

inside.” He added that he had used Officer Story as an “example setter” for the inmates for the kind of citizen and man they could aspire to be if they turned their lives around.

Officer Story’s example lives on. Those who knew him, those who have just now heard of him, can draw inspiration for a life well lived. In 21 short years, Officer Story did more good and spread more joy than many others who have been blessed with many more years on this Earth.

He was a great Arkansan and a great American. May God bless and keep Officer Jeremiah Story, and may God console his family and friends in this time of grief.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, for over a year, officials in the Biden administration have operated under the assumption that if they keep repeating their far-left propaganda, they will be able to trick the American people into believing that everything is OK. Don’t believe what you see. Don’t believe what you are reading. Don’t believe what you are hearing from friends and neighbors. Just believe us. Everything is fine. Prices aren’t high. Crime is not high. The border is not open. Everything is just fine.

The problem is, Tennesseans know better than to believe this. They have figured it out. They know the economy is not in a good place. They know high gas prices are not Putin’s fault. They know that spikes in crime and drug overdoses—this is not normal. But most importantly, they know that standing aside and letting the country fall apart is not what a normal Presidential administration does; it is far from it.

The White House has worked overtime trying to convince the American people that reports of the chaos along our southern border are exaggerated. This is one of the most dangerous falsehoods the Biden administration has tried to sell, and here is why. In May—May, this month of May—this year, Border Patrol encountered more than 177,000 unique individuals trying to cross the border.

Border Patrol doesn’t have the manpower or the resources to control this wave of illegal immigration. I know it. I think my Democratic colleagues know it. Certainly the ones who have taken the time to go to the border know it. And, no doubt, the Biden administration knows it.

As I said, in May of this year, 177,000 different individuals were encountered trying to cross that border. Now, Tennesseans are very worried about this, and they want to know why the President is not worried about this. For goodness’ sake, he has never taken the time to go to the border. He has had five decades to go down there and look at the border, and he has never taken the time to do it.

It really is pretty simple for “we the people,” the citizenry of this country—the issue of whether the Democrats wish this country well is no longer up for debate. They know that the left has abandoned them, the people. They know that. They are seeing it every single day, whether they are shopping for groceries, filling up the car. They see it. They see it by the crime in the streets, the gangs. They know it. They see it with the human trafficking and the suffering and the drugs that are killing precious American lives.

Now, unfortunately, President Biden lost the opportunity to persuade the American people otherwise on day 1 of his administration when he chose to turn the American Southwest into a free-for-all. Since then, things have only gotten more dangerous.

During the first 4 days of this month, law enforcement officials arrested 3 members of MS-13, an 18th Street gang member, and multiple convicted sex offenders as they tried to enter the country. On July 6, they seized more than 1,000 pounds of meth from one single smuggler—that is right, one smuggler. Do you think the drug dealers are emboldened? Think about that—1,000 pounds of meth. So far this year, they have seized almost 8,000 pounds of fentanyl, which is enough to kill a small country.

Here is the question I would pose to the President: How many people and how many pounds of drugs made it in while Border Patrol agents were busy with the smugglers and criminals they managed to catch? Where did the “got-aways” go? What did the “got-aways” have with them?

Well, that is a rhetorical question. We know exactly where they went, and we know what they have with them. Do you know what, Madam President. They are coming to our own cities, communities, towns, our own backyards.

My Democratic colleagues may be happy to ignore the problem, but on behalf of Tennesseans, I will not ignore the problem. The threat is too great.

If you ask any law enforcement officer—any—they will tell you that this issue of the southern border is a matter of life and death. Not just on the border but in each of our 95 counties in the State of Tennessee—in each of our towns and cities—this open border is a matter of life and death. In Tennessee, our sheriffs and police chiefs want the border secured.

I have got to tell you, to so many Tennesseans, it is laughable—laughable—that a White House spokesman would stand behind that podium and look at the people and say: “The border is secure.” Who do they think they are talking to? Do they think that people are not watching the footage? Whether they are watching it on TV or streaming it or looking at it on social media, they can see that this border is not secure. They are talking to friends and relatives who live in a border State, who live along that border, and they

are telling them some of the horrific stories that they are witnessing every single day in their communities.

We know for a fact that the cross-border drug trade is alive and well. Who is getting rich off this open southern border? Take a guess. It is the drug cartels—the drug cartels—with enormous profits growing into a global organization. That is right—global.

So far this year, people from 150 different countries have come across our southern border. Chinese nationals are not trying to come in here on a visa. They don’t wish us well. The Chinese Communist Party is hard at work. The Chinese Communist Party is paying the cartels \$50,000 a pop to get people into our country that they want to by bringing them across the southern border.

The Tennessean, which is our newspaper in Nashville, TN, recently reported a truly horrific story about a multimillion-dollar crime ring that is operating right out of Middle Tennessee. That is right. The drug cartels are not fearful because Joe Biden has the welcome mat out: Border open.

The kingpin was working directly with the Sinaloa drug cartel. That is the one that primarily has the Arizona border. That is the one that is bringing a majority of the drugs through Arizona. They like to focus on fentanyl.

The traffickers who are working underneath this hoodlum are as brutally violent as their friends down in Mexico. We know they are responsible for multiple horrific assaults, kidnappings, at least one murder, and the mutilation of a 22-year-old woman. They are also linked to a local gang who terrorizes the streets of Nashville. That is right, a drug kingpin working directly with the Sinaloa cartel. That is what they are doing in Tennessee.

The violence does not stop at the border. The violence in this country increases because of that open border and because of the unwillingness of this administration to do anything about it. This violence is bleeding into every town, every State, and it will not stop until we have leaders in the White House and an administration who are willing to put themselves in between these monsters and the American people.

The fact that we can’t talk about this without provoking hysteria in the ranks of the Democratic Party tells me we are heading in the wrong direction, but don’t take my word for it; just read a number of polls that are out there. I hope the President takes to heart that 33-percent job approval rating that the New York Times reported on today. That is about as significant a message as could be sent to this administration. Only 33 percent of the American people approve of what this administration is doing.

This administration has normalized things that even 5 years ago would have shocked the conscience of your average Democrat. We talk about spending in trillions of dollars now—a

trillion here and there, \$6 trillion for COVID, and let's spend another \$2 trillion on "Build Back Broke." The numbers just keep piling up. We talk about apprehending 170,000 people at the border in a month—not in a year but in a month. We talk about drug seizures in measures of pounds, not ounces.

I was talking with one of our sheriffs in Tennessee, and we were talking about this issue.

He said: You know, Marsha, we used to apprehend drugs, and it would be in grams or it would be in ounces, and now nearly every seizure is in pounds.

That is the change. The drug cartels are not fearful of being caught or stopped at that border. They have figured it out.

Sadly, this is life in Joe Biden's America, but none of this—none of it, nothing, not one part of what you are seeing in Joe Biden's America—is compatible with an optimistic vision for the future, with that phrase "a more perfect Union," "equal justice," "equal opportunity"—none of it. Why? When Tennesseans look at what Joe Biden and the Democrats are doing, what they are seeing is a political machine acting like they are on a deadline. They are burning through an agenda that the American people did not ask for and they definitely do not want.

Do they want higher taxes? Absolutely not.

Do they want an open border? They have said time and again, no.

Do they want higher crime? No.

Do they want drugs—fentanyl—killing 71,000 Americans in a year? No. No.

Do they want the highest inflation that we have had in 40 years? No.

Do they want a foreign policy that doesn't work? We have a disaster in Afghanistan. We have the Chinese Communist Party, after we have Russia and Putin out here, acting like they are in control. We have the axis of evil—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea—out trying to recruit friends and allies into their axis of evil to not wish us well. Is that what the American people want? No, it is not.

Do they want mandates? Do they want lockdowns? No, they do not. That is not what they want.

The people of this country still have a vision for the future, but it is hard to keep hope alive when the people in control of the government have, obviously, lost control of this country.

I love going around Tennessee, and I love having great conversations with people who will tell you they are Democrats or Republicans. They want to know if the Democratic Party is delusional. Are they obsessed with a socialist agenda? Are they out of touch with what it feels like to not have money to fill up the gas tank, to not have money to buy that full bag of groceries?

The idea that their President would allow our border to be open to drug cartels and smugglers to take advantage of us, the people, terrifies Tennesseans, but it is also something that

makes them angry because they know Joe Biden could do something about this if he wanted to. They know that the Democratic Party, which runs everything in this town—the House, the Senate, the White House—could do something about this if they chose to.

Law enforcement, Border Patrol, and advocates who work with drug addicts and the victims of human smuggling are in almost unanimous agreement on a few points.

First, what I have heard from them is this President, President Biden, must keep title 42 in place until there is a plan for how they would replace it. Title 42 is essential. This President must embrace a Remain in Mexico policy, and this President must do what the Border Patrol has asked to be done for three decades, and that is to build the wall and give them the tools they need to get their job done. These are all of the things that President Biden could choose to do right now.

So why is he refusing to take action?

If you know, the American people would really like to have an answer because they look at the chaos coming from this administration, the chaos at the border, and the chaos on our streets, and they know that this country deserves better.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

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

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

The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote occur immediately.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 599, Ashish S. Vazirani, of Maryland, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Richard J. Durbin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Benjamin L. Cardin, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow, Angus S. King, Jr., Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Gary C. Peters, Chris Van Hollen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Ashish S. Vazirani, of Maryland, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) would have voted "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 67, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 243 Ex.]

YEAS—67

Baldwin	Grassley	Reed
Barrasso	Hassan	Romney
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Capito	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	Kelly	Smith
Carper	King	Stabenow
Casey	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cassidy	Lummis	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Tillis
Coons	Markey	Toomey
Cornyn	McConnell	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Crapo	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Moran	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Wicker
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Fischer	Padilla	Young
Gillibrand	Peters	
Graham	Portman	

NAYS—20

Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Johnson	Shelby
Cruz	Lankford	Thune
Daines	Lee	Tuberville
Ernst	Marshall	

NOT VOTING—13

Blumenthal	Luján	Schumer
Cantwell	Murkowski	Sinema
Cramer	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Kennedy	Risch	
Leahy	Sasse	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 67, the nays are 20.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.