

amazing job here. I want to thank Leader COLLINS and thank all of our colleagues for working this out. Under the old days, regular order would have been a lot different than it is today. We are still moving forward, and I am glad for it.

I yield to the distinguished and hard-working chair of the Appropriations Committee, Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, after many discussions with Members on both sides of the aisle about ensuring a robust amendment process and a final vote on this strong bipartisan package of appropriations bills, I am pleased to say we have reached an agreement to finally get voting on the amendments and passage of this minibus.

I want to thank everyone who has worked with me and the senior Senator from Maine so we can get this process moving again to show the American people this place can actually work.

This is so important, especially right now because over the last few weeks, the American people have seen a lot of chaos and dysfunction in Congress. It has come at a time when the world needs to see U.S. leadership is still strong because it is not just the American people who are watching Congress right now. Our allies are watching. Our adversaries are watching. We need to show them that we are still able to work together and solve problems and respond effectively to the pressing challenges of this moment. And this is an important opportunity to do just that.

By passing this package, we can continue moving on our appropriations process and we can show that, by working together in a bipartisan way, you can actually get things done in a divided Congress. And that is important because there is a lot we absolutely have to get done. There is this first package of appropriations bills. There is the rest of our appropriations bills and the pressing need to address all sorts of urgent priorities, including supplemental funding to support our allies in Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan; to deliver additional disaster relief; address the worsening childcare crisis; and more. Getting all of this done is going to require us to put aside our differences and work together.

By passing this minibus, we can show that Congress is still capable of doing that, because this spending package is a prime example of what it looks like when Democrats and Republicans come together and focus on solving problems and helping people. It follows the bipartisan debt limit deal. It includes input from members across the country and across the political spectrum. And the bills in this package passed the Appropriations Committee unanimously.

In other words, this is a serious bipartisan legislation that can be signed into law; and it provides crucial resources to care for our veterans, to

fund military construction, to keep our food supply safe, to support our farmers, keep our travelers safe, invest in infrastructure, and a lot more.

We should pass this bill, show we can still focus on solutions, find common ground, and help people, like we were all sent here to do. And we can get our appropriations process back on track and continue our return to regular order, which, I know, so many Senators across the aisle and on this side have asked for.

To every one of my colleagues who has said we need to move away from massive end-of-year omnibuses, I agree. This is your chance to avoid one. If we don't get this passed, we are giving up a crucial opportunity to make sure the Senate has its voice heard on our Nation's spending priorities and make sure we don't find ourselves at the end of the year, once again, staring down another omnibus.

Madam President, just a few weeks ago, we were on the brink of a completely unnecessary government shutdown before cooler heads prevailed. The lesson from the near-shutdown should be clear: Letting the loudest voices on the far right push for damaging cuts, extreme partisan policies, is a road to disaster. Bipartisanship is the only way to get the job done in a divided government.

Now, we need to remember the lessons as we continue working to pass our full appropriations bills; support our allies in Ukraine, Israel, and the Indo-Pacific region; shore up our disaster relief funds; and address the childcare crisis; and more. So let's send a message that Congress can actually work and that we can actually work together. Let's get things on track so we can avoid an omnibus and address the urgent challenges we face.

The American people are watching. The world is watching. And let's be clear: Our adversaries are cheering for dysfunction. Let's show them unity. Let's show them the strength of our democracy. Let's get this done and then let's work together and get absolutely vital aid to our allies.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as we all know by now, last Friday, President Biden submitted an emergency funding request to Congress. As we all expected, it calls for funding to support Israel as it defends itself against the terrorist organization known as Hamas, a proxy for Iran. It also asks for funding for Ukraine, which continues its heroic defense against a Russian invasion. It requests funding to strengthen security in the Indo-Pacific to help our friends and allies combat increasingly aggressive threats from China.

And, notably, President Biden has also called for emergency funding to help address the crisis at the southern border. At face value, this shouldn't be

surprising. After all, the Biden border crisis has been raging for nearly 3 years; and, somehow, it continues to get worse every day.

Last month, Customs and Border Protection logged nearly 270,000—270,000—migrant crossings at the southern border, making it the busiest month on record. In total, nearly 2.5 million migrants have entered the United States since last fiscal year—or during the last fiscal year. That is another record.

We don't have the resources or the personnel to deal with this influx in what we all should hope would be an efficient, fair, and humane way. And that needs to change.

First of all, we need to wrest immigration out of the hands of the cartels who care nothing about the people who smuggle individuals into the United States for money—a lot of money. It is a very profitable business. And, also, there are affiliated cartels that are smuggling the drugs into the United States that killed 108,000 Americans last year alone. That is also the source of a lot of money for these criminal organizations, again, who care nothing about the life or welfare of individuals, either the migrants or people in the United States. That is what happens when you outsource immigration controls to criminal organizations as the Biden administration has done.

The President's funding request does include a few items that are definitely needed, starting with additional Border Patrol agents. Personnel shortages have impacted all of our missions at the border, including those that have nothing to do with migration. More Border Patrol agents would help fill the gaps and alleviate the strain on frontline law enforcement; but this change is meaningless unless we address the polygraph examination, which is a major barrier for hiring.

Just to be clear, the policy on passing a polygraph varies so much from Agency to Agency. But currently, the policy employed by the Border Patrol has basically made it impossible to fill the quota of Border Patrol agents that we seek to hire.

The administration has also asked for 375 new immigration judge teams. There is no doubt that our immigration courts are drowning under a rapidly growing case backlog. In 2020, before President Biden took office, there were just under 1.3 million cases pending in the immigration courts. But thanks to the administration's current policies, the backlog has now doubled to 2.6 million cases. Simply adding more judges will be an exercise in futility unless we also address the pull factors or the policies that are causing the backlog to grow at such an alarming pace.

I am reminded of something the former Chief of the Border Patrol said amidst another migration surge. In the summer of 2019, border crossings were on the rise; although, they pale in comparison to what we are seeing now.

Then-Chief Carla Provost testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee and talked about what it would take to fix the situation. She said:

We cannot address this crisis by shifting more resources. It's like holding a bucket under a faucet. It doesn't matter how many buckets [you have if you don't turn the water off].

The President's request for emergency funding is a bucket, a relatively small one. But it does nothing to stop the flow. The only way to do that is by deterrence, and the only way to achieve deterrence is by delivering consequences for entering the country illegally. We need to send a message to the people who have no legitimate reason to remain in the United States that if they come, they will not be able to stay.

President Biden does not seem to understand that. And in his emergency funding request, he asks Congress to provide for noncustodial housing for migrants and expedited removal proceedings.

This is the process that allows law enforcement to quickly remove migrants who have no legitimate reason to remain in the United States. I am talking about expedited removal now, the idea that we would release migrants who are on the verge of being deported is patently absurd and just shows the chaos and confusion and the lack of any logical coherence in the Biden border policy.

Anyone who believes that these individuals would come back for their removal hearing is living in an alternate reality. This would constitute yet another massive pull factor attracting people to make that journey to the border. President Biden also called on Congress to expand the so-called lawful pathways his administration created. But to be clear, there is nothing lawful about these pathways.

The administration, once again, has usurped Congress's authority in paroling entire classes of migrants into the United States. "Parole" is a technical term. It basically means to release them, even if they are not claiming asylum, which the Biden administration continues to do on a massive scale—simply release people into the United States.

This is, unsurprisingly, a violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and any effort to expand these so-called pathways is a nonstarter in Congress. We will not legitimize these unauthorized programs and provide an even bigger incentive for migrants to make the dangerous journey to the border.

We need to discourage people who have no legitimate claim to come to the United States this way, not bolster an incentive package. In my view, there are two broad goals that need to be met in order to address this crisis in a meaningful way: First, we need to end catch-and-release. So far, the administration has sent a message to people around the world that if you

enter the United States illegally, there is a good chance you will be able to stay, which, in turn, only encourages more people to come—just show up at the border, say the magic words, and then disappear into the great American heartland. We need to revise this message and make it clear that only those with a legitimate claim can remain in the United States. Ending catch-and-release is the most effective way to do that.

No. 2, the administration must remove people who have been determined to have no legal right to enter or remain in the United States. The Biden administration has proven it does not take this responsibility seriously.

In 2021, arrests and deportation by ICE, known as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, reached an alltime low. So not only are more people coming into the country than we have ever seen before, but fewer people are going out who have no legitimate basis to stay here.

In 2021, the Agency carried out fewer than 60,000 deportations that year, the lowest number on record by a long shot. The following year, the number of deportations increased slightly but not nearly enough to make an impact and certainly not enough to discourage people from continuing to come illegally to enter the United States.

Apprehensions are at record highs; deportations are at historic lows; and it is clear that this is all part of somebody's plan. Despite having every tool at its disposal, the administration is trying to move a mountain with a teaspoon. It is doing just enough to make some people think they are doing something meaningful without having any real impact.

While I am glad President Biden seems to have awakened to the fact that the status quo at the border is unsustainable, his emergency funding request shows he is still absolutely disinterested in solving this crisis. He has proven, once again, that he doesn't care about deterring illegal immigration; he doesn't care about delivering consequences to individuals who break our laws; and he doesn't care about solving this crisis. He merely wants to "manage" the flow, not stop it.

This is not a serious proposal. Some of the proposed spending is actually harmful, and the positive aspects are just window dressing. The President needs to get serious about the border, and what he sent us is not serious. One thing is certain, the Senate will not rubberstamp his paltry border request. You can be certain of that.

This emergency funding bill will absolutely include more funding to address the border crisis, but this is about more than funding; it is about the appropriate policies. We need real changes that produce real consequences, real ways to turn off the flow of illegal immigration and continuing to enrich the criminal organizations that smuggle people and drugs across our border.

Later this week, I am eager to talk with some of the true experts on the border crisis about the current challenges they are facing. Senator CRUZ and I are leading another visit to the Rio Grande Valley, and I am glad that Senator RICKETTS, Senator LEE, and Senator BARRASSO will join us. We are going to spend some time talking to the Border Patrol agents who actually work on the ground as well as the Customs officers who deal with the consequences of the administration's failed policies day in and day out.

We will tour the border to see how virtually anyone—from vulnerable migrant children to dangerous drug cartel members, to people on the Terrorist Watchlist—are able to enter the United States. And we will hear from State officials, local law enforcement, and landowners about the broader impact of the border crisis in communities across our State.

It is going to be 2 busy and informative days, and, as always, I am grateful to the men and women who take the time to meet with us who are doing the hard job. It would be nice if they knew that this administration had their back, but they are demoralized, despite the fact that they continue to do their job, day in and day out, because they realize that the Biden border policies are designed to fail.

Their insight, however, is invaluable to my work here in the Senate, and there couldn't be a more important time to hear from the frontline experts who know about this crisis and how to solve it better than anyone else.

I especially commend my colleagues from Wyoming, Utah, and Nebraska for taking the time to make this important trip and their willingness to hear from Senator CRUZ and my constituents on the frontlines of this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL G. WHITAKER

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Michael Whitaker to be the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. Last week, the Commerce Committee unanimously advanced Mr. Whitaker to the Senate floor, and this resounding bipartisan approval is in addition to the broad support that Mr. Whitaker has received from the private sector. He has the support of the aviation workforce, pilots, flight attendants, machinists, air traffic controllers, and safety specialists at the FAA.

Aviation safety advocates like the 737 MAX crash families have called Mr. Whitaker a "strong leader" for the FAA with the "ability [to] restore public trust and confidence in its oversight and safety standards."

The conclusion is clear, Mr. Whitaker is the right person to lead the FAA. And America's chief aviation regulator has a critical mission: protect the safety of the flying public.