

Mr. President, Police Week is an important and solemn occasion every year. America's peace officers deserve our respect and recognition every single day. But in recent years, Peace Officers Memorial Day has taken on an especially urgent situation. In 2021, President Biden's first year in office, the number of law enforcement officials feloniously killed in the line of duty reached its highest level in 20 years.

Just last year, 331 officers were shot on the job; 62 of them were killed. That is a 32-percent increase from just 2 years earlier. Brave men and women in blue swear to uphold law and order, to run toward danger, even to give their lives to protect their communities. But as a radical, soft-on-crime movement has taken hold of elected Democrats at every level of government, peace officers have been forced to bear an even heavier burden.

Brave police officers have faced down a historic wave of violent crime from the frontlines, even as defund-the-police radicalism forced them to do it with fewer resources and thinner ranks.

They have continued to risk their lives to enforce our laws, even as soft-on-crime liberal prosecutors do everything they can to avoid holding criminals accountable.

So this week—this week—we honor men and women whose tough job is only getting tougher on Washington Democrats' watch. But thanks to the leadership of Senator CORNYN and Senator CASSIDY, Senate Republicans are ready to take action to protect law enforcement officers in the line of duty.

Our colleagues from Texas and Louisiana have introduced legislation to raise the stakes for criminals who resort to violence against police. Their bill would deliver new Federal mandatory sentencing for killing a police officer, higher consequences for assault, and new separate penalties for fleeing such crimes across State lines.

So as our Nation observes Police Week, I am proud to cosponsor our colleagues' work and to continue to back the blue.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I note, when I left the Chair and closed our session on Thursday, you were in the Chair. I open the session here on Monday, and you are in the Chair. I hope you weren't here, sitting in the Chair, all weekend.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. I was.

Mr. SCHUMER. You are a dedicated man, Mr. President.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. President, as Democrats continue upholding our responsibility to preserve the full faith and credit of the United States, the position of the President, of Leader JEFFRIES, and myself has not changed: Default must be taken off the table.

Never in the history of our country have we failed to pay our bills on time. To default now would mean crossing a terrible point of no return, where the biggest losers will be America's seniors, America's small businesses, America's working and middle-class families, and everyone—everyone—who relies on Social Security, Medicare, pension payments, and 401(k)s.

Last Friday, I wrote a "Dear Colleague" to my Senate colleagues, explaining just how destructive a first-ever default would be. I warned, as many economists have warned, that a first-ever default would crash the economy, increase costs, and kill jobs—crash the economy, increase costs, kill jobs. Who would want that? But that is what awaits American families on the other side of the x date if no action is taken. According to experts, a default would almost certainly plunge the United States into another recession, shrinking GDP growth by an alarming 6 percent.

A first-ever default would also make life's most important expenses far more costly. Mortgages, car payments, student loans, and small business loans all would skyrocket. They wouldn't just go up a half a point; they would go up a lot. But the value of retirement accounts, which Americans spend their whole lives—every 2 weeks, every month, every 6 months—putting that money in so they would have a decent retirement, would nosedive—nosedive.

And, of course, if the United States defaults in a few weeks for the first time ever, experts warn as many as 8.3 million jobs would be lost. It would be a catastrophe.

No one should play with it. No one should flirt with it. No one should hold it hostage and say: "Unless you do 'this,' we are going to default" because the consequences of default are just awful.

Americans have been to hell and back over the past couple of years as we have tried to recover from the record unemployment we saw during COVID. Americans are coming back. I spoke at a whole bunch of college graduations this weekend, and the students who had been through COVID had missed sometimes a year of school or a year and a half of school or 6 months of school, but they were bouncing back, raring to go. It gave me some faith in the future of the country, but if default were to hit them and the rest of the country, wow, that would be awful.

So, for all of these reasons and many more, I insisted last week, along with President Biden and along with Leader JEFFRIES, that default is off the table.

Speaker MCCARTHY must commit to the same and not say: "Unless you do 'this' or do 'that,' we will default." The consequences of default are too terrible. Defaulting would mean that we would force Americans, as we recuperate from the pain of COVID, to go through what might even be a greater pain in a few short years after COVID had reached its zenith. That alone should push leaders on both sides to agree that default is not an option under any scenario.

For decades, Democrats and Republicans have worked out our differences about spending and revenues through the annual budget process. That process began earlier this year when the President released his budget proposal. This week, both sides are continuing to hold parallel discussions about the budget—what we should do with revenues, what we should do with spending—as Congress does every year. These conversations are going on right now among the four leaders and the President's representatives as I speak, and I am glad these conversations are continuing in a very, very serious way.

The President, Leader JEFFRIES, myself—we welcome a bipartisan debate about our Nation's fiscal future, but we have made it plain to our Republican colleagues that default is not an option. Its consequences are too damaging, too severe. It must—must—be taken off the table.

MILITARY PROMOTIONS

Now, Mr. President, another topic I cannot believe I must address yet again here on the Senate floor is that of military holds.

Over the past few months, the senior Senator from Alabama has singlehandedly—singlehandedly—hindered our national security by blocking hundreds of critical military appointments. Those holds are hamstringing our military.

According to former Secretaries of Defense who served Presidents of both parties, this blanket hold is "harming military readiness and risks damaging the U.S. national security."

But last week, the Senator's conduct, as bad as it has been just by holding up these hundreds of general officers whose lives are in limbo even though they have given decades of service to our country and whom we depend on for our national defense—he is holding them up, but the Senator went even beyond that.

In an interview over the radio, Senator TUBERVILLE was asked if White supremacists should be allowed in the military, to which he, a member of the Armed Services Committee, responded by saying:

Well, they call them that. I call them Americans.

It is hard to believe he really said it, but check the record. He did—revolting, revolting down to the last word. The Senator from Alabama's words were revolting to so many across this country.

A few days later, when asked to clarify his views on the matter, when he

was given a chance to make up for this awful mistake that will be a block on his record forever, Senator TUBERVILLE then responded with “What is a White nationalist?”—as if it is some great mystery.

“What is a White nationalist?” Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me, Senator?

Let me give my colleague a hint on how to define a White nationalist. The man who, just over a year ago, murdered 10 people at a Tops supermarket in Buffalo, seeking to murder Black people, was a White nationalist. The insurrectionists who waved Confederate flags through the halls of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, many of them were White nationalists. And, sadly, some of those insurrectionists had military backgrounds.

Again, what is a White nationalist? How about the parade of belligerents who carried torches through the streets of Charlottesville while screaming “Jews will not replace us”? Senator TUBERVILLE, those were White nationalists.

And then he followed up by saying—I couldn’t believe he said this: “I look at a White nationalist as a Trump Republican.” Really? What the heck is happening in America?

Leader MCCONNELL cannot allow a Member of his conference to make a mockery of our military and of the Senate the way Senator TUBERVILLE has done.

If any of my Republican colleagues care whatsoever about the well-being of our military, they will denounce the Senator’s words and urge him to drop his holds.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on judges, last week was a very productive week in the Senate for judicial nominees. The Judiciary Committee reported out six more nominees for lifetime appointments to the Federal bench. We are continuing the work of confirming more outstanding judges this week, starting today.

This afternoon, we will vote to confirm Bradley Garcia as a circuit court judge for the highly important DC Circuit. After the Supreme Court, as everyone knows, the DC Circuit Court of Appeals is the most important Federal court in the country—particularly when it comes to government actions—and it takes up cases, of course, that the Supreme Court is unable to consider. The Supreme Court only takes up about 75 cases a year, and so the DC Circuit Court has many, many vital and important cases. The DC Circuit is often the final word on hugely consequential cases, particularly those involving Congress and the executive branch.

I am proud to say that, once confirmed, Bradley Garcia will make history as the first Latino ever to serve on the DC Circuit since it was established in 1893. Latinos are historically underrepresented across the Federal bench, so confirming the first-ever

Latino to the second most important court is a long overdue step toward making the Federal bench better reflect our country.

When it comes to confirming people to the Federal bench, especially to the highly important and vital DC Circuit, it is imperative to get it right, and President Biden got it right with the historic nomination of Bradley Garcia.

A graduate of Johns Hopkins and Harvard Law School, Mr. Garcia has a wealth of public and private legal experience defending civil and human rights. He clerked for Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan and rose to be a partner at a law firm before leaving to serve in the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel.

Mr. Garcia, being of generous spirit, boasts an impressive pro bono record, advocating for clients in cases implicating the rights of immigrants and criminal defendants, women’s reproductive freedoms, and free and fair elections.

So I am confident that Bradley Garcia will make an outstanding addition to the DC Circuit, joining the proud company of so many other Biden appointments who are, little by little, making our courts a better reflection of the population of the United States of America.

Mr. Garcia received a bipartisan vote out of the Judiciary Committee. I am proud to say that. I thank my Republican colleagues who voted for him, and I expect that bipartisan support to carry on to the floor this afternoon. I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for working with us.

Senate Democrats will continue making judicial confirmations one of our top priorities moving forward. We have made remarkable progress in our work to confirm good mainstream and diverse judges under President Biden, and we will keep working toward that goal this week and beyond.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this week is National Police Week, a time to honor the service and sacrifice of America’s law enforcement officers. These brave men and women have chosen a difficult and often dangerous career. They have dedicated their lives to protecting the rest of us, defending our civil liberties and protecting our cities and neighborhoods. That decision requires tremendous courage and sacrifice by both the officer and their family.

We have recently been reminded of the dangers they face every day. Just a week ago, shoppers wandered in and

out of a busy outdoor mall in Allen, TX, near Dallas. It was a beautiful, seemingly normal Saturday afternoon until the day took a tragic turn. A man pulled up in his vehicle, got out of his car with multiple weapons, and started firing.

Fortunately, out of this terrible tragedy, fortunately, an officer was already on the scene for an unrelated call. He did what he was trained to do and what his conscience told him to do and ran immediately toward the danger. He didn’t hesitate to put his own life on the line in order to stop the shooter and save countless lives.

The shooter killed eight innocent people and wounded seven more. Had this brave officer not been on the scene, it is difficult to imagine how many more casualties would have been incurred, how many more lives would have been lost.

The shooter was carrying multiple weapons and had five additional guns in his car. If not for the quick action of that Allen police officer, more families would be making funeral arrangements today.

Stories like this underscore the dangers our officers take in their daily lives. A routine call or a traffic stop can turn deadly without warning. And these men and women still lace up their boots and put on a uniform each morning.

Each year for National Police Week, we honor the law enforcement community, naturally, and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. One of the most striking reminders of that sacrifice is the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, which sits along the National Mall here in Washington, DC.

It is a powerful tribute for the State, Federal, and local law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty and features marble walls, filled with more than 23,000 names. Each of those names represents an American hero. And, sadly, the names of 67 Texans will be added this year.

These officers gave their lives in service to their communities and our country. And while there is nothing we can do to console the families of those heroes, we can do more to support their brothers and sisters, still in blue.

Over the last couple of years, members of our law enforcement community have faced an onslaught of new challenges. From the pandemic to dangerous “defund the police” rhetoric to baseless attacks, the men and women in blue who keep us safe are subject to tremendous risks and strain.

They have watched as progressive politicians have made calls to fund the police and attempted to villainize the very heroes who keep us safe.

I am proud to say I have never been ashamed to support the men and women of our law enforcement community. I will always proudly stand with them. In the face of increasing crime rates and growing concerns about public safety, Congress must do more to