

the world. And there is a reason for that. It costs more. It adds to the cost. But there is a sensitivity to the land. And we appreciate that. As an Alaskan, I appreciate that and I expect that and I demand that of the companies. And if you are not willing to operate this way, then you shouldn't be coming to Alaska.

But companies that are willing to respect the fact that when the tundra is no longer frozen, there is no exploration activity. There is no work that proceeds in that way off of the tundra.

So in Alaska, our season, if you will, is 90 days. It is 90 days. And it is not 90 days in the good weather. It is between basically January and April—the coldest, darkest, harshest time that anyone could be up on the North Slope, much less being outside and working. But that is how we do it because that is when the ground is frozen. That is when we have that license to operate, if you will. And we respect that. And it is not when the companies decide we are done with this aspect of the program. When things start to warm up and start to thaw, that is when you are gone. And you are gone because the State regulators and the Federal regulators have said: Clock is up. You don't have extra additional days because spring is coming.

And so think about that. Any other business in the world, can you think about having just a 90-day window of operation? We do a fair amount of that in Alaska because, quite honestly, our seafood industry is certainly that way out in Bristol Bay. We do have a lot of seasonal activity. But think about what that means if you are trying to build a project and you have to stop—stop—after 90 days. Think about what it means to design a project around sensitive areas that may have wildlife or waterfowl that we need to be sensitive. Well, that is what we do. This project—this Willow Project—that was sent back for revision was to make sure that the impact on subsistence hunting, the impact on the animals was not going to be appreciable. And so there is a sensitivity. We get it. We get it.

The people who live up there are the first stewards of the land, and they get it. So when you have whaling captains who are standing shoulder to shoulder with the Alaska delegation out in front of the Capitol, standing there saying that we need Willow—we need Willow for our economy, we need Willow for our people, and we will make sure that the subsistence needs of those who live in the area are met. We will make sure that the environmental considerations are met. So we are ready. We are ready to proceed.

As I stand here, I am regretful that I think the next phase of this is not necessarily going to be movement towards gaining production; it is going to be movement towards the courts because that is just what seems to happen in every development project in my incredible State. But we are prepared for

that as well. We are prepared for that as well because this project is environmentally sound, it is just, it is fair, it is balanced, and it is time.

Again, I stand here appreciative that the administration has heard the voice of Alaskans. Now, let's get to work.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the years, I have heard President Biden share a favorite expression of his father's. He said his dad would tell you:

Don't tell me what you value. Show me your budget and I'll tell you what you value.

Well, there is a lot of wisdom in that statement. A person's budget shows what they truly value, whether that is supporting those who are less fortunate, saving for the future, or achieving a certain type of lifestyle. The same is true for the Federal Government. It is easy for leaders to say they value a strong military or fiscal responsibility, but a budget shows whether they really mean it.

Last week, of course, President Biden released his budget for the next fiscal year, which gave us an unvarnished view of what he truly values. In countless ways, it stands in stark contrast to what he has told the American people.

The President spoke about the need to rein in out-of-control spending, but he proposed more than \$2 trillion in new spending.

Given the growing threats from China and Russia, he says he cares about a strong national defense, but he proposed a mere 3.2-percent increase in defense spending—far below the level of inflation. So it actually is a cut.

He has spoken about the importance of growing our economy, but he proposed additional job-killing tax hikes on Main Street businesses and other job creators.

He says he is concerned about energy costs but proposed \$37 billion in new energy taxes—taxes that will be paid ultimately by the consumer in increased costs.

Despite saying he cares about the border, President Biden made it absolutely clear he isn't serious about addressing the crisis at our southern border. For 2 years, law enforcement and border communities have struggled to keep up with the overwhelming number of migrants who are crossing every day. During President Biden's first 2 years in office, Customs and Border Protection encountered 4.7 million—4.7 million—migrants at the southern border. That is astonishing, a breathtaking figure.

Well, there is a clear need, an obvious need to strengthen our border security, and the President's budget request includes \$535 million for border security technology at and between the ports of entry. At ports, this could include advanced equipment to efficiently scan cargo and passenger vehicles.

Mexico is our second largest trading partner, and that binational trade is

important to both of our economies. But this same technology could be key to stopping illicit drugs, weapons, and currency from coming across the border.

Between the ports of entry, this funding could go toward sensors, cameras, and other surveillance tools that allow Border Patrol agents to monitor unpatrolled portions of the border and to spring into action when necessary.

Given the ongoing migration crisis and fentanyl epidemic which is killing 70,000 Americans every year, there could not be a more important time to invest in border security. While the President's request for \$535 million may sound like a lot of money—and it is a lot of money—when you compare it to other line items in his budget, it starts to look a whole lot smaller. For example, the White House wants to spend \$1 billion trying to address the "root causes" of migration in Central America and Haiti. That is nearly double the amount he wants to spend on border security technology.

Over the last few years, we have seen failed attempts to alleviate what are called the push factors—violence and poverty—that cause people to leave their home countries and come to the United States. But don't forget that these migrants are not just coming from Central America and Haiti; they are literally coming from all over the world. Best case scenario, it would take years, if ever, before these efforts would translate to even 1 inch of progress at the border.

I have said before what I learned at the Yuma Border Patrol Sector in southwestern Arizona when the Border Patrol chief said that in this sector alone, a sleepy little agricultural community, we have people coming across the border from 176 countries, speaking 200 languages. This is a global phenomenon not just isolated to Central America and Haiti.

Well, worst case scenario, the administration flushes \$1 billion down the drain while the border remains in a state of crisis.

The White House wants to spend even more money on the Department of Homeland Security's climate resilience program—climate resilience. A whopping \$4 billion is what they want for that. That is more than seven times higher than what the President has proposed for border security technology. Now, the mission of the Department of Homeland Security isn't to fight climate change; it is to safeguard the American people. It cannot achieve that mission with the meager budget proposed by President Biden and the lack of priorities.

You may think that climate resilience is an important matter, but it certainly doesn't rise to the level of the crisis we are experiencing today on the border, with an overwhelming number of migrants and illegal drugs that killed 108,000 Americans last year alone.

Of course, the funding level requested for technology is only part of the problem. The question isn't just how much do you want to spend but what do you need to spend it on?

As I mentioned, this is one pot of funding that would support two purposes: security at the border and security between the ports of entry. Both of those functions are essential to our security and our economy, but the White House didn't delineate how it would split that funding. Would it be divided 50-50? Would it be distributed based on need? How would the administration ensure that it was closing the highest priority security gaps first?

We have a responsibility to taxpayers to ensure that every dollar is maximized and serves the greatest purpose possible. A few years ago, Senator SINEMA, the Senator from Arizona, and I introduced something called the Southwest Border Security Technology Improvement Act to help understand the best way to do that.

It required the administration to assess technology needs at the border and issue a report within a year. Our bill was signed into law at the end of 2020, and the deadline for that final report was December 27, 2021. Well, 15 months has passed, and we still have no report. I have repeatedly asked for updates from the administration but received zero response.

In short, the administration has failed to provide an assessment that is necessary for Congress to determine what the technology gaps are at the border and what the priority should be. Instead, they just ask Congress for a \$535 million blank check. They have offered zero assurance that they plan to use those funds to increase operational control over the border. They haven't even assured us they know what those needs are. Once again, the administration isn't trying to solve the problem—just to create an illusion of effort.

But technology funding isn't the only problem with the President's budget; it also falls short when it comes to personnel.

I have been to the southern border more times than I can count—but I do count 10 times—since President Biden took office, and I have spoken with every law enforcement officer and local elected official, nonprofit, and small business owner I could find. When I ask them what is needed the most to combat this crisis, there is a recurring answer: We need more boots on the ground. We desperately need more Border Patrol agents on the frontline.

The administration wants to hire an additional 350 Border Patrol agents, which would be a great start, but the White House isn't taking any action to address underlying barriers to hiring those agents.

For years, the Agency struggled to meet its staffing goals, and one of the biggest obstacles is the polygraph requirement. Roughly half of new applicants fail the polygraph, which one officer described as “high-tech voodoo.”

Applicants have shared stories of aggressive and condescending examiners. They talk about being stereotyped based on their background and traveling to other States in hopes of having a different experience.

Still, failing a polygraph or receiving an “inconclusive” result disqualifies a potential agent. So it wouldn't matter if the White House called for 10,000 new Border Patrol agents in its budget; the Agency would not be able to fill those spots until the administration fixes the broken application process, and we have seen no indication of their plans to do so.

The White House is also calling for 460 processing assistants at Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. These would be the men and women who would help process the migrants. Based on my conversations with folks at the border, I can tell you these additions are desperately needed, but that is only one piece of the solution.

A huge part of the solution lies in deterrence. If people with frivolous asylum claims see they will quickly be removed from the United States, they aren't likely to attempt the journey to our border in the first place. That is why we just can't staff up on processing coordinators; we need more personnel to actually enforce the law and deliver consequences to those who break it.

The Biden administration has refused to do so time and time again, and the Biden budget only makes insignificant changes to staffing for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Removal Operations, as well as Fugitive Operations team members. These are the dedicated men and women who do the difficult but important job of removing people who have no legal right to enter the country. But right now, the system is so overwhelmed with migrants who will not be ultimately granted asylum. So what happens when their claim is denied? It is an important question to ask because I can assure you, ICE does not have the sufficient manpower to enforce the law given the scale of this crisis.

In short, the White House has proposed adding more personnel to process migrants and then release them, but it doesn't want to hire more people who will actually remove people who break our laws. Based on his own assessment strategy, President Biden does not value border security because his budget certainly does not reflect it. His budget is not a serious proposal to gain operational control of the border. It is more talk with no action.

Our country is experiencing an absolutely unprecedented migration crisis. The southern border has become an open highway instead of a secured checkpoint. The administration is essentially waving everyone through—from migrants with frivolous asylum claims to the drug runners who are carrying fentanyl that kills our fellow Americans. Based on President Biden's

budget, he appears content for it to stay that way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Massachusetts. SILICON VALLEY BANK AND SIGNATURE BANK

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, on Friday, we experienced the second largest bank failure in our Nation's history. And make no mistake, this failure was the direct result of leaders in Washington weakening financial rules.

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Act to protect consumers and to ensure that big banks could never again take down the economy and destroy millions of lives.

Since then, Wall Street executives who hated the whole idea of the bill spent millions to keep it from becoming law and, after it passed, spent millions more to try to weaken it.

In 2018, the big banks won. With support from both parties, President Trump signed into law a law to roll back critical parts of Dodd-Frank. Now, I fought against these changes. On the eve of the Senate vote in 2018, I warned from right here on the Senate floor that “Washington is about to make it easier for the banks to run up risk, make it easier to put our constituents at risk, make it easier to put American families in danger, just so that the C.E.O.s of these banks can get a new corporate jet and add another floor to their new corporate headquarters.”

I wish I had been wrong, but last week, the FDIC was forced to rush in to take over two failing banks—Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank—and then take extraordinary actions to protect those banks' customers and prevent the contagion from spreading throughout the economy.

Both SVB and Signature Bank suffered from a toxic mix of poor risk management and weak supervision. If Congress and the Federal Reserve had not rolled back key provisions of Dodd-Frank, these banks would have been subject to stronger liquidity and capital requirements to help withstand financial shocks. They would have been required to conduct regular stress tests to expose their vulnerabilities and shore up their businesses. They would have had a more aggressive regulator standing at their shoulder, looking more closely at every part of the banks' business. But because those stringent requirements were taken out of Dodd-Frank, when an old-fashioned bank run hit SVB, the bank could not withstand the pressure.

Shortly after that, Signature Bank collapsed, and to fight back the risk of contagion and to protect the banking system, the Federal Government once again was called on to take extraordinary measures—the kind of measures that Dodd-Frank was originally supposed to protect us against.

These threats should never have been allowed to materialize, and now, we must prevent them from occurring