrol agents walked up to me and said, "Do you see the lady behind you?" And I turned around and said, "Yes."

She said, "She is wearing a Versace dress."

I said that probably should mean something to me as a guy, but it currently doesn't. And my wife later explained to me, "That is a pretty expensive dress."

Why are we seeing people like that crossing the border? Because it is easier to come in illegally into the country now than it is legally.

Most years we have a million people a year that legally cross our border—legally—that go through the process, fill out the paperwork. We do a background check on those individuals. They come through and come into our country, and we celebrate people who come legally into our country and have for over two centuries. These individuals are finding it faster and cheaper to just pay the cartel, fly to Mexico, walk across the border. And when you walk across the border, you are in the country not just for a few months. Right now, when you cross the border and enter into this area, as you walk across the border you are given a work permit and the ability to stay in the United States for 8 years until your asylum hearing comes up.

Why do we have people coming from all over the world? We have a million people doing it legally, but last year we had 2 million people do it illegally because it is faster to just illegally come into the border.

Let me ask a simple question to this body: Do we really want a system that incentivizes illegal activity as the entrance into the United States of America, because right now the incentive is to come into the country illegally?

Let me phrase it this way. For the individuals who come across this border, we do not do a background check on these individuals. We have no idea any criminal history they have in the country from where they are coming. We do a background check with American records. We know if they committed a crime here in the past, but we have no idea from any of the countries that they are coming from. And let me remind you, in Yuma, when I was there a week ago, the week before, 50 different nations crossed that border that week. We have no criminal background check on any of those individuals.

What else happens with this? Because of the chaos that is happening here and

Border Patrol are having to run their Uber XL vans to be able to pick people up and take them to processing, and they have to come off the line to be able to come into the processing center. What else is happening? The open desert areas not far from here, where they know the drug traffickers are actually moving large quantities of drugs, they don't have enough agents to be able to patrol that anymore. They can see them on cameras. They just don't have enough people to get to it.

The checkpoints that are on the highways typically leading out from this area to try to pick up the gun and drug smugglers coming in and out of the country, those checkpoints don't exist anymore. Why? Because they don't have enough staff anymore because they are managing this chaos at the border.

We are losing our security presence on our southern border because the President is incentivizing illegal immigration, and it is taking everybody that is there for our national security to actually be on the border to manage the check-in staff for people coming in.

This is a ticking time bomb. It is solvable.

Let me give you just some very basic things on this. No. 1, keep title 42 in place. The Border Patrol that I speak to when I talk to the folks on the line, their No. 1 fear is the Biden administration is going to cancel title 42. Now, currently, the court is prohibiting them from doing that, but their biggest concern is, if the Biden administration cancels title 42, even more people will come across, and this chaos will be even worse. That is their No. 1 issue. Keep title 42 authority in place.

The second thing is, stop giving people that cross the border between the port of entry and illegally cross, stop giving them work permits that incentivizes people to come between the ports of entry in an illegal fashion. The administration can do that right now.

Third thing: Stop giving people a free pass to come into the country for 8 years to stay in the country while they await their asylum hearing.

Whoever is last in, first up for the asylum hearing, and do it right there at the border. The asylum hearings can be done in less than a month, and do it right there at the border so they have to remain in place to have their hearing.

What happens is, these individuals cross the border, they cross the border, they get their 8-year pass in the country, they get their work permit. They snap a picture of it. They send it to their family back home and say: I paid this cartel member this much money. I crossed in this spot. I stood in this line. When I got there, I got into the country. Come join me. And it keeps accelerating. That is a policy decision that the administration could stop now, and they are choosing not to stop now.

And the final thing on this. Again, it is not hard. Close that gap.

Why is this so hard? Close that gap.

We have fewer people crossing in California right now than we do in Yuma. Why is that? Because the gap is closed in California. And while many of my colleagues scream "fences don't work," why do we have fewer people crossing in California than we do in Yuma, AZ? Well, it is because there is a functioning fence in California and a big, giant gap in Yuma. This does work, and everybody knows it. That is why the Biden administration leaves it open—because they are facilitating this. This is something that is going to bite our Nation. It is a national security issue, and we should not ignore it.

Again, I celebrate legal immigration. I want more of it in our country. This is unchecked, illegal activity, and we had better pay attention to it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Wyoming.

INFLATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about another Biden crisis. We just had my friend and colleague from Oklahoma talk about the crisis, as he saw it, at the southern border while he was on his trip there very recently. We hear from other colleagues about the crisis of crime in our cities across the country as another failure of this administration's. I come today to talk about the Biden economic crisis, which is hitting families in all of our States, in all of our communities, and it is the thing that I heard the very most about when I was home in Wyoming last week.

Across the country, summer is almost here. It is time for barbecues, visiting friends, and family vacations for many. This year, there will be many fewer who will be able to afford what has been a natural part of their family lives.

The American people have just been through the most expensive Memorial Day ever, and it has been painfully expensive for families across this country. This is just a preview of the summer of stress that families are going to be facing all across America. Hamburger meat today is at its highest price ever; chicken, its highest price ever; a gallon of gasoline, its highest price ever.

They say inflation is up by a certain percentage, but gas prices have doubled since Joe Biden became President. There has been a 100-percent increase in gas prices since the Democrats became the majority in the Senate and Joe Biden was sworn into office. Gas prices in America, under the Democrats, have gone up 15 out of 16 months since Joe Biden came to the White House and CHUCK SCHUMER came to be majority leader. Gas now costs more than \$4 a gallon on average in every State of the Union, and we are approaching \$5 on average across the country. In the liberal paradise of California, the gas price today is over \$6 a gallon if you can find it at that price. Financial analysts who have looked at