

into stark and painful relief. Half-baked green transitions, an allergy to clean and reliable nuclear power, and an addiction to Russian gas sent our allies' energy costs through the roof, with working families and ratepayers actually footing the bills.

It could have been a helpful, cautionary tale for the United States, but by last year, the Biden administration was already a year deep into their comprehensive war on abundant and affordable American energy. Remember, on day one in office, President Biden canceled further work on the Keystone XL Pipeline with the stroke of a pen—forget safe and efficient energy transport, high-paying American jobs, and lower cost, reliable power. The President had already put climate activism in the driver's seat of his own energy policy.

The Biden administration has frozen new oil exploration on public lands, overhauled permitting rules to make it harder to develop natural gas resources, dragged the United States back into a climate deal that gives the Chinese Communist Party a pass to keep increasing its carbon emissions, and balked at a chance to block Vladimir Putin's latest pipeline for controlling European consumption.

It is an absolutely nonsensical agenda, and it hasn't taken long for families across our country to feel the direct effects in the form of soaring prices in their heating and electricity bills, at the gas pump, as well as at the grocery store.

Fortunately, millions of working Americans were fed up last November and decided to put an end to Democrats' total control here in Washington. Republicans will stand strong on the side of American energy dominance, on the side of national security, on the side of American workers, American families, and America's future.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

POLICE REFORMS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, I am responsible for legislation in the Senate relative to law enforcement and criminal justice. It is an awesome responsibility, and I think about it quite a bit because the first thing all of us want is the safety of our families and our communities. It is the first question asked: How safe is that area of Chicago? How safe is that part of Springfield? It is a reality, and it is a natural reaction.

I have had, during the course of my congressional career, the opportunity to meet many of the men and women in

law enforcement. Let me tell you, there are some outstanding people who literally get up in the morning and put on that badge and risk their lives. They go out for just a routine traffic stop, and they could end up dead. That is the reality of police work in a dangerous world, particularly in a world awash with guns, as we are in the United States.

Having said that, acknowledging that reality, I also know that there are cops who are doing terrible things. That was brought home to America vividly over the last several days. You see, videotapes and DNA evidence have changed our conversation about law enforcement and justice. We now know just what happened—not an account of what happened; we know what happened. We see it on videotapes over and over and over again. And we know sometimes that people who have been found guilty of crimes and are serving long sentences—it turns out the DNA evidence proves it couldn't possibly have been them who were responsible. It is a gross miscarriage of justice for the person who is incarcerated—and even worse, the fact that the person who is culpable, blamable, who should be prosecuted, may somewhere be on the loose. Videotape and DNA have changed it.

Many Americans are struggling with feelings of grief and disbelief after they watched the videotapes of Tyre Nichols being beaten to death by a group of Memphis police officers.

Mr. Nichols, a 29-year-old father of a young son, worked the second shift at a FedEx facility with his stepfather. He loved skateboarding and photography. He loved his mother so much, he had her name tattooed on his arm. He had no criminal record. One friend told a reporter Mr. Nichols was even thinking about being a police officer to try to make the system better from the inside.

The videotapes of the deadly assault on Mr. Nichols by Memphis police officers on January 7 are horrific and sickening. They show at least five officers attacking Mr. Nichols with their fists, boots, batons, Tasers, and pepper spray, while yelling contradictory orders to him. They continued pummeling Mr. Nichols even as he screamed in pain, begged them to stop, and called out for his mother. One officer kicked him in the head so hard that the officer was limping afterwards.

When the beating was over, another officer propped an apparently unconscious Tyre Nichols up against the side of the squad car while the others laughed, fist-bumped, and tried to justify their awful behavior.

It took 20 minutes for an ambulance to arrive, even longer for medical aid to be rendered. Tyre Nichols died 3 days later in a Memphis hospital. An independent autopsy revealed he had “suffered extensive bleeding caused by a severe beating.”

The killing of Tyre Nichols follows years of devastating tragedies and

needless loss. Who can ever forget George Floyd? When I saw the videotape of what happened to him and saw that policeman with his knee on his neck stare straight at the camera—I will never forget that. Or Breonna Taylor, shot in her apartment.

In my own home State of Illinois, Laquan McDonald. A videotape that was held back from the public for over a year finally was brought to light, and people saw that he was shot in the back repeatedly, over and over again. There are so many others. For George Floyd, he was murdered as he lay on a curb in Minneapolis. Tyre Nichols was chased down and beaten to death.

Black Americans in particular are forced to live through trauma with every new incident of police violence.

I applaud the Shelby County district attorney for moving swiftly in seeking the indictment of the five police officers. A sixth officer connected to the incident was suspended today.

I agree with the attorney for Mr. Nichols' family, Ben Crump, that the response by prosecutors could be a “blueprint” for how such cases should be handled in the future if, inevitably, there are such cases.

We shouldn't wait for months to bring charges. There is no excuse for delayed justice when the heinous acts occur and the facts are as clear as the videotape.

I also want to extend my deepest condolences to Mr. Nichols' family, especially his mom and his stepfather, who have responded with dignity and grace to this unimaginable ordeal.

Before the videotapes were released, they called repeatedly for protests to be peaceful. I would like to think that I would have the strength to do that, having just lost my son in those circumstances, but the Nichols family did, and throughout our Nation, almost without exception, their wishes have been respected.

But prosecutions and peaceful protests cannot be the only response to this tragedy. Americans—especially Black Americans—are exhausted by the injustice of officers who abuse their authority. They are tired of the systemic failures that can lead to a young man being beaten to death after a questionable traffic stop.

As chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to finally confront these problems with meaningful legislation.

We need to have an honest conversation with law enforcement officers about screening, training, inherent bias, use of force, and consequences for unjust actions.

We need to prohibit deadly and dishonorable police misconduct. We must recruit and train the next generation of law enforcement to protect and serve everyone in America: Black, White, Brown, and everything in between.

We have made some very modest progress. Last December, Congress enacted and the President signed a bill on

law enforcement deescalation training. It provides for grants and training for law enforcement deescalation tactics. It is not enough. We must do more.

In the last Congress, Senator CORY BOOKER of New Jersey led an effort to build bipartisan support for policing reform legislation that national police groups and civil rights advocates could endorse. He worked with TIM SCOTT, a Republican Senator from South Carolina.

They invited me and Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM into their deliberations. They were close to making some progress toward our goals, but even if you look at their goals, which I believe were good, they are not enough. Simply to say we are going to ban choke holds or we are going to deal with warrantless searches in a different way doesn't get to the heart of the issue. What is in the mind of these policemen when they are executing their job, doing their duty? Is it the right way to approach things?

These efforts must continue now anew. We owe it to all of the families who have lost loved ones in these horrible acts of brutality and to the families who fear that their loved ones could be next to pass a law that will help ensure justice and accountability in our policing system.

The vast majority of law enforcement officers are appalled and angered by the deaths of Mr. Nichols and others. They deserve our thanks, and I believe they will support bipartisan efforts to prevent such abuses and punish those who commit them.

As I mentioned, Tyre Nichols loved photography. He loved photographing the world as he saw it. One of his favorite images—which appears again and again in his photos—was the image of a bridge. It is time for Members of the Senate to bridge our differences and pass policing reform so that Tyre Nichols' death will not have been in vain.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

LAW ENFORCEMENT DE-ESCALATION TRAINING ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the killing of Tyre Nichols has reignited a national debate about the excessive use of force by police, and rightfully so. This unarmed 29-year-old was brutally beaten by Memphis police officers with an egregious, excessive use of force.

Within the Republican conference, Senator TIM SCOTT from South Carolina has been our leader on police reform matters, and I have been proud to work with him on bills to help improve policing in our communities and public safety. One of those bills was the Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act, which, by the way, was just signed into law last month.

This new law will ensure that all police officers have the opportunity to acquire skills to defuse a potentially dangerous situation like the one we

saw in Memphis. Use of force should only come into play when absolutely necessary, and this legislation will provide law enforcement officers with the knowledge of what alternatives are available to them, which invariably will make their lives better and safer and also protect the life of the individual who is being detained.

This has the potential to save lives and prevent another senseless and entirely preventable tragedy like this from reoccurring.

I am glad this legislation is now the law of the land, and the Department of Justice must implement it as quickly as possible.

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, on another matter, last Friday I was in Austin, my home, and had the opportunity to speak at a conference that included some of the leading experts in all things dealing with declassification and government transparency.

It was cohosted by a number of academic institutions in Texas and the Public Interest Declassification Board, or PIDB.

Most of us had never heard of this group before, but the PIDB leads incredible work to help advise the President and the executive branch on ways to modernize the classification and declassification processes which safeguard our national security but also protect public trust in our institutions.

I joined an onstage conversation with my friend Will Inboden, who leads the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin.

We talked about the circumstances under which classification is important. Controlling access to certain sensitive information enables the United States to remain at least one step ahead of our adversaries. It also protects sources and methods that allow us to collect clandestine intelligence and protect the lives of those intelligence professionals who are engaged in collecting that information, as well as the avenues into those sources that are important to collecting this intelligence. Obviously, we don't want to jeopardize either the individuals involved or dissuade anyone from wanting to work with us in the future or to allow some of our access to dry up because it then becomes a matter of public knowledge.

But we know classification is not always the right answer. There are many circumstances in which declassification safeguards our national security.

One example is the way in which the United States Government declassified and shared information with our allies in the run-up to Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine.

The decision to declassify some important intelligence gave Ukraine enough battlefield awareness to push back after the initial attack and save countless lives. It also unified Western response, leading to quick condemnation

of Russia's attack and resources for Ukrainian forces.

Declassification is an important tool with which we share information with our friends and allies around the world, but it is also another way to show the American people what their government is doing. It builds trust and transparency. It inspires confidence in the incredible work that our intelligence professionals are doing, and it equips scholars with the information they need to conduct academic research that informs decision making.

Obviously, there is a very delicate balance between transparency, which drives democratic self-governance, and secrecy, which is sometimes necessary to protect sources and methods of information that are important to protect our national security.

Policymakers and scholars have long debated this balance, but it doesn't often garner much attention in the public square. At least that was the case until recently.

Over the last several months, law enforcement have uncovered classified documents in unsecured locations. For example, documents were discovered at President Trump's home in Florida. They were uncovered at President Biden's home in Delaware and in his private office in Washington, DC. And they were found at the home of former Vice President Pence in Indiana.

All of these discoveries paint a deeply concerning picture, because those of us with access to classified information know that the only appropriate place to view classified information is in a secure setting.

Now, we have no idea—we, as Congress—no idea what these classified documents contain. We don't know who had access to them. We have no insight into the possible ramifications for national security. So there are a lot of unanswered questions that need answers.

This really addresses Congress's unique role, as a coequal branch of government, to provide oversight of the Federal Government. As elected representatives, we have the duty to our constituents and to our country to ensure their government is working for them, and oversight of the intelligence community is a big part of that job, and it is part of the system of checks and balances.

Now, in most cases, oversight happens out in the open at congressional hearings, but this is, obviously, a different sort of case. We are talking about classified documents that were never meant for public consumption.

That is why we have the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that I serve on and the House Committee on Intelligence, both of which were created after the Church Committee made recommendations about oversight that needed to be put in place over the intelligence community—both the police, the community itself, to make sure that those tools were not abused, but also to restore public confidence that