

That is something I take pride in and call on my Senate colleagues and all Americans to celebrate this month, American Wetlands Month.

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. President, I rise today to recognize May as Jewish American Heritage Month. My good friend, Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and the late Senator Arlen Specter introduced the first resolution to recognize Jewish American Heritage Month in 2006. President George W. Bush then recognized the occasion through a presidential proclamation, which every subsequent administration has since renewed. I am proud to join Senators ROSEN, TIM SCOTT, and RICK SCOTT in introducing S. Res. 203, this year's resolution to recognize Jewish American Heritage Month.

Jews have turned to America as a place of refuge for more than 360 years, from when the first 23 Jews fled the Inquisition in Brazil to the pogroms in Eastern Europe, the Holocaust, and many other instances of violence and discrimination.

Jewish American Heritage Month gives us an opportunity to celebrate the contributions that American Jews have made to our country. The list is long and illustrious: there is Albert Einstein, the theoretical physicist who devised the theory of relativity, which expanded our understanding of the universe; the trailblazing women's rights advocate, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who was the second woman to sit on the Supreme Court, and the first female Jewish justice; Dr. Jonas Salk, who created the polio vaccine, saving countless lives; Emma Lazarus, who gave us the poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty that reads, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

The list goes on and on and includes Nobel Laureates, scientists, writers, musicians, entertainers, businessmen, academics, athletes, and more.

As we commemorate Jewish American Heritage Month and celebrate the contributions of American Jews, we must also remain committed to countering antisemitism both at home and abroad. Last year, we saw a 36 percent increase in antisemitic incidents nationwide, according to the Anti-Defamation League. In my home State of Maryland, the numbers are even more alarming, with antisemitic incidents nearly doubling from 2021 to 2022. That is why I have prioritized addressing the rise of antisemitism and hate-fueled violence. As Co-Chair of the U.S. Helsinki Commission and as the Special Representative on Antisemitism, Racism, and Intolerance for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in the European Parliamentary Assembly, I have held hearings on the alarming increase in antisemitism and its threat to democracy.

Last November, I convened a working group of high-level officials from across the government and non-profit sector to enhance coordination in

countering both domestic and international antisemitism.

The Biden administration has also acted to address antisemitism head-on. In December 2022, the President established an inter-agency group led by Domestic Policy Council staff and National Security Council staff to increase and better coordinate U.S. Government efforts to counter antisemitism, Islamophobia, and related forms of bias and discrimination within the United States. The group's first mandate is to develop a national strategy to counter antisemitism, which would help bring awareness to, address, and prevent antisemitic incidents. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues and the Biden administration to ensure that we use every tool available to confront this growing threat.

Awareness through education is a critical component of the effort to combat prejudice. We must educate members of the public, especially our young people, on the dangers of antisemitism and intolerance.

One of our best resources for doing this is the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. This past April, I led my colleagues in introducing a resolution to recognize the 30th anniversary of the Museum's founding. This national institution has welcomed over 47 million visitors during the past 30 years. It confronts hatred and Holocaust denial and preserves the history of the Holocaust. Visitors in person or online can hear stories of survivors, victims, and those who tried to help. Through teaching about the Holocaust, the Museum challenges the public and world leaders to take action against hate in their own communities.

The history of persecution of Jews and continued violence against Jewish communities in the United States and around the world today highlight the importance of the Jewish homeland, the State of Israel, and the U.S.-Israel relationship. Last month, Israel celebrated its 75th anniversary as an independent state. To mark this milestone, I am leading legislation with Senator TED CRUZ to direct the Treasury Department to mint a commemorative coin honoring Golda Meir, the first female prime minister of the State of Israel.

American Jews have had a strong bond with Israel since its inception as a Jewish homeland. But all Americans benefit from the special relationship between the United States and Israel. Together we face the common enemies of terrorism and extremism and are stronger and safer because of our relationship.

We also benefit economically from our partnership. More than 2,500 U.S. companies do business in Israel. Not only does America invest in Israel, but Israel invests in America, creating jobs in the United States and spurring innovation. Americans enjoy many technical innovations that came from Israel, such as USB drives, instant

messaging, medical cameras small enough to swallow, irrigation systems, and much more.

To me, one of the most important aspects of being an American Jew is the opportunity to apply Jewish values to my daily life. Jewish values like Tikkun Olam, which in Hebrew means "repairing the world," have helped inspire and guide my life in public service. My Jewish upbringing taught me to give back and that I have a responsibility to make a difference in the world. It's why I have pursued a career as an elected official since I was a law school student.

This Jewish American Heritage Month, let us honor the values and contributions of Jewish Americans who are a vital part of the American story and stand together to make clear that evil, hate, and antisemitism will not prevail.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Connecticut.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, one of the benefits of sitting in the chair, as the Senator from Maine is currently, is you get to hear a wide variety of views from our colleagues. And I have had the opportunity over the past several weeks, while sitting in the chair, to hear my Republican colleagues talk about their concerns regarding the lifting of title 42. They are concerns that are very often shared in many respects by Democrats as well.

But it is really important that we level set the facts when we are talking about what is happening at the border right now, as the pandemic authority to stop people from applying for asylum is—as required by law—being lifted.

It is really important that we understand that in this debate, there are a lot of spinning; there are a lot of myths; there are some just outright mistruths that are being spread about what is happening at the border and what has been happening at the border.

And so I am down on the floor just for a few minutes today to try to talk about a short list of those myths and untruths that are being spread, sometimes on this floor, but very often on social media and on cable news, so that we can find a way to have a functional conversation between Republicans and Democrats of good faith who actually want to make progress.

First, my sense is that there were a lot of conservatives out there and a lot of haters of President Biden who were kind of rooting for chaos at the border, who were hoping that there was just going to be this overwhelming flood of crossings and apprehensions at the border when title 42 was lifted.

Here is maybe the most important thing to say: It didn't happen. In fact, if you look at the number of people who were showing up at the southwest border right before title 42 expired—

and I will admit that number was elevated—we have seen half as many people crossing in the last 4 days as were crossing right before title 42 expired.

Four thousand, five thousand people—that is still a lot of people per day who are being apprehended at the border, but it does not match the doomsday predictions that many on the right were making.

So I think it is just important to acknowledge that fact. Because if you read the newspapers, if you paid attention to cable news, you would have thought that the minute that title 42 ended, there was going to be a doubling, a tripling of the number of people who showed up at the border. That didn't happen, in fact—52 percent less people are showing up.

Now, that may not hold. I can't promise that that is the future trajectory. But I am going to tell you a story today about why that happens, and it is connected to things Joe Biden did.

The second level-setting exercise I want to engage in is this idea that we should be in just lockdown fear of all these people who are coming to the United States at the southern border, that there is something uniquely dangerous about immigrants writ large, but, more specifically, undocumented immigrants.

Now, this is a trope that has been around for as long as the United States has existed, that we should fear immigrants coming to this country. But we now have data to tell us whether or not people who are coming to this country as immigrants or people who are even coming to this country as undocumented immigrants are a risk, a threat, to the United States compared to natural-born citizens.

This is a study that Donald Trump's Department of Justice released. This isn't Joe Biden; this isn't Barack Obama. This is Donald Trump's Department of Justice that released a study that found that “undocumented immigrants had substantially lower crime rates than native-born citizens and legal immigrants across a range of felony offenses.”

That is the truth. It is Donald Trump's truth that, in fact, people who come to this country, whether they are legal immigrants or without documentation, are not committing crimes at a greater rate than natural-born Americans.

That doesn't excuse our broken system. That is not an argument to continue to allow so many people to come to this country without documentation. It just means that we shouldn't set on fire these arguments that we have something unique to fear.

Why? Because these people are coming to the United States for a better life, because people are coming to the United States to flee terror and torture, persecution, violence, and economic destitution.

There are criminals amongst their midst. There are individuals who end up committing crimes but at no great-

er rate of offense than people who are born in this country. It is just important to acknowledge that.

I want to talk about four of these myths very quickly.

The first one is that President Biden had the authority to keep title 42 in place. That is just not true. For the better part of the last 2 years, Republicans, conservatives, and the broader right have been pillorying President Biden for not lifting COVID authorities fast enough: The pandemic is over, the right says. Why do we still have restrictions on our movement? Why are there still restrictions on air travel?

Interestingly, the only restriction Republicans wanted to keep in place was the one at the border to stop people from coming into the United States who looked different from them.

The pandemic is over. Title 42 can't stay in place. The President doesn't have the legal authority to continue to turn people around and deny them the right to apply for asylum. So it is just not true that this is President Biden's choice. And if you are a constitutionalist, if you are somebody that believes that the President cannot and should not exceed his constitutional statutory authority, then you have to support the lifting of title 42. Now, we could change the law, and there are proposals to do that, but President Biden cannot keep title 42 in place any longer than he declares a public health emergency.

The second myth—and I have heard this from some of my colleagues here—is that everything was great under President Trump and it exploded under President Biden. In fact, sometimes you hear this stat: that crossings were at a historic low under President Trump.

Well, that is true to the extent that gas prices were at a historic low under President Trump, because crossings were at a historic low for 1 year, for 2020, when we were in the middle of the teeth of the pandemic, and nobody was going anywhere. Yes, during that period of time, when we shut down the border, when nobody in the United States was moving, when nobody in Mexico was moving, we did have a relatively low number of crossings. But just before the pandemic, when President Trump was in office, we had a historically high number of crossings.

In 2019, 800,000 people showed up at the border. That was twice the number for the previous decade, on average. During President Obama's time in office and the first few years of President Trump, 400,000 people were showing up. Then, in 2019, the number spiked to 800,000. They go down for 1 year, but they came back up as soon as the worst of the pandemic abated.

So it is just not true that this problem was a creation of President Biden's swearing-in. Numbers were abnormally high right before the pandemic, and they started jumping back up once the pandemic started to lessen in its severity.

The third myth is that President Biden didn't prepare for the end of title 42. That is also not true, and I gave you that statistic to show that. In fact, crossings right now are half what they were right before title 42 expired. I can't define all the reasons for that and maybe those numbers are temporary, but it is definitely true that President Biden has taken extraordinary steps to be ready for this moment.

Even while Congress refused to act and give him any help, President Biden surged thousands of troops to the border. He put more asylum officers there. He moved Border Patrol. He signed agreements with Mexico in which Mexico agreed to take a certain number of individuals who were coming from countries like Venezuela and Cuba. And he implemented a really tough new asylum rule—a rule that, frankly, many people on his political left say went beyond his statutory authority. That rule says that you actually cannot apply for asylum at the border unless you have applied beforehand in a safe third country or you made an appointment. That is a really innovative, tough new approach to try to reduce the number of crossings and presentations at the border—a step that, frankly, President Trump didn't even entertain.

So it is just not true to say that President Biden hasn't done anything. In fact, he has taken extraordinary steps to try to be as ready as he can, which leads me to the fourth and final myth, which is that this is all President Biden's problem. It is not. It is our problem. We haven't significantly updated the immigration laws of this country since the 1980s or 1990s. It has been 30 years since we have changed the law in this Nation to reflect the changing nature of migration globally and the changing nature of migration to the United States. We, through our inaction, have left President after President, Republican and Democrat, with a mess because our laws don't work; our immigration system is broken. Yet we blame the President for failing to be able to work miracles out of a system that has been fundamentally rendered ineffective.

Let's be very clear. Republicans have had ample opportunity to fix the laws of this Nation. In 2013, when the Presiding Officer and I got to the Senate, there was a deal on the table to fundamentally and comprehensively reform our immigration laws. Republicans in the Senate joined with Democrats to get that done, but the Republican Speaker of the House refused to have a vote on it in the House.

Since then, there have been a number of efforts to reach out and try to find compromise with Republicans, and it has generally been the Republican Party writ large that has decided that there is too big a political cost for them to take in trying to find common ground on immigration reform.

Now, I say that this is a position from the Republican Party writ large

because I do know and believe that there are individual Republican Senators in this body who do want to find compromise, who do want to recognize that this cannot be solved by any President so long as the laws of this Nation don't provide resources to move asylum claims faster, don't give Border Patrol what they need, don't allow enough people to come into this country through legal pathways.

Part of the reason that I am down here on the floor today trying to correct these myths and untruths is because I think it is a necessary predicate in order for us as a body, Republicans and Democrats, to sit down and talk about solving this problem.

The lack of action in Congress has left President Biden an impossible task. He has done the best that he conceivably can with a set of broken laws. But instead of spreading these myths and often outright lies about what is happening at the border and the consequences of lifting title 42, we should, as body, instead, do our job and fix our broken immigration laws.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today to unmask one of the major players behind the Republican debt limit brinksmanship.

With renewable energy outcompeting fossil fuels, Big Oil is worried that its oil well has run dry and wants to keep pumping the American people dry for all that they are worth. So the oil and the gas industry is running its tried and true playbook with Speaker KEVIN MCCARTHY taking the snap as their quarterback.

The Republicans all voted against the Inflation Reduction Act. They turned away from its provisions to create a livable future, its millions of new, clean energy jobs, its investments in environmental justice communities. The only thing Republicans haven't turned away is the billions of dollars in new investments unleashed in their States and districts from this landmark legislation, with \$150 billion in investments already announced across the country because of the IRA, because of the largest climate bill in American history.

I have seen Republicans on TV fearmongering about the Inflation Reduction Act, but I haven't seen a single Republican turn down any of those \$150 billion or any of those jobs, or all those benefits for those communities in red States.

But the fossil fuel industry itself is actually scared that something might happen to their season of record-shattering profits. They are scared that utilities will finally wake up and realize that installing new renewables is cheaper and more cost effective than running existing coal plants.

Natural gas plants are also set up to go the way of the dinosaur. In fact, we won't have to dig up any more dino-

saur in order to create the fuel. Building new solar and wind, instead of new natural gas, could save American energy customers nearly \$30 billion on their energy bills.

Renewables are outcompeting fossil fuels. The average levelized cost of energy for coal and gas is much higher than wind and solar. How much? Well, coal is nearly double the cost of solar. Natural gas is almost 1.5 times more costly than wind. And this is not accounting for the new IRA subsidies, the new climate bill subsidies from last year.

These statistics are the real fear of fossil fuel executives. These clean energy gains threaten Big Oil's massive bonus and even bigger profit margin.

Big Oil more than doubled its profits in 2022, making nearly \$220 billion in that year alone and paying out \$110 billion to their investors. Those are windfalls made on the backs of American family budgets. Republicans say they care about budgets, but the only budget they are committed to protecting is the one of the big oil and big gas industry across our country.

That is why attacks on clean energy and climate action are on the Republicans' debt limit and budget agendas. That is why Republicans are attacking tax credits for the American-made clean energy that makes us more secure, saves money, and protects our health and our climate. That is why Republicans are reportedly trying to jam a Big Oil and Natural Gas wish list masquerading as a so-called permitting package through debt limit negotiations, instead of going through regular order on the floor of the United States Senate.

The Republican permitting package would give fossil fuels even more of a leg up while their repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy provisions would hold our clean energy future hostage. Republicans don't want to use the budget to give students and children a head start. They want to give Big Oil a headstart over clean energy.

So just as we cannot default on our national debt, we cannot default on our debt to society. That means we cannot default on climate action for a livable future.

Climate should be off the table in debt limit negotiations—no repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act, no provisions to fast-track fossil fuel permitting in our country.

We know we need to build a clean energy future, but the Republicans' permitting proposal wouldn't help build on the IRA. It would bury the IRA. The Republicans' permitting priorities are a carbon bomb designed to unleash fossil fuels to push renewable energy off the grid, to stall the progress that was made.

Their priorities, apparently, don't include fixes for the electric transmission issues in this country, when transmission is what could improve reliability and deliver affordable energy

to all Americans. In other words, they want to have permitting for more oil and gas drilling, but they don't want to fix the transmission issues. None of that is on the table that the Republicans are asking for in order to solve the problem of moving renewable energy across the country.

Permitting should be about transmission lines, not pipelines.

And combined with their attacks on the Inflation Reduction Act, their priorities will devastate our climate, take away good-paying jobs, and cost Americans billions of dollars.

The Inflation Reduction Act is projected to save households more than \$1,000 every year by 2030. It is projected to create 550,000 clean energy jobs, and it is projected to give us a fighting chance at meeting our climate targets. We cannot throw that away.

We have a climate test for success—jobs, justice, and emissions reductions. That is our climate test. If we negotiate on the Inflation Reduction Act and permitting as part of debt limit conversations, we will fail that climate test, and the end result will be an environmental and climate catastrophe.

Climate action and clean energy progress can't be held hostage in this debate. Fast-tracking fossil fuels while attacking renewables is and always has been and always will be the Big Oil game plan. We can't play their game. We can't play with our future.

We cannot default on our debt, and we also cannot allow the destructive Republican budget to be implemented. That is why I have joined some of my Democratic colleagues in calling on President Biden to utilize his authority under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, which clearly states:

The validity of the public debt of the United States . . . shall not be questioned.

It is in the U.S. Constitution. Using that authority would allow the President and the United States to continue to pay the country's bills on time and without delay. It will ensure that we prevent a potential global economic catastrophe.

But let's not forget that it is the Bush and Trump tax cuts for the wealthy that are the driving force behind the debt that the Republicans are now crying crocodile tears over.

Speaker MCCARTHY says he wants to limit, save, and grow. What he and the Republicans really want to do is to cut, gut, and slow: cut taxes even more for the wealthy and corporations; gut programs like Medicaid, Head Start, Meals on Wheels, Pell grants, and community health centers; and slow the pace of clean energy and climate action—wind, solar, all-electric vehicles, and battery storage technologies that will revolutionize energy consumption in our country—all to protect Big Oil buddies, gas buddies, all across the country.

A livable future and affordable clean energy are budget realities. We can save money for American families and save our planet at the same time.