

And let's remember that taxpayers are going to be facing economic hardship to pay off student loans for Americans who, if they graduated from college, enjoy greater long-term earning potential than many of the Americans who will be helping to shoulder the burden for their debts.

The President's plan isn't even targeted to the most needy, with families making \$250,000 a year—nearly 10 times the poverty line for a family of 4—now eligible to have their loans forgiven.

There is no doubt that the cost of a college education has risen outrageously and that, in some cases, students have been encouraged to take on unrealistic levels of debt to pay for it, but the President's student loan plan does absolutely nothing to fix these problems.

The President's plan will not only do nothing to control the cost of a college education, it will almost undoubtedly make our current situation worse. What college is going to spend time worrying about lowering tuition fees if it can expect the Federal Government to pick up part of the bill for its students' educations?

The President's plan will also do nothing to discourage students from taking on unrealistic levels of debt. In fact, it is likely to encourage students to incur even more debt since the President has now set up an expectation that the government will step in to help pay down students' loan burdens.

Given the fact that student loan debt is expected to be back to its current level in 6 years, I imagine we will be hearing more Democratic calls for student loan forgiveness in the very near future. In fact, some Members of the Democratic Party already think the President didn't go far enough. More than one Democrat wanted the President to forgive \$50,000 in debt. Now, apparently, these Democrats won't be satisfied until our economy drowns entirely under the weight of reckless government spending.

The defining achievement of the Biden administration so far has been an economy that has left millions of Americans struggling to make ends meet. Apparently, the President wants that to be his legacy because, for the sake of a few possible votes in November, he has decided to pursue yet another economic policy that will almost undoubtedly result in further economic pain for the American people.

Now he will just have to hope that his strategy doesn't backfire because, while his reckless student loan plan may buy him a vote or two, a lot of other Americans may decide that they have had their fill of inflationary spending and far-left appeasement.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, since President Biden took office on January 20, 2021, he has willfully ignored what has been happening at our southern border. The President and leaders of his administration try to convince people that what they were seeing with their eyes was not a crisis but was merely a challenge. When that flopped, they attempted to blame the previous administration for the flood of humanity coming across the southern border, even though the immigration surge has now reached epic proportions since President Biden took office.

Now, once again, they appear to be ignoring the problem altogether. We have had 17 months with more than 150,000 illegal border crossings each month—17 months, 150,000 migrants each month—and the Biden administration seems to be saying: What is the problem? Their decision, apparently, is to stay the course.

What little attention there has been to the impact on the border crisis tends to focus, though, solely on the migrants, and, of course, that is part of the concern. No one is suggesting that we treat them with disrespect or in an inhumane manner. In fact, just the contrary is true. We know that people coming into the country outside of the legal immigration system endure a brutal journey just to get here. They pay thousands of dollars to cartels and coyotes—or human smugglers—and often the women and girls are raped and abused. Migrants who slow down the coyotes will be abandoned and frequently left to die. We see that particularly in South Texas around the Falfurrias checkpoint, where we see the migrants coming across the river.

Then they are put in stash houses in inhumane conditions and then driven north through the Border Patrol checkpoints. But because of their fear of being discovered, the coyotes tell them: Get out of the vehicle and walk around the checkpoint and meet us on the north side to continue our journey. The problem is, this time of year, the weather and temperatures are brutal. Frequently, ranchers in Brooks County, which is the county where the Falfurrias checkpoint is located, find the bones of migrants who did not make it or otherwise dead bodies.

Migrants are certainly the face of the Biden border crisis, but they are not the only ones being hurt by the failure of the administration to deal with this crisis. When thousands of people a day illegally cross our border, it impacts our entire border security apparatus. We are seeing unprecedented numbers of people showing up at the border, and unfortunately it is part of a plan to overwhelm the capacity of law enforcement to deal with these numbers. This is part of a business model of the drug cartels. Flood the border with migrants. Distract the Border Patrol, who

have to leave the frontlines to transport, process, and care for the migrants, creating huge security gaps.

There is no question that the cartels and criminal organizations are exploiting those gaps to traffic dangerous drugs. They are bringing across heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana—name your poison.

The truth is, these transnational criminal organizations—sometimes called cartels—are commodity-agnostic. They are in it for the money, and they will sell anything or anybody to make money.

But without a doubt, the most alarming drug that is crossing the border today is fentanyl, a synthetic opioid. Last year, the Biden administration may have not noticed, but 108,000 Americans died of drug overdoses last year alone, and the vast majority of those drugs came across the southern border because of the business model I just described. The majority of those deaths involve synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Fentanyl is especially dangerous because as little as 2 milligrams can be deadly. That is a lethal dose that fits on the tip of a sharpened pencil.

Customs and Border Protection doesn't track fentanyl seizures by milligrams, although it logs them in pounds. Since October last year, Customs and Border Protection has seized more than 10,600 pounds of fentanyl. And, no, they didn't get it all; that is just what they were able to interdict and seize. But that 10,600 pounds of fentanyl is more than 2.4 billion lethal doses—enough to wipe out the entire U.S. population more than 7 times over.

You would think this would be a matter of serious concern for the administration, an operation which uses migrants to distract law enforcement from being able to interdict a dangerous drug coming into the United States and taking tens of thousands of Americans' lives, but, frankly, it hasn't even registered any kind of reaction by the administration.

The good news is, thanks to the hard-working Customs and Border Protection officers, those 10,600 pounds of fentanyl never ended up on our streets or in our local communities, but the bad news is, there is a whole lot more where that came from.

Cartels exploit the security gaps across the border to smuggle drugs into our country. While the first stop may be Texas or another State along the southern border, these products don't stop there; they are quickly distributed by networks of criminal gangs across America to every community—not just cities but rural communities as well.

Fentanyl poses a unique danger because not only is it incredibly potent, but it is also a lot cheaper than these other drugs. Illicit drug makers will lace substances with fentanyl to cut expenses and to hook the user, and buyers often have no idea what they are actually getting.

This is a big problem in Texas but not just in my State but across the country. But we have seen a surge of fentanyl-related deaths in my State. Last year, more than 1,700 Texans died from fentanyl overdoses, and we continue to see the heartbreaking toll this drug is having on communities of every size. Cities across the State have experienced strings of overdose deaths likely tied to batches of drugs laced with fentanyl.

There is no single profile to describe the victims of these fentanyl deaths that cover every age, every demographic, and every walk of life, but one of the most concerning trends we have seen is a spike in teenage overdose deaths.

Nationwide, 77 percent—77 percent—of all teen overdose deaths last year involved fentanyl. Fentanyl is, believe it or not, the leading cause of death of Americans between the ages of 18 and 45—a shocking statistic. Teenagers may think they are buying prescription opioids—things like OxyContin or some other drug—but they may be unknowingly taking drugs that contain a deadly dose of fentanyl in addition.

One Texas community is feeling the devastation of this situation at an almost unimaginable degree. In Hays County, situated just southwest of Austin, 2½ weeks ago, only days into the new school year, a 15-year-old high school sophomore died from a suspected fentanyl overdose. Sadly, this wasn't the first death in the Hays Consolidated Independent School District. It wasn't even the second. In 1 month's time, this school district lost three students to fentanyl-related overdoses. The other two students were both seniors. We are talking about young people who are at the starting point in their lives. They have endless potential and an army of people who want to see them succeed and live happy, productive, and successful lives, but that human potential is lost because this deadly drug has made its way into our country, into our communities, and into our schools.

But Texas isn't the only State confronting a wave of fentanyl overdoses. A few weeks ago, a woman in Colorado found her 13-year-old grandson, Jose, leaning over the bathroom sink, unresponsive. Jose's family said he had no history of illicit drug use, and they believe he received a pill from someone on his way home from school. That pill contained enough fentanyl to kill this energetic eighth grader who had his entire life ahead of him.

Sadly, this is an all-too-familiar story. Earlier this summer, a 15-month-old toddler in Georgia died after being exposed to fentanyl. The same thing happened recently in California, also to a 15-month-old infant.

Law enforcement in big cities and small towns alike have seen a spike in arrests and overdoses connected to fentanyl. The problem has gotten so bad that a number of major cities, including Las Vegas, San Diego, and New

York, have installed vending machines to distribute lifesaving shots of Narcan, which is an antidote to fentanyl overdoses—vending machines on the city streets of an antidote for fentanyl because the problem has become so pervasive. This is a crisis facing everyone from toddlers to teens to adults of all ages.

Last year, more than 71,000 Americans died from a fentanyl overdose. That is 71,000 out of the 108,000 drug overdose deaths that I mentioned a moment ago. Given the rate at which fentanyl is coming into the United States, I fear the worst is still to come.

Drug cartels are taking advantage of the security gaps at the border and going to extreme lengths to boost their sales. For example, last month, the Drug Enforcement Administration seized brightly-colored fentanyl tablets in 18 States. Children appear to be the target demographic for what the DEA is calling rainbow fentanyl. They are small, colorful pills that look like candy, as well as pressed blocks of powder that look like sidewalk chalk. Mexican drug cartels and others have turned a dangerous and deadly drug into something that any child would be quick to pick up.

No, there is no question there is a crisis at the border notwithstanding the fact that President Biden and his administration have been ignoring it for the entire time he has been in office. It is certainly hurting the migrants, but it is also having a deadly impact on the American people.

Coming from a border State, I have visited the border many times, and I have spoken often to the officers and the agents who are on the frontlines of this fight. They know well about how the cartels are gaming the system, using the migrants to divert and distract while moving deadly drugs into the country. But, frankly, they cannot stop this humanitarian crisis on their own. They need a change in policy that can only come from Congress working with the administration. But so far, the administration has refused to take any steps—any steps at all—to address the migrant surge, and so the problem continues day after day after day.

I know the mayors of New York and Chicago and Washington, DC, have expressed concern that migrants are being bused to their cities, even though they advertise themselves as sanctuary cities, but, frankly, I think if that is what it takes to get the attention of the mayors of those cities, who can then hopefully get the attention of President Biden and his administration, that it is worth it.

Unless something changes, though, the 108,000 Americans who lost their lives to drug overdoses, including the 71,000 who lost their lives to fentanyl last year, will only go up. More fentanyl will come across the border and find its way into our communities. More cartels and criminal organizations and street gangs will get rich off of our suffering. And more of our chil-

dren, our neighbors, our friends, and loved ones will die.

We often talk about the need for a humane response to the border crisis. And these conversations largely focus on migrant care, and there is no question these individuals should be treated humanely. But a humane response also involves consideration for the impact this drug infestation is having on the American people.

By allowing our border to descend into chaos, the President may think he has taken a humane route, but he is sorely mistaken. Families are burying their loved ones, children are losing their schoolmates, and our country is suffering while the cartels get richer and richer and richer.

Until we can get this crisis under control, the cartels will continue to move drugs across the border and poison our communities. No, an open border policy is not humane; it is not sustainable; and despite what President Biden may think, it is not benefiting anyone.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UKRAINE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to report back from a trip that Senator PORTMAN and I took to Ukraine last week. And the No. 1 thing I would like to report is that President Zelenskyy personally asked us—and I know that Senator PORTMAN addressed the Senate last night and reported this—but he personally asked us to thank the U.S. Senate, to thank the people of this country for the generous and unending continuing help that the Senate has given to Ukraine in their fight for democracy.

This is a country that has given it all. Sometimes we wonder, in our own country, what are we going to put on the line for our democracy? Are we going to go over and vote today? How much do we care? There, the people of Ukraine are putting their lives on the line every single day.

The ballerina who puts on camo and goes to the front lines, the exhausted workers at the nuclear plant trying to protect not just the country of Ukraine, but surrounding countries because it is the biggest nuclear plant in all of Europe, supplying 20 percent of the electricity to the people of Ukraine.

They go to work every day, under incredible stress and pressure that we can't imagine, trying to keep their country safe while surrounded by 500 Russian troops. We think of the cellist playing beautiful melodies on the front steps of bombed-out remnants of a