

including 1.5 million jobs created in manufacturing, construction, and engineering. Meanwhile, unemployment has been under 4 percent for 22 months in a row—the longest stretch in over 50 years. And, across the country, we are seeing the labor movement reclaim its strength.

After decades of declining union membership, working people are coming together to demand their fair share of the economic success our country is experiencing—success they make possible. None of this is happening by accident. These victories are thanks, in large part, to the commitment of the Biden-Harris administration and, to give credit where credit is due, to the work of Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su.

Since assuming the top role at the Labor Department earlier this year, Acting Secretary Su has played a critical role in supporting workers and finding consensus to move our economy forward. In June, just months after taking over the Department, she helped avert a potentially disastrous strike at ports all along the west coast. Had major ports come to a screeching halt, our country would have experienced massive supply chain disruptions, costing our economy billions of dollars. Such a shutdown would have been particularly chaotic for Hawaii, where the vast majority of our goods is shipped to the State.

Gene Seroke, the director of the Port of Los Angeles, the busiest container port in the country, said Julie was “a constant and reassuring voice of reason that has helped to keep both sides at the bargaining table and focused on resolution.”

In October, Acting Secretary Su helped settle a labor dispute between Kaiser Permanente and nearly 75,000 of its union employees who staged the largest healthcare strike in our Nation's history. After weeks of bargaining, Kaiser and its employees had failed to reach an agreement, endangering the care they provided to millions of Americans across our country. At the invitation of both parties, Acting Secretary Su flew to California to sit at the bargaining table and encourage both sides to continue talking in good faith. To help bridge the gap between labor and management and keep the lines of communication open, Acting Secretary Su was regularly moving from room to room, serving as a critical liaison in the negotiations.

With her help, Kaiser workers reached a historic deal that included a record 21-percent wage increase over 4 years. Both sides agreed she was critical to reaching a deal, with the union calling her support “instrumental” and Kaiser's senior vice president of labor relations saying that Julie was “able to get us to articulate where we have commonalities, not about a particular package, but about our interests in the employees, and in healthcare.”

That is what Julie does. She helps people find common ground, setting

workers, businesses, and our economy up for success.

But, even after that historic success, many continue to doubt Acting Secretary Su's acumen, with one labor economist going so far as to question her skills as a mediator. Let's face it: It is not unusual for so-called experts to question the leadership qualities of women, with little evidence to substantiate their criticisms.

In spite of her detractors, just weeks later, Julie Su helped mediate a truly historic deal between the United Auto Workers and the Big Three auto companies, resolving the most significant auto strike in modern American history. Like Kaiser workers, with Acting Secretary Su's support, autoworkers secured a transformational contract—a contract that will see UAW salaries rise more in the next 4 years than they have in the previous 20.

Shawn Fain, the newly elected UAW president, showed his mettle in these negotiations as the country watched. Significantly, he, too, praised Julie Su's leadership, citing her work to build trust between labor and management and encouraging them to focus on their shared goals.

In addition to these and many other settled labor disputes, Acting Secretary Su is leading major initiatives to make life better for working people in our country and grow the middle class—from expanding overtime protections to strengthening apprenticeships and work training programs and much more.

Julie Su's work speaks for itself. She listens; she finds consensus; and she helps those around her stay the course for as long as it takes. What more could we ask of a Secretary of Labor?

Still, there are those who question Julie's ability to do the job, either ignoring or willfully dismissing her track record of successes. To be blunt: Sexism, racism, and double standards applied to women of color are all too common in spite of their denials all around. Julie Su has been doing the job of the Secretary of Labor for months, and she has been doing it well. But still, some of our colleagues cling to baseless criticisms, insisting she is unfit to serve. It is unfair to Acting Secretary Su and to the millions of workers whose lives she has helped to improve. Like the committed public servant she is, Julie perseveres, focusing on the important work of her Department.

Along with millions of working people all across our country, I am grateful for all she and the Biden-Harris administration have done for workers, businesses, and our economy. This administration and Acting Secretary Su understand that workers are the force that keeps our country moving forward. With their continued leadership, I look forward to more wins for workers and our economy in the years ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, President Zelenskyy visited Washington, DC, last week to ask for the United States' continued support for Ukraine as it defends itself against Russia.

As someone who strongly believes that it is in our national security interest to aid Ukraine as well as our allies Israel and Taiwan, I am disappointed that we have not already passed the aid Ukraine needs. But let's be very clear: The reason the Senate has not already passed a national security supplemental is that Democrats, so far, have chosen to prioritize an open border over aid for our allies.

Democrats have known for months that border security was going to be a part of the national security supplemental. After all, the President himself requested border funding in his supplemental request. Republicans have had a border security proposal on the table literally since the beginning of November, but Democrats wasted weeks, refusing to engage in substantive negotiations even though they were well aware that border security was going to be a requirement for getting this supplemental through both Houses of Congress. Now the supplemental will be pushed to January because Democrats have run out the clock to the point where getting a substantive border security deal passed before Christmas is impossible.

Last week, President Biden said that failing to pass the national security supplemental before the holidays would be a Christmas gift to Putin. Well, I would like to point out, once again, that the only reason we haven't passed the national security supplemental already is because of the Democrats and President Biden. Only one of the two parties has been dragging its feet on negotiations, and it has not been the Republicans. A lot of us Republicans are eager to get Ukraine the aid that it needs, but we cannot—and I say we cannot—tend to our national security interests abroad while ignoring the national security crisis right here on our doorstep.

President Biden wants to talk about a gift to Putin? Well, let's talk about the gift the President has been giving to terrorists and criminals and cartels for 3 years now with the chaos we have at our southern border. We have had three successive, record-breaking years of illegal immigration at our southern border on President Biden's watch; and the President is no closer to getting this crisis under control than when it first started.

During October, the latest month for which we have data, U.S. Customs and Border Protection encountered 240,988 migrants at our southern border, which is the highest October number ever recorded. I might add that among those numbers in October, there were almost 1,600 convicted criminals, 50 gang members, 90 people who have warrants out for their arrests, and 12 people on the Terrorist Watchlist. That was just in

the month of October. The past 24 hours alone saw a record-breaking 12,000-plus migrant encounters at the southern border and, I would say, the highest—highest—daily total ever recorded. And those numbers don't count the "got-aways," the individuals the Border Patrol saw but was unable to apprehend.

Let's be very clear: While many of these individuals may simply have headed to the United States in search of a better life, there is no question that there are dangerous individuals who are trying to make their way into our country.

During fiscal year 2023, the Border Patrol arrested 169 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist at the southern border—169. That was a substantial increase over fiscal year 2022, which was itself a substantial increase over fiscal year 2021. Needless to say, that is not a good trajectory. Again, these numbers only refer to individuals the Border Patrol has actually apprehended. There were 670,000 known "got-aways" during fiscal year 2023.

How many of them were terrorists, criminals, or other dangerous individuals?

Well, the answer is, we really don't know. We really don't know.

One thing we do know is that the chaotic southern border and the chaos that we have experienced there cannot continue. Our country cannot be secure while we have 10,000 people a day pouring across our southern border and hundreds of thousands of unknown individuals taking up residence in our country. Think about it. With the record that we had yesterday—as I mentioned, well over 12,000, which is the single highest—single highest—day that we have ever had on record in terms of people being apprehended illegally at the southern border, if you analyze that number, you are talking about more than 4.5 million people a year—4.5 million a year. That is way more people than the majority of the States in this country, in the entire United States of America.

The Federal Government is charged with the responsibility for our Nation's security, and we owe the American people nothing less than a secure border. So while I believe it is essential that we get aid to our allies, any supplemental must include measures to address our national security here at home at the border as well as our national security interests abroad.

I want to thank Senator LANKFORD for his patience and tenacity in working to bring Democrats to the table. After weeks of Democrat intransigence, it is encouraging that the White House is finally—and I say "finally" because, as I said, we had a proposal on the table at the beginning of November, and the White House finally engaged last Tuesday—finally has stepped up to take on a role in the negotiations. It is just too bad that they didn't do it weeks ago.

But I hope that the President and Democrats understand that the only

acceptable outcome of negotiations is a solution that meets the challenge at our southern border. Cosmetic measures and superficial tweaks are not going to cut it. So the ball is in the Democrats' court.

We need to get aid to allies like Ukraine, but we cannot pass legislation to do that without addressing the situation at our southern border. I would like to think that Democrats would see the necessity of addressing our border crisis irrespective of what is needed to get this bill through Congress, but at the very least, I hope that Democrats' concern for our national security interests abroad will lead them to finally—and again I say "finally"—get serious about working with Republicans to address the national security crisis here at home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled recess for 5 minutes: Senator MURRAY for 5 minutes, Senator COLLINS for 5 minutes, and me for 5 minutes.

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

ISRAEL

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, it has now been over 70 days—70 days—since hundreds of people were kidnapped by Hamas. In that time, more than 100 have been released, including 4 Americans, but 8 Americans remain in captivity. And from what we have heard from those who have been released and rescued, it is likely they are enduring unimaginable suffering.

One of the released Americans, 4-year-old Abigail Mor Edan, was kept with four other hostages in above-ground apartments. She shared—shared—one piece of pita bread per day with four others and did not have a shower in the entire 50 days in captivity. Her hair was cut because it was filled with lice.

We have heard from others that they were kept in complete darkness for days. Some became psychotic and experienced hallucinations. A child was given ketamine for weeks, while others were given sedatives like Valium. We have heard reports of self-harm among the hostages, while some who have returned have suicidal ideations.

Many were subjected to psychological torture. A 12-year-old boy was forced to watch videos of the October 7 attack and threatened with a gun when he cried. I have seen those videos. You cannot unsee them once you have seen them. I cannot imagine the nightmares that will plague that boy for the rest of his life.

One man was told his wife was dead when she actually was alive. Others were convinced Israel no longer existed. A doctor who was treating hostages says that they were told that "nobody cares about you. You are here alone. You hear the bombs falling?

They don't care about you. We're [the ones] here to protect you."

Most children lost between 10 to 15 percent of their body weight. These kids were starved. They had skin rashes and infections from being held in unsanitary conditions. Other children were branded—literally branded—with a motorcycle exhaust pipe to help identify them if they escaped.

Many came back speaking only in a whisper because they were warned not to make any noises in captivity. Many hostages were deprived of medicine and proper medical care. One woman who was shot in the hand says a veterinarian performed surgery on her. Others were beaten with electric cables.

Now, as the fighting in Gaza intensifies, the lives of hostages remain in jeopardy. I can't imagine what it must be like to live on only a piece of a pita a day for months. I can't imagine what it would be like to endure constant physical, psychological, and emotional torture for 70 days.

We know that at least one American hostage, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, had his lower arm blown off by a hand grenade. His mother says his injury could have easily resulted in him bleeding to death.

The treatment of these hostages are crimes against humanity. They are war crimes. And for those who remain in captivity, we are running out of time. We cannot give up hope. We cannot abandon them. We must go to the ends of the Earth to bring them back. These are American hostages, hostages from our ally Israel. We cannot stand quiet while they suffer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

I-5 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today, thrilled to announce major progress on something that I have been working on since my earliest days here in the U.S. Senate: replacing the I-5 bridge between Vancouver, WA, and Portland, OR.

Late last week, the administration began the notification and review process for grants from the brand new Mega Grant Program we all worked together to establish in the bipartisan infrastructure law, and I was proud to help write the provisions that made sure the Mega Program was funded when we passed that law. So I am ecstatic that the I-5 Bridge Replacement Project will be receiving \$600 million in Federal funding from the Mega Grant Program to move us forward on a project that is hugely important to Washington State, to the Pacific Northwest, and really the entire country.

This has been a long time coming, and I should know because I have been there for just about every step of this journey. I remember meeting with Senator Hatfield from Oregon when I was first elected to talk about the need to replace the I-5 crossing between our States—Washington and Oregon—which was already in bad condition in