

Democratic colleagues have supported this administration's disastrous open border policies.

And for more than 7 months, they have refused to bring H.R. 2 to this floor for a vote. H.R. 2 is the House Republicans' Secure the Border Act. It would help end this crisis. In fact, since the House passed H.R. 2 and sent it over here to the Senate, the Senate Judiciary Committee has held 83 hearings—83 hearings and meetings since that bill was passed. H.R. 2 has never been brought up for 1 minute of discussion in this Chamber. It just shows you: Open border is this administration's policy. This is what they want.

Now, I think that it is very telling what the Democrats are for on this. Their inaction on what is a crucial issue and, indeed, the No. 1 issue with the American people reveals a lot about their priorities.

But I would have to ask my Democratic colleagues: Why is it that you are for illegal immigration? Why is it that you are working so hard to make illegal legal? What is it about circumventing the rule of law that you think is the right thing to do? Do you want to circumvent the rule of law and throw away all immigration policy? Or is it just you want to allow illegal entry into this country?

I will tell you what, Madam President: We need to know who is coming in this country and why they are coming. I would yield time on this floor to any Democrat who wanted to come and explain why you are working so hard to make illegal legal. I would like to hear that explanation because it seems, every time we turn around, you are looking for some way to codify illegal entry into this country.

How about abiding by the rule of law, because when you circumvent the rule of law, what do you do? You devalue our citizenship. What about the thousands of people who are working legally toward citizenship, who are spending money, who are spending time? Have any of you spent time going to a naturalization ceremony, a citizenship ceremony? Have you heard these stories of how hard people work, how they want to be a U.S. citizen?

But, oh, no. What some of you want to do is devalue that. You want to say: Let's make it OK for people to just waltz across the Rio Grande, walk in here, and enter this country illegally outside of the rule of law, wait 10 years to get an asylum hearing.

What is right about that? And you know the answer: Nothing is right. Nothing is right. And it is amazing to me. Give me an explanation of why you think you should preference people who illegally come in this country before our Nation's veterans and hard-working taxpayers. Why do you do that? Why do you think that that is OK?

I will tell you what right now: Tennesseans don't think that is OK. They don't think having a million people on the VA backlog for services is OK while you are spending millions of dollars for

healthcare for veterans for processing claims. They don't think that sending outside referrals for them when veterans can't get into community care—this is not right.

I can't imagine an explanation from one of my Democratic colleagues that would say: I think that is what we ought to do. We ought to just say: Illegal immigrants, we are going to take care of you first, and everybody else to the back of the line.

But, in essence, that is what your actions are showing that you support. Your actions and inactions are showing that you think making illegal legal, that that is a really good thing.

And the other thing I don't get about all of this: Each and every one of you know you do not come to that southern border on your own; you have paid a cartel. People pay the cartels.

And then, Border Patrol will show you the bands and bracelets that are put on people. What it shows is the cartel and what this person needs to do to work out their fee, because not everybody can pay the \$5,000 or \$10,000 to the cartel to illegally come in this country and then have the U.S. taxpayer finish the job for them once they get to the U.S. border because they get their asylum claim, their notice to appear, their phone, their food, their clothes, their plane tickets, and their healthcare.

But they have a band on them, a tracking device, and that is what tells the cartel and their job. It may be going to a gang. It may be going to a work crew. It may be selling drugs—fentanyl—and pushing that into our communities. It may be that these people are part of a human trafficking ring, they are going to be put into human trafficking and sex trafficking.

So to my Democratic colleagues: Do you think this is compassionate? How do you say this defines compassion? It is beyond me. You all know that this is modern-day slavery. And if you haven't seen these bands, I think there are some of us that would show you these bands that people have to wear, will show you the Department of Homeland Security stats that shows that just a few years ago, human trafficking was a \$500-million-a-year business. Today, DHS tells us it is a \$150-billion-a-year profit center. That is right: \$150 billion a year.

Let me tell you something. These women and children that are being sex trafficked, they are being mentally, physically, emotionally, sexually, and drug abused as they make these journeys. You all know that. But why would you say an open border is a compassionate policy? It is not.

This is a humanitarian crisis. This is a crisis where people are having their lives ruined. They are sold a bill of goods by a cartel who is incentivized because the cartel says: Biden said come on, border is open. The policy is an open border.

You know, it is imperative that we stand with the rule of law. I have got a couple of pieces of legislation that I

filed hoping that they will help. One is the CONTAINER Act that would allow States to protect their portion of that southern border, give them the ability. They have got that right. If the Federal Government falls down on their job, they have got the right to protect their citizens, and they want to do that.

The other is No VA Resources for Illegal Aliens Act. This is something that I have done along with Senator TUBERVILLE to stop the administration's Department of Veterans Affairs from providing taxpayer-funded healthcare to illegal aliens or engaging in claims processing for anyone unlawfully present in the United States.

It is time that we secure this southern border and that we end this illegal entry into this country.

I yield the floor.

(Ms. CORTEZ MASTO assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. OSSOFF assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

#### AMENDING THE PERMANENT ELECTRONIC DUCK STAMP ACT OF 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2872) to amend the Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013 to allow the Secretary of the Interior to issue electronic stamps under such Act, and for other purposes.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the only amendments in order to H.R. 2872 be the following: Paul No. 1384, Marshall Motion to Commit, Braun No. 1382, Murray No. 1381; and that at 12:30 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, January 18, the Senate vote on adoption of the amendments in the order listed, with each subject to 60 affirmative votes required for adoption, with the exception of the Marshall Motion to Commit and Murray No. 1381; that there be 2 minutes for debate equally divided prior to each vote; further, that on disposition of the Braun amendment, the Murray substitute amendment No. 1381, as amended, if amended, be agreed to, the bill be considered read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended, with 60 affirmative votes required for passage, all without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1381

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Mr. SCHUMER. I call up substitute amendment No. 1381.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER], for Mrs. MURRAY, proposes an amendment numbered 1381.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask that further reading the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of January 16, 2024, under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, there is good news. We have just agreed to lock in an agreement and pass a bill tomorrow that will fund the government and avoid an unnecessary government shutdown. This CR will give Congress time to continue working on the appropriations process to fund the government for the rest of the fiscal year. We hope that the House will take up this bill before the Friday deadline with bipartisan support. I appreciate the work of all the leaders to move forward with this CR.

And, in conclusion, I hope—truly hope—we will see the same bipartisanship we have seen tonight in the Senate continue as we tackle the very important supplemental and appropriations bills before us.

#### CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN WOLVERINES FOOTBALL TEAM

#### EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF OCTOBER 2023 AS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

#### REPEALING STANDING ORDERS RELATING TO FLOWERS IN THE SENATE CHAMBER

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Science, Commerce, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 520 and that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following resolutions: S. Res. 520, S. Res. 525, and S. Res. 526.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles, where applicable, be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 520) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of January 11, 2024, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The resolution (S. Res. 525) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The resolution (S. Res. 526) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### MORNING BUSINESS

#### THE PROTECTING AND ENHANCING PUBLIC ACCESS TO CODES (PRO CODES) ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, ensuring Americans' right to access, read, and understand the law is critical to the functioning of our democracy. Whether text with the force of law is found in statute or regulation or whether it has been incorporated by reference, it is essential that all members of the public have fair and equitable access to the legal standards by which they must abide.

Unfortunately, I have concerns that the Protecting and Enhancing Public Access to Codes (Pro Codes) Act would hinder, rather than enhance, the public's access to technical or voluntary consensus standards that have been incorporated into law by reference. This bill explicitly allows standards-setting organizations to require that a member of the public create an account or agree to terms of service as a condition of access. Requiring that an interested party surrender personal information to, or enter into a binding contract with, a private entity in order to read the law raises concerns of privacy and fairness.

I am also troubled that the bill lacks robust standards for public accessibility. It does not require standards to be made available in print or in person, and it does not require standards to be searchable, machine-readable, or accessible to persons with disabilities. In this way, the Pro Codes Act risks creating barriers to access for many Americans, including researchers and reporters, those without reliable internet service, and individuals with visual impairments.

For these reasons, I will object to any unanimous consent agreement regarding the Pro Codes Act.

#### GUATEMALA

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, the inauguration of Bernardo Arevalo as President of Guatemala shortly after midnight on January 15 was a triumph for the people of Guatemala. Despite corrupt forces in the outgoing government, the Congress, and the Office of the Attorney General—who abused their authority in a flagrant attempt to subvert the result of a free and fair election that President Arevalo won overwhelmingly—in the end, Guatemala's democracy was preserved.

I want to congratulate the Guatemalan people for their courage and perseverance, especially the indigenous Mayan population who have suffered deprivation and indignity under successive governments whose officials cared far more about enriching themselves than improving the lives of the country's most vulnerable. It is long past time for Guatemala's indigenous leaders to have a central role in the national government.

I also want to commend the Biden administration, in particular U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Samantha Power, Assistant Secretary of State Brian Nichols, Charge d'Affaires Patrick Ventrell, and the other U.S. Embassy staff, who in the months leading up to the election and late into the chaotic night of January 14 until Arevalo was finally sworn in, used a combination of diplomacy, sanctions, and advocacy to support a peaceful democratic transition of power. Without their sustained diplomatic engagement and the strong support of the international community, it is likely that the so-called Pact of the Corrupt would have prevailed in destroying Guatemala's fragile democracy.

President Arevalo faces immense challenges. Late last year, in an attempt to ensure that if he came to power he would be unable to govern effectively, the Congress slashed the national budget for the social programs and economic reforms necessary to carry out his anti-corruption, anti-poverty, pro-justice, and accountability vision for the country. The Guatemalan people expect him to deliver on his campaign promises, but the very forces that sought to prevent him from taking office have made clear that they will do every possible to prevent him from governing.

Despite these formidable obstacles, Bernardo Arevalo's remarkable ascendancy to the Presidency offers Guatemala and the United States an opportunity that has not existed for generations. Hundreds of thousands of impoverished Guatemalans have fled their country, risking their lives in search of safety and a better life in the United States. In President Arevalo, we finally have a partner of integrity with whom we can focus on addressing the root causes of migration.

For generations, Guatemala's elites, including business and political leaders, have profited from a corrupt system at the expense of the best interests of the country. Tax revenues are a fraction of what they should be. Large areas of the country lack basic public services. Millions of Guatemalan children are malnourished and have no access to higher education. The justice system has been used to perpetuate the unjust and inequitable status quo.

If the Pact of the Corrupt had succeeded, Guatemala's business community would have also paid dearly. The choices were, and remain, stark. They can either help create the conditions