

Democrats agree immigration should be debated and addressed. But if Republicans want to raise the issue of immigration right now, the onus is on them to present us with bipartisan ideas. Democrats have spent weeks—weeks—engaging in good faith on this issue. In fact, the President's supplemental proposal puts money directly toward vetting asylum claims, reducing court backlogs, and stopping fentanyl, which is exactly what our Republican colleagues say they want.

But instead of meeting us in the middle, Republicans have tripled down on extremist policies that seem dictated by Donald Trump and Stephen Miller, like indefinite detention of asylum seekers and sweeping powers to shut down the immigration system.

Democrats want to be reasonable on immigration. We are willing to make concessions, but we will not keep going in circles if Republicans aren't interested in even meeting us halfway.

Now, just because both sides can't reach an agreement does not mean that we can't get something done. But it must be broadly bipartisan. Neither side can dictate what can be in the bill, which is what many of our Republican colleagues seem to want.

The two parties don't disagree seriously on Israel or Ukraine aid or humanitarian assistance to Gaza or the Indo-Pacific. We should, therefore, work toward passing these areas where we have bipartisan agreement.

The world is watching what we do in Congress these coming weeks. You can bet Vladimir Putin is watching, Hamas is watching, Iran, President Xi, North Korea. All our adversaries are watching closely.

If Congress fails to defend democracy in its hour of need—all because of border policies inspired by Donald Trump and Stephen Miller—the judgment of history will be harsh indeed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Madam President, now, on NDAA, Democrats have committed to working with Republicans to pass the annual Defense authorization bill through Congress before the end of the year.

Four months ago, the Senate passed our own version of the NDAA with strong bipartisan support. Our bipartisan NDAA made a critical downpayment to rein in the Chinese Government on fentanyl trafficking, the purchase of U.S. farmlands, outbound investments, and more.

We also passed critical parts of AUKUS, one of the most important tools we have for outcompeting the Chinese Government. We must include all of AUKUS in the final agreement.

But, right now, a number of House Republicans—who like to talk a big game on China—are actually sabotaging some of the best tough-on-Chinese-Government accomplishments we have passed in the NDAA. Instead of standing up to the Chinese government, House Republicans seem to be doing their bidding.

For one, House Republican leadership is dangerously close to killing a bipar-

tisan measure to disrupt opioid supply chains—many of which began in China—and punish those who facilitate fentanyl trafficking. This measure, the FEND Act, was adopted with strong bipartisan support in the Senate. It has been championed by the leadership of both the Banking and Armed Services Committees.

Holding the Chinese Government accountable for the fentanyl crisis is the definition of a legislative layup, but House Republicans are trying to kill this bill if they don't get their way on unrelated measures. Instead of making the layup, they are throwing up an air ball.

Incredibly, there is more. Earlier this summer, the Senate overwhelmingly passed a measure limiting the free flow of U.S. investment into China for sensitive advanced technologies like semiconductors, AI, and more. It would codify elements of an Executive order that President Biden issued in August on outbound investments.

What is more commonsense than stopping U.S. dollars from helping Chinese companies beat us on chips and AI and quantum computing?

Yet, once again, House Republicans, with the apparent blessing of their leadership, are blocking the bipartisan measure.

So House Republicans will talk a good game on fighting the Chinese Government but oppose measures to hold that government accountable for the fentanyl crisis, which is so afflicting America. House Republicans will howl that President Biden is not tough enough on China but refuse to codify restrictions on outbound investments that President Biden already issued.

There are only two words to describe House Republicans' record when it comes to China: cynical and hypocritical. We have a chance—a chance—to pass real, bipartisan reforms to help us outcompete the Chinese Government, but House Republicans are going out of their way—out of their way—to kill these wins.

Finally, on UAPs, while it is not related to China, House Republicans are also attempting to kill another commonsense, bipartisan measure passed by the Senate, which I was proud to cosponsor with Senator ROUNDS as the lead sponsor, to increase transparency around what the government does and does not know about unidentified aerial phenomena.

Unidentified aerial phenomena generate intense curiosity for many Americans, and the risk for confusion and misinformation is high if the government isn't willing to be transparent.

The measure I championed with Senator ROUNDS would create a board, just like we did with the JFK assassination records, to work through the declassification of many government records on UAPs. This model has been a terrific success for decades. It should be used again with UAPs, but, once again, House Republicans are ready to kill this bipartisan provision.

Now, we are going to get the NDAA done this year, just like we have for more than six decades, but there is still some more work to do.

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

Madam President, on the assault weapons ban, later this week, I will join my Democratic colleagues here on the floor to ask unanimous consent to pass the assault weapons ban. I will come to the floor to try and pass the assault weapons ban because, right now, the scourge of gun violence in America is a national crisis.

It wasn't always this way. After I led passage of the Brady Law and the assault weapons ban 30 years ago, America saw a significant decrease in mass shootings and gun deaths.

It is simple: The assault weapons ban works. It saves lives. And one decade since the expiration of the ban, we need it more than ever.

As of today, there have been more mass shootings than days in the year 2023.

Let me say that again. As of today, there have been more mass shootings than days in 2023. And the American people are tired of fearing for their lives, their children's lives, their friends' lives every time people leave the house.

The people of Lewiston, ME, where a gunman murdered 18 people at a bowling alley and restaurant with an assault rifle, are tired of fearing for their lives. The people of Allen, TX, where a gunman murdered eight people at a shopping mall with an assault rifle, are tired of fearing for their lives. The people of Louisville, KY, where a gunman murdered five people at a bank with an assault weapon, are tired of fearing for their lives.

So when Democrats come to the floor this week, again, to pass the assault weapons ban and other gun safety legislation, I urge my Republican colleagues to stand with us. Stand with the American people. Stand against the gun lobby. Stand against gun violence. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam 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.

REMEMBERING SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I would like to begin today with a few words about the late Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Justice O'Connor was a transformative figure in the history of our country and of our highest Court. She was a trailblazer in both legislative politics and constitutional jurisprudence, and I am grateful for her extraordinary life and for her dedicated service.

I know our colleagues join me in offering our deepest condolences to Justice O'Connor's children, grandchildren, and the entire O'Connor family.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND BORDER SECURITY

Madam President, on an entirely different matter, the Senate has less than 2 weeks to pass supplemental legislation on urgent national security priorities. As I have said for months, that means addressing both grave threats to America's interests overseas and a glaring border security crisis right here at home.

Senate Republicans know that national security begins with border security, and we have made it crystal clear that, in order to pass the Senate, any measure we take up in the coming days must include serious policy changes designed to get the Biden administration's border crisis under control. Apparently, some of our colleagues aren't ready to take that reality seriously.

Senator LANKFORD, Senator GRAHAM, and their fellow Republican negotiators are still at the table, working diligently on solutions, but from the White House to the Capitol, Washington Democrats are wasting time with bizarre public scoldings. Instead of engaging actively in the border security discussions required to complete a viable national security supplemental, the Biden administration has chosen to lecture—lecture—Congress with a brag reel of its supposed leadership in countering Putin in Europe.

The administration's account glossed over its record of self-deterrence toward Russia, insisting that "the time to help democratic Ukraine fight against Russian aggression is right now."

If only President Biden had felt that sort of urgency in late 2021 and early 2022, as I and other Republicans urged the administration to give Ukraine the lethal assistance it needed to resist Putin's escalation. If only this lethal assistance—and critical investments in cutting-edge capabilities for U.S. forces—hadn't required so much prodding.

Last week, at the Reagan National Defense Forum, the previous administration's former National Security Advisor, Robert O'Brien, made the case for supporting Ukraine.

He pointed out, rightly, that helping degrade the military power of a major U.S. adversary is in America's national security interest and that we shouldn't hesitate to give Ukraine the weapons it needs to do the job. He observed that the Biden administration's "self-congratulatory talk" doesn't square with its "parsimonious" approach to actually getting decisive weapons to the battlefield. As he put it, President Biden's team ought to "stop patting [itself] on the back."

For their part, it is time for Senate Democrats to start demonstrating they are more interested in reaching a productive outcome in border security dis-

cussions than in wringing their hands in the press. The junior Senator for Connecticut has concluded that beginning to stem the humanitarian and national security crisis on our southern border amounts to "closing the border indiscriminately." Apparently, restoring a functional asylum and parole system, orderly points of entry, and meaningful enforcement of our immigration laws is a bridge too far for Senate Democrats.

Let's be absolutely clear on what we are dealing with here. Let's establish exactly what it is that the Democratic leader has called "extraneous" to America's national security.

On President Biden's watch, CBP has recorded 6.5 million—million—encounters at the southern border and 1.7 million known "got-aways." Last fiscal year's alltime record apprehensions at the southern border included 169 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist—a massive increase.

The Biden administration tried to convince the American people that they were serious about this historic crisis by having asylum seekers download a smart phone app. Instead, week after week, all we can see are numbers that somehow keep getting worse.

Meanwhile, liberal State and local officials told us that the increasing chaos of their "sanctuary cities" could be mitigated if only we raced to give work permits to that ever-growing population of illegal aliens. Now, setting aside the fact that that creates the exact wrong incentive, the Biden administration has already tried this approach and failed. In New York City alone, just 2 percent of recent arrivals have even applied. President Biden's officials have even admitted that they expected this unserious approach to produce a further surge in arrivals.

As recently as 2 weeks ago, the White House was trying to sell its flawed, insufficient supplemental proposal as a solution to the crisis. As the junior Senator from Tennessee has pointed out, the President's answer to the border crisis wasn't to enforce immigration law; it was to turn ICE into a concierge service for illegal aliens.

Washington Democrats appear to be hell-bent on exhausting every half-baked idea before they get serious about actually fixing our broken enforcement system and securing our southern border. That is the job the American people expect them to do. That is the foundation of America's national security. And time is running out.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in the depths of World War II raging in Europe, a group of people decided to charter a ship and come to the United States. They were Jewish people from European countries. The ship was known as the *USS St. Louis*. It went to the port in Havana, Cuba, and was

turned away. It tried to land in the United States and was turned away again. It eventually returned to Europe, a boatload of Jewish people. Hundreds of them died in the Holocaust.

We reflected on that after World War II and decided it was not a period in American history that we should take pride in but a lesson to us of what happens when people are in desperate situations and ask for help.

I believe it was in 1951 that we entered into the Geneva Convention, an agreement when it came to refugees who sought refuge at the shore. The United States, under Presidents of both political parties, wanted to establish once and for all that what happened to the *USS St. Louis* did not reflect the values of the United States of America. So in 1951, we established, with many nations around the world, a standard for what to do with refugees, people who sought refuge in your country because of fear of staying in their own country.

The system worked well for us for many decades, but now we are facing a new challenge we have never seen before. The number of refugees from around the world is at a record-breaking pace—some refugees because of war, some because of fear, religious belief, state of the environment—and they are moving in massive numbers all over the globe, particularly into Europe and the United States.

So we have seen recordbreaking numbers appearing at our border to the south of our country, and we have heard from the other party quite a bit about this—deservedly so.

I am a person who believes in immigration. My mother was an immigrant to this country, and I am proud to be in the Senate, a first-generation American, representing the great State of Illinois, as the Presiding Officer does. But I understand the overwhelming numbers we are facing at the border and President Biden is facing really argue for us to take a hard look at the way we approach this.

If you have ever been to an immigration court—and I have in the city of Chicago—it is an overwhelming experience. You see people standing three and four deep against the wall, waiting for their numbers to be called. Usually—in fact, almost without fail—their cases are postponed for another 6 months or another year.

It takes years for a person's refugee claim to be litigated. That is just plain wrong. Justice delayed in this situation is clearly justice denied. And the fact that half of them don't win in their litigation is an indication that if they were tried at an earlier date, the resolution of their future would be obvious.

So now we hear from our Republican friends that before we can provide any more military assistance to Ukraine in their war against Vladimir Putin, the war criminal from Moscow, if we are going to provide any assistance to Israel to fight off the Hamas terrorism