

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 Republican leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, over the weekend, the southern border crisis set a sobering new record. In the past year, CBP conducted more border apprehensions than in any year on record. Officials reported more than 2.4 million apprehensions since last October, and this number doesn't even count the illegal entries that actually evaded authorities.

Most alarmingly, this news isn't actually new. Last year was the third straight year we set an all-time record for border apprehensions. In other words, every year that President Biden has been in charge of border security, his administration hasn't simply failed; it has failed to a historic and catastrophic degree.

America has had functionally open borders for years. Along with millions of illegal aliens, we have allowed Chinese fentanyl and other lethal drugs to literally pour into our country and kill thousands of Americans every year.

So the Democrats' border crisis isn't new. What is new is their supposed desire to finally do something about it. Now that blue State mayors and Governors are starting to feel the consequences of this catastrophic policy failure, the Biden administration says it now wants to take action. Of course, the administration mostly just wants to throw money at the problem and at its friends in local government. Apparently, the preferred response to a border crisis is a blue State bailout.

Meanwhile, a particularly dangerous consequence of the President's border crisis is making history of its own. In the past year, southern border apprehensions of individuals on the terror watchlist broke an alltime record, the record that was just set the year before.

Even President Biden's Department of Homeland Security has admitted in its 2024 "Homeland Threat Assessment" that "record encounters of migrants arriving from a growing number of countries have complicated border and immigration security."

The American people have watched the Biden administration spend their way into plenty of problems, but they haven't managed to spend their way out of a single one yet.

Our country deserves real law enforcement and real borders. Border security is national security. And on that front, the Senate has a lot of work to do.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, on a related matter, in the coming days and weeks, the Senate

will work urgently to address several major, related threats to the American people, to our allies, and our interests at home and abroad.

After Russia's escalation against Ukraine last year, the savage Iran-backed terrorist attacks on Israel, once again, reminded the civilized world of the persistent evil that demands our attention and our action.

The United States must stand with our ally Israel for as long as it takes to restore its security, and we have a responsibility not to look away from the brutality and inhumanity the terrorists inflicted on innocent Israeli men, women, and children.

Unfortunately, our own Western media haven't made that task any easier. Some of the most disturbing firsthand accounts reported the savages responsible for the October 7 attacks had beheaded Israeli infants and committed other unspeakable atrocities. Some in the press leapt to express skepticism and even discredit the reports of eyewitnesses. But these sickening accounts were proven to be true.

In an especially reckless example, America's "paper of record" took the word of Gaza's terrorist overlords and actually announced to the world that an apparent explosion at a hospital had been an Israeli strike that killed hundreds of people.

We know now it was the terrorists themselves whose rockets struck the Palestinian civilian target. But as the saying goes, this dangerous lie had traveled around the world before truth had literally laced up its shoes.

Perhaps the corporate media organizations that have spent years warning about disinformation should exercise a bit more caution with the claims of a terrorist organization that uses civilians as human shields.

So let us get a few things straight. There is a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. People are suffering. But the blame for their suffering belongs solely to the terrorists who divert humanitarian and economic assistance and build terror tunnels and rocket launchers instead. And the solution is not to use the same corrupted mechanisms to allow Hamas to further exploit this crisis of its own making.

The Israeli Government's stated intention is to destroy Hamas's capacity to wage war and end the stranglehold of Gaza.

And the West has every reason to expect that Israel will hold itself—as it always does—to the highest standards of humane conduct. But make no mistake, war is hell. This will be a difficult, bloody, and costly fight. And we know Hamas's propaganda machine will do everything possible to exploit every inadvertent civilian casualty.

There can be no moral equivalence between terrorism and self-defense. The President must give Israel the time and space it needs to achieve its military objectives in Gaza. America should assist Israel with any intelligence, planning, and resources their

military requires. This includes coordinating closely with Israel to ensure new channels for international humanitarian assistance and prevent Hamas from again expropriating it.

Hamas is Israel's primary focus, but it is clear that Iran's Hezbollah proxies in Syria and Lebanon are toeing up to the line.

Israel has responded quickly and decisively to repeated attacks from Lebanon in recent weeks, and the United States and other Israeli partners should make clear that Hezbollah and Iran will face devastating consequences if they escalate the situation.

Unfortunately, terrorists have also escalated their attacks on American forces in the region. Reports indicate multiple attacks in recent days in Iraq and in Syria. As one U.S. official put it, there are "red lights flashing everywhere."

Deterrence has failed, and the United States must restore it before Iran-backed terrorists kill Americans. We must strike back hard at anyone who targets U.S. personnel.

More broadly, it is time for President Biden to close the book on his failed Iran policy. It is past time to work with Republicans to craft a bipartisan Iran strategy that will actually outlive this administration, unite America's allies, and counter the full range of threats Iran poses to the region and to the world. This has to include confronting Iran's role as the world's most active state sponsor of terror. We ignore this growing threat at our own peril.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL G. WHITAKER

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, a quick note about the business pending before the Senate: leadership at the FAA, the Federal Aviation Administration.

It has been more than 18 months since the FAA last had a Senate-confirmed leader, and in that time, we have seen an alarming number of close calls on runways and operational challenges, including the outage of the critical Notice to Air Missions system. Compounding these issues is a shortage of air traffic controllers that has led to flight delays and cancellations.

The FAA urgently needs a permanent leader to address these concurrent challenges and guarantee the safety of travelers. Michael Whitaker is that leader, and I am glad that the Senate is going to confirm him over the next day or so.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Madam President, next, I would like to turn to a different topic.

Seeing is believing, we often say. But that is not really true anymore because, thanks to artificial intelligence, we are increasingly encountering fake images, doctored videos, and manipulated audio. Whether we are watching TV, answering the phone, or scrolling through our social media feeds, it has become harder and harder to trust our own eyes and our own ears. The boundaries of reality are becoming blurrier every day.

We have always consumed information under the assumption that what we are seeing and hearing is coming from the source that it says it is from and that a human has created it. It is such a basic notion that it is left unsaid and taken for granted. But right now, that assumption is under threat.

Deception is not new. Fraud is not new. Misinformation is not new. These are age-old problems, of course. What is new, though, is how quickly and easily someone can deceive or defraud and do it on a staggering scale. With powerful generative AI tools at their fingertips, all con artists need are just a few minutes to spin up a scam or a lie: doctored images falsely claiming that there was an explosion at the Pentagon, fake advertisements using the likenesses of celebrities like Tom Hanks to peddle products, phone calls that replicate the voices of family members purporting to be kidnapped and needing money, manipulated audio clips of elected officials saying things they did not say.

These are just some of the examples of misuse we have already seen. It is not a parade of horrors about the future of AI; these are things that already happened.

We are only scratching the surface of what is possible with AI, and because the possibilities are so vast—much of it yet to be discovered—it is easy to feel overwhelmed by it all, to think it is so complex, you don't even know where to start. But we do know where to start.

This issue of distinguishing whether content is made by a human or made by a machine actually has a very straightforward solution. Content made by AI should be clearly labeled as such so that people know what they are looking at. That is exactly what the bipartisan AI Labeling Act that Senator KENNEDY and I introduced calls for. It puts the onus where it belongs: on the companies and not the consumers—very straightforward—because people shouldn't have to double- and triple-check or parse through thick lines of code to find out whether something was made by AI. It should be right there in the open, clearly marked with a label.

Labels will help people to be informed. They will also help companies using AI build trust in their content. We have a crisis of trust in our information sources, in large part due to polarization and misinformation. But if the current situation seems bad without guardrails, the coming onslaught of AI-generated content will make the

problem much, much worse. Misinformation will multiply. Scams will skyrocket. Labels are an important antidote to these problems in the age of AI.

Whether we are ready or not, AI is here, and in the not too distant future, it will reshape virtually every facet of our lives—how we work, how our kids learn in school, how we get healthcare, to name a few. So to wait to take action or, worse, to do nothing at all is not a good option. We have seen that movie before with foreign interference in our elections, with medical misinformation that claims so many lives, and with data breaches that left Americans exposed and vulnerable.

This moment requires us to get serious about legislating proactively, not belatedly reacting to the latest innovation. Yes, Congress has a lot more to learn about AI, both its opportunities and threats. Yes, there is no simple answer or single solution for a very, very complex challenge and set of opportunities. But there is one thing we know to be true right now: People deserve to know if the content they are encountering was made by a human or not. This isn't a radical, new idea; it is common sense.

There is a long road ahead for regulating AI in the policymaking space, but that should not prevent us from doing this good and sensible thing as soon as we can.

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.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 198, H.R. 4366; that during the consideration of Calendar No. 198, H.R. 4366, Murray-Collins substitute amendment No. 1092 be considered an Appropriations Committee amendment for the purposes of rule XVI, with no other rule XVI points of order waived by this agreement; that H.R. 4366, H.R. 4368, as reported by the House of Representatives on June 27, 2023, and H.R. 4820, as reported in the House of Representatives on July 24, 2023, serve as the basis for defense of germaneness under rule XVI for any floor amendments and that it be in order for floor amendments to amend the substitute in more than one place; further, that the only amendments in order to the Murray-Collins substitute amendment No. 1092 be the following amendments, if offered, and that at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate vote on the

amendments: Moran, No. 1250; Daines, No. 1185; Sullivan, No. 1216; Sullivan, No. 1221; Peters-Cornyn, No. 1283; Rosen, No. 1117; Schatz, No. 1120; Booker-Tuberville, No. 1175; Tillis-Welch, No. 1264; Reed, No. 1202; Britt, No. 1270; Kelly-Tillis, No. 1116; Hirono-Moran, No. 1113; Warnock-Cornyn, No. 1351; Smith-Ricketts, No. 1134; Rosen-Crapo, No. 1220; Cardin, No. 1277; Padilla, No. 1140; Shaheen, No. 1131; Klobuchar-Moran, No. 1203; Kelly, No. 1133; Padilla, No. 1139; Ossoff-Braun, No. 1255; Merkley-Crapo, No. 1352; Ernst, No. 1177; Stabenow, No. 1115; Vance, No. 1210; Rubio, No. 1237; Kennedy, No. 1354; Braun, No. 1182; Hawley, No. 1200; Cruz, No. 1296; Blackburn, No. 1349; Budd, No. 1243; Cramer, No. 1241; Paul, No. 1217; Paul, No. 1347; Cruz, No. 1249; Lankford, No. 1232; and Lee, No. 1121; further, that 60 affirmative votes be required for the adoption of the following amendments: Cramer, No. 1241; Paul, No. 1217; Paul, No. 1347; Cruz, No. 1249; Lankford, No. 1232; and Lee, No. 1121; further, that upon disposition of the amendments listed above, the Senate vote on adoption of substitute amendment No. 1092, as amended, if amended, with a 60 affirmative vote threshold required for adoption; that the bill, as amended, if amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended, with a 60 vote affirmative threshold required for passage; finally, that upon disposition of the bill, the Committee on Appropriations be discharged from further consideration and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 662, the Scott-Rubio substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with a 60 affirmative vote threshold required for passage, without intervening action or debate.

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Madam President, we are now moving forward after many weeks delay on the omnibus—no, not the omnibus but the three appropriations bills—Agriculture, MILCON and T-HUD—as one package, as one minibus.

We have pledged as Democrats to try and go through regular order. It has been a long and arduous process. As you can see, there are 46 amendments here and, in fact, even though there was a pledge there would be no poison pills, there were many poison pills that were offered by the other side. However, instead of just saying, "Well, we didn't have an agreement; let the bill go down the drain," we want to get this bill done. It is important to move the appropriations bills. We worked long and hard. It took a while to work through the vagaries and negotiations on many poison pill amendments that, in my judgment, shouldn't have been offered to begin with. But here we are; we are moving forward.

I want to thank Appropriations Chair MURRAY. She has done an amazing,