

addition to my regular discussions with farmers and ranchers as I travel around our State, I have held a number of roundtable discussions across South Dakota, focused on the next farm bill, to receive direct input from our State's agriculture producers, and most of my priorities for the farm bill come directly from the conversations that I have had.

One thing I consistently hear from farmers and ranchers is the importance of a farm safety net. Crop insurance, commodity, and livestock programs play a critical role in helping producers manage risk in their operations.

Crop insurance is the cornerstone of the safety net, and we need to strengthen it wherever possible in the next farm bill. And while crop insurance has historically supported row crop production, I am pleased with the progress we have made in recent years to improve and expand insurance options for livestock producers.

But commodity programs like Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage need to be improved so that they sufficiently mitigate producers' losses. And livestock programs like the Livestock Forage Disaster Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock Program need to be modified to improve the assistance that they provide and make them workable for producers.

So one of my top priorities for the next farm bill is improving commodity and livestock programs so they provide the support that farmers and ranchers need during tough times.

As I said, while I am glad we have extended key provisions of the 2018 farm bill through this growing season, we are overdue for a full, updated, multiyear farm bill, and Republicans on the Agriculture Committee are ready to get to drafting a bill.

I am disappointed, however, that some of my Democrat colleagues don't seem to share our sense of urgency.

The Biden administration and congressional Democrats have put funding their climate and nutrition priorities ahead of helping farmers and ranchers, which has stalled what has traditionally been—traditionally been—a bipartisan farm bill process.

With an expected \$1.5 trillion pricetag for the next farm bill—thanks in part to the Biden USDA's SNAP Thrifty Food Plan update, which is expected, by the way, to cost more than a quarter of a trillion dollars over the next 10 years—there needs to be some give and take when it comes to meaningfully funding the farm safety net and other components of the farm bill.

Since the last farm bill passed in 2018, farmers and ranchers have faced a number of challenges. Inflation has driven up farm production expenses by \$100 billion since the last farm bill. USDA is forecasting another decrease in net farm income this year, following last year's drop. And farm input costs are projected to stay near record highs this year.

The Biden administration's failure to promote trade and new market access opportunities will continue to negatively impact farmers and ranchers in their bottom lines. This year, the United States is on track to post a record-high agriculture trade deficit, and recent disruptions to shipping in the Middle East could have impacts on global markets that negatively affect American farms and ranches.

Our focus needs to be on helping farmers deal with these challenges. Simply put, we need to put more farm in the farm bill, and we need to get moving now.

America's farmers and ranchers can't afford more unnecessary delays or partisan exercises. It is time to get the farm bill done and done right.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, tomorrow President Biden will do something he has done only once before in his term as President of the United States, he will travel to the U.S.-Mexico border to Brownsville, TX, in an attempt to address his biggest political liability. Since the President took office 3 years ago, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has logged more than 7.2 million migrant encounters at the southern border. By that, we mean people who have shown up at the border and, by and large, have simply been released into the interior based on an initial claim of asylum which has yet to be put in front of an immigration judge. And it may be as long as, in places like New York, 10 years in the future before they ever get in front of an immigration judge; or, as we have seen tragically here most recently, these migrants will be paroled or simply released into the interior of the country—even without a claim of asylum—given a work permit, and stay here indefinitely.

Mr. President, 7.2 million is higher than the total number of migrants who came across the southern border under President Obama, who served 8 years, and President Trump, who served 4 years. So the Biden administration has done in 3 years what it took 12 years for the two previous administrations to accomplish. We have experienced more illegal immigration in the last 3 years than in the last 12.

The American people have become increasingly concerned at the southern border because they see with their own eyes that this is a humanitarian crisis, and it is a public safety crisis. And they overwhelmingly—and quite appropriately—blame Biden administration

policies and the President himself. They see that his policies and his rhetoric, rather than deter illegal immigration, have actually encouraged it.

Let me say that again: They understand that the policies of this administration and the rhetoric that has been used are the driving force behind America's most serious border crisis in history.

But, as usual, the President refuses to accept any responsibility. He has tried to blame everybody but himself. He has blamed congressional dysfunction. He has blamed MAGA Republicans. He has blamed anybody and everybody that he can possibly think of, rather than accept responsibility himself. Not only that, he has, at different times, claimed that he lacks the tools to fix this crisis. At different times, he has claimed that his hands are tied unless Congress passes new laws.

The problem with that storyline, that narrative, is the facts simply don't support it. For one, the suggestion that only Congress can fix the crisis implies that Congress created the crisis. I would point out the same laws that were in effect during President Trump's administration are still in effect during President Biden's administration with far different outcomes.

As each of our colleagues knows, Congress has struggled to pass any immigration laws in recent years; and, certainly, it has not passed any that would cause the dramatic surge in immigration that began the day that President Biden took office. The President was dealt exactly the same hand as his recent predecessors. The only difference is he used these authorities entirely differently and sent an entirely different message.

As I have spoken before on the floor, the Border Patrol, which are the experts on border security, tell me that there are two main drivers of illegal immigration: One is push factors, they call it—poverty, violence, a desire for a better life. And we understand that. America is a nation of immigrants, of legal immigrants.

But there is also the pull factors, like a magnet encouraging people to make the dangerous journey to our border, even in the form of unaccompanied children designed to exploit gaps in Biden administration policies and permanently reside in the United States.

Earlier this week, I was surprised by a New York Times article that acknowledged the fundamental hypocrisy behind President Biden's efforts to shift the blame once again. This is a quote from February 26, 2024, the New York Times. David Leonhardt is the columnist. He said, in part:

Biden is the president, after all, and a president has significant authority to shape immigration policy even without new legislation. Biden himself has been aggressive about using this authority—albeit to loosen immigration policy rather than tighten it.

So the current phenomenon, this crisis—humanitarian and public safety crisis—is as a result of President

Biden's own policies. It is not the laws that are broken or inadequate; it is his will to actually enforce the law and his active encouragement for people to come to the border because they know they will successfully be able to stay in the United States.

I have mentioned before about a trip that several of us colleagues on a bipartisan basis went to Yuma, AZ, a little sleepy agricultural community in southwest Arizona right across the border from Mexico. The Border Patrol Chief said: Welcome to the Yuma sector. Last year we welcomed people from 140-plus countries—not Mexico, not Central America, but from 140-plus countries that speak more than 200 languages.

Senator KELLY, our colleague from Arizona, pointed out that there was an airport in northern Mexico, in Mexicali—which is a fairly large city in northern Mexico—and, apparently, what happens is people fly into Mexicali and literally Uber over to the Border Patrol and declare amnesty—well, declare “asylum” is the right word.

Well, I know the President will have a hard time with this, his second drive-by of the American-Mexico border during his term as President, but, of course, his goal is to try to shift the blame once again. As this journalist wrote, President Biden is the President. He wanted to be President. He got elected President. He ought to do the job that Presidents do, which is to enforce the laws. That is what the executive branch of government does: Congress passes laws. The judicial branch decides disputes about those laws as applied to given facts, but it is the President and the executive branch—the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security—that are responsible under our constitutional order for actually enforcing the law.

And what has President Biden done with that authority? He has loosened immigration policy rather than tightened it. This is what I have been saying for 3 years; and, even now, I can't tell you how surprised and pleased I am to see this stated in the New York Times. But President Biden could listen to Mayor Adams, the mayor of New York City. He has said: This has been a disaster for New York. You hear the similar complaints from people like the Mayor of Washington, DC, the mayor of Chicago. These are self-styled sanctuary cities that you think would welcome these migrants, but they have been overwhelmed.

Well, what about 7.2 million that are showing up on our back doorstep in Texas? It is hard to have much sympathy for the mayors of New York and Chicago and Washington, DC, when they have dealt with just a fraction of the numbers that we have had to deal with in Texas without any help from the Federal Government.

And the Federal Government has been actively undermining efforts by

the State of Texas to reduce illegal immigration.

During his first few days in office, President Biden signed a raft of Executive orders related to immigration and border security: He halted construction of the border wall. He dismantled the agreement we had with Mexico that migrants could remain in Mexico while they waited for their asylum claim to be adjudicated. But he ripped that up too. He ended an asylum agreement with Northern Triangle countries and even issued a 100-day pause on deportations. So even if you were here illegally, you knew, at least for 100 days—and very likely for the rest of your life—that you would not be deported because of President Biden's policies.

These are just a few examples of the Executive orders President Biden issued within days of taking office. In the 3 years since, he and other leaders in the administration have gone to great lengths to roll out the welcome mat.

One of the most egregious examples is the administration's widespread use of parole. Parole, in this context, means that is a temporary entry for foreigners under rare and dire circumstances. It was never meant to be used categorically or in a blanket fashion as the Biden administration has done. It is meant to be used on a case-by-case basis in extreme cases—someone experiencing a medical emergency at a port of entry; somebody is donating a kidney or serving as a witness in a trial. It was meant to be used on a case-by-case basis which, by nature, gives the administration a good amount of discretion. But to provide some comparison, during the two previous administrations, an average of 5,600 migrants were paroled into the United States each year—5,600. Once President Biden took office, that number skyrocketed.

The Biden administration has used parole to facilitate catch-and-release at the border at an unprecedented pace, but its use of parole extends beyond illegal crossings at the southern border. The Biden administration announced a new program which allows individuals from four countries—Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela—to enter and remain in the United States, all under the guise of parole. You don't need to claim asylum. If you can make it to the border, if you pay the smugglers enough money to get you there, you know you are going to be able to stay here. This program that the Biden administration set up intentionally and with great deliberation provides 2 years of legal status and work authorization to 30,000—30,000—migrants from these four countries each month. That is 360,000 a year. The Biden administration: Roll out the welcome mat. Give them a work permit. Say “You can stay,” knowing that they probably will be able to stay indefinitely.

In total, the Biden administration has used its case-by-case parole authority to grant parole to 1.6 million mi-

grants in less than 2 years—1.6 million. As President Biden has shown repeatedly, if you give him an inch, he will take a mile.

Another example of gratuitous discretion came from Secretary Mayorkas, who has been impeached by the House of Representatives. Secretary Mayorkas issued a final directive for immigration enforcement priorities in the fall of 2021. This really should be called—instead of immigration enforcement priorities, this should be immigration nonenforcement priorities. That would be a more accurate title.

But under this guidance—one headline summed up the contents rather succinctly. It said the “U.S. Will No Longer Deport Illegal Immigrants Based on Undocumented Status Alone.” We are not going to deport people who are illegally entering the country? What kind of message does that send?

But the memo went on to explicitly discourage ICE officers. ICE is Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Once you get past the border, ICE is the one responsible for repatriating or returning people who are here illegally. This memo explicitly discouraged ICE officers from arresting or removing illegal immigrants unless they have been convicted of a serious crime.

It defies all common sense to ask law enforcement officers, who take an oath to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States—it makes no sense to tell them at the same time to turn a blind eye when you encounter people who are here illegally just because the Biden administration doesn't want to enforce the law.

Secretary Mayorkas went further. He laid out mitigating factors that should be considered before arresting or removing illegal immigrants, including their age, how long they have been in the United States, and the impact the removal would have on their family. Even in the case of an alien convicted of a very serious offense, like murder, like rape, receipt and possession of child pornography, ICE would have to consider these mitigating factors before they could take action and remove that person.

The reality of the situation, no matter how inconvenient it may be for our Democratic colleagues, is that by entering the United States illegally, these migrants are breaking the law.

There is nothing wrong with prioritizing the removal of the most dangerous criminals. Previous administrations have prioritized certain categories of illegal immigrants, like those suspected of terrorism or those who could be a threat to national security or public safety. But there is a difference between prioritizing certain groups for removal and exempting entire categories from enforcement.

Given everything we have witnessed over the past 3 years, President Biden has no right—no right—to claim that

his hands are tied when it comes to addressing the border crisis by Executive action.

From day one, President Biden made clear that he was willing to use Executive action, as David Leonhardt notes here, but he did it to loosen illegal immigration, make it easier, not harder. He used Executive action to stop border wall construction, end the “Remain in Mexico” policy, halt deportations, exclude broad classes of migrants from removal, parole more than 1.6 million migrants into the United States, and so much more. So this is a crisis of President Biden’s making. This is a manmade disaster, and that man is President of the United States.

If the President believed that he had this much latitude to loosen immigration policy, he shouldn’t feel constrained by Congress when it comes to tightening immigration policy. It would be good politics for him. I pointed out that this is a major political liability for the President going into an election. He could fix it, just like he broke it.

Executive actions have been used in the past to address migration surges—and with a great deal of success.

Back in 2005, then-DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that I serve on and spoke about the Department’s response to a surge of migrants from Brazil.

All of a sudden, a bunch of migrants from Brazil showed up at the border. But what did they do? What did the Bush administration do? They used their existing authorities to expand the use of expedited removal, which allows agents to quickly remove migrants who have no legal basis to remain in the United States. As Secretary Chertoff noted, word spread fast. After 30 days, the number of Brazilians dropped by more than 50 percent. After 60 days, it dropped more than 90 percent.

President Biden can do precisely the same thing, but he won’t do it. President Biden has the exact same authority to replicate that effort today. He could expand expedited removal, send a clear message that our southern border is no longer an open corridor. But, as Mr. Leonhardt points out, all the messages he is sending are “You can come. You can stay.” What more powerful magnet, what more powerful pull factor for illegal immigration can you imagine?

As I pointed out time and time again, it is not just about illegal immigration; it is about the drugs, because the cartels have figured out that if you flood the border with people, you can overwhelm the Border Patrol. Many of them would have to leave the frontlines to process paperwork, provide transportation, food, shelter, clothing to migrants in order to treat them humanely while they are here, but they are not on the border.

Last year alone, 108,000 Americans died from drugs that come across that

border, 71,000 of them from fentanyl, the synthetic opioid pressed into counterfeit-looking pills that high school-age children are taking across the country, thinking that they are taking something relatively innocuous, but, in fact, it kills them. Fentanyl is the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 18 and 45. We know where it comes from. It comes across that border. It is manufactured in Mexico from precursors shipped in from China. But that is part of the disaster that the Biden administration’s open border policy has wrought—108,000 dead Americans last year alone.

Well, news reports are that President Biden could announce new Executive actions on his trip to the border tomorrow. I am eager to see whether he will reverse course and issue an Executive order that will actually tighten the border or actually do his duty of securing the border or whether these are measures more designed to loosen immigration policy.

Of course, I expect that the American people, being very smart, will understand why President Biden has chosen this time to take this trip—the second driveby of the border since he has been President. It is all about the election in November, and he understands that this is a gaping political liability, and he is trying to plug that. Not only is he trying to plug that hole, he is also trying to blame others for his failure, and that will not work. The American people, being very smart and perceptive, can see through that smoke screen.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled rollcall vote begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 472, Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie Hirono, Tina Smith, Gary C. Peters, Amy Klobuchar, Raphael G. Warnock, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted “nay.”

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 55 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rubio
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Butler	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Lujan	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Sinema
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	Menendez	Tester
Coons	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Graham	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—43

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tuberville
Cramer	Lummis	Vance
Crapo	Marshall	Wicker
Cruz	McConnell	Young
Daines	Moran	
Ernst	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—3

Klobuchar	Smith	Tillis
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(Mr. SCHATZ assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The yeas are 54, the nays are 43.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as some of you may know, this has been a particularly difficult time for my family. We tragically lost Elaine’s younger sister, Angela, just a few weeks ago.

When you lose a loved one, particularly at a young age, there is a certain introspection that accompanies the grieving process. Perhaps it is God’s way of reminding you of your own life’s journey to reprioritize the impact on the world that we will all inevitably leave behind.

I turned 82 last week. The end of my contributions is closer than I would prefer.

My career in the U.S. Senate began amidst the Reagan revolution. The truth is, when I got here, I was just happy if anybody remembered my