

leader who lives in exile in Turkey had his phone hacked with NSO group software. In January, the U.S. Justice Department arrested a foreign agent here acting on behalf of Egypt. This is not the behavior of a foreign government that has made “significant progress” toward improving human rights to merit the release of \$225 million.

Lastly, every year when we have this debate, there are always proponents who argue that, even though Egypt has this horrific human rights record, we should give them the money anyway. The argument is that because Egypt is a really important strategic ally, if we withhold just a portion of the \$1.3 billion, Egyptians might stop cooperating with us or shop around for another partner.

Let me just take a minute to address the fallacy of this argument. First, Egypt does provide strategic benefits to the United States. Egypt provides counterterrorism cooperation. It shares intelligence with us about shared threats. Access to the Suez Canal is critical for the United States. When violence does flare up in Gaza, Egypt often steps in and helps mediate and facilitate a truce through its ties with Hamas. There are good reasons for the United States and Egypt to be partners.

And it is not crazy that we give them military aid, but we shouldn't delude ourselves into thinking that reducing our aid from \$1.3 billion to \$1 billion, after giving Egypt an entire year to meet these commonsense conditions, is going to cause the sky to fall. Just last year, the administration actually did withhold \$130 million of Egypt's aid. Of course, the Egyptians were angry. It probably did make our diplomats' life a little bit harder in Egypt, but, by and large, our relationship didn't change. The Egyptians still cooperated with us on counterterrorism. They provided Suez overflight access. They again facilitated a truce in Gaza.

Why? Because all of these areas in which we engage are beneficial for the Egyptians. They don't do it as simple payback for our aid. They engage with us on these issues. They engage with Israel because it is good for Egyptian security, notwithstanding whether they get \$1 billion or \$1.3 billion from the United States.

We also sent a signal to the Egyptians by withholding some of that money last year. And while we didn't see significant improvements, we did see some political prisoners released.

This year, we have to keep the pressure up. The United States needs not just to talk the talk when it comes to human rights abroad; we need to be able to walk the walk as well. And the decision that the administration will make this week as to whether to comply with the conditions set forth by Congress on holding the Egyptians accountable for progress on human rights is critical to American credibility globally when it comes to our call to protect human rights and democracy

abroad, and, for that reason, I would urge the administration to withhold the full \$300 million as called for by the appropriations act until Egypt's record gets 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.

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

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

#### IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, like you, I am proud to represent the city of Chicago. On Friday, returning back home to Chicago, I had a chance to see the best of that great city. I traveled to the Salvation Army Freedom Center in Humboldt Park, in the city of Chicago, where residents from around our city have come together to welcome the families who are seeking refuge in America.

Our city's agencies, State agencies, members of the faith community, and kind families have stepped up to provide supplies—the basics: clothing and such—and a safe place to sleep for many of these people who have come to America. These modest acts of generosity have changed everything for the families who have arrived at that Salvation Army Freedom Center because, for the first time in months, they feel safe and secure. And that is exactly why they left their home in the first place: to survive.

In Chicago, we are honored to offer a warm, welcoming hand to these families escaping unimaginable circumstances because in them we see ourselves, we see America, we see our history as a nation. And for me, personally, I see my own family.

Back in 1911, a young Lithuanian woman set sail for America. She carried two things with her: her Catholic prayer book, published the year before the Czars outlawed it in the nation of Lithuania; and her 2-year-old daughter Ona, my mother.

More than a century stands between my mother's arrival in America and the arrival of families I met Friday, but in many ways it is the same story. America opened its doors to my family all those years ago and gave us a chance to find a place for a new land of opportunity. Today, it is our responsibility to welcome families fleeing violence and persecution, families seeking nothing more than safety and a fair shot. This is fundamental to who we are as Americans, but, sadly, it seems that some in politics think otherwise.

You see, there is a reason these families arrived in Chicago, and it is not because they booked a bus on their own accord. It is because the Governor of Texas has chosen to exploit this humanitarian challenge to score political points. When these families arrived at our Nation's border seeking asylum,

what did the Governor of Texas do? He didn't help. He took advantage of the fear and confusion. He rounded these families up, boarded them onto a bus, and shipped them to cities like Chicago and New York without even telling them where they were headed and without any consultation with their destination States. This is cruelty of the highest degree.

The Governor of Texas didn't provide any notice to Illinois or Chicago. He bused them to our Union Station downtown, nearly 1,500 miles away from their Texas border, without sending as much as a text message in advance. No logic. No rationale. Just plain meanness.

Look, we can have reasonable disagreements about how to address the situation at our Nation's border, but there is no excuse for playing games with human lives. It is not the first time. Sadly, it is the playbook for many of the other party. You will recall when President Trump, the nominee or candidate, stood up and said they are all murderers and rapists coming in from Mexico, or do you remember when more than a thousand children—infants and toddlers—were separated from their parents at the border? Some of them are still adrift, never being reunited with their families.

One of the people I met on Friday was a man named Carlos. He and his wife are from Venezuela, a country with an economic and political crisis so severe that their family feared persecution and was on the brink of starvation, even though Carlos was a hard worker, always looking for a job.

So on May 15—May 15—Carlos and his wife did what they needed to do. Imagine this, if you will. They picked up their two children—a 5-year-old little girl and a 1-year-old infant—and set out on a trip to the United States. They set out on foot to reach the Texas-Mexico border. Their journey was a nightmare: violence, theft, and exploitation.

Carlos told me that at one point he thought he would die, with his wife and kids forced to spend nine nights in a Panamanian jungle. They were finally rescued by a local military force, but they had lost all their money, their cell phones. Everything had been stolen.

They didn't quit. They were determined, slowly making their way across Central America, primarily on foot, stopping from time to time. Carlos said: I would take any work they would give me. I would sell things on the street—whatever it was—to feed my family.

It took 4 long months for them to reach our Nation's border, and they had no destination in mind when they arrived, no contacts. They simply followed instructions, and then they were placed on a bus by the Governor of Texas that took them to the city of Chicago.

Carlos had no intention of ending up in this great city when he and his family arrived in America, but he told me,

with real gratitude, that he wanted to stay in Chicago. I warned him to get ready for the winter. They have been amazed by the welcome they have received from the Salvation Army and from so many others—Catholic Charities and other groups—that stepped up to help.

That is a similar sentiment I heard expressed by another man I met on Friday, William. William is 42 years old. He sat down next to me as I was talking to this family. I thought he was a translator. He happily listened to the conversation back-and-forth. Finally, I turned to him and said: So what is your story? Again, he left Venezuela, left his family behind, and is hoping to get some work here so he can send some money back to his family.

We talked about what he would do, and it was literally anything; he would take any job. I asked him if he had any family or friends in the United States. You know what he told me? He said: "I have you."

Before I left on Friday, both Carlos and William had something else to say to me. They both asked me the same question: When can I go to work? It should be a simple answer because the reality is they are legally in the country now awaiting a hearing on their ultimate status. That hearing could be a matter of months or years. And there are no shortage of work opportunities in Chicago and all across the country. Plenty of businesses—restaurants, entertainment venues, nursing homes, landscaping—all of them would be happy to hire them, but under the law, currently, they cannot do that because asylum seekers like Carlos and William could be years away from the final determination of their status in America.

They are at least prohibited for the first 6 months from taking any kind of legal employment in the United States. How did that happen? We let them in the country. Yet we wouldn't even allow them to work to feed their families.

Well, you won't be surprised to know that was a decision by the Trump administration. This administration of President Biden is trying to change it, but, in the meantime, they are faced with a horrible dilemma, a Jean Valjean moment if there ever was one—when they are trying to find some way to feed their families, but if they take a job and are paid for it in any way, they risk deportation. This is yet another example of a broken immigration system.

The system has failed not just these families but our Nation's economy as well. We have 10 million unfilled jobs in this country. We have 5 million unemployed Americans. There are jobs in every direction. A leading restaurateur in Chicago, whom the Presiding Officer knows very well, said to me: If you took the undocumented workers out of the restaurants in Chicago, you would turn out the lights.

Behind those swinging doors in each of those restaurants are undocumented

people doing the hard work: the dishwashing, the food prep and cleanup that is part of being a restaurant. And the same thing is true when we talk about other areas.

I had a visit from the Farm Bureau of Illinois, and they told me just point-blank: We are desperate for workers, for migrant workers, to pick the crops at Alto Pass orchards in Southern Illinois, to work in the dairy farms and dairy operations in Northwestern Illinois.

In every direction, they need these workers, and they need them now—farm workers, ag workers. And it isn't just in the Midwest. It is across the Nation, and yet we don't have a system that allows for these people to come to this country and to legally work. It doesn't make any sense.

Now, of course, there are standards we ought to apply. They shouldn't be offered any job that hasn't been offered first to an American. That is our first obligation. I get it. And we ought to make sure that if they are going to be here, they are good people.

I don't believe we should knowingly allow any dangerous person to come into this country or to stay. If they are guilty of crimes while they are here, they should be punished and deported, period. The standards we should establish should keep our country safe, first and foremost.

But, secondly, we have seen over the past 4 years, under the previous President, a complete downturn in the immigrants coming into this country to work, and that is why there are so many shortages in our current workforce. We can do better, and we should do better.

And there is a problem we have that is very fundamental. Our Nation's birth rate is not keeping up with our demands for new workers. We have to accept that reality, particularly when it comes to entry level positions.

We are a nation desperate for workers, particularly young, able-bodied people like those two men that I met. But we can't put them to work under the law as it stands today. How does that make any sense?

It is the same story for millions of people living throughout our hemisphere. Even though American employers should be willing to sponsor them, there are few, viable legal immigration pathways to bring them to America, and, as a result, the arduous journey to the Mexican-American border is the only option they have.

I will be the first to agree with my colleagues on the other side in saying we need an orderly process at the border, and we do not have it today.

I am chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. We have the responsibility of writing the laws on immigration. And you say to yourself: Well, Senator, why haven't you done it?

And I can tell you why: Because our committee is evenly divided—11 Democrats, 11 Republicans, as is the Senate, 50–50—making it extremely difficult to pass anything controversial.

It was 7 or 8 years ago when we put together a group of 8 Senators—4 Democrats, 4 Republicans. I was glad to be part of forming that group. John McCain, LINDSAY GRAHAM, MARCO RUBIO, and Jeff Flake were on the Republican side; and on the Democratic side: myself, CHUCK SCHUMER, BOB MENENDEZ, and MICHAEL BENNET. We put together a comprehensive immigration bill and called it on the floor of the Senate here, and it passed with 68 votes. We were elated. We finally found that sweet spot, that agreement.

Oh, we said to President Trump: We will build some more of your wall. And I had second thoughts about that. But if that is what it took, we had an agreement for a comprehensive bill.

We passed it in the Senate and sent it over to the House of Representatives, and under Paul Ryan's Republican leadership, they refused to call it or consider it. It died, and nothing—nothing—has been done ever since. In fact, nothing has been done for 30 years, when it comes to the immigration laws of this country.

Is it any wonder the problems we face?

We need an orderly process. We need to make sure that no dangerous person is going to come into this process and do our level best to keep them out. And we need to accept one reality, and that is that we cannot accept everyone in the world who wants to come to America tomorrow.

The numbers are overwhelming. We have to have an orderly process and bring those people in that help us grow as a nation.

Imagine, if you will—I thought about it from time to time in my own family—sitting down in a small town—a small village then—in Lithuania. Jurbarkas was the name of the village. I can't imagine what it was like over 100 years ago, when my grandfather sat down with my grandmother and said: We are leaving for America. We are going to the land of opportunity. We are going to a place called East St. Louis, IL—which is where I was born.

Imagine that decision—leaving your home, your church, your relatives, everything behind, and going to a land where you don't speak the language. It sounds like an incredible decision on their part, and I marvel today that they even did it. A lot of the people around them in their same village must have said: Oh, that family, the Kutkaite family, they will be back.

They weren't. They came here. They endured, and because of that endurance and determination, I am standing here today.

That kind of spirit in the DNA of people who are willing to sacrifice everything to be part of America is something we should not dismiss. This is not a selfish decision on the part of the heads of those families. This is a selfless decision. For their family, they are willing to risk everything to come to this country.

Now, we need an orderly process to bring them into this country, as needed, in the right fashion, and I believe we can achieve that. But, unfortunately, politically, we are stopped at the moment. I am going to continue to work to try to find some bipartisan approach to this which will solve this problem.

Our Nation's immigration system should reward hard work and the determination that these people have to be in America. Instead of exploiting families who are fleeing for their lives, we should all work together to create a system that reflects the best values of America.

We are a nation of immigrants. Our diversity is our strength. Those who say we need some kind of ethnic purity are aspiring to a goal which does not serve us well. We have done just the opposite. We have taken people from different sections of the world and brought them together into the American family, and that is what is important for our future as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

#### TRIBUTE TO FRANCISCO J. COLLAZO

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I am pleased this afternoon to commend Mr. Francisco J. Collazo of Grant, AL, for his contributions to our great country and to the State of Alabama.

Born in 1931 in Puerto Rico, Mr. Collazo joined the Army at 15 years of age. He had an exceptionally distinguished career, serving in the Korean and the Vietnam wars and retiring as a chief warrant officer 4.

While in the Army, Mr. Collazo continually worked to further his education. Due to his 30 years of military service, he attended numerous Army technical schools and earned sufficient academic credits to receive the Department of the Army bachelor's equivalency degree in mathematics and computer science.

After his retirement from the Army, he continued his lifelong learning with additional coursework and the study of complex missile systems.

In 2003, the University of Alabama in Huntsville recognized his technical achievements and bestowed upon him an honorary degree of doctor of science.

In 1980, Mr. Collazo and his wife Carmen started COLSA Corporation in their garage in southeast Huntsville, AL. COLSA is a service-disabled, veteran-owned company, and it rapidly grew and received many accolades.

In 1983, COLSA was certified under the 8(a) Business Development Program. The Small Business Administration certified COLSA as a socially and economically disadvantaged company.

In 1988, the SBA selected COLSA as the Regional Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year—such an achievement.

In 1997, COLSA received a Cogswell Award for Excellence in Security Operations.

In 2004, COLSA was inducted into the Alabama Engineering Hall of Fame.

NASA awarded COLSA the Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year Award in 2008.

In 2021, Forbes magazine named COLSA to two of their top lists: Best Employers by State—4th in Alabama; and America's Best Midsize Employers—17th overall in the United States.

Today, COLSA has grown to over 1,600 employees—1,600 employees from zero—and currently ranks as 76 on Washington Technology's Top 100 Federal Prime Contractors.

Frank Collazo has personally received numerous awards and declarations, some I have enumerated. In the military—just a few—he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal with two oakleaf clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with three oakleaf clusters, and a Bronze Star with one oakleaf cluster for distinguished service during his time in Vietnam.

As an industry leader, the Huntsville and Madison County Chapter of the National Management Association recognized Frank Collazo as the manager of the year 30 years ago, 1991. Mr. Collazo has served as president of the following: the Air Defense Artillery Association; the Air, Space, and Missile Defense Association; the Huntsville Chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association.

In 2018, he received the Davidson Award for his leadership in the defense community. In addition to his leadership in industry, Mr. Collazo has been exceptionally generous in his contributions to local organizations. He funded the Collazo Endowment to retain and recruit students at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. He established the Francisco J. Collazo Scholarship Fund at Auburn University and is an original Partner in Education at the new Alabama School of Cyber Technology and Engineering located in Huntsville.

He is a routine and substantial contributor to over—yes, over—80 charitable organizations in the Tennessee Valley—that is including a lot of Alabama and a lot of Tennessee—personifying his motto when he says “Character is a matter of what you do when no one is watching.”

I am pleased this afternoon here in the U.S. Senate to join the citizens in Huntsville, AL, and throughout the State of Alabama, in offering my sincere thanks and gratitude to Frank Collazo, and I want to share my appreciation with his wife, Carmen, and his extended family.

Frank has continually demonstrated his commitment to our country, the State of Alabama, and to the community. Basically, Frank Collazo is an outstanding American.

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. 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.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 1032.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Sarah A. L. Merriam, of Connecticut, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative 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. 1032, Sarah A.L. Merriam, of Connecticut, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Tammy Baldwin, Tina Smith, Jeanne Shaheen, Chris Van Hollen, Elizabeth Warren, Catherine Cortez Masto, Raphael G. Warnock, Tim Kaine, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher Murphy, Maria Cantwell, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Gary C. Peters, Tammy Duckworth.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, September 12, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. 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.

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

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

#### NOMINATION OF SALVADOR MENDOZA, JR.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote to confirm Judge Mendoza to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.