

she is the first openly LGBTQ Senator of color to serve in this body. Today, the Senate takes another step toward fully reflecting our vibrant democracy.

Now, LAPHONZA's life story can be summarized in two words: serving others. By her own telling, service was practically a dinner table conversation growing up in Magnolia, MS. After losing her father to illness, LAPHONZA watched her mom sacrifice everything to put her kids first: working night shifts as a nurse, as a security guard, a classroom aide, anything to help her kids have a better life.

No surprise, that example left a mark on LAPHONZA for the rest of her days. Following in her mom's footsteps, LAPHONZA has dedicated her entire career to fighting for others: fighting for women, fighting for working families, and fighting for the cause of justice. I know she will do the same here in the Senate.

So, again, this is a proud moment for all of us. And I know this must be a proud moment for LAPHONZA's family.

I know you are not supposed to address members of the Senate Gallery, Mr. President, but let me say this to everyone who had attended here and who are still here: We are all very happy LAPHONZA's family could join us to share in this special day. We share in their joy too.

Finally, to our colleague LAPHONZA, I know these last few days have felt like a whirlwind. I know it seems like there is a million things to do and so little time to do them. But rest assured, we are here to help you.

I spent a great half hour, 45 minutes talking to LAPHONZA, and she is going to be one great Senator. We are ready to work with her. All of us who have stood where LAPHONZA stands now have felt the awesome weight of holding this office and are ready to help her. I urge you, if you permit me, to never let the sense of duty disappear, for in our hands rests the trust, the wishes, the hopes, and the burdens of the American people.

So to Senator BUTLER, congratulations on this honor and welcome to the Senate today. Today is a day of celebration.

As we celebrate, we also remember to give thanks to our late colleague and friend Senator Feinstein.

For the information of Senators, the floor of the Senate will close so Members can attend the memorial service of Senator Feinstein in San Francisco this Thursday. And on that day, it will be my honor to speak at Senator Feinstein's memorial to give thanks for all she did for this country and to honor the legacy she leaves behind.

I hope all my colleagues who worked with her all these years are able to attend so we can say a final goodbye to one of the greatest public servants to serve in this Chamber.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 5692

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read the following:

A bill (H.R. 5692) making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. McCONNELL. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

WELCOMING LAPHONZA BUTLER TO THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to begin today by welcoming our newest colleague, Senator LAPHONZA BUTLER of California.

As the Senate continues to mourn our late friend and colleague Dianne Feinstein, I know the people of California are grateful for Senator BUTLER's willingness to serve. And I know our colleagues join me in welcoming her.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, last week, the Senate voted to prevent a domestic budget dispute from shutting down the Federal Government. Now, with straightforward, short-term funding in place, it is time for Congress to redouble our efforts on a number of unfinished priorities.

In the coming weeks, the Senate needs to continue making progress on full-year appropriations. And we will begin by funding important resources for military construction, veterans services, agriculture, housing, and transportation infrastructure.

But our work does not stop there. The Senate also needs to address urgent supplemental funding needs and

continue our work to bring the Biden administration's reckless spending and radical regulations to heel.

Many of our colleagues are particularly keen to deliver additional relief to communities rebuilding after devastating national disasters—from hurricanes on the gulf coast to wildfires in Hawaii, to flooding in Kentucky.

Bipartisan majorities in both Chambers continue to recognize that providing additional lethal assistance to Ukraine's defense against Russian aggression is in the United States' direct interest.

Across the country, as historic inflation continues to wreck household budgets, millions of working families are ready to turn the page on Bidenomics.

After three record-setting years of functionally open borders, folks in every State are eager for Congress to force the Biden administration to start cleaning up the southern border crisis. The fiscal year that just ended saw apprehensions at the southern border exceed 2 million for only the second time in history. The first time was just last year. Some reports expect that the last month's total could clock in as the highest on record. On President Biden's watch, illegal border crossings and asylum claims have stretched Border Patrol and ICE personnel to their breaking point.

Authorities are seizing hundreds of millions of lethal doses of fentanyl, although they also estimate that they are apprehending just a fraction—roughly a quarter—of all the fentanyl that is smuggled at the border.

Frankly, this is less about providing border personnel with new resources than it is about giving them the authority and direction to actually enforce the law. It is certainly not about bailing out blue State sanctuary cities while the tsunami of illegal immigration continues unabated. It is about the administration finally taking commonsense steps to end their wrong-headed policies that have encouraged illegal immigrants to cross our borders in the first place.

Every State is now a border State. Major cities like New York and Chicago are being overwhelmed by arrivals from the southern border. Finally, even blue State mayors and Governors are joining the chorus calling out the administration for its utter failure on border security.

Of course, across the country, liberal local governments and innocent residents are also facing the consequences of years of soft-on-crime policies, and once again our Nation's Capital leads the headlines.

Just last night, for example, Congressman HENRY CUELLAR was the victim of a violent carjacking a few blocks from the Capitol Building. Armed assailants threatened him at gunpoint and stole his car. Thankfully, our House colleague was not injured, and his car has been recovered.

It is not even the first time this year that a Member of Congress has been assaulted while in town for work. But this is what private American citizens are facing every single day, like the 22,000 people who had their car stolen in Chicago this year or the 20,000 victims of felony assault in New York City. This sort of brazen violence against anyone should be a wake-up call for local officials.

Last year, a 54-year-old man was murdered at a gas station in Washington by a group of teenagers attempting to steal his car. The city is now averaging two carjackings every day, and these crimes are increasingly being committed by young people.

At a certain point, the American people who visit our Nation's Capital by the millions every year might expect the city's liberal government to finally start getting serious about securing the streets, but even as senseless violence increases, local leaders are bent—bent—on undermining public safety.

One member of the DC Council—the same soft-on-crime panel that tried to weaken sentencing for repeat offenders earlier this year—proposed recently that local courts be required to provide a written explanation before releasing violent criminals before trial. The courts' response? Such a requirement was “not feasible” because it would “significantly increase” their workload. All this in a city where prosecutors declined to even prosecute two-thirds of the arrests last year.

American families deserve to feel safe in their homes and in their neighborhoods and certainly in the Nation's Capital. It shouldn't take another assault or carjacking or homicide to convince leftwing local leaders to start actually doing their jobs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

CRIME

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my honor to represent the State of Illinois and the city of Chicago. I cannot tell you how many times Members of the Senate and the House in the other party have gone to the microphones to condemn the city of Chicago and its crime rate.

Let me tell you point-blank, there is too much crime in the city of Chicago, but it is not the only city in America that suffers from that problem. Cities large and small have problems every single day with violent gun crime. My hometown of East St. Louis is a tiny little town of 20,000, 25,000 in comparison to the large metropolis of Chicago. Yet the rate of gun violence there is even higher in East St. Louis than it is in Chicago.

We have to do everything we can to deal with it. Let me tell you what “everything we can” means. It means we have to look at the flood of guns coming into these cities from out of State, primarily, without background checks, that are getting into the hands of

criminals, who are turning around and killing innocent people. To ignore this flood of guns in the United States of America and condemn crime is to basically take a position that you are not going to look at reality. And that is what we are faced with.

We have to have a sensible policy when it comes to background checks, universal background checks, to make sure guns are not ending up in the hands of people who will misuse them. When they confiscate thousands of guns every year, which they do in Chicago, they find that they come from the surrounding States, which have lax laws, if any, when it comes to checking the background of purchasers. That is a critical element. If you raise that issue on the floor of the U.S. Senate, you will have the whole side of the aisle—the other side—coming here and waving their arms about Second Amendment rights.

I want to tell you, we need common sense when it comes to guns and gun safety. I want that to be part of the conversation on making our cities safer.

The second thing I want to really raise is personal to the Senate. If you want to stop crime in the streets of Chicago or any city—Cleveland or Chicago, for example—one of the first things you need is a competent, aggressive criminal prosecutor, a person known as a U.S. attorney who works as part of the 85 U.S. attorneys across the United States enforcing the strong Federal laws we have enacted.

So why don't we have a U.S. attorney in the city of Chicago? Why don't we have a U.S. attorney in the city of Cleveland? Because of the objections of one Republican Senator who has come to the floor over and over again to stop these appointments from taking place. The nominees have been cleared. They have gone through background checks. Both sides, Democrats and Republicans, have approved them. They are sitting on the calendar, and they cannot move because one Senator from the State of Ohio, a Republican Senator, refuses to lift his hold and give us a chance to vote on them.

So you can give all the speeches you want on the floor of the U.S. Senate from every Member on the other side about how we have to end crime in the city of Chicago, but do me a favor. Speak to this one Senator and convince him that a competent, aggressive criminal prosecutor as U.S. attorney in the city of Chicago is one step toward that goal. To ignore that and to let him hold up this nominee is just unfathomable and inexcusable.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, another point I would like to make is that over the weekend, we managed to avoid a government shutdown with a 45-day extension, a bipartisan continuing resolution. Keeping the lights on is a win for the American people. It used to be con-

sidered just normal procedure around here. Now it is a reason for celebration and victory because we have such a discordant and dissident group heading up Congress on both sides of the Rotunda.

I am disappointed that, unfortunately, the continuing resolution did not include critical funding for the war in Ukraine. It is impossible to explain to my constituency why, when the Ukrainians are in the midst of fighting and dying every single day for their nation against the war criminal Vladimir Putin, this Congress somehow or another managed to pass a spending bill for 45 days and not include more funding for the Ukrainian cause. This assistance is absolutely essential to make sure we stop the aggression of Russia against this tiny country.

A small group of isolationists and Russian sympathizers—largely MAGA extremists in the House—threatened to hold the entire country, the United States, hostage over this funding despite the overwhelming bipartisan support for Ukraine. Ronald Reagan and John McCain must be turning over in their graves.

I am glad that after the vote on Saturday, Senators SCHUMER, McCONNELL, MURRAY, COLLINS, COONS, and GRAHAM released a joint, bipartisan statement reaffirming the Senate's commitment to supporting Ukraine and addressing the funding in the weeks ahead. I couldn't agree more.

Let's keep this in perspective. The American people have been generous to Ukraine, but this critical assistance that has halted and reversed Russian aggression accounts for only about one-half of 1 percent of all the Federal spending in our country. So for a modest investment by U.S. standards, we are keeping hope and freedom alive in Ukraine while they are offering their lives. Our European allies have stepped up and provided even more assistance than the United States, and I am glad they have. It is a joint effort.

Quite simply, Putin is willing to keep sending Russian conscripts to their death in the hopes that we in the democratic transatlantic alliance will get tired of his war of tyranny. I hope we never do.

Putin is counting on the West, NATO, the United States to grow weary of his Ukrainian war of attrition. We cannot let him prevail by this approach. We have to be organized and unified in our effort.

GENERAL MARK MILLEY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a separate issue, I would like to address the announced retirement of U.S. GEN Mark Milley.

On January 17, 1961, 3 days before he was to leave office, President Dwight Eisenhower addressed the American people. His political farewell to the Nation surprised a lot of people. They expected him to give the “old soldier's speech,” like Douglas MacArthur. Instead, Eisenhower surprised many by