

this country—that the experience of this year shows our colleagues on the other side that embracing MAGA is a recipe for failure.

There will be a lot at stake when we return in 2024. If we embrace bipartisanship, I am confident we will succeed.

I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The Republican leader is recognized.

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, negotiations on border security continue to make headway. I am grateful to Senator LANKFORD for his uninterrupted focus on the task at hand, which is meaningful policy changes.

Our colleagues at the negotiating table are under no illusions about how difficult it is to fix our Nation's broken asylum and parole system. They are working on what would be the first serious repair in more than 30 years.

But there is no longer any disagreement that the situation at the southern border is unsustainable and requires the Senate to act. This is the core of America's national security. It will be an essential part of supplemental legislation to address pressing security challenges, and negotiations will continue in earnest until we get there.

The Senate cannot afford to get this wrong. From South Texas to Southeast Asia and from the Black Sea to the Red Sea, it is a historically challenging and consequential time to protect America's interests, our allies, and our own people.

#### BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the world is witnessing the first land war in Europe since 1945. Ukraine's citizen soldiers are in the trenches right now, resisting Russian aggression with Western assistance.

American leadership has strengthened the NATO alliance, prompted our closest allies and trading partners to share more of the burden of collective defense, and driven historic investments in the military strength and industrial capacity we need here at home to compete with our biggest adversaries. Finishing the job will require more of that leadership.

Meanwhile, Israel is responding to the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Our ally needs the time, the space, and the support required to eliminate the terrorist savages responsible for the horrors of October 7, and the entire region needs American leadership to restore deterrence against Iran and its terrorist proxies who attack U.S. personnel with impunity.

From the other side of the world, our friends in the Indo-Pacific are watching closely what goes on in Europe and the Middle East and investing seriously in their own military strength because they know that China is doing the same.

Our single greatest strategic adversary is growing increasingly aggressive, increasingly advanced, and increasingly keen to seize an edge over a global superpower that has failed to act like one.

So the stakes are high this holiday season for our allies and partners on the frontlines of authoritarian aggression. The challenges are real for brave American servicemembers who are spending this time of the year far from home and loved ones to keep us safe.

It is a dangerous world, one that doesn't reward weakness. America needs to show that we haven't forgotten how to lead and that we are committed to restoring the hard power that leadership requires.

So I am encouraged by our colleagues' commitment to keep working toward an agreement on national security, beginning with security here at home. The Senate will not let the challenges we face go unanswered.

#### RECESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask consent that the Senate recess until 1:45 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:52 p.m., recessed until 1:45 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO).

#### MORNING BUSINESS—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

#### U.S.-RUSSIAN FEDERATION SEAFOOD RECIPROCITY ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I know this might be one of the last presiding duties of the year, so I appreciate the Presiding Officer taking the time on the floor before she gets to go home.

I want to talk about two issues today here on the Senate floor. One is a really important one. It is a policy issue that we have to solve. What I am trying to do today is just make sure my colleagues—because a lot of them get kind of fed some misinformation on this issue and then the American people writ large—know what is going on so we can fix this issue. I am hoping the White House and the administration and the Treasury Department—that everybody is watching because this is an easy one.

Imagine this, if someone came to you and said, "All right. Let's see. Is there legislation that we could pass that would help end slave labor in China, with the Uighurs; help make sure we

had a really strong environment for our oceans and our fisheries; help make sure we weren't funding the Russian war machine to go kill innocent civilians in Ukraine; help make sure we keep strong American coastal communities; and help promote the great American fishermen, who work so hard all over this great Nation?" We have been doing it way before the founding of the Republic. If there is legislation that could do all of those things, wouldn't you want to support it—oh, by the way—and that could undermine our adversaries, the two big adversaries we have, Russia and China?

Is there legislation pending in the U.S. Senate that could do all of these things? The answer is yes. Hell yes. I just want to make sure all of my colleagues know, because when I bring this to the floor when we come back in the new year, I just want to make sure everybody supports it because it is a no-brainer. It is a no-brainer.

So what am I talking about? Well, it is my U.S.-Russian Federation Seafood Reciprocity Act. It has a bunch of cosponsors, Democrats and Republicans. Senator CANTWELL is a big, big promoter of this, just for one example. But let me just give a little bit of background because people are saying, I am sure: Wait. You have a piece of legislation that can do all of that?

Yes, I sure do. And why anyone would not support it—well, once they get educated, they will support it. So let's talk about it just very briefly.

What is the background here? I am going to go way back, almost 10 years. So the Russians invade Crimea. You have an aggressive dictator, Vladimir Putin, trying to invade everybody, right? We have to make sure he doesn't win in Ukraine. The Obama administration smacks them with sanctions, OK? I wasn't here then, but that is what happened. This was in 2014. But I supported that. Then the Russians retaliated.

Now, one of the things they did when they retaliated was that they said: We are going to ban the importation of all American seafood into Russia. Now, Russia has a big seafood market, OK? So Russia said that no American seafood can come into Russia.

By the way, my State is the superpower of seafood. The great State of Alaska is responsible for the harvesting of over two-thirds of all fish and seafood in America—two-thirds, 66 percent. We are the superpower of seafood. Now, there are a lot of other great States that export seafood. I am not sure the great State of Nevada does, but that is a whole other topic.

So this is really important to my constituents. Tens of thousands of my great constituents are involved with this. So imagine that. Russia is still allowed to import in the United States almost duty-free, and we can't export one fish, OK? That has been the situation since 2014. Right there, that is just unfair, OK?

So I tried to work with the Obama administration, with the Trump administration, and with the Biden administration to fix this—unfair.

By the way, the Russian seafood guys were eating into our fishermen's market in our own home, in our own U.S. market—not fair.

By the way, American fishermen—Alaskan fishermen—have the highest standards by far in the world on the environment, on sustainable fisheries, on the management of fisheries and our oceans—this is something Senator WHITEHOUSE and I have passed legislation on—and on workers' rights, OK? They are the highest in the world. It is not even close. So the highest standards on the planet are right in America, are right in Alaska. Russia and China—I am going to get to them—have the lowest in the world, OK? So keep that in mind as we talk about this issue.

So then it literally takes a war to fix this. Russia brutally invades Ukraine. The Biden administration is putting together a sanctions package.

I call the White House and say: Hey, look, how about including in your sanctions package a way to fix this unfair trade situation where Russia won't allow us to import one fish, and they can export into the United States all they want. No way.

So, to his credit, President Biden said—or his team: Hey, I agree with Senator SULLIVAN. Let's smack them with sanctions on fish.

So the Biden initial Executive order hitting Russia after they invaded Ukraine said Russia can't import in the United States. Great. I have been working on that for 10 years, and it is only fair.

So what happens? Hmm—these sneaky authoritarians—by the way, the Russian seafood industry is controlled by oligarchs who are literally taking a lot of that money and funding it for the Putin war machine. So remember that, my colleagues who might want to object to this later. Money is going to fund the Putin war machine from fisheries, OK? That is a fact.

So, anyway, the little, sneaky authoritarian regimes—Putin and Xi Jinping—are working together, and they are like: Hey, let's avoid those American sanctions. We will take the Russian seafood caught by Russian fishermen in Russian waters, and we will send it to China, and we will have slave labor in China transform it, and then we will send it to the United States. We will sneak around those sanctions—a big loophole—using slave labor.

So that is what they are doing right now. They are doing it every day by the hundreds of millions of dollars, if not in the billions. They are avoiding these sanctions by saying: Let's take the Russians' seafood, with the worst environmental standards in the world, and we will send it to China. We will use slave labor by the Uighurs to transform it, and we will call it Chinese fish.

Then we will send it into the American market.

That is happening right now—right now. So my legislation is simple. It closes the loophole.

By the way, it is a really good idea because word is getting out that the Chinese fishing industry is a disaster. They take these big fleets. They go all over the world. They ravage the high seas. They ravage fisheries wherever they go. They are like—what is a good analogy? I don't know—rats in the water, right? They destroy the high seas fisheries. They go off the coasts of smaller countries in South America and Africa that don't have coast guards and can't enforce anything. They are literally like the abuser of the ocean and the world—China, OK?

Then they use slave labor. How do I know? Because there has been article after article just in the last several weeks.

POLITICO did a great article that I would like to submit for the RECORD after my remarks. This one is called—it is in POLITICO Magazine—"How Uyghur Forced Labor Makes Seafood That Ends Up in [American] School Lunches."

This article can be found online at <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/11/21/chinese-forced-labor-seafood-00126642>.

Madam President, the New Yorker has done great work on this. One was titled "The Crimes Behind the Seafood You Eat," from the New Yorker: "Americans know little about how their seafood is sourced. Much of it comes from a vast fleet of Chinese ships. On board, human-rights abuses are rampant."

This article can be found online at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/10/16/the-crimes-behind-the-seafood-you-eat>.

Madam President, then there is another one from the New Yorker: "The Uyghurs Forced to Process the World's Fish," OK? Slave labor.

You know the Chinese—they try to dominate everything. They are trying to dominate the fishing industry at the expense of my fishermen—unfair practices.

"The Uyghurs Forced to Process the World's Fish." This is from the New Yorker in October of this year. The subheading is "China forces minorities from Xinjiang [Province] to work in industries around the country. As it turns out, this includes handling much of the seafood sent to America and Europe."

This article can be found online at <https://www.newyorker.com/news/newsdesk/the-uyghurs-forced-to-process-the-worlds-fish>.

Madam President, this is what is going on.

Now, look, there are always a few companies out there, including in our great Nation—and I am not besmirching them or anything, but you know, they kind of whine. And, remember, this happened at the beginning of the

Ukraine war. You might remember that a lot of us, Democrats and Republicans, were like: Hey, let's make sure we stop the Russian war machine because right now America is importing a lot of Russian oil, OK? And the Europeans and the Germans in particular were saying: And we are importing a lot of Russian gas. So some of us were like: Well, hey, we are going to cut that off. Let's cut that off. Let's nail them.

You might remember, at the beginning of the war, people were saying—even in this country—and the Biden administration folks: Well, we can't really cut off Russian oil. You know, that will hurt the American economy. What about those importers of Russian oil in America? Those refineries that use Russian oil? What about those guys?

With the Germans, it was the same thing: Well, we can't really cut off the importation of Russian gas because, well, shoot, we use it.

Now, not a lot of people were buying those arguments. I certainly wasn't. The way we got around those arguments was: Well, wait a minute. We know that it is going to be a little painful, but here is an idea. Let's not import Russian oil. Let's use American oil. Let's use more oil from Alaska. We have way higher environmental standards and way higher worker standards. And you Germans, don't import Russian gas. Don't fund the Putin war machine. We will send you LNG from America.

So the Germans, the Biden administration, and everyone was like: That is a good idea.

So what did we do? We cut off Russian oil. In Europe, they cut off Russian gas. That is hurting those guys. That is good.

And what did we do? We said: Let's fill it up with American oil and gas.

So why am I using that as an analogy? Because we have a couple of companies—look, I get it, but, as I said when I debated it with Senator MARKEY a couple of months ago, it is not a good business model, America and American fish importers. Trust me. It is not a good business model to be using slave-labor Uighur seafood from China. At a certain point, Captain D's—you are one of the companies—it is going to catch up with you. It is going to catch up with you. It is not a good business model to be helping fund the Putin war machine.

I know there are a few companies out there saying: Oh, we don't like the Sullivan bill. Shoot.

Really? So what is the answer? It is the same answer: We have great American fishermen who can make sure you guys—Captain D's or whoever else, I guess some in Virginia—you get fish. Don't worry. By the way, it is a much higher standard.

I just learned today that a lot of the Russian fish sent to China gets injected with 40 percent phosphates and water to plump it up, to make it look more plump. That is disgusting. Then it gets sent to America, maybe to Captain D's.

So my point here is, we are not out to hurt you. We can say: Use American producers. Use great American fishermen from all over, not just Alaska—Maine, you know, Virginia, California, Oregon, Washington State. Use them. Don't block this legislation. Don't be a Putin lackey. Don't help fund the war machine. Don't help Xi Jinping's forced slave labor with the Uighurs. Buy American, for goodness' sake. Stand with American fishermen.

So, when we come back, I am going to work this hard, and for all of you—and there are not many but a few importers. I hope the NFI is not doing this either. I hear they are, which would be really bad because they are supposed to promote the exporters too. That is the National Fisheries Institute. But what you need to do is not block this. This is a freight train, right, and it is going to pass. You want to get out of the way, and you want to help.

Stand with American fishermen. Let us in Alaska supply your company. Don't rely on slave-labor China fish. Don't rely on authoritarian aggression, Putin-backed seafood from Russia with low environmental standards.

By the way, they are flooding the markets globally because they are worried, and they are hurting fishermen in America, for sure. My fishermen and my fishing communities in my State are really hurting right now. This can help them.

So we have been working on this hard. A lot of my Republican and Democratic colleagues are 100 percent with me. Like I said, there are a few importers who are kind of working the halls here, and my answer is: Come on. Be patriotic. Stand with America. Stand with American fishermen.

Let's do legislation that can—what did I say at the beginning of my remarks? Now do you understand?—help defeat slave labor, help the environment, help strong American fishermen, help workers' rights, and go after Russian and Chinese abuses in the seafood industry.

It is all over the place. It is only going to grow more widespread in terms of the knowledge. The American people say: Wait a minute. Do I want to eat fish that is slave-labor fish, Putin-oligarch fish? No. I want to buy fish—by the way, the highest standard in the world, by far. We don't inject 40 percent phosphates into this fish and make it disgusting. I want to stand with American fishermen and buy seafood from Americans.

So that is what we are going to do. We are going to close that loophole. It is a big issue. Thanks for listening. But I sure hope when we get back that my colleagues will fully support it. I think 99.9 percent of them already do. That is the right answer. It is the right thing for our country and the right thing for America's fishermen.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE MILLER FAMILY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I am going to end my remarks today on a high note and a very important one.

It is Wednesday. I like to come down and do what we call the “Alaskan of the Week.” I can see the pages are already kind of excited, right, because, let's face it, this is the most exciting speech of the week and certainly the most interesting. So what I like to do is come down—by the way, I know the press generally likes it because it is normally a signal that it is the end of the week. Everybody is going home. This is usually the last speech of the week. I think this might be the last speech of the year this year.

What we do with the Alaskan of the Week, we talk a little bit about what is going on in Alaska—I will get to that—and then I like to highlight someone who is doing something great for my State. It might be, you know, someone local. Our first Alaskan of the Week, I think, was a librarian who had been a librarian for 40 years—amazing woman—and then we have superstar world athletes, gold medalists in swimming, and things like that. So we just cover the whole gamut.

Now, usually there is a poster board. I made this a very special Alaskan of the Week poster board. This might be the first time ever it has got Santa on it, and you are going to see why—a Santa-oriented speech.

So, of course, right now, I am getting ready to head home in a couple of hours. I was just home over the weekend. There are no worries in Alaska right now about a white Christmas. Anchorage, my hometown, I think we have had close to 100 inches of snow already. Look, for us, that is a lot. I am talking about November, right. So we have a white Christmas coming, for sure.

It is magical, of course, in Alaska. We have got reindeer. We have got one that actually lives in downtown Anchorage. We have visitors coming. We have got a great town called North Pole, AK—North Pole, AK—and we have the Santa Claus House in North Pole, where Santa lives. By the way, this is true. This is what my Alaskan of the Week speech is all about.

If you write a letter to Santa addressed to the North Pole, your letter will end up at the Santa Claus House in North Pole, AK. Why wouldn't it?

By the way, this house is not to be confused with the abode of a North Pole city council member. North Pole, AK, is a city a little bit north of Fairbanks. This city council member, by the way, his name is Santa Claus. His legal name is Santa Claus. He is a member of the city council. I know him well. Look, I am not ripping him. He is a BERNIE SANDERS Socialist, true. Now, why wouldn't he be? You know, the guy gives out free gifts to everybody. That is true. He is a good guy.

So, Santa, if you are watching, hello—Santa Claus, city council member, North Pole.

But in all seriousness, Interior Alaska—this is in the interior part of our State—has the greatest, most kind people and generous. And in keeping with the spirit of Christmas, our Alaskan of the Week is the Miller family who is the owner of Santa Claus House in North Pole, AK, which has been a fixture in our State—and really for the country—for over 70 years—70 years. The Miller family founded Santa Claus House and has been running it for 70 years, making North Pole, AK, literally what it is today. They built the whole community.

Let me help you get into the holiday spirit by describing just how magical the Santa Claus House in North Pole, AK, really is. If you drive down Saint Nicholas Drive—I am not kidding—by St. Nicholas Catholic Church, by the way, you will see a huge house lined with red trim and murals of a reindeer and Santa's sleigh. Just outside is a barn with a real reindeer, a massive, decked-out Christmas tree, and a 42-foot-tall Santa Claus statue welcoming you to Santa's workshop.

The magic does not end there. Inside the house, you are greeted by a Christmas tree decorated with every ornament you can imagine, a live countdown to Christmas Day—of course. Why wouldn't there be one every day of the year—and a professional Santa Claus ready to hear every Christmas wish from the thousands of visitors—and I am not just talking Alaskans but Americans, people from all over the world who visit Santa Claus House in North Pole, AK, every year. And you are also likely to meet and see several members of the extended Miller family working to make the Santa Claus House the winter wonderland it is. They have been doing it for four generations, keeping the spirit of Christmas alive.

Let me take you back four generations to the original founder of Santa Claus House. That is Con and Nellie Miller. Born in 1913, Con and his mother just didn't see eye to eye. They decided that it was best that he join the Navy.

He joined when he was 15—a little young. This is just in the great Alaska spirit. You know, I have talked about it a lot over the years. We have more veterans per capita than any State in the country, so being in the military and a veteran is very normal in Alaska. It is a great part of our culture.

This young guy Con left Colorado and spent 3 years in the Navy, starting at the age of 15. How he got in, I have no idea. He was on a gun boat in China. Then he got out. Then Pearl Harbor happened. And of course he is a patriot so he rejoined the Navy. He fought in the South Pacific during the Second World War—so a great American, “greatest generation” individual, Con Miller.

After the war ended, Con and his wife Nellie ended up in Fairbanks with the goal of running a clothing store. To supplement their income, Con sold