

gave his “zero tolerance” speech, I said to my team: It sounds like he is planning for a policy of tearing children out of their parents’ arms down at the border, and I am sure that is hyperbole because no American administration would ever do that to children.

A member of my team said: There is one way to find out. Go down there yourself.

Well, Ray, who is sitting behind me on the bench, took that idea and ran with it. We went down there the following Sunday, down to Texas, and he used his cell phone to livestream our attempts to try and ascertain exactly what was happening to young boys and girls.

At a detention facility in McAllen, we were the first legislative team to witness that, indeed, Team Trump was ripping children out of their parents’ arms. I will never forget, as Ray and I walked into that facility, there was a group of press outside who said: What are you going to find?

I said: I have no idea, but I will talk with you all when we come out.

Ray and I went in and saw those children in cages. And as we were being given a tour, I remember this group of young boys who were in one of the cages. They were being asked to line up—there were about 10 of them—from the shortest to the tallest, and the youngest was knee-high to a grasshopper. He was just maybe 4 years old.

I asked: Where did these young boys come from?

He said: Well, we brought them in that door over there, and we took them away from their parents.

And in that warehouse room, the parents were in other cyclone fence cages. And if the boys peered really hard, they might possibly see a parent or a sister, a father or mother, an uncle somewhere in that warehouse, but they had no idea what fate awaited them.

We went outside and talked to the press outside and told them what was happening. And in a flash, it was national news about what was going on by our government in their treatment of young children.

We went up the road to Brownsville. We had heard that there were a few hundred boys possibly being held in a former Walmart. I thought that was an astounding story, not possibly true, but should we go and check it out? Ray and I decided we would.

We went up to this former Walmart. It had barriers to keep you from parking in the former Walmart parking lot so we walked across the grounds to the door, where, by cell phone, I called up the number that was inside and said: We are here. I am a U.S. Senator, and we would like to have a tour, please, of your facility, if we could speak with your manager or your manager could come out and talk with us. Eventually, the manager did come out. His assistant had said he would be talking to us, but, actually, what he did was he called the police. And he didn’t come out until the police cars were arriving.

I think Ray, who was livestreaming the whole thing, secretly wanted me to be arrested and carried off in handcuffs to magnify the impact of the story. I am sorry, Ray, that it didn’t come to that, but the story had a tremendous impact.

They would not let me into that Walmart to see what was going on, but the national scandal that ensued in the days that followed meant the press of the United States of America got in the following weekend, and a national debate started about who are we as citizens of the United States of America and who is our government and what are we doing to these children?

It turned out there were not a few hundred boys in that facility; there were a few boys short of 1,500 in that single former Walmart.

The work that Ray did that day revealed the truth of Trump’s actions and shocked this Nation and moved this Nation to action. Horrified, as we continued to learn about the realities of the situation, Ray kept up the drumbeat with his contacts in the media throughout months that followed to ensure that that story of traumatized children and how we can help them continued, and those children were never forgotten.

Let me be clear. It wasn’t just the power of the story or the opportunity to get his boss—me—on television; he kept up the drumbeat because he is a passionate person who cares deeply about others.

Countless members of Team Merkley could recount stories about a time when Ray went out of his way to help them, to provide comfort and support when they were going through a difficult moment in their lives, or just a call to check in on how someone is doing or a full-blown Italian feast delivered to the home of a fellow team member grieving the loss of a loved one. And as his work with those migrant children separated from their parents at the border showed, he doesn’t have to know you personally to care deeply.

One time Ray was out with me in Oregon for a series of townhalls, and a constituent showed up who was having a personal crisis. Ray went out of his way to make sure that man got the help he needed, while still continuing to do the other aspects of his job: attending to members of the media, guiding and supporting staff in their respective tasks, and ensuring that the constituent had everything he needed.

That is just who he is, the type of person who will drop everything if someone needs help, who will offer up his own apartment so his boss can come film an important, last-minute video when the planned location fell through.

I couldn’t begin to count how many late nights and early mornings we spent together sitting for media interviews. I am thinking right now, here on the floor of the Senate, of a night a few years ago, when I was here through the

night, speaking for over 15 hours straight to protest the theft of a Supreme Court seat by our former President and then-Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL. Throughout the night, there was Ray, in between running back and forth to the office to take calls from reporters and producers, returning to flip floor charts as my speech proceeded.

Thank you, Ray, for all that you have done for the team, for the people of Oregon, and for the people of this Nation. Thank you for your tireless efforts to utilize communication tools at our disposal to protect our democracy and enhance the important issues that face our Nation, from healthcare to housing, to education, to living-wage jobs, to equality of opportunity, to taking on climate chaos. Thank you for bringing the passionate and long-standing commitment to democratic politics and principals that were forged in your early experiences back home in Long Island, and you brought them to Capitol Hill.

It is hard to picture what our Team Merkley experience will be after you leave because you have been such an integral part for so long. But know that while you will be deeply missed, we all wish you nothing but the best in this next chapter of your life as you continue fighting to build a better world.

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,  
JANUARY 24, 2022, AT 1 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 1 p.m. on Monday.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:39 p.m., adjourned until Monday, January 24, 2022, at 1 p.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

FRANKLIN R. PARKER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, VICE GREGORY J. SLAVONIC.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ELIZABETH FRAWLEY BAGLEY, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND Plenipotentiary OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL.

JANE HARTLEY, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND Plenipotentiary OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND.

ALEXANDER MARK LASKARIS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AN AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND Plenipotentiary OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHAD.

ALAN M. LEVENTHAL, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND Plenipotentiary OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK.

#### CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate January 20, 2022:

##### THE JUDICIARY

HOLLY A. THOMAS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE	FOREIGN SERVICE	FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JOHN BREIDENSTINE AND ENDING WITH MICHAEL LALLY, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JULY 19, 2021.
JOSEPH DONNELLY, OF INDIANA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE HOLY SEE.	FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATION OF LEON SKARSHINSKI.	