

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

name. President Reagan called me Mitch O'Donnell. Close enough, I thought.

My wife Elaine and I got married on President Reagan's birthday, February 6. It is probably not the most romantic thing to admit, but Reagan meant a lot to both of us. For 31 years, Elaine has been the love of my life, and I am eternally grateful to have her by my side.

I think back to my first days in the Senate with deep appreciation for the time that helped shape my view of the world. I am unconflicted about the good within our country and the irreplaceable role we play as the leader of the free world. That is why I worked so hard to get the national security package passed earlier this month.

Believe me, I know the politics within my party at this particular moment in time. I have many faults. Misunderstanding politics is not one of them.

That said, I believe more strongly than ever that America's global leadership is essential to preserving the shining city on a hill that Ronald Reagan discussed. For as long as I am drawing breath on this Earth, I will defend American exceptionalism.

So, as I have been thinking about when I would deliver some news to the Senate, I always imagined a moment when I had total clarity and peace about the sunset of my work, a moment when I am certain I have helped preserve the ideals I so strongly believe. That day arrived today.

My goals when I was narrowly elected to the Senate in 1984 were fairly modest: Do a good job for the people of Kentucky and convince them that, by doing so, they might rehire me for a second term. That was it. That was the plan. If you would have told me, 40 years later, that I would stand before you as the longest serving Senate leader in American history, frankly, I would have thought you had lost your mind.

I have the honor of representing Kentucky in the Senate longer than anyone else in our State's history. I just never could have imagined—never could have imagined—that happening when I arrived here in 1984 at 42. I am filled with heartfelt gratitude and humility for the opportunity.

But now it is 2024. I am now 82. As Ecclesiastes tells us, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven."

To serve Kentucky in the Senate has been the honor of my life. To lead my Republican colleagues has been the highest privilege. But one of life's most underappreciated talents is to know when it is time to move on to life's next chapter.

So I stand before you today, Mr. President and my colleagues, to say this will be my last term as Republican leader of the Senate. I am not going anywhere any time soon. However, I will complete the job my colleagues have given me until we select a new leader in November and they take the helm next January. I will finish the job

the people of Kentucky hired me to do, as well, albeit from a different seat. And I am actually looking forward to that.

So it is time for me to think about another season.

I love the Senate. It has been my life. There may be more distinguished Members of this body throughout our history, but I doubt there were any with more admiration for the Senate. After all this time, I still get a thrill walking into the Capitol and especially on this venerable floor, knowing that we—each of us—have the honor to represent our States and do the important work of our country.

But Father Time remains undefeated. I am no longer the young man sitting in the back, hoping colleagues would remember my name. It is time for the next generation of leadership.

As Henry Clay said in this very body in 1850, "The Constitution of the United States was not made merely for the generation that then existed, but for posterity—unlimited, undefined, endless, perpetual posterity."

So time rolls on. There will be a new custodian of this great institution next year. It won't surprise you to know I intend to turn this job over to a Republican majority leader. I have full confidence in my conference to choose my replacement and lead our country forward.

There will be other times to reminisce. I am immensely proud of the accomplishments I have played some role in obtaining for the American people. Today is not the day to discuss all of that because, as I said earlier, I am not going anywhere anytime soon.

There are many challenges we must meet to deliver for the American people, and each will have my full effort and attention.

I still have enough gas in my tank to thoroughly disappoint my critics, and I intend to do so with all the enthusiasm with which they have become accustomed.

So to my colleagues, thank you for entrusting me with our success. It has been an honor to work with each of you. There will be plenty of time to express my gratitude in greater detail as I sprint toward the finish line, which is now in sight.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I just want to very briefly recognize my good friend, the Republican leader, for his extraordinary service, not only to our caucus but, more important, to the Senate as an institution and to our country.

His tenure as leader will be remembered, not just for its historic longevity but also for his unparalleled devotion to this great institution, which he has always defended.

I also admire the leader for stepping forward when it wasn't popular to do the right thing for our country and for our world.

There will be plenty of time for all of us to honor him in more detail as time goes on, but I felt compelled to speak today to thank him—to thank him—for devoting his life to public service for all the right reasons: to improve the lives of the people living in our great country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President:

I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

That is the oath that we all take once we become Senators of the United States.

Just imagine that you are Allyson and John Phillips. Last Thursday afternoon, you get a phone call from law enforcement in Athens, GA. The voice on the other end of the phone says that your daughter has been murdered by an illegal immigrant. I cannot imagine what that feels like. I cannot even begin to understand the shock and sadness and anger.

Laken Riley was a nursing student at Augusta, GA, this past year. On Wednesday morning, she went out for a jog on the campus of the University of Georgia. She never came back. Police found her body in the woods a few hours later around noontime. She was covered with blood and injuries from head to toe.

An autopsy found that she died of blunt force trauma to the head. The charging documents in this case say that her skull was disfigured. This was a brutal murder of an innocent young woman.

Laken Riley was just 22 years old. She had her whole life ahead of her. She had a bright future. Now that future will never be realized.

You know, I spent 40 years of my life on college campuses. I have dedicated my life to coaching young adults, but I wasn't just a coach; I was also a mentor. There is nothing more heartbreaking than losing a promising young person like Laken Riley, and I want to offer my condolences to the Riley family.

Our No. 1 commodity in this country is our young people. Laken's death is even more heartbreaking because it could have been prevented and should have been prevented. On Friday night, police arrested and charged Jose Antonio Ibarra with malice murder, felony murder, aggravated battery, aggravated assault, false imprisonment, kidnapping, and hindering a 911 call.

Jose Ibarra is an illegal immigrant from Venezuela. In other words, he should never have been in this country in the first place. This brutal and horrific murder would have been prevented