

perfect, and it includes an unnecessary extension of section 702. I won't go into the details of this complicated mechanism that we have to try to detect those who threaten our country, but, from the beginning, I raised questions about its compliance with the constitutional guarantees of people being safe in the searches and seizures of the government. We will continue to discuss this over the weeks and months ahead.

## IMMIGRATION

Mr. President, I want to close on the topic that Senator MCCONNELL raised, immigration. It is not an easy issue. I have given 20 years of my life here in the Senate to the issue of immigration and feel it was time well spent. It is over 20 years ago that I introduced the DREAM Act. Before I introduced this bill, if you asked most people what the "Dreamers" were, they would say a British rock group headed up by a guy named Freddie. Well, today, when you say "Dreamers," people know what you are talking about: infants, toddlers, and children brought to the United States by their parents, growing up here, going to school, and determined to help this country succeed in the future. And what they find when they are teenagers is that they are undocumented; they don't have legal status in the United States.

I have always believed that they deserve a chance. The overwhelming majority of Americans of both political parties believe the same thing. But we have been unable to enact that law, and, as a consequence, at least 800,000 who were helped with the DACA Program by President Obama still have their fate in doubt as it courses through our Federal court system. That is something we should do automatically—we should have done it a long time ago—to protect these young people and the aspirations they have to make us a better nation. These are young people who will serve not only as teachers and engineers, but doctors and nurses and members of our military. If we give them the chance to fight and die for America, they will do it. They want to be part of this Nation's future, and they deserve that opportunity.

But, currently, we are debating only one thing, and that is the policy at the border—the southern border of the United States. I will tell you this: I have taken a close look at the situation at the border, and I know that change is necessary. But it must be change consistent with our values and realistic.

For the Republicans to propose change which says that those who come into the country seeking asylum will either be detained or sent to remain in Mexico—a policy that Donald Trump tried during his Presidency—there are some fatal flaws here. How in the world are we going to detain all those people presenting themselves at the border? That is simply a promise that can't be kept. And, secondly, as for this notion of "Remain in Mexico,"

there is only one party to this conversation that hasn't agreed to it, Mexico. They don't want to have these people residing in their country for long periods of time while we work out changes in America's legal system.

It is hard to imagine, when you see the intractable positions taken by some on immigration, that there actually was a moment when we agreed on a bipartisan basis to pass comprehensive immigration reform. The Gang of 8, which I was part of, put that together. It was an extraordinary effort, and it was successful because of the hard work of a lot of people and a lot of time spent going through—painstakingly going through—each and every provision of the bill.

It can be done. It needs to be done. But the notion that in 7 days or 14 days we can craft some change in immigration policy that will help us, from time immemorial, is unrealistic and naive, and to condition any assistance to Ukraine on the achievement of that political goal is nonsense.

What we can do is come up with an agreement, I believe, on a bipartisan basis to enforce provisions and rules at the border that are consistent with American values but really do make it clear that we cannot sustain the number of people who are presenting themselves at the current time. I think that can be done, but only as a preliminary step to move us toward comprehensive immigration reform.

There are some, incidentally, who call for immigration reform but have never voted for an immigration bill one time in their political lives. That is a reality. So we shouldn't listen to their guidance if they haven't proven that they are open to vote for anything on the subject.

This is an important issue to a lot of people. I was in Guatemala City yesterday, as a matter of fact—or was it Saturday? This weekend, I met with people from Venezuela who were making their way to the U.S. border—they were mothers with small children—and I thought to myself: Who would embark on that dangerous, deadly journey with small children, realizing that every step of the way they are the most vulnerable person in the country?

As you travel through these countries, they are assaulted by people who steal everything that they own and threaten them with physical abuse and other things. I can't imagine how desperate these people must be to risk their families and their kids to make it to America. But then I think back: As a son of an immigrant myself, I know there was a determination in my family to make it in this country.

We have got to find a way to carefully construct a border policy that still takes advantage of the opportunities of immigration—the people who will come here and make us a better nation in the years ahead—and do it in a fashion that is thoughtful, not vindictive. That is what immigration requires, and I hope that we can reach that goal.

I yield the floor.

## RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

## UKRAINE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, tomorrow morning, Leader MCCONNELL and I will welcome Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the Senate. This will be the third time President Zelenskyy meets with Senators since the start of the war, and it will be his most important visit of all.

The war in Ukraine stands at a crossroads, with our friends in desperate need of American aid to maintain pressure on Vladimir Putin. The last time President Zelenskyy spoke to the Senate, he warned us that without more aid, Ukraine will lose the war—simple as that. Earlier today, he warned military officers at the National Defense University that "if there's anyone inspired by unresolved issues on Capitol Hill, it is just Putin and his sick clique."

So if there is a word for what we most need this week, the word is to be serious about the task at hand. If Republicans in the Senate do not show they are serious about finalizing an agreement for the national security package, Vladimir Putin is going to walk through Ukraine and right through Europe.

Both parties understand that aiding Ukraine and resisting Putin are critical for our national security, but Republicans and only Republicans are holding everything up because of unrealistic, maximalist demands on the border.

Last week, we put forth a serious bill to address our national security needs. The package included robust border security provisions. Republicans rejected it out of hand, demanding their way or the highway, even though they were offered an amendment of their choosing—and they only need 11 Democrats to go along.

This posture is unserious. Again, Republicans and only Republicans are holding everything up because of unrealistic, maximalist demands on the border.

I want to be very clear. Democrats very much want an agreement if possible. We talked all weekend with our Republican counterparts to find some kind of agreement. We talked again earlier today. We are not there yet, but as a sign of good faith, Democrats are going to keep trying.

If Republicans keep insisting on Donald Trump's border policies, then they will be at fault when a deal for aid to Ukraine, Israel, and humanitarian aid to Gaza falls apart. The onus is on Republicans to show they are willing to moderate.

Let me say that again. If Republicans keep insisting on Donald Trump's border policies, then they will be at fault when a deal for Ukraine, Israel, and humanitarian aid to Gaza falls apart. Republicans will be giving Vladimir Putin the best gift he could ask for.

Democrats are serious about reaching reasonable, bipartisan compromise to pass this package. The question is if Republicans are now willing to do the same.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

On NDAA, at the beginning of December, I said the Senate has three major priorities before the end of the year.

First, we needed to end the blanket holds on hundreds of military nominees by the Senator from Alabama. We have now done that. Before we finish for the year, the Senate plans to move to confirm the 11 four-star military officers awaiting confirmation.

Second, we must pass the annual Defense authorization bill, which has been one of the most bipartisan priorities in Congress for over 60 years. This will be our focus on the floor this week.

Third and hardest of all, we must reach an agreement on the national security supplemental. We are still working, and while we are not near an agreement yet, we are going to keep pushing as the week progresses.

Last week, I filed cloture on the NDAA conference report, and we expect to move forward on the NDAA conference report after lunch tomorrow. At a time of huge trouble for global security, passing the Defense authorization bill is more important than ever.

This year's NDAA makes strong downpayments in outcompeting the Chinese Communist Party, particularly by approving President Biden's trilateral U.S., U.K., and Australia nuclear submarine agreement. We have been working on AUKUS all year. It is one of the most important tools we have against the Chinese Government, and it is a major accomplishment to get it done.

I want to thank the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, JACK REED, and Ranking Member WICKER for their good work in shepherding this bill through committee and through the conference process. I commend all conferees for their good work over the past few weeks.

I thank my colleagues for working together to ensure the Senate's six-decade streak of passing the NDAA remains unbroken.

#### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on judges and nominations, today, the Senate will confirm the 39th circuit judge under President Biden—Richard Federico to be circuit court judge for the Tenth Circuit.

Mr. Federico is precisely the type of judge we need on our circuit courts—a brilliant legal mind who has dedicated his life to service as a lawyer in the Navy and as a public defender.

Thanks to the work of President Biden and the Senate majority, we have confirmed more public defenders to circuit courts than under any President in history. Of course, we also confirmed the first-ever public defender to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court, the great Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Now this Senate majority has confirmed over 160 judges to lifetime appointments on the bench, including more Black judges, more women judges, and more judges of color than the full first term of any other President; more women to circuit courts than any President in their entire time in office; the first Muslim-American woman on the Federal bench; the first Navajo Federal judge; and, of course, as I mentioned, the first Black woman on the Supreme Court, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

All year long, this Senate majority has prioritized confirming judges who add to the bench's personal and professional diversity, and we are going to continue going into the new year.

#### STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. President, now on student debt and the letter we sent, today, I sent a letter with several of my Democratic colleagues, including Senators WARREN, PADILLA, and SANDERS, to the Secretary of Education urging him to continue the Department's expansion of student debt relief to working- and middle-class borrowers.

The Biden administration has already taken historic steps to reduce the burden of student loan debt for tens of millions of Americans, but following the Supreme Court's cruel ruling blocking student debt relief, too many borrowers remain saddled with massive and in many cases unbearable amounts of debt. We can and must do more to help these borrowers.

As the Education Department is engaged in the rulemaking process for student debt relief, our letter specifically urges the administration to, No. 1, eliminate all debt that exceeds the original principal balance of the loan; No. 2, provide full cancellation for borrowers who have repaid enough to cover their original principal; and No. 3, extend relief to borrowers victimized by student loan servicer misconduct or error and other commonsense measures to help borrowers.

I want to thank Senators WARREN, PADILLA, and SANDERS, as well as Representatives PRESSLEY, OMAR, and WILSON, for their leadership on this letter. I look forward to working with the Biden administration to make sure relief reaches every borrower in need.

#### ALBANY NANOTECH

Mr. President, now on Albany NanoTech, earlier today, I joined Governor Hochul and Albany leaders to announce a historic \$10 billion public-private partnership to make the Albany NanoTech Complex the most advanced center for semiconductor research in the entire world. It is a landmark day for the capital region in New York. That is Albany, Schenectady, and Troy in that tricity area.

This \$10 billion partnership, spurred by the CHIPS and Science Act, will bring the most cutting-edge semiconductor machinery on the planet to Albany and propel Albany NanoTech as the premier global center for semiconductor research.

Today's announcement will mean hundreds of new, high-paying tech jobs, hundreds of construction jobs, and a tidal wave of scientific innovation that engineers today cannot even fathom.

When I wrote the CHIPS and Science Act, I had precisely regions like Albany and Upstate New York in mind because these communities have so much to offer for America's semiconductor future.

As we enter the home stretch for the selection of the major hubs of the National Semiconductor Technology Center, today's \$10 billion announcement will strengthen Albany and Upstate New York's case as the best region to lead the next generation of innovations in America's microchip industry.

Today's announcement comes on the same day as the announcement by the Commerce Department of the first funding agreement from the CHIPS Incentives Program. BAE Systems will receive \$35 million to quadruple its production capacity for chips essential to our national security, including for F-35 fighter jets. This award, like today's announcement in Albany, shows that the CHIPS and Science Act is delivering for American workers and for our national security.

So it is an exciting time for New York tech, with major announcements from companies like Micron, IBM, GlobalFoundries, and so many others made possible because of CHIPS and Science. And I believe the best for New York's semiconductor industry is still to come.

I yield the floor.

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

#### MILITARY NOMINATIONS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, a major item in the news last week was that the senior Senator from Alabama, Senator TUBERVILLE, released holds on over 400 military promotions. As usual, media reports framed the situation in much the same way as the Biden administration had. Both the President and the press focused on the holds instead of the policy the holds protested. They claimed my Senate colleague manufactured a crisis. The truth is that it is the President's political appointees who have been manufacturing the crisis from the start.

Let's go back. In the summer of 2022, the Supreme Court handed down its landmark Dobbs ruling. Almost immediately, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel claimed the decision would have "significant implications . . . for the readiness of the force." The abortion decision named "Dobbs" would have "significant implications . . . for the readiness of the force." Again, he claimed that the Supreme Court's decision, which essentially returned abortion decisions to the States, would have "significant implications . . . for the readiness of the force."

Let's all agree that readiness is vital to our success. Military readiness is