

have your back. With the Presiding Officer, my senior Senator from Nevada, we have your back.

That means working to see that our law enforcement officers have access to resource, training, and recruitment support—the kinds of things they need to do their job safely.

And we should also honor the men and women who have fallen in the line of duty protecting our communities. These men and women were heroes. They left behind family and friends and colleagues and communities they served and helped to protect—men and women like Las Vegas Metro Police Officer Truong Thai, who was tragically shot and killed this past October while responding to a domestic disturbance call.

Officer Thai, who came to this country as a child from Vietnam, was a pillar of our community. He was deeply devoted to his family. He was an experienced patrol officer who trained new recruits over the course of his career.

Officer Thai has been described as a mentor to his colleagues. One said: He “did the job”—“did the job”—“for all the right reasons.”

Officer Thai was also a friend to so many, a consummate family man. And when he wasn’t directly serving the community in uniform, he was often coaching volleyball or out in the water, boating with his family and friends.

And 7 months since he was murdered, Officer Thai continues to be missed by his loved ones and the entire Las Vegas community, and no one will forget him and his service and his kindness.

Unfortunately, Officer Thai is not the only one. Far too many officers have been killed in the line of duty. So, today, I am also thinking of these fallen officers and all of those who died in the line of duty in Nevada.

To honor their lives and bravery, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a list of names of Nevada police officers who recently passed way and whose names have been added to the Nevada Law Enforcement Officers Memorial and the James D. Hoff Peace Officer Memorial.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Officer Philip Carl Closi, Las Vegas Metro Police Department. Officer Ed Contreras, Las Vegas Metro Police Department. Officer Ray Edward East, Walker River Paiute Tribal Police Department. Special Deputy Marshal Jose E. Gomez, U.S. Marshals Service. Senior Federal Air Marshal Shawn P. Hennessee, Department of Homeland Security. Sergeant Douglas Michael King, Las Vegas Metro Police Department. Bailiff Gerald Raymond “Bear” Smith, Pahrump Justice Court. Detective Justin Terry, Las Vegas Metro Police Department. Officer Truong Thanh Thai, Las Vegas Metro Police Department.

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, these officers—these brave officers—made the ultimate sacrifice for our communities, and they deserve our eternal gratitude.

I will continue to work with my colleagues here in the Senate on solutions

that support our police departments, the officers who serve, and, always, their families.

I yield.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

U.S. SPACE COMMAND

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Madam President, the Space Command has been in the news lately. A final decision may be forthcoming soon, but the reported rationale behind that decision is misguided. There are rumors out there that ignore the fact that this basing process is about a variety of issues. But, really, there is only be about one thing: What is in the best interest of our national security?

The reports focus on the draconian laws of Alabama and Senator TUBERVILLE’s decision to bar military promotions. I have always been a strong advocate for reproductive rights, especially among servicemembers, and I vehemently disagree with Senator TUBERVILLE and his decision to hold nearly 200 general and flag officer nominations hostage, a hold that directly affects military readiness.

These nominees are waiting to take their new commands, move their families, and carry out their missions that they were trained to lead. They need to sell and leave the homes they are in. They can’t buy new homes. They can’t do anything until their promotions are confirmed.

These are important issues, but we can’t conflate these issues with the Space Command for the simple reason that our military should never be politicized. Senator TUBERVILLE wants to make this about politics. Senator BENNET and I want to make it about national security.

And space capabilities are absolutely essential to our national security. Whether you are talking about GPS for ground-based operations or secure communications systems for maritime navigation, every single domain in which the United States acts in the name of national defense, be it on land, air, cyber or maritime—you name it—depends on our ability to operate in space.

The entity responsible for coordinating these operations is U.S. Space Command, which was first established in Colorado Springs back in 1985 and formally stood up as a full combatant command in 2019.

Over the past 3½ years, the brilliant team at Space Command headquarters in Colorado have set the standard for U.S. expertise in space. They are building out our understanding of the global threat landscape, investing in our response capabilities, and hitting keen readiness milestones, including reach-

ing initial operating capability back in August of 2021.

This April, Space Command took another giant step forward when General Dickinson, who is in charge of leading these efforts, announced that U.S. Space Command will reach full operational capability by the end of the year at its current location in Colorado Springs—full operational capability. In other words, Space Command is on the verge of achieving full mission readiness in record time. That is an incredible achievement, and full credit goes to General Dickinson and the men and women on the frontlines of U.S. space leadership.

General Dickinson’s announcement underscores just how dangerous it would be to rubberstamp former President Trump’s reckless political decision to move Space Command from its current location in Colorado. Moving headquarters requires that we build new facilities, install secure communications infrastructure, and relocate or rehire our existing workforce.

Congress has never received an estimate for how much this would cost, even before factoring in the impact on national security. That is neither efficient nor strategic. It would take years—years—to replicate the milestone of full operational capability, and every single member of this body knows that we simply don’t have that luxury.

We don’t have that kind of time. We don’t have years while Russia is waging a brutal and ruthless war in Ukraine. We don’t have years while China is developing advanced hypersonic weapons and threatening to invade Taiwan. We don’t have years while Iran and North Korea are attempting to undermine our cyber security.

Right now, the United States is being challenged from every angle. Now is not the time to tie our hands and announce to our rivals that we are intentionally stepping back from being fully operational in space. It is not the time to announce to the world that we will let partisan politics interfere with our military decision making.

The arrival of U.S. Space Command on the cusp of reaching full operational capability in Colorado Springs should be received by the entire Senate as a remarkable achievement, one that strengthens our national security and one that expands our military might.

Space command’s formal establishment as a full combatant command in 2019 came not a moment too soon. Just over 2 years later, Russia conducted a direct-ascent anti-satellite weapons test, which created thousands of pieces of debris that Space Command has been tracking ever since.

A few months later, information gathered by U.S. satellites helped the intelligence community to sound the alarm as Putin was amassing thousands of troops on Russia’s border with Ukraine.

Satellites have spotted the massive construction of suspected nuclear missile silos by China's People's Liberation Army, as well as the illegal buildup of PLA bases in the South China Sea—a brazen breach of international law and proof positive that the CCP's threat to Taiwan is real.

Satellites directly facilitate our communications, our critical infrastructure, navigation and banking systems, as well as countless other technologies that we use every single day without even thinking twice. There is no question that President Trump's decision to move Space Command to Alabama was political—no question. Don't take my word for it. President Trump said so himself on live radio.

Take it from Republican Mayor John Suthers, the former Republican attorney general of the State of Colorado who personally heard Trump say, in the presence of a four-star general, that he wanted to see how the 2020 election turned out before making a final decision on the location of Space Command.

That is politics interfering with military decisions.

Take it from our senior military leaders whose best professional judgment led them to all recommend Colorado. Colorado Springs is the best place for Space Command because it is already at work here with tangible results about which all of us should be proud.

We shouldn't risk our national security. We should keep Space Command in Colorado Springs where it belongs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today to again speak on the multifaceted crisis that has defined our southern border and how the inaction and misleading rhetoric from President Biden and his administration has only exacerbated the continued fallout our country is experiencing.

Since the beginning of his tenure in the White House, President Biden's trademark has been border chaos with over 6.3 million illegal border crossings under his watch. Actions do speak louder than words, and President Biden continues to prove that his priorities are miles and miles away from the southern border. He has only visited the southern border once since becoming President. He has supported funding cuts to the Department of Homeland Security in his recent budget proposal; and that Department is charged with securing the border.

Our Border Patrol agents deserve needed support from the administration who has laid the crisis they face squarely at their feet. In this past week, according to the U.S. Border Patrol, there have been 67,759 apprehensions, 15,780 approximate "get-aways," 179 pounds of meth, 56 pounds of fentanyl, and 34 pounds of cocaine—all seized at our southern border in just 168 hours.

With our Border Patrol stretched inconceivably thin with little support from the administration, it is hard to fathom the true amount of illegal crossings, human trafficking, and illegal drugs that are currently entering our country through the southern border.

On top of all this, on Sunday, a person on the U.S. terror watchlist was arrested at the U.S.-Mexico border crossing in San Diego. This further proves the national security implications regarding this border crisis and the message displayed to the world about the State of our ports of entry.

The impact of the unprecedented amount of drugs entering through our southern border is certainly not lost on me either, nor anyone in this body. My State of West Virginia has seen the impact of this crisis directly, and it has created irreversible scars on our communities.

I just mentioned 56 pounds of fentanyl has been seized just last week alone. That is enough fentanyl to kill 12 million Americans. Recent data from the CDC shows that between 2016 and 2021, fentanyl overdoses have risen 279 percent in this country. Those between the ages of 24 through 44 have the highest overdose rates, and those involved fentanyl.

Through conversations I have had on this topic with the Biden administration officials, I have found their answers to be highly insufficient. This is a crisis that is killing a generation, and we know that these drugs are flowing across our southern border. The administration needs a better answer, and they must swiftly act to stop this killer.

Now as the title 42 authority has expired, it has added to the confusion on the southern border. The Biden administration is trying to reset a new normal based on failed policies as an attempt to redefine and hide their border failures. Trust me, the American people are not fooled by the recent victory lap taken by the Biden administration or their effort to claim success or progress. To the Biden administration, what they consider low numbers still far exceed the daily average of the prior administration. In fact, if illegal crossings continue at the levels that the administration is tallying, this White House is on track to break the previous record they set last year for the number of illegal immigrants caught at the border. This is not lost on the American people.

Unfortunately, this is a habit we have kind of seen from this President. We saw similar messaging antics from the administration regarding gas prices when they touted decreases that still put us above the average before President Biden even took office. The same goes for inflation, which saw record increases only after Democrats' supercharged spending. Yes, it came down, but it is still way, way too high.

Mitigating the border crisis is an ongoing effort and one we have to mon-

itor closely. For example, will the administration's actions of the past week create a massive backlog of asylum claims? What does that do to our system? It only adds to the issue of interior enforcement, something the Biden administration has clearly never prioritized.

Despite the President's too-little, too-late action, our border remains open. I know with certainty that once someone enters our country, the chances of them being expelled are very, very low. As we move forward, the situation of the border needs to be tightly watched, and it needs to be tracked over time if it deviates based on many different factors and changes to policies that we are currently experiencing. But above all else, we have to remain committed to policies that do secure the border, policies that protect our communities.

I don't know how these border communities are doing it. I really don't. Policies that support our Border Patrol officers and policies that prevent the unprecedented humanitarian tragedy that has become the custom over the past several years—whether it is the drug influx, the human trafficking, and just the human sorrow that we see that this has generated.

My Republican colleagues and I remain committed to this mission, and I encourage the Biden administration to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I am here today to join my colleague from West Virginia and others in, again, calling on the administration to secure our southern border.

Last Thursday, I traveled to Brownsville, TX, with my colleagues to show support for the Border Patrol agents and see firsthand the situation at the border as title 42 expires. I traveled repeatedly to the southern border; and each time I go, I see more and more people coming across illegally.

I have been to McAllen; I have been to Del Rio; I have been to Eagle Pass; I have been to El Paso, Mexico, Ecuador, Guatemala, Colombia—both sides of the border. As I go each time, more and more people are crossing the border illegally.

In the 3 days leading up to the end of title 42, Border Patrol reported 10,000-plus encounters each day and almost 83,000 for the week. In the first 6 months of fiscal year 2023, CBP encountered more than 1.5 million individuals—that is 6 months—1.5 million individuals in 6 months. That compares to about 2½ million crossings illegally last year. That means, at the pace we are on, it will be more than 3 million coming illegally this year.

This truly is a crisis, and it is one that has been caused by the Biden administration's unwillingness to enforce the law and reinstate policies that have been shown very clearly to work in the last administration.