

bringing in decades—decades—of freedom and prosperity in Eastern Europe and a welcome end to the Cold War.

Now there comes a man named “Vladimir Putin” who is clumsily and dangerously trying to regain that dystopian Soviet glory with a bloody war in Ukraine.

So I can only wonder what President Reagan would be thinking now, with so many of his Republican Party Members refusing to support critical military assistance to keep Ukraine from falling to Russian tyranny.

Yes, we have other legislative needs in Congress, but refusing to support the forces of freedom in Ukraine in a war against a resurgent evil empire in the name of partisanship is nothing short of reckless.

It is not hard to understand how we got here. Putin gambled and lost a botched attempt to quickly overthrow Ukraine. Now he has to juggle a formidable Ukrainian resistance, huge losses of Russian conscript, isolation on the global stage, a struggling economy, domestic opposition, and an upcoming election in Russia that he needs to rig again to stay in power. Meanwhile, he has been branded a war criminal and has to carefully choose the nations that he visits so he isn't arrested on the spot.

So, given his tenuous position, what is one of his greatest opportunities for clinging to power? It is hope that the partisan chaos in the U.S. Congress will stall or end support for Ukraine. And make no mistake—the President of Ukraine told us point-blank when he visited here several months ago, in a private meeting in the Old Senate Chamber, that if the United States cuts off military assistance to Ukraine, his country will lose the war with Vladimir Putin.

That is what is at stake. The White House was clear. We know that Putin is watching this activity by Congress; so is China and so is Iran.

The White House was clear in warning that the United States is “out of money to support Ukraine in this fight.”

And President Zelenskyy told us the obvious: Ukraine will lose without American support.

So this is not an abstract political theater; what we do has consequences—global and historic consequences. As such, I implore my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, think long and hard about what President Reagan would say today about showing weakness to Vladimir Putin. Let's not flinch when it comes to standing up to such obvious threats to freedom.

It is time to pass President Biden's national security supplemental request. It is hard to imagine that we would actually let history record that we walked away from Ukraine at this moment. And it isn't over a debate of the merits of his defense of his country; it is over an unrelated issue: our border security.

It is obvious that we need to do something on our border. The number

of people presenting themselves for refugee status is at a record high. The system that was designed 60 years ago to deal with refugees never envisioned the volume of demands that we are facing on the border every single day, week, and month.

This is not unique to the United States. Refugees all around the world are mushrooming in size for a variety of reasons: conflicts, the war in the Middle East, the war in Ukraine, environmental changes. All of these have the world in flux. And many people are looking for safety, safety in countries like the United States.

I support the refugee system. I think it was designed at a time when we realized that turning away Jewish people in World War II was a stain on our reputation. We decided after World War II to enter into a pact with other countries around the world to accept refugees under certain circumstances, and we have lived by that ever since through Presidents—Republican and Democratic.

Now, we are being tested. We can meet that test. We can adjust our refugee system to the reality of today, and we can stop the abuse of the system that is taking place on the border. But we don't want to walk away from the very fundamental values of our country. It is trying to find that delicate balance between those values and the disorder that we face on the border that leads us to the point we are today.

I have been involved in immigration issues for as long as I have served in this Chamber, and I know how hard they are to negotiate. And to put this stark choice before the Senate of either finding a solution to a decades-old problem in a matter of days and hours or cutting off aid to Ukraine is a terrible choice.

It is a deadly choice for the people of Ukraine, and, sadly, it is a deadly choice for the dominance of the United States and shaping world opinion. I hope we find our senses and do it soon.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have come to the floor many times to voice my frustration with the timid, ineffective job by the Food and Drug Administration in protecting American children and consumers from Big Tobacco. With new threats like vaping, the FDA has failed—utterly failed—to use its authority under the law to clear the market in the United States of unauthorized e-cigarettes. These addictive products are targeting children with sweet and fruity flavors. Yet the Food and Drug Administration has largely neglected its public health responsibility to regulate these products.

But, today, I want to discuss an area where the FDA can make progress that has the potential to save hundreds of thousands of lives. Last month, the FDA submitted a regulation to the White House for final review. This proposed regulation would ban the sale of menthol cigarettes and prohibit the use of flavorings in cigars.

Scientists have known for years that flavors play a powerful role in addicting people to tobacco by masking the harsh taste of their product, but when Congress banned the use of most flavors of tobacco in 2009, Big Tobacco secured a loophole for menthol. Why? Addiction is profitable.

For decades, menthol cigarettes, in particular, have been marketed aggressively to the African-American community in the United States, through free samples, sponsorship of cultural events, and heavy advertising. As a result, today—today—85 percent of Black smokers use menthol cigarettes, compared to 30 percent of White smokers.

It is part of the reason why Black adults are 30 percent more likely to die from heart disease and 50 percent more likely to die from stroke, compared to White Americans.

Right before Thanksgiving, I met in my office with Marsha Hike, who lives in Chicago. She was in Washington because November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. She shared the fact that lung cancer is the No. 1 cause of cancer death in America. The No. 1 cause of cancer death in America: lung cancer, killing more Americans than breast cancer, prostate cancer, and colorectal cancer combined.

She met with me because six of her dearest family members have died from lung cancer due to smoking. I am glad there is greater attention today on topics like health disparities, equity, and the underlying factors for why Black people live sicker and die younger in America.

FDA's proposal would eliminate the racial disparity among cancer deaths between Black and White Americans, saving 650,000 lives.

I take this issue very personally. When I was a sophomore in high school, my father died of lung cancer. He was 53 years old. He spent 90 days—almost 100 days—in the hospital before he died, and I was by his bedside regularly. It made a profound impact on me as a high school kid, and little did I know that I would be able to follow up on this issue when I came to the House of Representatives by passing legislation to ban smoking on airplanes and taking Big Tobacco on ever since. The battle continues.

I know what the reaction is that the decision to ban menthol in cigarettes would be unpopular among the African-American population and may be reflected in the next vote. I think that is greatly exaggerated.

The majority of the Members of the Black caucus in Congress support this ban on menthol. And I want to make it clear, they are peddling stories—Big Tobacco is—that we are going to go out and arrest African Americans if they use menthol cigarettes, but that is not the case at all. The FDA proposal would take all of the action against the producers of the cigarettes, not the consumers. The consumers are not drawn into this in terms of any legal liability nor should they be.

The question is, do we care enough about these African Americans, their families, and their future to make an unpopular—to some—decision to move forward to make America a healthier, safer place to live? I hope we do.

I don't want any more families to experience the suffering that I went through and families do every day.

The Biden administration has an incredible track record of taking on big challenges and delivering. It has launched the Cancer Moonshot, created a new Federal research Agency, ARPA-H, to accelerate cures for patients. President Biden has taken on the gun lobby and Big Pharma and secured important victories with the passage last year of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

Now is the time to do the same against Big Tobacco, which is responsible for nearly half a million deaths per year. I urge the Biden administration to look carefully at the proposal from the FDA and swiftly finalize its rules on menthol and flavored cigars, which will save lives and reduce suffering, especially for communities of color.

This is an issue that is personal to many Americans. We didn't choose it. Addiction led our family members to face illness and sometimes death. Are we going to do something for the next generation of African Americans who are being harassed in the advertising and marketing of this product to the detriment of their future?

I hope that President Biden will do that.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will take a vote on whether or not to move to consideration of the national security supplemental bill. And make no mistake, this vote will fail. Not because Republicans oppose supporting our national security interests overseas but because Democrats are refusing to take seriously the national security crisis here at home.

From the beginning, Republicans have made it clear that any national security supplemental would have to address one of the biggest threats to our national security, the out-of-control illegal immigration at our southern border.

And when I say "out of control," just look at the numbers. Yesterday, 12,000 people were apprehended at our southern border trying to come into our country illegally—not including the "got-aways," not including the unknowns—over 12,000 people, which, I think, is an alltime, one-day high. Most ever. In history.

And think about that annualized. We are now talking about on the order of 4 million people annually coming across our southern border, being released into the country, coming across illegally.

When is this a crisis? This is a crisis. It is a humanitarian crisis. It has been that for a long time. But now—now it is a national security crisis because among those 12,000 people are some pretty unsavory characters.

There are people who are coming here for a better life, but there are a lot of people who are being apprehended now at our southern border. Some of whom are on the Terrorist Watchlist.

This is a crisis that needs to be dealt with, and it seems to be falling on deaf ears at the White House and among my colleagues here, Democratic colleagues in the U.S. Senate.

We have put forward meaningful ideas and solutions about how to deal with this, and yet crickets. Nobody seems to want to confront what is a major, major debacle at our southern border.

That is 12,000, one day—a new American record of people trying to come into this country illegally. Why? Because this administration doesn't seem to care or want to do anything about stopping or reducing that flow across our southern border.

It is a staggering number. And just to put it in perspective, Jeh Johnson, who was the Department of Homeland Security Secretary to President Obama, once said that a thousand a day would overwhelm the system—a thousand a day. He went on to say: I can't even comprehend what 4,000 a day would look like.

Yesterday was 12,000. Now, if you sustain that rate, annualize that rate, as I said, you are talking about 4 million people annually being released into this country.

And you have heard from countless now, not just Members on my side of the aisle or overcrowded communities on the southern border or members of the Customs and Border Patrol who are underwhelmed and underresourced and undermanned down there to deal with this crisis.

But you are hearing from cities in the interior of this country—large cities—who are complaining about not being able to deliver basic services to their constituents now because they are having to deal with a migrant inflow into their communities—New York City being one notable example. The mayor of New York City says he would have to freeze hiring police officers, he would have to close libraries, and cut education funding to keep up with this massive, massive inflow of people who are coming into this country who need to be cared for.

So let me just say, this is not an extraneous issue, which is what the Democrat leader suggested last week. Border security is a national security issue, and anyone who thinks that our Nation can be secure while we have hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants pouring over our southern border each month needs to think again.

The month of October, 240,988 individuals were encountered at our south-

ern border. That was the highest October number ever recorded. But on top of that, the month of October saw an average of 1,000 "got-aways" per day, individuals the Border Patrol saw but was unable to apprehend. That is 30,000 unidentified individuals entering our country in just 1 month—30,000.

And there is no telling how many unknown "got-aways"—these are known "got-aways"—how many unknown "got-aways" there were during that same period. And there is no question that some of those "got-aways" were dangerous individuals who should not be entering the country.

During fiscal year 2023, there were 169 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist who were apprehended attempting to illegally cross our southern border. That was fiscal year 2023, which ended September 30, 169 in 1 year.

Well, if the numbers continue to ramp up—and you look at the daily numbers we are encountering now, you know that number is going to go up significantly as well. Because why? People have figured out, you want to get into the United States, come across our southern border.

And thousands of what are known as—what we call special interest aliens, those individuals who may pose a threat to the United States, have been apprehended trying to illegally cross our southern border over the past 2 years.

Then there have been the criminals who are trying to make their way into the United States, and those range from drug traffickers to child predators. One border reporter noted last month:

Border Patrol's Del Rio Sector has arrested at least 21 child sex predators crossing illegally since the new fiscal year began on October 1.

Twenty-one child sex predators in a single sector of our southern border.

And, again, all of these numbers I am mentioning only refer to individuals who have actually been apprehended. With 30,000 unknown individuals entering the United States in October alone, there is no telling how many terrorists, how many criminals, how many other dangerous individuals have made their way into our country without our knowledge.

So I think it is fair to say that the issue of border security is not "extraneous" but is, in fact, fundamental to our national security and something that the Democrat leader ought to realize.

Indeed the fact that New York City, as I mentioned, is currently facing across-the-board cuts to its city services, including a staggering 13.5-percent cut to its police force—to its police force—as a result of the migrant crisis should be all the information the majority leader needs to realize that our current situation is not sustainable, even without the national security risk imposed by unchecked illegal immigration.

Now, I support aid to Israel, Taiwan, and Ukraine, and I believe it is in our