

often hostile to America. By the way, they often have zero environmental regulations.

Over the last 2 years, the EU has been forced to import 40 percent more LNG from Russia, directly funding Russian aggression in Ukraine with roughly \$21 billion in 2022 alone.

If kept intact, our LNG industry is projected to bring up to 452,000 additional jobs to hardworking Americans by 2040, adding some \$50 billion to \$73 billion to our economy. Plus, we gain the economic leverage as an economic exporter of energy to other nations.

Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H. Res. 987, Denouncing the harmful, anti-American energy policies of the Biden administration, I urge my colleagues to put an end to Biden's war on the U.S. energy sector. It is time to prioritize the well-being of Americans over the flawed ideologies of the Green New Deal.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Idaho, a fellow member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for his insight and comments.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as we have stated, the impact of stopping the export of liquefied natural gas affects all Americans.

We have had individuals from all over, Representatives, who know the impact financially to their constituents. They know the impact on jobs to each one of the Americans who are in the natural gas industry. We understand, and this is not lost on us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. JOYCE leading this Special Order here tonight. It is very important that we shed the positive spotlight on energy production that natural gas is and also shine the spotlight on what a horrific decision it is by Mr. Biden and his administration to shut down export, as well as the ongoing efforts to shut down capacity, exploration, and production of natural gas in this country.

Through the miracle of hydraulic fracturing, not that many years ago, it put the U.S. on the map internationally as a gigantic energy source in the world.

I remember about 20-plus years ago, we were looking at how we could find a way to import more liquefied natural gas, set up our ports for that so the big ships can come in from somewhere else and bring us this energy source. Hydraulic fracturing has made it possible that we are a gigantic source of energy around the world, and indeed other countries are looking to us and would look to us more if we were giving more of a positive signal.

This is the chart showing usage from about 2010 up to current. If you look at

that on a global scale, energy usage on a global scale is going to increase massively as more and more countries come on board and become less Third World and more of a modern economy.

Oil and gas is going to be extremely important, so the U.S. should be leading the way. We should be stronger partners for our European allies. We have seen the debacle that the Russian pipeline is going to be and has been for Germany, in one case, and the reliance on Russian gas.

□ 2030

Don't they look back at how these alliances haven't been strong enough to rely on a neighbor like that for so much of your energy?

In Germany just 1½ years ago people were going out to the woods and cutting firewood to make sure they were going to get through the cold season. This was on top of their destroying so much of their nuclear generation.

So the Biden administration's approach to natural gas is very wrong-headed. So as you see, Mr. Speaker, increased demand in just a short amount of time of low-cost domestic energy has been, indeed, miraculous.

My next chart will show that the cost of natural gas, although peaking some years ago in the early 2000s, was getting quite expensive. This is right where hydraulic fracturing came in and made it a very, very low-cost and very clean form of energy. It was helping get us to energy independence until the Biden administration decided to come along and say: No, we are not going to do it here. We want Germany and Europe to rely on Russian gas, and we are going to be somehow more green than everybody else here.

So it is very dangerous for us. It is dangerous to our allies. As we have seen, it empowers those in Russia and in Iran to do the types of things that they are doing around the world to upset peace. Indeed, Iran is a major sponsor of terror helping out Yemen.

As I mentioned earlier, so many of the weapons that you will find, Mr. Speaker, missiles that maybe didn't completely fire or explode, what have you, you will find that Yemen has been using them and they have Iraqi signatures on them. So every time the rest of the world patronizes Iranian gas or Russian gas, it just helps them to undermine Western countries and those who are trying to be good neighbors.

So the more we go the wrong direction on this and follow the Biden model, the bigger trouble we will be in. Indeed, natural gas has been a miracle in how important it has been to our economy up until recently with the Biden crew.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of the Members who have joined us this evening to hold this Special Order to address President Biden's policy failure on liquefied natural gas. Since his first day

in office, President Biden has worked to dismantle our Nation's energy production, revoking permits, stonewalling new development, and using red tape to harass our energy producers.

The decision to halt the permitting of LNG exportation facilities is the next step in an agenda that puts Green New Deal policies ahead of American families.

The Biden administration has continually passed the buck for high prices by blaming domestic energy producers. Biden's regulatory assaults destroy any incentive for domestic energy producers to invest in building our natural gas infrastructure.

Now, most recently, President Biden announced that his administration would no longer hold court-ordered offshore oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska.

Liquefied natural gas is safe, affordable, and easy to transport. That is why this week 150 of my colleagues and I were led by E&C Chair RODGERS and Speaker of the House MIKE JOHNSON to demand that President Biden overturn this terrible decision. We know that this energy source, which is underneath the feet of my constituents, will help power our allies, it will help create American jobs, and it will help reduce emissions.

Instead of embracing this technology, President Biden has caved to his far-left base who refuse to recognize the benefits that LNG has for America. A single shipment of LNG can power an entire city, and, yet, the Biden administration has refused to allow these shipments.

Tonight, we have heard about the dangerous impacts that the cutting of LNG exports have from raising prices here at home to funding our adversaries by forcing European nations to rely on energy from Russia and from Iran.

Let's be clear. President Biden is choosing to cut American jobs and fund our enemies. When it comes to our energy security, appeasing liberal activists can have long-lasting and very dangerous consequences. We all must continue to urge the Biden administration to reverse this disastrous decision and allow liquefied natural gas exports to continue and to power communities around the world.

It is time to return to American energy dominance, and it is time to stop using our energy security as a pawn in political games.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

BIPARTISAN IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. ESCOBAR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I have the incredible privilege of representing El Paso, Texas, which is a vibrant, wonderful, and generous community of goodwill that is right on the U.S.-Mexico border. My community has seen firsthand the challenges that come with a significant number of people fleeing their homeland and seeking refuge in the United States. We have opened up our pantries, we have opened up our wallets, and we have opened up our hearts, but it is time for Congress to act.

I am so proud to be spending this Special Order hour talking about the first bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill introduced in Congress in a decade. In fact, even today, it is the only bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill that exists in Congress. It is a bill that addresses the border and beyond. It is a national security bill. It is an economic bill. It is a bill that finally forces Congress to do its job.

While we are seeing a large number of migrants arriving at our Nation's front door, at the same time, we have 8 million unfilled jobs in our country. If we want to be a competitive nation and if we want to make sure that we are at the forefront of having a bold economy, then, frankly, we need immigrants. However, we also need order and humanity at the border. President Biden has repeatedly asked Congress to do its job and find a legislative solution.

Now, the Senate has just introduced their own bipartisan bill. We don't know the fate of that, but what we in the House know is that we have a wonderful bipartisan coalition that has introduced a real solution, and that real solution is the Dignity Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce and yield the floor to one of my cosponsors who herself is an expert on immigration.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. SCHOLTEN).

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, last week I joined my colleagues from all corners of the country on a trip to the southern border to El Paso, hosted by my good friend, Congresswoman ESCOBAR. This wasn't my first trip to the border.

Before coming to Congress, I worked on this issue for close to 20 years as a social worker, walking alongside immigrants and refugees who were new to this country, also as an attorney for the United States Department of Justice enforcing our immigration laws at

the Nation's highest law enforcement agency. I also worked at a community legal aid organization in west Michigan. I have also helped employers try to get the workers that they need. I have worked on all aspects of this issue.

What I saw on the border was truly horrific. We are in a crisis mode. During our trip we talked to Border Patrol agents, we met with individuals at holding facilities, talked to the immigrants themselves, and we talked to humanitarian aid workers. Across the board everyone was unified in this one belief: the border is broken. Our immigration system is broken. There has never been a more important time to come together with bipartisan solutions to fix it.

There is truly a crisis at our border. It is a humanitarian nightmare, a national security red alarm, and an economic disaster.

We visited a holding facility just outside of El Paso. The number of immigrants crossing the border every single day is far too many for the El Paso Del Norte Processing Center to contain in just 1 day, so they are held at a detention facility. It costs our United States Government, our taxpayers, \$1.2 million every single day to run this facility just to hold people. This cannot be.

Now is the time for action, not the time for pointing fingers. Now is the time not for kicking the can down the road but picking it up and solving this problem.

We don't have to start from scratch for a new bill, a bill that would get bipartisan support. We already have that bill. It is bipartisan, and it is called the Dignity Act. It is the only bipartisan comprehensive reform bill in Congress right now.

Instead of infighting and pointing fingers, Mr. Speaker, why not put it to a vote on the floor and see how many individuals would support it?

What are we afraid of?

That it might actually work?

That it might actually solve this problem?

The immigration crisis in our country is at a fever pitch. It has evolved over many years of inaction, of moments just like this where we are compelled to act but we refuse to do so.

The immigration crisis in our country is a multifaceted problem that requires a multifaceted response.

Just insisting that we are going to close the border is not a magic wand that would wave and fix the vast number of individuals who are finding their way across our border every day.

It doesn't automatically provide the funding necessary for the Border Patrol agents who would be required to enforce this border closure, and it doesn't provide the pathways to the legal workforce that is so desperately needed in this country.

Moreover, it surely does not address the root causes of the increase in migrant flow that we are seeing over the years.

However, the bipartisan Dignity Act does.

The Dignity Act provides for an immediate infusion of \$25 billion to help secure our border, and the bill pays for itself through fees generated from visas for qualified workers.

If we put this bill to a vote on the floor tomorrow, billions of dollars would begin to start flowing to our border communities to give them the help that they need.

This bill also addresses the source of the flow by creating new, regional in-country processing centers, taking the pressure off the border and helping individuals determine their eligibility ahead of time—or lack thereof—and immigrate here to the U.S.

The bill also addresses the fact that our immigration crisis does not exist in a vacuum at the southern border. Our years of failed policy have resulted in millions of individuals living in the shadows of the United States, again, a national security red alarm, an economic disaster, and a humanitarian crisis that must be addressed.

This bill provides a means to identify these individuals and the means to remove those who have violated our laws and pose a threat to our country. Those who pass a background check and qualify and who pay a fine will immediately receive permission to work and be provided a pathway to lawful citizenship, supporting our growing economy and enhancing all of our communities in a multitude of ways.

Why wouldn't we take this moment to address this immigration crisis?

Why wouldn't we put this bipartisan bill on the floor?

This is not a perfect bill by any stretch of the imagination. It is a compromise bill. Republicans are not getting everything they want, and Democrats are surely not getting everything they want, I can tell you that, Mr. Speaker, but it is a compromise. That is not a dirty word.

The last time we had comprehensive immigration reform in this country was over 40 years ago. Think about how much our world and our economy have changed in that time. We are not always going to get exactly what we want, but if we work hard and we work together, then we can provide for the good of this country.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, HILLARY SCHOLTEN. I so appreciate her leadership and her support of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised on the U.S.-Mexico border. I am a third-generation border resident. My children are both adults. My son, Cristian, and my daughter, Eloisa, are fourth-generation border residents.

□ 2045

No one wants a solution to the border more than those of us who live there, who have made our lives there, raised our kids there, and know that we will spend the rest of our days there.

We need to come together and find areas of compromise. There is so much

disunity, but we can find unity, and the Dignity Act provides us with that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. WILD), a cosponsor of the Dignity Act, a dear friend, and an incredible leader.

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be joining the gentlewoman from El Paso, Texas, to address one of the most pressing issues facing our Nation: our broken immigration system.

I am from Pennsylvania. We are not a border State, but I hear an awful lot about what is happening at the southern border. I am deeply concerned about it, as are my constituents. It is something that we, this group of us who are speaking this evening, are committed to fixing.

For far too long, both parties have played political games with the crisis at our southern border rather than pursuing real solutions to restore order. That is why I am so proud to be a cosponsor of the Dignity Act, a bipartisan bill that would tackle the crisis at our border and reform that badly broken immigration system.

Let me tell you just a few things about what the Dignity Act would do.

Number one, and most pressing to many, many of my constituents, it addresses border security. It increases the hiring of CBP personnel. It provides funding for border infrastructure and equipment. It makes it a crime to transmit the location of law enforcement personnel at the border for the purpose of trying to defraud the immigration laws. It also requires employers to verify the immigration status of their employees using an E-Verify system.

All of those are things that we have been hearing about from the GOP for ages. This bill also provides a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers who came here as minors and have lived here for years in the shadows, unable to fulfill their lives, unable to become meaningful members of the workforce and to pay taxes.

These people, these Dreamers, need a pathway to citizenship. We have been talking about this for way too long. It gives good, law-abiding people an opportunity to pursue the American Dream, which, by the way, so many of our parents, grandparents, and ancestors pursued. That is what this country is all about.

There is absolutely no question about it: We need comprehensive immigration reform, and that means we have to bolster border security and ensure that law-abiding, tax-paying immigrants are treated with humanity and respect.

We need enhanced infrastructure and funding for our Border Patrol agents to help enforce our laws and keep dangerous drugs off of our streets. We also need to strengthen those pathways to citizenship, which, by the way, will help build our workforce in critical industries and will boost our American economy.

I have heard from employers, HR managers, manufacturers, and all sorts

of businesses in my community that face workforce shortages. They want us to find ways to expand opportunities for legal immigration.

Immigration reform is also a national security issue. Comprehensive immigration reform, as contemplated by the Dignity Act, would help us keep the drug dealers, terrorists, and other bad guys out.

The best way to get things done in Congress is something that we don't do nearly often enough. It is for Democrats and Republicans to work together. We know that. We all know that. We have seen it historically. As I said, we don't do nearly enough of that.

I am so proud that the Dignity Act has broad bipartisan support. I will continue to work to find ways that I can engage more of my friends across the aisle to support this commonsense immigration reform.

Let me be clear. Our country needs the Dignity Act. This bill would allow us to bring order back to the southern border. It would surge resources to help enforce our laws and to support border communities like El Paso and so many others.

It would help take back power from those who seek to abuse and overrun our asylum system. It would allow us to efficiently process those who are eligible for legal immigration and asylum.

We must bring the bipartisan Dignity Act to the floor for a vote. It is the only truly bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill. We need to pass it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in leadership to put aside partisan politics and consider the best interests of the American people.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine if we came together and actually solved the most politically divisive issue facing our Nation today? The American people would be incredibly relieved. They would be so grateful. We could check this key issue off our list and move on to all the other issues that our Nation faces.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING), another wonderful colleague who is a cosponsor of the Dignity Act.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear friend, Representative ESCOBAR, for yielding time to me and also for her tireless work on this incredibly important issue.

Mr. Speaker, the last time Congress passed comprehensive immigration reform was in 1986. That was nearly 40 years ago—before laptop computers, before cell phones, and before the internet became available to all.

In so many ways, our economy and our need for workers has changed and grown. In fact, we have a workforce shortage at all skill levels, from farm and factory workers to nurses and physicians to high-tech and other STEM workers.

Even though we educate the best and the brightest of foreign students, we

send them home to compete with us because there simply aren't enough visas to accommodate them. Our immigration system hasn't changed to accommodate our needs. It is hampering our economic growth.

While other countries, like Canada, are encouraging immigration, we are allowing our partisan disputes to get in the way of creating a system that is in our own best interest.

Even worse, we have failed to update our system to tackle the rapid growth of migrants fleeing persecution and hazardous conditions in their own countries and seeking to enter our country by claiming asylum at our southern border.

As one of my hometown immigration attorneys recently wrote in our hometown newspaper, many of these people would come in other ways, seeking legal visas if we had visa categories that accommodated them.

Despite record levels of people seeking refuge in our country, we have failed to pass legislation that would address this crisis. Our processes are inhumane, slow, and simply don't work. Dreamers and asylum seekers deserve better. Border towns deserve better. Americans deserve better.

That is why I joined a bipartisan group of women in the House to work on serious immigration reform. Alongside my friends, Representatives VERONICA ESCOBAR and MARIA SALAZAR, I was proud to help introduce the Dignity Act.

This bill would finally address the country's workforce needs, strengthen the economy, provide pathways to citizenship for Dreamers and asylum seekers, and secure the border.

The Dignity Act finds common ground between Democratic and Republican immigration priorities. It is not perfect. There are things that I love in the bill, and there are things I don't love. But if we don't find compromise and common ground, we will never solve this challenge.

The Dignity Act strikes the right balance. It offers tough but creative solutions to our Nation's most pressing immigration challenges.

Over the past few months, we have seen House Republicans spend an enormous amount of time on the House floor, in hearings, and, frankly, on TV talking about the border crisis and demanding action. We have heard the administration call on Congress to pass legislation to address the border crisis as well as other immigration challenges. For weeks, a bipartisan group of Senators had been working on legislation, on an immigration deal, but the extreme House Republicans recently described that deal as dead on arrival even before the text of the bill was released.

They didn't reject the deal because it was bad policy. They didn't know what the policy was. They rejected it because former President Trump told them to.

He doesn't want a solution. He wants a border crisis that he can run on. Extreme Republicans are falling in line

with him. They don't want a solution. They want a problem that will rile up their voters. This is shameful.

Our country deserves better. Our country deserves real solutions. That is why I am here with my fellow Democratic co-leads of the Dignity Act to say: Stop the whining and get to work.

We all know the border issue needs to be addressed. We all know we have a workforce shortage. We all know we need an upgraded immigration system that works for all of us. We have a solution crafted right here in the House by Democrats and Republicans working together on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in supporting the Dignity Act. Let's work together to solve this problem and build a stronger future for all.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Ms. MANNING's powerful voice.

Mr. Speaker, many of the sponsors of the bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill, the Dignity Act, are relatively new to Congress, including Ms. SCHOLTEN and Ms. MANNING, who you heard from.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SORESEN).

Mr. SORESEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman ESCOBAR for hosting this important discussion.

I would be remiss if I didn't say that your home State of Texas is the only State that I have ever lived outside of my own home State of Illinois. So, I have a soft spot for the Lone Star State.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here proud to cosponsor the Dignity Act tonight, which is the only bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill that currently exists in the House of Representatives.

This legislation is critical. It does just what we need. It secures our border, strengthens our economy, creates an orderly and humane path to legal status for those who follow U.S. law, and gives law enforcement the tools they need to stop the flow of fentanyl that is hurting and killing members of our families and our neighbors.

Make no mistake, I am deeply concerned with what is happening at the southern border. It is now Congress' time to act.

Since the moment I was sworn in, I have tried to work as hard as I can with both sides of the aisle to find solutions to complex problems. I have proposed legislation to increase the number of Customs and Border Protection officers that patrol our southern border. I have proposed legislation that would help identify the fentanyl that is coming into our country. I found Republican colleagues, Republican friends, to come together because we need to work together.

Unfortunately, House GOP leadership has rejected all of the bipartisan ideas.

I am a believer that to get things done here in Congress, we need to listen to the perspectives of both sides. In this Congress, the bipartisan path has

been the only way that we have gotten results.

□ 2100

That is how we have been able to fund the government, prevent a catastrophic debt default, pass a bill to lower taxes for businesses and working families.

We have tried the partisan-only path to solving the immigration and border problem, but that does not work. Securing our border and fixing our immigration system must be done on a bipartisan basis.

Now, there are Members of Congress, especially my colleagues here on the floor right now, who want to solve the problem, but there are some in the House and the Senate GOP who want to strong-arm us, using the border as a political football in the ultimate display of gamesmanship.

Just yesterday, a bipartisan group of Senators released a plan to secure the border and fix our broken immigration system.

This compromised proposal is aggressive about tackling the challenges that we see at the border without straying from our Nation's core values.

The Senate plan makes our country safer; it makes our border more secure; and it treats people fairly and humanely.

But less than a day after its release, before most Members have even had a chance to read it, House GOP leadership said it is dead on arrival in the House.

Now, let's call it what it is: It is a display of inaction that puts politics in front of any solution.

The choice is clear: Do we choose to solve the problem in a bipartisan way, or do we allow Members across the aisle just to continue to refuse to consider the solution at all?

The latter is not what the people sent us here to do. In my district, in central and northwestern Illinois, my neighbors expect us to come here and solve problems, not to ignore them for political gain.

I have families in my district who have an empty seat at their dinner table because they lost a loved one to fentanyl.

And the House GOP leadership's response to that family is: Let's put the upcoming election in front of hurting families. That, Mr. Speaker, is as pathetic as it is selfish.

But the good news is, Speaker JOHNSON has another chance. He can work with us to put the Dignity Act up for a vote. Passing a bipartisan bill will show the American people we are serious about solving this problem.

I can think of few other examples where Democrats and Republicans have come together on such a difficult topic to propose bipartisan legislation that will secure our border, reform our immigration system, and put us on a sustainable path to solving the issues.

We can be the Congress to do it. We can create security for our Nation and for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Speaker JOHNSON to give us the chance to do what we need. Bring the Dignity Act to the floor. Let us debate it, let us vote on it, and let's work together to solve the problem.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative SORESEN so much. I am so grateful for his leadership and support.

Mr. Speaker, there are diverse groups and organizations that support the Dignity Act, from the evangelical community, to the American Chamber of Commerce, to ABIC, the American Business Immigration Council.

It is remarkable that once we put up our bill, our bipartisan bill, people from every corner of this country have been clamoring, asking us when it is coming to the floor, when will it get a vote because they are in support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN), who is an incredible leader here in Congress and a colleague, a classmate that I was elected to Congress with, another cosponsor of the Dignity Act.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, I came out today to address the issue that is top of mind for so many Americans: Immigration.

We find ourselves at this existential moment on the issue. As a Nation of immigrants, where nearly every single one of us has our own immigration story to tell, we know in our bones that our immigration system is broken. It is not working for, literally, anyone.

When I say "anyone," I mean, everyone. It is not working for our businesses, who desperately need vetted immigrant labor. It is not working for the immigrants who are walking a thousand miles in some cases to cross our border. It is not working for our border agents and for our customs and border folks who are trying to manage an astounding number of people coming over the border. It is not working for our communities who are having people bused to them. It is not working for the strain on those cities and the services. It is not working for anyone.

We can say with clarity and certainty that immigration system in a Nation of immigrants is broken, and there is blame enough to go around.

Democrats, Republicans, multiple White Houses, multiple administrations, Congress plays a big part in this, Washington departments and agencies over many, many years have used this issue to play politics rather than actually doing anything about it.

Finally, as you can see from the speeches here tonight, there is agreement that we have a problem, right?

The first step you can take to dealing with your problem is admitting you have a problem, but the fundamental question is: What are we going to now do about it?

I am a national security person by trade. I am a former CIA officer, a former Pentagon official. I did three tours in Iraq alongside the military.

My whole life before I came to this body was about protecting the homeland from external threats.

Not only that, but I come from Michigan, a northern border State. I was just at our border in Detroit this past week where I got to see a healthy, functioning border and what it looks like.

There is no greater responsibility for those of us who are elected than to protect our citizens, and no greater responsibility than to work on solutions that do just that.

Two months ago in December, I thought we finally had gotten over a major hump. We were at a moment where Democrats and Republicans here in the White House, in the Senate, across the country were all saying that we needed to work on immigration.

The Speaker of the House, the Speaker of this body, wrote to President Biden personally, saying that if the President wanted more things on Ukraine, it was “dependent upon enactment of transformative change to our Nation’s border security laws.” Those were his words.

In the Senate, a group of Democrats and Republicans did what people pay them to do, what they actually expect them to do, which is sit in a room, negotiate, argue, debate over policy to deal with the extreme pressure on the border, and they came to a solution.

Yesterday, we got our first look at what that proposal actually is, but no sooner was it out, than it is now sailing down the river like a dumpster fire, being trashed by the very people who negotiated it, being trashed by the very people who asked for it, being trashed by the Speaker of the House who desperately said: I won’t consider any future assistance without border security.

No piece of legislation is ever perfect, but it does help us curb who is coming in. It gets people working legally in our businesses like on our farms, which desperately need that labor. In the meantime, these people would be paying taxes, paying into Social Security, paying into Medicare.

I can’t understand why we continually refuse to take up bipartisan solutions like the one that is being debated in the Senate and the one that we are presenting on today, the Dignity Act. We need something to move the ball forward.

I know that all of us are willing to work with anyone across the aisle on solutions, but you have got to come to the table and acknowledge we have a problem and say you want to work on the solution.

Just two months after the Speaker laid out this existential problem with border security where he said: What is happening at the border is nothing short of a catastrophe and demanded immediate changes to the administration policy and to our laws.

He has now reversed course. He did a complete 180, changed his views and now we can’t talk about the border.

Why? Because former President Donald Trump told him to.

He is out there saying that I am in control of my caucus. If you have to say you are in control of your caucus, you are not in control of your caucus.

□ 2110

Donald Trump told him he didn’t like the bill. He told MITCH MCCONNELL he didn’t like the bill. The thing we have been working on as a healthy bipartisan negotiation falls apart in a day because Donald Trump wants to make ads about it; he wants to do political rallies about it; he wants to use it as a club against Joe Biden; he wants to use it for himself instead of doing what the country expects, which is dealing with the crisis at the border.

The leaders who were elected to protect their constituents are bowing to this pressure with barely a bat of the eye. It is embarrassing actually. It is sad to watch, but definitely embarrassing, and another sign of how toxic and ill our politics have become.

I was trying to think about what would happen when I was a CIA officer or at the Pentagon if I had identified a real national security crisis with facts and data, if I had said this is a threat to our country, talked about it publicly, constantly came back to it to raise attention to this issue, and then refused to do anything about it? There is a term for this in the military. It is called dereliction of duty. It is a fireable offense.

The next time I hear one of my colleagues railing about the border, railing about immigration in the same breath that they are refusing to actually do anything about it, I am going to remember that in other places other than this body, that is completely unacceptable, that it is a joke to care about something and then ignore it.

Remember this, our colleagues had the chance to work on this issue. If they don’t like that bill, come and talk to us about the Dignity Act. Come to the table to negotiate, but stop choosing yourself instead of your constituents and the safety of the country.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. SLOTKIN for those very powerful words. She mentioned something that I think is so important to repeat. As I have been talking to colleagues on both sides of the aisle about the Dignity Act, they have pointed out things they don’t like or things that they consider imperfect.

I have said two things in response: Please give me a suggestion on how you would change whatever provision it is that you don’t like and how you would accomplish that in a bipartisan way. That is the first thing I say. The second thing I say is, if this bipartisan bill that to date has about 30 bipartisan cosponsors, a really great coalition of bipartisan support, if this isn’t the bipartisan immigration bill you like, I would be happy to look at yours.

If folks don’t like this bill, they can either introduce their own after work-

ing hard to produce a bipartisan product like we did or they can even offer suggestions on provisions they would like to see changed as long as those changes reflect the bipartisan compromise that we worked so hard to create in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN), who was just in my district and my hometown this weekend.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative ESCOBAR for not only yielding her time but also for welcoming me and many others to her community just a few days ago.

Last week, I had the opportunity to visit our southern border by way of El Paso. This was my second time to the border. Very similar to the op-ed that I published in Newsweek earlier today, I share a little bit of my reaction to this very important and eye-opening congressional delegation that I was able to participate in.

If you are a Pennsylvanian like I am, you know that we just observed Groundhog Day, and Punxsutawney Phil didn’t see his shadow, so we can all expect an early spring. At our country’s southwest border, it feels like every day is Groundhog Day. Like so many Americans, I am a combination of angry and frustrated and heartbroken by what continues to happen there day after day and year after year and decade after decade.

We know that our immigration policies have to align with the shared values of our country. We are a country that was built primarily by immigrants, and we must welcome new arrivals compassionately while also protecting and securing our safety and our economy.

My community is, indeed, thousands of miles away from the southern border, in the suburbs of Philadelphia. We face unique challenges every day regarding immigration, but what is not unique about my community, indeed about every community, is that we have felt the impact in some way of our fractured and broken immigration system.

My visit to the southern border last week was not my first. Previously, I had the opportunity to go to Brownsville, Texas, and these trips have taught me that our system is broken but, indeed, can be repaired.

I have seen the efforts firsthand of important changes that Congress here has made and implemented since my first visit. Gone are the dehumanizing cages and the literal smell of humanity. In their place is a clean and dignified environment, centered on the health and the well-being of the migrants and of the incredibly dedicated Americans who work on behalf of our country. There is still clearly an enormous amount of work that needs to be done to secure our border, with enhanced processes, more staffing, and better systems, but the difference is palpable.

Most significantly, though, what has not been improved is the volume of migrants and the fact that there is still no other path than this desperate one for people who seek a better life in this vibrant and healthy economy. We don't need more of the same expensive Band-Aids but, rather, we need real reform, with more legal pathways to come here and to participate in our Nation's next 250 years.

I am committed to bipartisanship and to securing our border, and I am asking the very same of Congress. Specifically, I am asking the very same of our Speaker. The message that I share today is this: Our Republican leadership in Congress needs to commit to bringing bipartisan immigration reform bills like VERONICA ESCOBAR's bipartisan Dignity Act to the floor for a vote and now.

As an example, here is what the Dignity Act would do:

Number one, it would provide more money for CBP and border infrastructure to prevent illegal immigration.

Number two, it would require employers to verify the immigration status of workers and to ensure that they are here lawfully.

Number three, it would provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, who are the children of immigrants who came here when they were very young.

Number four, it would establish a path to permanent residency status for eligible individuals without lawful immigration status who meet various requirements, including paying into a fund to provide training for U.S. workers.

Let us pause and think about what I have just shared—policies that the vast, vast majority of Americans agree on. If we, as a Congress, are not passing legislation that the vast, vast majority of Americans agree on, I truly believe, as my colleague Representative ELISSA SLOTKIN mentioned, we are derelict in our duties.

Efforts like the Senate bipartisan bill that was just introduced yesterday must also be considered and be voted on. While I am still reading through the details of the 370-page bill, I am encouraged by the very summary that I have seen. While the path forward on immigration reform will likely not be straightforward, this much is true: We must reach a compromise with real solutions to this complex conversation and issue right now.

Again, I am calling on Speaker JOHNSON to change his deeply cynical position that "now is not the time" for immigration reform. I couldn't disagree more. Most people in most communities across America couldn't disagree more.

No solution will be perfect, but we cannot let that keep us from making progress for both the American people and for those who seek refuge here.

Not too long ago it was, indeed, my own family seeking shelter. My father and my grandmother survived the Hol-

ocaust. They left war-torn Poland after World War II and sought a better way of life here in the United States. I saw my young dad and grandmother in the eyes of frightened, desperate, and hopeful migrants that I was able to meet last week.

One small family unit in particular struck me. He was a young man of probably no more than 20 years old with his beautiful, curly-headed toddler, who reminded me of my youngest child. He told me about traffickers taking pictures of his son to intimidate and extort the father into conformance with their threats and demands. We can do better.

A lot has changed since my own father and grandmother took a ship across the Atlantic Ocean to New York City, and our immigration laws must also change as well.

I honor the souls, both migrant and American, whose lives collide with each other every day at our borders, and I again urge Republican leadership to bring a bipartisan border bill to the House floor. We must seek the hope of fresh opportunities. The shadows that burden us must all be lifted. That is possible, but only if we here in Congress understand that this Nation depends on us to act and to act now.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support the bipartisan immigration reform.

□ 2120

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of my colleagues and so incredibly honored and privileged to be working alongside them toward this very noble purpose. I am so proud of my Republican colleagues, as well, and honored they are on this bill.

It is a strange thing to say, but it actually takes a lot of courage for people to compromise in this place. The U.S. Congress today, unfortunately, is in some ways set up to ensure that our divisions are even more deeply rooted and that the chasm between us is made even greater.

It really is up to each and every one of us to build a bridge over that chasm, to find that pathway toward unity, and to focus, really, on areas of agreement instead of areas of disagreement. It is what the American people want. It is what the American people deserve.

A couple of my colleagues mentioned the trip to El Paso last weekend. Since I was elected to Congress my first year in 2019, I have brought over 25 percent of Congress—that number is probably even higher now—to El Paso. I invite my colleagues to join me. The trips are really insightful. We don't just talk to Border Patrol agents. We actually do a very holistic evaluation and have robust conversations with everyone that a broken system touches.

It helps put into perspective how complex the solution really is and how unacceptable it is that we have gone so long without addressing this solution.

I am going to close with this, Mr. Speaker, because my colleagues have

done such an effective job of advocating for this bipartisan compromise. I mentioned just a little bit ago the large number of supporting organizations that have come to us and told us they want to help. They want to see this bill get to the floor. They want a solution. The organizations range from left leaning to right leaning and everything in between.

Last week, I had the opportunity to speak to the Power and Communication Contractors Association, a group that came to Washington specifically to advocate for the Dignity Act. This is not a group I reached out to. This is not a group that any of us called and invited to D.C. They heard about the bill. They shared it with each other. They are a trade organization that is trying to install broadband across this country, especially in rural areas, but they are up against workforce shortages.

When they learned of the Dignity Act, they reached out to me. They asked me to speak to their group. I visited with them last week in the evening after a long day here on Capitol Hill, and they gave me such inspiration.

If regular Americans who are just trying to do their jobs are coming to D.C. to beg us to do ours, something is very wrong, but something is also very right. That means the American people are finally demanding of us that we do our job.

I would be remiss if I didn't say this: My party should have worked to compromise a long time ago.

Colleagues of mine on the other side of the aisle today are refusing to compromise. They keep pointing to their bill, H.R. 2. They keep saying this is the solution. I can tell you it is not.

A fundamental component to H.R. 2, something that is rarely talked about but fundamental to H.R. 2, is that Mexico be willing to accept every migrant the U.S. decides to expel. That has never happened, nor will it ever happen, so H.R. 2 is not realistic.

House Democrats who are holding onto the perfect are not realistic, either.

Let's come together. Let's fix this once and for all. Let's get to work and bring this to the floor. Let's put everyone to the test. Do we want a solution, or do we not?

On behalf of my colleagues and the millions of Americans who are ready for this vote, let's get this done.

Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful for the opportunity to highlight this very important bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

--- HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?