

would force vulnerable people from these countries to make a dangerous journey to our border to seek protection rather than applying for protection in advance.

As the only immigrant currently serving in the Senate, I know that the challenges confronting immigrants are not hypothetical. This isn't about statistics; it is about people—people desperate for opportunity and the hope of building a better life in our country. A plan that villainizes and degrades those seeking to enter our country is bad enough; but this plan does little to address the actual issues facing immigrants, failing to acknowledge the plight of DACA recipients, temporary protected status holders, and undocumented individuals living in the shadows while contributing to our communities and our economy.

Just this month, the Judiciary Committee, on which I sit, held a hearing on how to improve immigration courts. Immigration experts shared meaningful, thoughtful ways to improve this key component of our immigration system. Disappointingly but not surprisingly, sad to say, none of the solutions discussed at that hearing are included in the Republicans' proposal.

Beyond the problematic content of their proposal is the precedent that Republicans are attempting to set by tying one-time funding for Ukraine to permanent anti-immigrant policy changes. Pitting vulnerable groups against each other—Ukrainians fighting an unjust invasion and asylum seekers fleeing persecution—is a recipe for bad policymaking. Exchanging permanent policy changes for temporary funding all but guarantees additional Republican demands on immigration next year.

There was a serious effort to enact bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform in the Senate in 2013. I was here then. I had just gotten elected to the Senate. The year 2013 was the last time this body attempted to address this issue of a broken immigration system in a comprehensive way. To this day, I consider that bill that we worked on in a bipartisan way in 2013 as one of the most important issues and bills I have ever worked on in the Senate.

Comprehensive immigration reform was needed then, and it is desperately needed even more now. I stand ready to work in good faith with anyone looking to meaningfully improve our Nation's badly outdated and broken immigration system. However, that is not what the current Republican proposal does.

The American people are tired of rhetoric. They are looking to us to act. I believe this body has the ability to come together and enact comprehensive immigration reform, and I hope we—Democrats and Republicans—both acknowledge that the immigration system is broken—can find the will to do so. We did in 2013, and we can do it again.

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

Madam President, on another note, I am glad that, later today, the Senate will vote to confirm Micah Smith and, tomorrow, Shanlyn Park, to be judges of the U.S. district court for the State of Hawaii.

Shanlyn Park, who currently serves as a Hawaii circuit court judge, was born and raised in Hawaii, where her career has been spent almost entirely in public service. After graduating from Chaminade University and the William S. Richardson School of Law, Judge Park served as a Federal public defender in Hawaii for 20 years. As a judge, she has earned high marks for her even-handed approach and well-reasoned, fair decisions.

Importantly, if confirmed, Judge Park would make history as the first native Hawaiian woman to serve as a Federal district court judge. It is high time and long overdue. Representation matters.

Like Judge Park, Micah Smith has also had an impressive legal career. After graduating from Lock Haven University and Harvard Law School, he clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and then on the Supreme Court for Justice Souter. He went on to become a Federal prosecutor—a job he has held for the last 12 years. He began at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and, in 2018, returned home to Hawaii to join the U.S. Attorney's Office in Honolulu.

I believe both nominees' experience, temperaments, and demonstrated commitment to public service, along with their deep roots in Hawaii, will make them excellent judges on Hawaii's district court. I look forward to voting to confirm them.

I know that we have also voted on cloture on Micah Smith. I thank my Republican colleagues for voting for Micah in a bipartisan way, and I look forward to their support for Shanlyn Park.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today to once again speak about a subject that President Biden and his administration are refusing to address, and that is this crisis on our southern border.

I have been extremely outspoken about this topic—many of us have—especially when it comes to the need for deterrence along our southern border, the alarming drug epidemic that continues to harm my State and the entire country, and the desperate need to make changes to our immigration policy and the laws that define our homeland security.

The American people see the numbers, but it is not just numbers; they see the actual human effects within their own cities and States of this rampant illegal immigration. It can no

longer be ignored. In just the past year, there have been more than 2.4 million illegal encounters on our southern border—we have all seen them on our television sets—and that is more than a 180-percent increase since fiscal year 2019. There have been 169 encounters with individuals on our country's Terror Watchlist—six times the number of the past year; and fentanyl seizures along the U.S.-Mexico border have hit record highs.

I see my fellow Senator from Kansas. He has spent a lot of time on this fentanyl issue because it is so devastating to our States.

More than 26,000 pounds of illicit fentanyl were seized along the country's southern border this past year, and this is just the data we know. It is hard to fathom that there are 600,000 "got-aways"—those are people who were not even disrupted in their journeys—drugs and threats to our national security that are streaming across our border that we might have missed.

This is truly and simply an unmitigated crisis. There is no doubt that this is leading to and sometimes already has created an unsustainable situation across this country. But don't just take my word for it. I will offer some quotes:

The federal government's lack of intervention and coordination at the border has created an untenable situation.

This issue will destroy New York City.

A federal crisis of inaction that is many years in the making.

These are all direct quotes from Democratic Governors and mayors across the country.

Across the aisle and across the country, we know that President Biden's rhetoric and lack of action on the southern border has created a historic problem. In fact, this is a 50-State problem. I hear about this topic from West Virginians frequently. Constituents have expressed border security concerns to me, things like the catastrophic, flawed, and failed Biden-Harris approach to immigration and the loss of control of our southern border; the vulnerable state that our communities are left in by the flow of human trafficking and illicit drugs currently coming across our border; and the need to bolster our national security with the increase in crossings by those on the Terror Watchlist.

My home State of West Virginia is not a border State, so to speak, but we are all border States now. We are no stranger to the strife and grief created by the flow of harmful narcotics into our communities.

From June 2022 to June 2023, West Virginia's provisional State data shows that an estimated 1,415 West Virginians died from overdoses. These are husbands, brothers, sisters, moms, and dads. It is indescribably sad.

Drug overdoses caused over 5,200 emergency room visits, and our EMS teams responded to over 6,300 calls of a suspected drug overdose. These numbers are staggering, especially for a State as small as mine.

Fentanyl overdose in this country has become the leading cause of death for Americans age 18 to 45. Something has to be done, and it has to be done now and fast.

This crisis on our southern border raises grave questions about the national security of our own country. In addition to the 279 individuals on the Terror Watchlist who have been encountered at the southern border since President Biden took office, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has arrested over 35,000 migrants with criminal convictions in just this past year.

Nearly half of the migrants encountered on our southern border are coming from countries other than Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, or El Salvador, with more than 24,000 Chinese citizens apprehended crossing into the United States from Mexico in the past year.

Who are these people? We don't know. Yet many of them are living in all of our States.

My point is, the immigration crisis on our southern border is now more multifaceted than ever, and the open-border virtual signaling from this administration has allowed that to happen. We truly have no idea who is entering our country illegally.

At a time of heightened national security risk, this is a chance that we cannot be willing to take. There is currently a large-scale ground war in Europe, our ally and friend Israel is facing historic and unprecedented attacks of terror, and tensions in the Indo-Pacific remain on high alert.

As Leader MCCONNELL stated on this same floor yesterday, national security begins with border security. We can and should take needed action to mitigate the threats that we face. This starts by securing our southern border and making the policy changes necessary to defend our homeland from nefarious forces abroad.

I keep saying "policy changes" because there are some who think if we just keep putting money into the situation, it is going to help the problem. All the money does is turn the asylum cases around faster. It makes more people have parole into the United States, and, there, again, is a cycle of unknown people throughout the United States.

Time and again, Republicans have asked the tough questions and put forward the solutions necessary to stop the crisis that we have seen unfold. Nearly every elected official—Democrat and Republican—both in the executive branch and in Congress, has acknowledged that there are top-to-bottom changes that need to be done to our asylum system.

That is what is being offered, and that is what needs to be delivered: changes to our asylum system—meaningful changes—meaningful changes to our parole system, and safe third country agreements. This will have meaningful effect on the problems that I have described.

Now is the time to come to the table. Republicans stand for solutions that

enforce and enhance not just the immigration laws that we have on the books but the policy changes that we are advocating for.

We back our hard-working CBP agents and guards on the ground who are overwhelmed and undersupported, and we need to finish the border wall and provide the necessary level of deterrence that we desperately need.

I have been encouraged by my colleagues' bipartisan efforts for their ongoing talks to deliver the immigration policy changes that are increasingly needed, but any agreement will need to find consensus by the entire body. I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to recognize the importance of the effort and of this moment.

We simply do not have time to waste. We need to come together, secure our southern border, and fulfill the other national security obligations that are demanded of a nation as powerful as ours.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, "border, border, border"—I just had lunch with Speaker MIKE JOHNSON. He is a great friend and a classmate. We came in together. That is what he said. He said he wishes he could get all of us a T-shirt that said "border, border, border."

In my office, this week, no matter what the question is, the answer is "Secure the border." In fact, I think Speaker JOHNSON has been talking to some of the same people I have been talking to.

I had the great time of my life these past 7, 10 days back home in Kansas. I got to spend time with my grandchildren, teaching them how to hunt and fish and sled in a very welcome 10-inch snow. I got to see a lot of friends and family members and share what is going on in their lives and get caught up. But no matter where I went, the No. 1 worry people had was about the concern for the safety and security of their own family.

In Kansas—the heartland, the middle of the country, the middle State—people are concerned about their own safety and security, and why wouldn't they be?

Since Joe Biden was sworn into office, over 10 million immigrants have come into our border, and over 1.5 million "got-aways" have occurred—10 million people crossing our border illegally, 1.5 million "got-aways."

This crisis at our Nation's border is the No. 1 most immediate threat to our safety and security. This is a true, clear, and present danger to our Nation.

Just think about these numbers. Fentanyl is now the No. 1 killer of young adults in America. It kills a Kansan every day. Nearly 300 young Americans are dying every day from fentanyl poisoning, not to mention what is going on with human trafficking, the growth of the cartel, and

the violence. As my dad the police officer taught me, the violence always follows the drug trafficking.

But it seems like these numbers are falling on deaf ears at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Just look at September, October, and November. These look like they are all going to be record-setting months for the number of people crossing our border illegally in these months. But yet, for some unknown reason, the White House wants to take border security off the table in the supplemental bill.

Why? That is what people are asking me back home. Why? That is the question Americans want to know.

They point out the facts that we know well up here. Under this administration, we have seen 279 known terrorists try to cross our border, more than 24,000 Chinese nationals, not to mention some 80,000 aliens of interest from countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria who have breached our border. This is indeed an invasion of our border, and every American is now paying for it.

As a matter of fact, it is now costing Americans nearly \$500 billion a year—let me say that again, \$500 billion a year—to house and take care of these illegal immigrants. Can you imagine how many Border Patrol officers, how much technology, how many drug dogs, and, yes, how much fence we could build for half a trillion dollars a year?

Again, that is what Americans are asking me back home.

It is time for this Chamber to step up to the plate and do what is right for the American people. For such a time as this, we need leadership. I am grateful, I am proud, and the American people are glad to hear that the leadership on this side of the aisle are saying we will deny cloture on this supplemental bill if there is not meaningful border security.

This concept of a supplemental bill without taking care of our national security, of sending over \$100 billion to foreign lands without addressing our own national sovereignty, well, it actually reminds me of what Abraham Lincoln once said:

You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.

Let my message today be clear. Let's bring on the hard work, late nights, and weekends. That is what Kansans do. We work hard. We have those values of a hard work ethic. I am certainly willing to do just that, to work hard to get to border security.

Look, on this side of the aisle, we are not going to waver. We are not going to quit. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure our border and to get this right for once.

I urge every Republican to vote down cloture of this outrageous supplemental package unless we see true, meaningful border security included.

We have got solutions that this body can send to the President's desk today that wouldn't cost a dime. Changing

the asylum policy alone can result in as many as 75 percent less people entering our Nation illegally—75 percent. If we just turn off the siren of asylum, we can cut back on those crossing our borders some 75 percent. That would free up the Border Patrol officers to do the job that they were hired to do: catching the bad guys, stopping the fentanyl, stopping the human trafficking, rather than playing a nursemaid to nearly 10,000 illegal people every day.

And also from a policy standpoint, we have to limit the President's abuse of his parole powers, which has enabled over 1.5 million immigrant parolees to enter our Nation under his watch.

Our insistence that these measures be included in the supplemental bill are not partisan. They are not hard-right distractions, as has been alleged. But it is an attempt to protect the lives and well-being of the Americans who elected us and their families and to ensure the sovereignty of this great Nation.

This is a national security issue, not an immigration issue. It is imperative. It is a must that any supplemental bill include provisions to address these border issues. Any package agreed upon by all or some of the Senate Republican conference must actually be effective at controlling our borders.

A measure that is advertised as stopping the torrent of illegal migration but does not in practice would be a devastating blow to the credibility of Republican Senators on this issue, over the long term, and unacceptable to the people we represent. This is why I urge every Republican in this body to vote no on cloture on any bill that does not, at a minimum, include policy changes that meaningfully address the flood of illegal immigration at our southern border.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Kansas.

Coming from Texas, this is a familiar topic because we have a 1,200-mile common border with Mexico, and illegal immigration, drug smuggling, and everything that goes along with it has been something we have had to live with pretty much alone for a long time.

But now, as we have heard some people say, every State has become a border State, and every city is a border city, because what happens at the border does not stay at the border. You get migrants who ultimately make their ways to big cities like New York, Washington, DC, and Chicago.

The mayor of New York says a few thousand migrants showing up in New York will destroy New York City. Well, what about the 7 million people who have come across the southern border and then released into the interior of the United States, released at the Texas-Mexico border?

There is not a lot of empathy, not a lot of sympathy for what we have had to endure in our border communities and by the people of Texas, not to mention the billions of dollars that we have had to spend of taxpayer money, by Texans, to do the Federal Government's job. It is outrageous.

The part that is most tragic is, of course, all the lives lost to the drugs that come across the southern border. What the Biden administration does not seem to understand—or they seem to be in willful suspense of their power of disbelief—is that the 71,000 Americans who died of fentanyl overdoses last year, those drugs come from synthetic opioids made from precursors that come from China, go to Mexico, and are made into something that looks like a pharmaceutical product—relatively innocuous. But fentanyl poisoning is the leading cause of death of Americans 18 to 45 years of age.

I keep asking myself: What is it going to take? What is it going to take for the Biden administration to wake up and do something about it, to do its job? Well, obviously, 7 million migrants—that is not enough; 108,000 dead Americans—apparently that doesn't get President Biden's attention. How about the 300,000 children, the unaccompanied minors who have been placed with sponsors in the interior of the United States?

The New York Times documented that in 85,000 cases, when a call was made 30 days after the child was placed with a sponsor, there was no answer. There have been some terrible stories about forced labor and very dangerous jobs. But it doesn't take imagination to realize that what the Biden administration has done is lose basically 300,000 children. We don't know whether they are going to school. We don't know whether they are getting the healthcare they need. We don't know whether they are being trafficked for sex, forced into involuntary servitude. We don't know.

The only conclusion I can reach is that the Biden administration and the President of the United States don't care. He doesn't care because if he did care, he would do something about it.

Well, because we have been met with complete intransigence by the Biden administration and by the majority here in the Senate when it comes to solving some of these problems on a bipartisan basis—there are many of us who would be willing to work on a bill. We have worked on bills. I see the Senator from South Carolina, who bears the scars of having worked on the immigration issue many years, as have I. This is a tough, hard issue.

But enough is enough. We are not going to proceed to this emergency supplemental that the President has asked for unless and until policy changes are made to our asylum policy, the catch-and-release policies, that will stem the flow of millions of migrants across the border only to be released into the United States. It will not happen, I am confident of that.

I won't go through the statistics. Let me just mention one example. It makes no sense for migrants who come from places like Haiti to move to South America—to avoid what are admittedly dire circumstances in Haiti—only to live in South America and then, when the opportunity presents itself, to show up in Del Rio, TX, and claim asylum. They have escaped the circumstances which caused them to leave Haiti and are living in a safe third country. So why is it that under the current policies, we say: OK. If you make it to the U.S. border, we will let you in if you claim asylum.

Well, you are claiming a credible fear of persecution based on what happened to you in Haiti, not what happened to you in South America. Yet this is a huge flashing green light and a “welcome” mat for people anywhere around the world who want to make their way to our southern border.

Eagle Pass Mayor Rolando Salinas has said the city of Eagle Pass has lost at least \$500,000 during the closure of a bridge due to the influx of migrants.

One of the things we did during President Trump's tenure in office, which I think was one of the most significant, was we passed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement in recognition of the fact that our economies in North America are intertwined and that millions of American jobs depend on that flow of legitimate trade and commerce across our international bridges.

But, again, one of the other consequences of President Biden's border crisis is that even the benefits of that trade and legitimate commerce are being denied because resources at our bridges and ports of entry are being overwhelmed.

I mentioned New York City. Last year, more than 130,000 migrants arrived in New York City. That city spent \$2 billion to manage the crisis. That is a drop in the bucket compared to what the State of Texas has had to do over recent years. But it is no surprise that the mayor and others in New York have taken notice. I think that is the point.

Governor Abbott knew that if the Biden administration was going to ignore the plight of border States like Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California, that maybe he would care if these migrants showed up in New York City.

Now, polls have shown that New Yorkers are overwhelmingly concerned about the influx of migrants in their State and in their city. Eighty-two percent said it was a serious problem.

So why doesn't President Biden—maybe he doesn't care about a red State like Texas, but he should care about a blue State. The truth is, he should care about the entire United States, but let's just maybe question why he would ignore the pleas of Mayor Adams and the voters in New York State—a State that probably was responsible for his margin of victory in

the last Presidential election. Well, he continues to ignore it.

In fact, the Senate majority leader, from New York, where Mayor Adams is mayor—a major capital city there—despite the fact that Senator SCHUMER represents that same State, he has criticized the Republican effort to actually address the Biden border crisis. He has called it partisan and hard right.

Well, frankly, that is all the majority leader and our Democratic colleagues have been willing to do. But we are not going to miss this opportunity to get true policy changes which help stem the flow of illegal migration across the border.

It is clear that the President and Secretary Mayorkas, who has been an absolute, unmitigated disaster as Secretary of Homeland Security—I told him at the last hearing we had: I have lost confidence, any confidence, in your willingness to do your job. You should resign.

Well, he continues to show up and testify under oath and to lie when he says the border is secure. Well, anybody with eyes in their head can tell that that is not true. And he has told the Border Patrol: Don't actually tell anybody what is happening at the border.

Well, enough is enough. We are not going anywhere on this supplemental appropriations bill until and unless acceptable provisions are made to change the policies that currently implement the Biden border crisis and to staunch the flow of drugs and people across the border.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I just want to pick up where Senator CORNYN left off. He has been a great person to try to work with to find a solution to our immigration problems.

But what we are dealing with on the Senate floor is not an immigration issue.

To my Democratic colleagues: I have worked with many of you on solutions to immigration, comprehensive immigration reform.

We are now having to deal with a broken border from a national security lens—172 encounters that we know of, of people on the Terrorist Watchlist. In fiscal year 2021, it was 15. So it is going through the roof.

So we have to get control of our border for our own national security sake. Terrorism is on the rise. The world is on fire. Now is not the time to have a broken border.

The numbers are really astounding. In September, we had the highest encounters at the border in recorded history. In December of 2020, we had the lowest in decades. In fiscal year 2023, which ended September 30, 2.5 million people. Since President Biden has been in office, 6 million people. That is larger than the State of South Carolina.

So one of two things is going on regarding the border. The Biden adminis-

tration wants it to be this way for some reason or they are incompetent. If they are incompetent, they need to listen to people who have actually tried to secure the border successfully and work with us to get it done. If they want it to be this way, it is going to end if you want money for other countries.

I have been involved in about every game there is on immigration reform, but I am here to tell my Democratic colleagues: I am not going back to South Carolina and say I provided money for Ukraine and Israel, which I desperately support, unless we fix in a real way the problems at our border. That is unsustainable for me.

The Speaker of the House was just addressing the Republican Senate. I think he understands the need for Ukraine funding, but he says border security has to be real for the House Republicans to be able to do what they need to do.

To my Democratic colleagues: You are fighting us in a way that makes no sense to me. I understand why we should send money to Ukraine. You had me at hello. I understand why we need to help our friends in Israel. I don't understand why you fight the changes that would bring back order out of chaos.

Is that the position of the Democratic Party, that the policies that led to this overwhelming surge in illegal immigration are not subject to change?

We are not going to vote for legislation that doesn't stop what is on this chart, period. Look at the line. Fiscal year 2020, 458,000 encounters; fiscal year 2023, 2.5 million. It has to stop.

Look at the asylum system that is being completely gamed. It has become a joke. It needs to stop.

Parole. We have had some major efforts to reform asylum. Senator LANKFORD is doing a good job.

To my good friend Senator BENNET, I want money for Ukraine. I support Ukraine funding. I think a lot of Republicans do. But we have to have real reform on the border. And your statement that Ukrainian aid should be separate and apart from the border is not going to happen.

Parole is meant to be a case-by-case analysis based on two things: There is an urgent humanitarian reason for the person to come in under parole or a significant public benefit—any alien applying for admission to the United States. That is the law that is being abused.

Past administrations granted parole in a handful of cases. There had to be an urgent humanitarian reason or the individual in question had to provide a significant public benefit. The Biden administration is using the parole statute to allow people in by the hundreds of thousands without any individual analysis, in my view.

So all I am asking to do is follow the law. Quit using the parole statute to allow hundreds of thousands of people in, in violation of the law. If we went

back to what the law says, most of this would stop.

Secretary Mayorkas, here is what he said to Senator LANKFORD:

We need . . . the ability to remove individuals who [do] not qualify [for asylum] . . . with efficiency and speed.

Why are so many people coming? Word is out that if you get into America, you ask for asylum, you never leave. We release you into the interior of the country, years pass before your asylum claim is heard, and you are here in America, and you never leave.

We have to change the asylum laws so that you actually have to apply to the first safe third country you pass through, not just here in America. And we should not release you until your claim has at least been adjudicated at the initial stages. And 90 percent of the asylum claims are eventually denied; so, clearly, the screening system needs to change.

So long story short, we are not going to pass a supplemental that doesn't have policy changes to dramatically stem the flow at the border. This is not an immigration negotiation. There is not going to be a DREAM Act provision attached to this. This is about locking the border down in a fashion to give the public confidence that as a nation, we have the ability to secure our own border.

To all of my friends on the other side—and on this side—who have negotiated immigration reform in the past, President Biden's irresponsible handling of the U.S.-Mexican border has made it virtually impossible to do an immigration deal any time soon. No Republican in their right mind would vote for a comprehensive immigration bill until the Democratic Party can prove that they are capable of securing the border.

Everything we worked for all these years has been lost. Your approach to the border during the last 3 years has made it impossible to do immigration reform until we first secure the border, not as part of an overall effort to deal with immigration, but you need to prove to us and the people of the United States you can and will secure our border. Until you do that, no deal.

How this ends, I don't know. I just know this: I am OK with aid to Ukraine. I am more than OK with aid to Israel. I am insisting on border security that is meaningful. I am not asking for H.R. 2. I am not asking for everything I would do to secure the border if I were King of the country. But I have been around this issue enough to know what works and what doesn't. The policy changes we are insisting upon regarding asylum and parole need to be implemented to regain control of our border. And that is not too much to ask.

I look forward to working with our colleagues on the other side—and you—to find a way to help Israel, who are in dire straits, find a way to keep Putin from going past Ukraine, bring some sanity back to the world. But you are

going to have to work with us. And we are not looking for half measures. We are smart enough on our side to know what works. And I am not into doing a deal that doesn't work.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I appreciate the words of my colleague from South Carolina. I fully support everything he said. And I want to come up and speak again to the challenge that we have at the border and why we need to take action now and why that action needs to be taken as part of a supplemental that includes funding for Israel and Ukraine.

The situation at the border simply has gotten out of control. But I think it bears repeating; it has been said by some of the folks who spoke before: We are talking about a fourfold increase.

Donald Trump was President for 4 years. President Biden has been President for 3 years. And in 3 years, we have nearly four times the crossings that we did in the Trump administration.

Now, let's say some of that is because we had title 42 and COVID. That is fine. We can argue that. But we can still recognize this is a two- or three-time increase in illegal crossings.

Now, we have lost operational control of the border. We don't have situational awareness at the border.

Let me explain what that means. When you have 1.5 million people who we know came into this country illegally—they paid money to a cartel—\$5 to \$50,000, depending upon what country they came from—to get into this country illegally. But some of them specifically want to go through a sector that the cartels specialize in making sure that you never have to encounter a border agent. They are called “got-aways.” Over the last 3 years, 1.5 million “got-aways” have entered this country.

Now, I have been to the border several times. Once you cross the Rio Grande River, most people are going to go present themselves to a Border Patrol agent, and then you are going to be processed. You are either going to get screened for asylum or you are going to get paroled. But from the time you cross the border until the time you are released into the United States, it is a matter of days or a week. So why would somebody spend money—why would 1.5 million people spend money to expressly avoid being detained, unless they have a bad record, unless they have criminal intent or malign intent?

Ladies and gentlemen, we have apprehended people at the border who are on the Terrorist Watchlist. So we have lost operational control of the border by a fourfold increase in crossings. We have lost situational awareness because we don't know where these 1.5 million people are. We only know that they set foot on American soil, and it is highly unlikely that they went back.

Now, I hate to almost draw this parallel, but I think it is important. One

of the things when Israel is able to be successful in their response to Hamas, Israel is going to have to go back and say: How did this even happen on October 7?

Well, we know. And I think a part of that analysis is going to be that they had lost situational awareness on the threat coming from Gaza. Now, people may say it is an unfair comparison. I don't think it is. When we have almost 8 million people by the end of this administration here illegally, is it fair to say that a few of them hate America, that they could be terrorists, and they are on the Terrorist Watchlist? There is a compelling Homeland Security reason for securing the border.

And the American people are great. I want to get quickly to the negotiations that are being led by JAMES LANKFORD. The American people now, a majority—we are not talking a plurality; we are talking about a majority of American people—Democrats, Independents, Republicans—agree that we have a major problem or crisis at the border. Biden needs to fix this problem. Biden needs to fix this problem for Senators that are running up.

This is not a situation where it is just Republicans saying we want a secure border. We always do; we always will. This is now the American people in the electorate saying that we need to fix it.

So when we get into negotiations, of course, we have to change asylum policy and, of course, we have to change parole policy. And, of course, that is going to make some Democrats get out of their comfort zone.

The last thing I will leave you with, in the last Congress, ladies and gentlemen, I participated in every single bipartisan bill that was passed out of the Congress in the last Congress. I took a lot of heat from the right for doing that. And I did it for good reason.

Now, the Democrats can say that they had a bipartisan vote in the last Congress, but they didn't. All 51 of them voted for something I worked hard to get 11 or 12 or 15 Republicans to vote on. So now it is time for Democrats to demonstrate their commitment to bipartisanship. It is time to let some of their Members get out of their comfort zone or vote no on the supplemental, while the other ones who recognize this is a problem and that the American people have disapproved of this administration's handling of it, now it is their time to be bipartisan. Now it is their time to recognize that parole reform and asylum reform is critical to reducing the future flows.

And I hope that my colleagues will, because as someone who has tried to be bipartisan and respectful of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I have no intention of supporting a supplemental bill that doesn't have meaningful bipartisan border security that we can measure on an almost immediate basis in terms of reducing the future flows.

I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, who I thor-

oughly enjoyed working with on bipartisan efforts in the last Congress, will see that this is an opportunity, this is their time to demonstrate the same courage, to get out of their comfort zone and do what is right for the American people.

I yield floor.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 5 minutes and, also, that Senator MENENDEZ be allowed to speak for 5 minutes as well.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I want to echo the comments of both the esteemed Senator from South Carolina as well as the Senator from North Carolina. And I rise to address the same subject, and that is, to bring attention to the crisis that is taking place at our southern border.

You know, the cause of the crisis is very clear, and the numbers do not lie. In fiscal year 2022, Customs and Border Protection—CBP—encountered nearly 2.4 million illegal crossings at the southern border. In fiscal year 2023, the number of encounters rose to nearly 2.5 million—2.5 million.

Now, since the start of fiscal 2024—that's what, just the first month—there have been over 240,000 illegal crossings at our southern border.

Put differently, this means that after just over a month—end of the fiscal year, this fiscal year 2024—nearly a quarter of a million people have tried to illegally enter the United States via the southern border.

And these are just the individuals that we know about. Reporting shows that since the start of fiscal 2024, there have been more than 23,000 known “got-aways.” Since the beginning of the Biden administration, there have been 1.7 million “got-aways.”

Additionally, CBP has confirmed that a dozen individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist have attempted to illegally enter the United States through the southern border already this fiscal year, in just 1 month. And look what is going on in the world right now. And we have people on the Terrorist Watchlist trying to cross our border.

The American people can see the problem, even if the Biden administration can't or, worse, just continues to choose to ignore it.

This crisis is the result of the Biden administration's failure to secure our border—pure and simple. It is not an issue of not having comprehensive immigration reform. It is a failure of the administration to enforce the law.

The open border policies of the Biden administration jeopardize our national security because border security is national security.

I want to repeat that. And I will repeat it again.

Border security is national security. And Americans know it.

The situation at the southern border has turned every State into a border State.

Last month, I was in Jamestown, ND, to stand with the 817th Engineer Company of the North Dakota National Guard as they prepared to deploy for a yearlong mission to assist CBP in securing our southern border.

So now we have the National Guard down there trying to secure the border. But, again, they can't get the job done if they aren't given the enforcement authority to do it.

DHS writ large, as well as any other support down there, has to be given the authority to enforce the law. And the administration will not do it because the administration wants an open border policy.

As we continue to debate the upcoming supplemental appropriations package, we must include real, enforceable steps to secure our border. This should include benchmarks so we know the administration is enforcing the law and reducing the number of encounters and illegal entries.

The administration's current policies prioritize processing migrants who illegally come across the southern border and then providing them with housing, transportation, and other services once they enter the United States.

The administration is turning CBP into one of the most well-funded, government-run travel agencies in the world. Any supplemental funding must secure our border—our own border. That means ensuring that the administration reinstates the Migrant Protection Protocols—or the “Remain in Mexico” policy; enforces third safe country agreements; and resumes construction of the border wall.

Those things are all in place now. It doesn't require legislation from Congress. Those are measures that are in law now. The administration refuses to enforce them because the administration wants an open border policy.

And we need to include benchmarks to hold the administration's feet to the fire and ensure that these policies get enforced.

The Biden administration must address the border crisis, enforce the laws that kept monthly encounters to lower numbers under the prior administration—we are not guessing about this; we saw that it works under the prior administration—and take border security seriously, because, again, border security is national security.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent that my remarks be completed prior to the vote.

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

NOMINATION OF JAMEL SEMPER

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to proudly vote for the confirmation of Jamel Semper to the U.S. District Court of New Jersey.

Mr. Semper, whom I personally recommended to President Biden, is exceptionally well-qualified for this position, and you don't have to take my

word for it. Mr. Semper received strong, bipartisan support on the Judiciary Committee. So there is no reason he shouldn't enjoy that same bipartisan support here on the Senate floor.

For more than 15 years, Mr. Semper has tirelessly sought justice for the residents who call New Jersey home. Indeed, it is the central theme that runs throughout Mr. Semper's career—an unwavering commitment to the rule of law and to the communities the law is meant to protect.

He began his career as an assistant prosecutor in Union County, handling a wide range of cases across the appellate, juvenile, and adult trial units. Then, in Essex County, he went after carjackers and murderers, including the first prosecution of a homicide under New Jersey's domestic terrorism statute.

In 2018, he was sworn in as an assistant U.S. attorney in Newark, climbing the ladder and ultimately serving as chief of both the violent crime and organized crime units. Today, he is the deputy chief of the criminal division, a role in which he is responsible for supervising all phases of criminal investigation and prosecution.

In each of these positions, Mr. Semper has demonstrated unflinching fidelity to the rule of law. Time and time again, Mr. Semper has kept New Jerseyans safe, while also building bridges between residents and those who have sworn an oath to protect them.

This community-focused approach to law enforcement has earned Mr. Semper plaudits from individuals and organizations representing diverse interests, especially those who advocate for communities of color in the Garden State.

Consider the words of Rev. Ron Slaughter, the pastor of St. James AME in Newark. He said:

“Semper has touched all the bases, stayed connected to the community, and remained patient. This is a great day for New Jersey, America, our judiciary, and my community.”

Truer words haven't been spoken.

Mr. Semper's confirmation today not only furthers our collective goal of addressing judicial vacancies across our country; it also advances our efforts to diversify the Federal bench. It brings us one step closer toward ensuring that our most hallowed institutions reflect the rich tapestry of America.

For nearly 18 years, I have always taken my constitutional duty to provide advice and consent on judicial nominees seriously. It is one of the most solemn obligations as U.S. Senators that we have, and it is one of the most consequential impacts we have on our democracy as Senators—confirming judges who interpret and shape the law and our Constitution for decades to come.

So I am a firm believer that our independent judiciary must reflect the very best of America's values and its citizens, which is why I can honestly say

that Jamel Semper's relentless commitment to public service, combined with his temperament and the trust he has built with New Jerseyans—all this is exactly what we look for in a Federal judge.

He will, no doubt, be an asset to New Jersey's Federal bench, and I encourage all my colleagues to support Jamel Semper to be in his rightful place on the District Court of New Jersey.

IMMIGRATION

Madam President, before I yield the floor, I would like to take a moment to forcefully oppose ongoing efforts to attach harmful immigration proposals to the national security supplemental package we are considering. It is the height of absurdity to claim that the price for assisting our international allies is gutting our asylum and humanitarian parole laws.

Democrats should not and cannot stand idly by while asylum seekers and immigrant families are imperiled by a handful of Senators operating in total darkness, without any meaningful feedback from a broader coalition of Hispanic, Black, and Asian legislators, advocates, and others who should be helping shape these negotiations.

For all those who care about the future of immigrants in this country—indeed, our very identity as a beacon of hope for those seeking a better life—now is the time to make your voice heard. Now is the time to make it clear that we will not allow our asylum and humanitarian parole laws to be gutted, while undocumented immigrants, including Dreamers, TPS recipients, farm workers, and essential workers are forced to stay in the shadows. Now is the time to make it clear that we will not stand by as some try to fundamentally change our immigration system without any transparent, deliberative process. This is the time to make it clear that we should not be codifying asylum and transit bans into law—failed policies that will do nothing to mitigate the flow of migration to the United States.

Moreover, now is the time for my Democratic colleagues in both the Senate and the House to meet the moment. This is our clarion call. We must find the moral courage to do what is right. Otherwise, what are we doing here? How are we supposed to face our constituents and immigrant families across the Nation, some of whom are doing the most difficult jobs in our country in order to help us, and argue that we are the party that stands with immigrants? We cannot capitulate to the extremes in the Republican Party that are more interested in demonizing and hurting immigrants than working together in good faith to fix our immigration system.

We must reject the notion that playing our role as the defender of freedom and democracy around the world comes at the cost of our own identity as a nation of immigrants. We are the United States of America. Let's ultimately start acting like that.