

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

TACKLING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, we are going to follow up on the last series of speeches and point out to the American public that over the next month—we are now going to leave for about 2½ weeks. But over the next month, all eyes should be on the Republicans of the House of Representatives as we finally dig in and try to tackle the biggest problem that America faces today. That problem is the illegal immigration across the southern border.

I want to give some statistics because I have talked to a lot of people, and some people are still confused. They think we will be mean if we try to cut off the illegal immigration, or xenophobic, or something.

I point out to the American people one more time that the number of people coming across our southern border each month is historically wildly high. It is even high by the standards of the Biden administration.

The most recent figures we have are still for October 2023. Almost 300,000 people came across our southern border in October. That is up from about 180,000 a year ago. It went from 180,000 to 290,000. If you go back 2 years, you are down under 100,000. If you go back 3 years, it was under 20,000.

We are going up even higher than I thought. We are going up to about 14 times as many people crossing the border today as were crossing the border 3 years ago. It is a disaster for the United States.

Of that amount, depending on the month, we are up to having 6,000 to 9,000 unaccompanied minors crossing the southern border. There was a time when Americans' heartstrings were pulled a little bit if a family was separated. If a 16-year-old comes across the border without either of their parents there, isn't that a broken family? For all we know, they may never see their parents again. They may be human trafficked. They might wind up working illegally on a third-shift job.

The New York Times reported it, and the Biden administration objects to it, but I think anybody would agree that we have lost track of tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors in America.

Why aren't more people upset by this? There are people who say some of them are okay. Are we making any effort to find out if they are okay?

Some other statistics that should be tackled here, as we permanently change America, is that we not only look at the number of people coming here illegally, but we should be looking at the number of people who are coming here who are being deported after they do bad things.

Let me say that one more time. We find dramatic reductions in the number of people who are coming to our country who are being deported from our country after they do bad things.

In the most recent year available, 72,000 people were deported, primarily for breaking the law. You have COVID in the middle there. If you go back 2 years, that 72,000 was 185,000. Before COVID hit at all, we were deporting about 250,000 people a year for breaking the law. We have now dropped that to about one-quarter as many.

We not only have a problem with the current administration that has an open border, with the number of people crossing the border up by 14 times what it was 3 years ago, but the number of people deported compared to—and I don't like to make this a Trump thing—under Trump has dropped about one-quarter as many.

It is hard to believe right now, but at the time of the Trump administration, people were critical because people were doing horrible things and not being deported. I think President Trump should have been deporting more. Nevertheless, almost a quarter as many people are being deported as were 4 years ago.

We are both letting far more people in the country and kicking out fewer people who I think everybody should agree are a problem.

Mr. Speaker, there is going to be a strong effort made when Congress returns from our Christmas break to do something to aid Ukraine. The Republicans feel, and rightfully so, that this is such a crisis of what is going on at our southern border that we should not be addressing any other crises around the world until this situation is solved.

There are other statistics that the public should be aware of. Every year in this country, over a million people are allowed in the country with green cards. It is not impossible to come here. Right now, almost a million people are sworn in every year to become new citizens.

This is the highest number that we have had since 2006, so don't let anybody say it is impossible to come here. Don't let anyone say that America is xenophobic and turning its back on the world. Just shy of a million people every year are being sworn in legally. A million people a year are also being let in on visas. As a result, nobody should say that America is afraid of people from other parts of the world.

The only question is: Should we have people coming here who have not been appropriately vetted? How much of a quick change in the makeup of America's population can we stand?

Mr. Speaker, I have statistics available for last year, when 970,000 new people were sworn in as Americans. I was at a ceremony in Milwaukee County where 270 people were sworn in in 1 month by itself.

Last year, despite this huge illegal immigration, we had just short of a million people naturalized. That is the most since 2008.

□ 1330

There were only 2 years, from what I can tell, in the last 50 years when more people were legally sworn in as new citizens than who were sworn in last year. I am led to believe, at least by my local officials, that that number is going to go up again when we collect the final numbers from 2023.

I strongly encourage my Republican colleagues to hold the line. We have passed legislation out of the House—and we don't even really need legislation, but we have passed legislation out of the House to change the immigration laws the degree to which we will go back to where we were a couple years ago and only a small number of people will come here who are not legal, and we will stop the current trend of having such a wholesale change in the make-up of our immigrants coming to America.

John Adams said that the Constitution is built for a moral and religious population and totally unfit for any other.

We therefore have to make sure that just as we do a good job of raising our children who are expected to live in a country under our wonderful Constitution which anticipates a limited government which is necessary for a free people, we have to make sure that the people who come here are a moral group of people who are prepared to live in a country based upon less government and leaving people alone. If the House Republicans do not get what they want in January or February, then it is scary for the future of our country.

This is a fight the Republicans, of course, do not want.

Who wants to fight?

Nevertheless, it is something that is necessary to change our country. If we lose that fight, then we are going to go back to the days, or continue the days, of 180 or 300,000 people per month crossing the southern border.

I hope the press pays careful attention to what is going on here, and I hope the American people pay close attention to what is going on here.

The next topic I am going to address, and we have addressed it before, is that we are right now working through the 12 bills which we call appropriation bills and which the people back home would call budget bills.

In virtually every bill, there will be a disagreement as to whether America ought to be spending more money identifying people based on racial make-up, trying to use the racial make-up of where your parents were born 2 or 3 or 10 generations ago when determining who gets a job, who gets a promotion, and who gets a government contract.

This has been a big part of American life since 1965, but under the Biden administration it has become a much bigger, I won't say problem, but a bigger part of American life because we ask people what their racial background is.

Maybe I should explain why it is something of concern to me.

I personally became aware of this when a local human resources professional contracted out to someone. This business had over 50 employees, and it is something that every business with at least 50 employees has to worry about. They were going to hire a new engineer, and they were told by a firm they had hired to monitor this sort of thing that if they currently had four men who were engineers, then they had to make sure the fifth person was a woman.

In other words, despite the fact that the guy owned this company privately, the government was going to sit in a room and say: We don't care if the best person for the job is a guy, it has to be a woman.

Later on, they were going to hire a member of management. Before this time they had four members of management who happened to be White folks. They were told that the next person should be a person of color.

Again, this person who called me was a human resources professional, a woman herself, but she just felt that something was wrong with this. It is our company. If we find somebody we think we ought to hire, then we ought to hire that person.

The Biden administration and virtually every agency wants more attention paid to where people come from. I think there are two justifications for that, and I wish we were debating it more openly.

The first justification is diversity. I question whether that is really the motivation or is it just to divide Americans. The reason I say that is because when you identify people by their ethnic background, it has nothing to do with their life experiences or their opinions on any individual issues.

Some of the rules make no sense whatsoever. When identifying somebody, a person self-identifies. You could be one-quarter a protected class or one-eighth a protected class, and the government will say that because you are say, one-eighth Peruvian, that therefore you bring a diverse viewpoint and it is important we bring you into a company. That makes no sense. Nevertheless, that is the current justification.

Or the justification may be that we have to make up for past sins. Again, people getting preferences are ever-increasing. These are people who were not even in this country 20 years ago.

Why would we have to put our thumb on the scale or order a company to hire somebody who thought the United States was so wonderful that they would immigrate here?

Last night, I was reading about a woman who came here who had one parent from Jamaica and one parent was, I think, from the Bahamas. In any event, this person's ancestors were not suffering in any way in the United States. Nevertheless, they used the excuse that in order to make up for past injustice, we have to give preferences. This makes no sense.

The diversity argument is also strange. We can have somebody who came here from Vietnam three generations ago. Maybe they are right now one-quarter Vietnamese. Maybe they don't know how to talk Vietnamese and have never set foot in Vietnam. Nonetheless, according to the diversity bureaucracy, it is important they are given preference because they will bring a diverse viewpoint to the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, does it make any sense to say that you are going to bring a diverse viewpoint if you know nothing at all about the country or culture which you supposedly represent?

In any event, there are programs along this line being pushed throughout the Federal Government.

I think, largely, the Republican Party will try to decrease them and just say that we are going to view people as individuals while the Democratic Party wants to forever label people by where their grandfather or great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather lived.

I think that is a recipe for divisiveness. I hope the Republicans prevail, and I hope the American public objects to this increasingly divisive program.

I want to focus on one area in particular. Recently the Biden administration has decided to add to the groups of people whom I think will be given preference in the government contracts.

By the way, I recently toured a company owned by and run by a guy from Asia. His parents had founded the company and were very, very successful, but despite the fact that, from what I could tell, he was going to inherit a company worth tens of millions of dollars and had lived a very lavish, let's say a spoiled life to this point, he was taking advantage of, or was being given an advantage for government contracting because he was perceived to be a protected person or a person who needed assistance.

This is a person who is going to inherit tens of millions of dollars and who is living in an upscale Wisconsin suburb, but under current law, he had to be given preferences over maybe somebody who had lived in America for generations, who was brought up in a difficult background, and who founded his own company working it from the ground up. Nevertheless, because of this divisive affirmative action sort of stuff, the American, the guy whose great-great-grandparents were here, was going to be given a disadvantage in getting a government contract because he was not the son of Asian multimillionaires.

We ought to have a discussion about this. This is the sort of thing that should matter.

Nevertheless, the Biden administration, in addition to trying to hire all different people in our agencies, wants a new group that would be considered persons of color and given preference, and that is Middle Eastern or North Africans.

Now, I will make a couple of comments about that. Right now, Mr. Speaker, if you look at a map from Morocco all the way over to Iran, these people are considered just like any other American. They are not given preferences.

Why they would get preferences, I don't know.

I think most people from this part of the world immigrated here only very recently, so I wouldn't even say their parents or grandparents or great-great-grandparents were treated poorly in this country.

Insofar as I know people from this part of the world, I believe they think like every average American. I don't see what sort of diverse viewpoint they are bringing to the workplace. Moreover, I should point out, that right now people from Middle Eastern or North African background are making, if money can be described as a success, considerably more than the average American citizen, including the average American White citizen.

Nevertheless, the Biden administration wants to say to this group from Morocco, from Lebanon, from Syria, and from Iran that if you found a company here, then you get preferences if you are dealing with the Federal Government.

I have yet to find one person back home who knows the Biden administration is trying to do this, but it is something that ought to be more publicized in the mainstream media, and it ought to be subject to debate.

One of the topics that should be brought up is the question: Is this a way to destroy America and divide Americans, or when people vote they create a situation in which people say: What are you going to give me because I am from Peru?

What are you going to give me because I am from Vietnam?

What are you going to give me because I am from Iraq?

What are you going to give me because I am from Angola?

I think that is where we are headed, and the time is now to nip it in the bud.

By the way, I mentioned that people from North Africa make more than the average American. That is also true for the wealthiest immigrant group in this country, people from India. People from China make more than the average American. People from the Philippines make more than the average American. People from Cuba make more than the average American.

From what I can see, it might take one or two generations, but then people from Africa or Southeast Asia make more than the average American. So we should not be afraid to put an end to this.

We have a labor shortage. These DEI specialists should be swept aside, and we should go back to the days in which companies could hire and promote people based on who is the best for the job.

I hope this is discussed over the next 3 weeks back home so that when Congress reconvenes and works on our appropriations bills we try to do what we can to get rid of these DEI specialists.

The final topic of the day is with regard to two different groups who are being treated very differently, and it is time we got rid of the differences.

Beginning in the 1960s, the Federal Government began to institute widespread use of income-based benefits. Some of them were low-income housing benefits, some of them were at the time what we called AFDC benefits, some of them were food benefits, and some of them were healthcare benefits. Nonetheless, they all gave more benefits to people who were considered to be in poverty.

Frequently, being in poverty meant that you couldn't get married because if you have a couple together and one of them has a job, then they usually are not considered to be in poverty, so they don't get free housing, free food, and free checks. There is a flawed program called the earned income tax credit in which people also get more money.

All these programs have two things in common: They largely penalize people who get married to someone with an income, and they largely discourage people from working. In my experience talking with people on a lower level of the income scale, they all know when they should stop working to get the maximum benefits.

□ 1345

There is a sweet spot if you are a single parent, around \$16,000 to \$18,000, and you get your earned income tax credit. You get your rent-free apartment or almost rent-free apartment. You get your food share. You get your medical care. You may be getting some separate individual checks. As a result, we are discouraging two things: We are discouraging marriage, particularly marrying somebody who has got an income, and we discourage work.

There is a bill working its way through Congress right now, which is adding a new class of Pell grants. Pell grants are what amount to college scholarships for people who are perceived to be low income.

What happens with Pell grants—and the same thing should be said about food stamps, the same thing should be said about low-income housing—if one couple gets married and raises a child on their own, under most cases they are not eligible for free government scholarship.

If they decide not to get married and maybe you have one parent with a small income, their children get what amounts to a college scholarship. I had a woman approach me saying that her and her husband got married and their daughter was \$35,000 in debt when she graduated from college. She thought that was unfair because her sister didn't get married and her daughter was getting what amounted to almost

free tuition for 4 years because of the marital status of her parents.

The child from a married couple is \$35,000 in debt, compared to very little debt of the child of the unmarried couple.

In America, we are supposed to be treating people equally. Obviously, we are not treating people equally here. It is like it is the policy of the Federal Government to discourage marriage and particularly discourage marriage if you have children. This is not something that has been talked about lately. It hasn't been talked about in depth here, as far as I can tell, since the 1990s, but since equity or "equality" or something is the catch word that you hear a lot of around here, I think we ought to look at these programs and stop penalizing people who get married and have children.

It is a shame, but a lot of people feel they can't afford to have kids anymore, maybe they have no kids, maybe one child, and you hear it is because they don't have enough money; meanwhile, we have no problem taxing them to make sure people with a different lifestyle have a variety of things.

It is not going to change in January or February, but I hope the people in this institution begin to think about that. Was it right to set up programs and the only way you can get them is if you don't get married when you have children?

I will recount a little anecdote with regard to the Pell grants. I used to speak on this back in Wisconsin before I was a Congressman, and I would go through all the different programs which you lose if you get married and have a job. I talked to a young gal who was in the room at the time—because sometimes I think I have to know more how young people think—and when talking about the grants that went out to people of supposed lower income—of course, this also encourages working off the books. All these things do—the gal said, me and my husband got married before we had a child, but none of my friends are getting married. They get free college. I think people in this institution have to stop and think, is that right? Should we be teaching the young people that you get free college if you don't get married when you have a kid?

That is what we are teaching them right now. That is what we taught that young gal in Green Bay if she is listening. I have heard what she said, and I hope it is something that is talked about a little bit more in this institution.

The three topics for the American public to chew on over the next 3 weeks: The record number of people coming across our border and permanently changing America and bankrupting America. The obsession over identifying people where their great-great-grandparents came from as if their view of the world is the same of somebody who was born in Mexico or China or somewhere else in the 1890s.

Lastly, our rather strange policy of trying to discourage people from getting married before they have children. I hope the American people chew on that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague has been covering a lot of very important subjects here. I know he is frequently in the area of immigration and the invasion of our border, so I appreciate Mr. GROTHMAN's strong efforts on highlighting that so the American people understand.

It really boils down to when we are looking at the border invasion that we have quite a battle. I do not understand why the Biden White House is simply sitting by watching it happen, even having personnel propping the gates open to allow this to happen.

We do not understand fully who is coming in. It is not just people from Mexico or even Central America. There is a lot of very dangerous people coming across the border. They apprehend many people on the known terrorist or mayhem list, at the very least, and I wonder whose side are they on. Whose side is the administration on when they allow this to happen? Whether it is the drugs coming across, the fentanyl, the people who are setting up and going to be the potential terrorist cells that are going to hit this country at some point, and we see all these protests going on over Palestine.

Mr. Speaker, they are just waiting for the green light on this. It is completely irresponsible and antithetical to the constitutional vows we take what is going on with the Biden administration and their nonenforcement of the border. Much work needs to be done.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE OPEN WORLD LEADERSHIP CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 313 of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2001 (2 U.S.C. 115), as amended by section 1601 of Pub L. 111-68, and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Board of Trustees of the Open World Leadership Center:

Mr. BACON, Nebraska

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO ADAMS MEMORIAL COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 2406(b)(3) of Public Law 116-9, and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Adams Memorial Commission:

Mr. GRIFFITH, Virginia