

Let's stop pretending the American people can't handle an honest debate on immigration. They can. Talk to small business owners and family-run farms in States like mine. They are the first to tell you our Nation needs more immigrant workers. We have two times as many jobs in this country as unemployed people to fill them.

I had the CEO of a major international corporation in my office yesterday. We talked about opportunities in the future, and he said the one thing that is holding him back is the lack of skilled employees. He begged me to find ways.

I gave a few suggestions to him, but I told him as well: Don't ignore the reality. America is a nation of immigrants, and with so many jobs unfilled in this country, we need help. There are thousands of immigrants who are ready, capable, and willing to meet our workforce needs. What are we waiting for?

Communities across America are struggling with worker shortages. It seems many in the other party are willing to entertain any solution except immigration in the land of immigrants.

Just look at States like Arkansas and Iowa, which recently passed laws rolling back child labor protections—kids they want to work in dangerous settings. When I hear the suggestion that a 15- or 16-year-old can work in a slaughterhouse, I remember those jobs that I held when I was going through college.

I spent 12 months working in a slaughterhouse in East St. Louis, IL. It was dangerous, deadly work. And to think that you would put a young person on that job without the training and protection that they need is just not American. It is mindless.

If you have any doubt that asylum seekers at our border are ready to fill the jobs that are available, let me tell you the story of Carlos from Venezuela, a country with one of the most ruthless dictators in the world.

Back in Venezuela, Carlos had a full-time job. But the political and economic crisis was so bad in this country, he couldn't put food on the table. His family was on the brink of starvation, and he feared for their safety from political violence. So last May, Carlos and his wife did what any parent would do: They picked up their 4-year-old daughter and their nursing infant and they took off for the border. It was an incredible journey, 5 months—much of it on foot—to the Texas-Mexico border from Venezuela. It was a nightmare of violence, theft, and exploitation.

I sat down with Carlos and his family when they got off the bus in Chicago, and he told me what they went through. He told me that at one point he thought they would die as they spent 9 consecutive nights in the Panamanian jungle. They were rescued by a local military force. All of their money, all of their cell phones had been stolen, but they pressed on to try to get to America.

After filing a claim for asylum once they arrived, Carlos and his family were relocated to my city of Chicago. That is where I met them last September. When I spoke with Carlos, I asked him: What can I do for you? What can I do for your family? What do you need? He said one word: "job." I need a job. I will go to work anywhere. I will do anything.

There are many employers across this country who would take Carlos up on his offer in a minute, but they can't because he is not legally allowed to work. Though he is legally in this country waiting for his asylum hearing, he is not legally allowed to work for at least 6 months or maybe longer. How does that make any sense?

Last week, the House Republicans finally introduced their response to our immigration hearings. The bill is more than 200 pages long. Not one word of it offers anything to employers in my State who need workers like Carlos. That is not a serious proposal.

Yesterday, the mayor of Chicago, noting that some 8,000 immigrants who have been sent to our city by the Governor of Texas and the Governor of Florida, begged for help and issued an Executive order saying do something to help me deal with these very serious problems. At the current moment, immigrants are sleeping on the floors of police stations in the city of Chicago.

Do you want to know what a serious immigration proposal looks like? Well, 10 years ago, the Senate actually passed one. We had a group of eight of us who worked for months to put together a bipartisan proposal. We brought it to the floor of the U.S. Senate, and it passed with an overwhelming majority. What happened to it in the Republican House? They refused to even consider it or debate it. Even Donald Trump's Secretary of Homeland Security admitted that that bipartisan bill would have made our border more secure, but the House Republicans refused to take it up and still refuse to face the reality of what comprehensive immigration reform looks like.

We still need that package today, one that addresses the needs of our economy, provides a path of citizenship for Dreamers and immigrant farm workers, and lives up to our Nation's legacy of providing safe harbor to refugees fleeing for their lives.

I have been told repeatedly by my Senate Republican colleagues that they will not negotiate until the House sends us a bill. We have waited long enough. This week, I am introducing a proposal that I hope we can all support and will start the debate.

My bill would provide immediate assistance to border officials and authorities to help secure the border and officially process asylum seekers. It would provide support to the communities that welcome migrants in our country.

This bill is by no means a comprehensive package, but it is an opportunity to show the American people

that we are not ignoring the reality and we can support our frontline officials and the communities that need help.

The American people are tired of partisan bickering and excuses over immigration. They want us to work together to secure our border, support our economy, and stand by the fundamental principles and values that have started this Nation.

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. DURBIN assumed the Chair.)

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it is May 10—May 10. If the President's Treasury Secretary is correct, in 3 weeks, the United States could reach the limit of its borrowing capacity, and—and, absent an agreement between the President and Congress to raise the debt ceiling, begin to default on its debts. But if you think that means the President has gotten serious about reaching a debt ceiling agreement, you would be wrong.

The President did invite the Democratic and Republican leaders of the House and Senate to the White House yesterday, presumably, one would think, to finally begin negotiating. But as it turned out, the meeting was apparently a little more than an occasion for the President to reiterate his position that he won't negotiate.

Here is the political reality: The President can't raise the debt ceiling by himself. He has to work with Congress, and, more specifically, he has to work with Speaker McCARTHY and the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. That is just the reality.

The American people sent divided government to Washington last November, and divided government requires compromise. It requires negotiation. Frankly, it is the height of arrogance for the President and the Senate Democratic leader to think that they are somehow the exception to that, to think that they should be able to simply decree what they want—in this case, an increase in the debt ceiling with no spending reforms—and have everyone else just fall in line.

That is not the way our system of government works. I get that the President would like things to work that way, but they don't, and the sooner he accepts that fact the better because the fiscal stability of our country is hanging in the balance here. Unless the President comes to the negotiating table for real, he is going to be responsible for the United States defaulting on its debts.

Let's talk for a minute about why the President doesn't want to negotiate, why he is insisting on a clean

debt limit bill. Well, it is really quite simple. House Republicans want to pair any increase in the debt ceiling with spending reforms, and the President doesn't want anything that will restrain his ability to spend. He is intent on expanding the size and reach of the Federal Government, and spending reforms would get in the way.

What President Biden does not seem to realize, however, is that our Nation is on an unsustainable spending trajectory. Spending under the Biden administration has reached staggering levels. The total Federal budget for fiscal year 2023 is up approximately 40 percent from 2019, the last budget before the pandemic—40 percent. And under the President's budget, over the next decade, the Federal budget would reach a staggering \$10 trillion, a 125-percent increase from its prepandemic level. Think about it—a 125-percent increase in the cost of government from the prepandemic level. Our country and our economy cannot take that level of spending.

Between October and March, the Federal Government borrowed \$6 billion a day—a day. That is more than the entire 2023 budget for my State of South Dakota. The amount of money that the Federal Government borrows in a single day is more than the entire budget for the State of South Dakota for the entire year. Debt at that level threatens economic growth. It jeopardizes our national security and leaves us excessively dependent on other countries who hold our Nation's debt, and it sucks money away from essential government spending on things like Social Security and Medicare and our national defense.

Just paying the interest on our debt is taking a toll on our Nation's budget. According to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, 50 cents of every dollar our country borrows in the next 10 years will go just toward paying interest on our national debt. By 2028, we will be spending more on interest than on national defense. By 2044, we will be spending more on interest than on Medicare. And by 2050, we will be spending more on interest than on Social Security.

How in the world are we going to be able to pay for these programs and other essential government functions if we are spending that much money just meeting the interest—the interest alone—on that massive, going-on-\$32-trillion debt?

Negotiating over the debt ceiling is hardly new. Seven of the last ten debt limit increases have included some mix of policy or budgetary changes rather than a simple, clean increase. And the Democrat leader of the Senate, the same Democrat leader who is now insisting on a clean debt limit increase, is on the record during the last administration talking about using the debt ceiling as leverage to achieve Democrat priorities.

So the President and the Democrat leader's outrage that they might have

to yield to the realities of divided government and actually have to negotiate over the debt ceiling is a little hard to swallow. And it is profoundly disturbing that, with a national debt in excess of \$31 trillion and growing every day, the President and the Democrat leader can't be brought to consider even the mildest spending reforms.

House Republicans have proposed reasonable spending reforms. The nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget—where the President's own Treasury Secretary used to sit on the Board, I might add—called the Republican bill “a serious package” and a “realistic and extremely welcome first step.” But if the President doesn't like the House's proposed spending reforms, he should put forward his own spending reforms.

What he should not do, however, and cannot responsibly do is continue to refuse to engage in negotiations. If he continues to reject compromise, if he continues to insist that it is his way and no other, then, come June, he will be responsible for our Nation defaulting on its debts.

The President has already spent us into an inflation crisis. Let's hope he can see his way to negotiating before he plunges us into a default crisis as well.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

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

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

VOTE ON GORORDO NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gorordo nomination?

Mr. REED. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 117 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Cardin	Duckworth
Bennet	Carper	Durbin
Blumenthal	Casey	Fetterman
Booker	Collins	Hassan
Brown	Coons	Heinrich
Cantwell	Cortez Masto	Hickenlooper

Hirono	Ossoff	Stabenow
Kaine	Padilla	Tester
Kelly	Peters	Van Hollen
King	Reed	Warner
Klobuchar	Romney	Warnock
Lujan	Rosen	Warren
Manchin	Sanders	Welch
Markey	Schatz	Whitehouse
Menendez	Schumer	Wyden
Merkley	Shaheen	Young
Murphy	Sinema	
Murray	Smith	

NAYS—45

Barrasso	Fischer	Mullin
Blackburn	Graham	Murkowski
Boozman	Grassley	Paul
Braun	Hagerty	Ricketts
Britt	Hawley	Risch
Budd	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Vance
Ernst	Moran	Wicker

NOT VOTING—3

Feinstein	Gillibrand	Tuberville
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

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. 55, Glenna Laureen Wright-Gallo, of Nevada, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

Charles E. Schumer, Ben Ray Luján, Peter Welch, Tina Smith, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Raphael G. Warnock, Christopher Murphy, John W. Hickenlooper, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Baldwin, Edward J. Markey, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Mazie K. Hirono.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Glenna Laureen Wright-Gallo, of Nevada, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) are necessarily absent.