

across our southern border and to do it illegally. That is in direct contradiction and violation of everything that our Nation is about as a nation of laws.

And so as I talk about this issue, and we talk about it in the context of national security, it has become a national security issue because, once again, there has been another record set when it comes to the border and not the good kind, I should say, of record. This administration now has, during the month of October, seen 240,988 individuals be apprehended attempting to illegally cross our southern border. That is the worst October on record, and that is on top of the three previous months which were historic records; the month of September, 270,000 people apprehended at our southern border trying to come into the country illegally.

So the highest October number ever recorded, and those are just the individuals—I would remind people—who were apprehended. The month of October saw an average of 1,000 “got-aways” per day, individuals whom the Border Patrol saw but were unable to apprehend. That is another 30,000 people, unidentified individuals, entering our country in just 1 month, and there is no telling how many unknown “got-aways” there were during that same period. It suggests a situation at our southern border that is completely and totally out of control.

The closing of the fiscal year in September marked the third successive, recordbreaking year of illegal immigration at our southern border under the Biden administration. As the October numbers point out, the end of this crisis is nowhere in sight.

If you think about it, the problems here are really too many to count. The men and women of the Border Patrol are under incredible strain and have been for pretty much the entirety of the Biden administration. Border cities are struggling to deal with the ceaseless influx of migrants, and major cities in other areas of the country are now discovering what border cities have been going through.

Just as a point of fact, big cities, the city of New York, the mayor of New York announced that he will be freezing the hiring of police officers in New York, closing libraries, and cutting education funding—this is in New York City—to deal with the migrant crisis, absent an infusion of Federal dollars coming in from Washington, DC.

So this is creating not problems just on our southern border but for communities all across this country, including the largest communities in the United States of America. The situation we currently have in front of us is encouraging migrants to undertake the dangerous journey to our southern border, sometimes with tragic results.

So I say that our national security is in jeopardy because a border security problem is a national security problem. This isn't a matter of speculation. We know, for a fact, that dangerous indi-

viduals are attempting to make their way across our southern border every month.

During fiscal year 2023, 169 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist were apprehended attempting to illegally cross our southern border. This is 2023, fiscal year 2023, 169 people on the Terrorist Watchlist trying to come across our southern border—18 in the month of September, another 13 in the month of October.

Those are the people who are apprehended at the southern border. That doesn't count the “got-aways.” My assumption is, if they are on the Terrorist Watchlist, they are going to be pretty good at evading the authorities, meaning that there are people trying to come into this country on a daily basis who are on the Terrorist Watchlist.

On top of that, you have thousands of what they call special interest aliens—and those are individuals who may pose a threat to the United States who have been apprehended at our southern border over the past 2 years—thousands of special interest aliens. Again, the numbers we have refer only to those who have been apprehended.

As I said, last month alone, 30,000 identified individuals made their way illegally into our country—I should say unidentified individuals; in other words, the “got-aways,” the unknowns. Many of them may simply have been seeking a better life. That is entirely possible, but it is not only possible, but I would say likely, that some of them were dangerous individuals who should not be entering our country.

This work period, we expect to take up supplemental spending legislation to address national security priorities, notably, support for our allies like Israel and Ukraine. And one national security priority this legislation must address is border security.

As the October 7 terrorist attack on Israel reminds us, national security requires constant vigilance, and our Nation is simply not secure as long as we are dealing with a massive flow of illegal immigration at our southern border. We must get this crisis under control.

Senators GRAHAM, LANKFORD, and COTTON have been working to craft a set of border security measures for inclusion in the national security supplemental focused on the two areas in obvious need of reform: parole and asylum.

Under our current asylum system, a large percentage of individuals claiming asylum are released into the interior of the country after initial screening with court dates up to a decade later. The Associated Press reported that in March, 77 percent of individuals claiming asylum passed the initial screening.

In practice, this means that thousands of individuals who have entered our country illegally end up taking residence in our country, possibly, for a number of years, given our immigration court backlog. That is a problem.

Our parole system is in trouble as well. In fiscal year 2022, the Biden administration granted parole to 417,326 individuals. And that is because the Biden Department of Homeland Security has instituted an overly permissive application of parole, which means that, again, tens of thousands who have not been granted legal status and who may not have a case for remaining in the United States have been taking up residence in our country with instructions to report back a year or more into the future for further review of their status.

Now, given the backlog and overwhelmed nature of our parole system, this ends up being de facto permanent residence. Needless to say, this invites abuse, and individuals are availing themselves of these flawed policies to gain entry to our Nation. Any supplemental legislation must not only deal with border security generally but with our asylum and parole system specifically, if we want to get the crisis at our southern border under control.

Our porous southern border is a massive national security vulnerability. Republicans know it, and while they may not always admit it, I think my Democrat colleagues know it as well.

It is time for them to act on that knowledge and join Republicans to pass real border security measures as part of the national security supplemental.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, before I begin my prepared remarks, I just want to acknowledge Leader SCHUMER for his extraordinary, personal, compelling, and essential remarks on the rise of anti-Semitism across the country and across the planet. It was needed; it was accurate; and it touched me. So thank you, Mr. Leader.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam President, we are about to see the beginning of COP28. That is the annual international meeting to take climate action. This one is a little different because America finally took historic action on climate, and it is working.

And so the message that America will be bringing to this COP—COP28, which begins in Dubai tomorrow—is that we finally did it. We finally took the biggest climate action in human history. Is it enough? No.

Is it more than we have ever done before? Absolutely, it is more than we have ever done before.

And the COP is a unique opportunity for governments across the world to work together and coordinate their response to what is the greatest challenge of our time: the climate crisis. Climate change is getting worse by the year, and it is affecting more and more people in every corner of the planet, including all of us in the United States. Recognizing that, Congress took the biggest climate action in American history a year ago with the Inflation Reduction Act, in addition to setting

targets to dramatically reduce carbon emissions in the United States, the IRA also made historic investments to accelerate the transition to a clean energy future. It was an ambitious piece of legislation. But the truth is, the IRA's impact in just a year—just a year—has surpassed even the most hopeful projections. And none of the parade of horrors that the fossil fuel industry articulated ended up happening: Prices did not go up for regular consumers; the economy didn't crash; and all of the things that, frankly, the clean energy side said was going to happen—and some of it, in my view, was aspirational, like hundreds of thousands of new union clean energy jobs—it actually is happening. So everything we said was going to happen, happened. None of the things that they were fearing would happen did happen, and it is working faster and better and more powerfully than even our experts were able to project. But there is still more to come.

The IRA has proof that big, bold climate action is not just possible, but it benefits everyone, and it offers a roadmap for the rest of the world. As my dear friend and family member—may she rest in peace—Madeleine Albright always said that “We are the indispensable nation.” The United States is the indispensable Nation.

And I look at the presiding officer, and I think you know this: When we go abroad, it is a little shocking the extent to which people are hanging on tenterhooks wondering, What does the United States think? You don't need to be the head of state for people to still be especially tuned in to. What is the United States going to do? What are they going to say? What actions are they going to take?

And, finally, after the first COP, where we organized through President Obama's leadership global climate action and we had some momentum, and then we lost our momentum. Federal action on climate basically ground to a halt. So we were going to these COPs to say: Hey, we are still in. We are still committed to climate action. Yes, it is true that we weren't able to do something this year or last year or the year before, but we are still in. And it was hard to make that case year over year over year as the indispensable Nation while we try to tell everybody to take climate action and we hadn't yet done it at the scale that was necessary.

Well, this is different. Now we have done it. It is working. It is equal to the task in front of us. And every other nation should capitalize on this opportunity and do their own version of the Inflation Reduction Act. This is a real chance for us to put words into action. We have been talking about what to do about climate for years. It is time to finally put the resources and the money behind those pledges as time runs out.

What absolutely cannot happen in this conference is that it cannot be co-opted by fossil fuel interests. Too many oil and gas companies are paying lip

service to addressing climate change, all the while actively expanding their fossil fuel enterprise.

Just this week, we saw alarming reports that the host of the COP was looking to cut deals with countries on oil and gas projects. Now, I know that he denied that. I know that the reporting is somewhat mixed, and I don't begrudge UAE chairing this COP. It is a rotating COP. It goes by region. UAE gets to chair it. That is not the problem.

The problem is the extent to which fossil energy companies, the American Chamber of Commerce, and other international corporations have decided to bear-hug this process to undermine it. And we have to be very, very wary. If there are fossil companies or energy companies that are both on the clean and the fossil side that want to be constructively engaged in how to take climate action, that is great. But we will be damned if we allow these companies to bear-hug the COP process to the point where it becomes meaningless.

And so myself, Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator CARDIN, Senator HEINRICH, Senator MARKEY, and others will be watching this like a hawk.

NOMINATIONS OF MICAH W.J. SMITH AND
SHANLYN A.S. PARK

Madam President, on another note, the Senate is about to vote on the first of two Hawaii nominees to the U.S. district court, Micah Smith and Judge Shanlyn Park. Both of them have had distinguished careers in law and public service and are extraordinarily qualified to serve as United States district court judges.

Micah Smith has been a Federal prosecutor for the U.S. Attorney's Office for over a decade, most recently in the District of Hawaii where he serves as Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division and Criminal Civil Rights Coordinator. Those who know him are quick to highlight his balanced temperament and deep commitment to equal justice.

Likewise, Judge Shanlyn Park spent two decades as a public defender, giving a voice to those most in need, and has brought her integrity and sound judgment to the bench as a State court judge.

Both of these nominees represent the very best of Hawaii and will represent all of us well on the judiciary, and I urge my colleagues to vote to confirm them both to the Federal bench. They both had a bipartisan vote in the Judiciary Committee, and I am looking forward to a bipartisan vote on the floor. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled roll call vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I come to the floor to urge action on the

fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills that fund critical programs, programs that are so important to America and to American families, programs ranging from biomedical research to our national defense.

On November 1, the Senate passed its first package of three appropriations bills: the military construction and veterans affairs legislation, the Agriculture and FDA bill, and the Transportation and Housing bill. And due to the extraordinary work of the members of the Appropriations Committee, they passed by overwhelming bipartisan vote of 82 to 15.

Despite the Appropriations Committee working hard to report all 12 of the funding bills by the end of July, additional full-year appropriations bills have not been brought to the Senate floor. Instead, the Federal Government has been operating under short-term funding patches known as continuing resolutions since the start of the fiscal year on October 1. These temporary funding patches lead to harmful uncertainties, needless inefficiencies, and wasted taxpayer dollars.

One of the bills that I hope will be brought to the floor soon is the Department of Defense appropriations bill. This bill would provide critical resources for our military at a time when we are facing many complex threats from around the globe, including those posed by an imperialistic Russia, a hegemonic China, and an increasingly belligerent Iran and its proxies.

Earlier this summer, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the defense funding bill by a strong bipartisan vote of 27 to 1. This bill contains funding for key national security priorities, including providing our troops and their families with the pay and benefits that they deserve, expanding our naval fleet, and modernizing the nuclear triad, strengthening deterrence against China—our pacing threat—rebuilding our munitions stockpiles, and addressing military readiness and capability gaps.

Each day that the Department of Defense operates under a temporary funding measure rather than its full-year appropriations bill, important national security investments remain on hold. For example, the Department has identified more than 330 new programs or production increases that cannot proceed. This includes more than a dozen high-priority initiatives identified by the Air Force, 6 billion in Army transformation efforts, and multiyear procurement authority for the Virginia class submarines.

In a letter that was sent to the Appropriations Committee just today, Chairman C.Q. Brown, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff writes that “We cannot outpace our pacing challenge while under continuing resolution.”

In other words, continuing resolutions give China the upper hand.