

many people can't get the medical care they need when they need it, where they need it. Students who are desperate for help get the runaround. Poor women face impossible hurdles. Children who have survived rape and become pregnant are frightened and confused. Fertility clinics are abandoning services, and families who hoped for a baby face excruciating heartache when a pregnancy goes wrong and doctors are barred from helping. At every turn, we see a new form of hell brought to us by an extremist Supreme Court and a powerful band of Republican lawmakers determined to obliterate reproductive freedom across the country.

To every person watching these events unfold and feeling hurt, I see you, I am with you, and I grieve alongside you.

But I do more than grieve, more than complain; I fight back, and I am asking you to fight back too because, right now, this is our moment to act and, if we don't, we might not get another opportunity for a long, long time.

Roe wasn't overturned by some accident. We are here because Republican extremists have been waging a decades-long war to take down Roe. They have poured billions of dark money into our politics to chip away at our rights. They handpicked judges with proven anti-abortion records. They took over State and local governments. They built an anti-Roe coalition right here in Congress. And the very second—the very second—that the Supreme Court gave them the green light, they jumped into action enacting the most severe restrictions possible on abortion access.

The result: Over the last year and a half, over 20 States have banned or severely restricted abortion access; passed laws criminalizing doctors who perform abortions; or threatened access to pregnancy care, miscarriage care, fertility assistance, and more.

Well-organized and well-funded extremists have brought lawsuits to further restrict access, hoping to undermine access in States that are firmly pro-choice. The result has been cruel and frightening. Some people have given in to despair, but I don't see it that way.

To me, the end of Roe marked a new era in the movement for abortion rights. Yes, an era that has been harrowing for people across the country, but also one that marks the end of a plan Republicans hatched 40 years ago to reverse Roe and the beginning of a new chapter. And in this new chapter, we are leading the way.

Together, we have made clear that an overwhelming majority of Americans support reproductive freedom and individuals' rights to make decisions about their own bodies. Across this country, millions of Americans have come together and said they are with us. Not just in places like California and New York, but in Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio.

The Biden-Harris administration has stepped up to vigorously protect repro-

ductive freedom from defending medication abortion from baseless lawsuits to preserving access to care for service-members and veterans to strengthening protection for patients' sensitive health information.

Republicans know that the majority of Americans oppose overturning Roe, but they aren't letting up. Instead, overturning Roe is not enough for them; they want more. They have introduced legislation to ban abortion nationwide, and if they can't pass it through Congress, they will use a Republican President to dust off a 19th century anti-obscenity law, instead, to try to get the job done.

We cannot let that happen. We have the energy; we have the numbers; and we know what we need to do. President Biden has called on Congress to act. We need to pass the Women's Health Protection Act to protect our human rights and to roll back the extreme abortion bills that radical rightwing legislatures have enacted across this country, and we need to get in the fight right now to secure the Congress that we need to get this job done.

This won't be easy, but important fights never are. I know our strength; I have seen it in the millions of people marching in the streets for abortion rights. I have seen it in the thousands of calls made to Congressional offices. I have seen it in the resolve of people standing up for Kate Cox in Texas and Brittany Watts in Ohio. And that is how I know that even when it gets hard, we will persist.

From this moment on, what happens is up to us. Together we have the power to restore Roe and to protect our right to make our own decisions about our own bodies and our own futures. I am in this fight all the way. The stakes are too high not to be.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, President Biden, last Friday, garnered a lot of attention for his comments on the border crisis.

When asked by a reporter if the border was secure, the President didn't hesitate; he didn't equivocate. He said, "No, it's not."

"No, it's not."

On its own, that statement is not particularly shocking because it is actually true. What is shocking is that it represents a 180-degree flip from the position taken over and over and over by the Biden administration, from the President to the Vice President to the Secretary of Homeland Security, on down.

The fact of the matter is that under President Biden's leadership, the Federal Government has shattered virtually every record on the books when it comes to illegal border crossings. In the last 3 years, Customs and Border Protection has logged more than 6.7 million—6.7 million—border crossings. At the same time, the cartels have

trafficked record amounts of fentanyl across the southern border, fueling the overdose epidemic.

Gang members, dangerous criminals, and potential terrorists—people on the Terrorist Watchlist—have used the chaos on the border to attempt to sneak into the United States. And 1.7 million of them, the so-called "got-aways," that were detected on cameras and other various sensors simply have evaded law enforcement, and the Biden administration can't tell you who these people are, what they are doing, and what their intentions are while they are here.

Communities across the country, not just in my State—in Texas—but across the country have been forced to carry the burden of caring for thousands of immigrants who cross our border every day.

No, the border is not secure, not in the least. Anyone who has been paying attention for the last 3 years could have told you that.

But it took the President 3 years to finally be willing to speak the truth, because for President Biden, this is a shocking reversal. After all, as I said, the senior most leaders of the administration have spent the last 3 years trying to convince the American people that there is no such thing as the Biden border crisis.

The White House press secretary has said, "The border is secure." Secretary Mayorkas, the Secretary tasked with the border security responsibilities, the Department of Homeland Security, he said, "The border is secure."

Vice President HARRIS, the anointed border czar for President Biden, said, "The border is secure."

This is the same line that has been parroted over and over and over by leaders throughout the Biden administration. And it is not true. It is not true.

On Friday, President Biden not only admitted that the border is not secure, he went on to say he believes it hasn't been secure for the last 10 years. That means every single attempt by his administration to assure the American people that the Biden administration was performing its responsibilities by enforcing the laws to secure the border has been untrue.

I don't know how to say this charitably. I don't easily accuse a President of the United States for intentionally telling an untruth, but it appears that that is absolutely the case. By his own account, President Biden has known all along the border was not secure, but he chose to gaslight the American people with untrue assurances that everything was just fine.

Sort of like the story goes: "Don't believe your lying eyes," when the American people see caravans of migrants coming up to the border, because they know that President Biden has laid out the welcome mat and will release them into the interior of the United States. That is a huge magnet, not only for people coming from Mexico, but around the world.

That is what has changed under the Biden administration is that this is not a regional, this is not even an economic issue. This is a matter of the human smuggling networks making billions of dollars smuggling people from around the world and, unfortunately, overwhelming the Border Patrol to the point that the Border Patrol is processing paperwork, providing transportation and care for unaccompanied children, who were likewise incentivized to come to the United States, and here come the drugs that took the lives of 108,000 Americans last year alone.

Finally, when the President was asked if he believed his own policies had enabled this crisis, he offered another shocking statement: “No.”

So he said the border is not secure. He admitted that, finally. He said it hadn't been for 10 years. And he was asked whether his own policies had enabled that, and he said no.

I don't think you can have it both ways. There is a huge difference between the number of border crossings that we saw during the previous administration, during the Trump administration and compared to the Biden administration.

None of the laws have changed. It is simply the willingness or, in the case of the Biden administration, the unwillingness to actually enforce the law.

Since President Biden took office, the United States has logged, as I said, more than 6.7 million illegal border encounters. That is higher than the 8 years under President Obama and the 4 years under President Trump. So in 3 years, he has managed to accomplish something that took 12 years in the previous two administrations.

The fact that President Biden believes his policies have nothing to do with this sea change is absolutely unbelievable. It is not credible—that is what I mean. It is unbelievable. You can't believe it. This administration's refusal to take its responsibility for this crisis is pathetic, and it should be embarrassing. But, sadly, it is nothing new. We have seen this song and dance many times over.

The Supreme Court of the United States, I am told from published reports, just said that the State of Texas, which was trying to fill the breach left by the failure of the Federal Government and the Biden administration to do its job couldn't put razor wire or impediments to illegal immigration on the border.

I haven't read the opinion, but, presumably, they say it is the Federal Government's exclusive authority, and the States can't enforce that. But if the Federal Government is not going to do its job, why can't the State do it? It doesn't affect people here in Washington, DC, directly, although we have heard the mayor of Washington, DC, complaining about the fact that migrants have come to the District of Columbia. But it does affect my State.

We have 1,200 miles of common border. The huge tsunami of humanity

coming across the border has affected my State disproportionately because we are at ground zero. And now, because Mayor Adams in New York or Mayer Bowser in Washington, DC, or Governor Pritzker in Illinois, it is impacting them in a rather minor way compared to the way it has affected my State over the recent years.

The Biden administration has finally realized this is a huge political liability. President Biden is going to be on the ballot in 2024, and he realizes that this is a huge problem for him and everybody up and down the ticket because the American people really never believed the statement that the border was secure, because they could watch on television and watch on social media the huge numbers of people coming across. They knew it was not true. But now, after 3 years, the President has finally come around to admit it. You know we talked about the drugs. We have talked about the people. What we haven't talked about enough, in my view, is the fact that the Biden administration has simply lost track of unaccompanied children who have been placed with sponsors in the interior of the United States. The New York Times ran several investigative pieces pointing out that 85,000 calls were made to these sponsors to see, How are these kids doing? And the calls were never answered, and they were never followed up on. The Biden administration takes the position—I think it is an irresponsible position—that once they place these children with sponsors, they have washed their hands of any further responsibility—no followup, no wellness check if there is no response to the phone call. And the Biden administration, apparently, just does not care.

And then, most recently, we have seen a new low as they falsely blamed the State of Texas for three tragic drownings at the border at Eagle Pass, TX. A little over a week ago, a woman and two children drowned in the Rio Grande River attempting to get across the river. It was near a park that is currently the subject of a standoff between Federal and State officials.

Now, migrant deaths are a tragedy. There is no two ways about it. And, sadly, it is a too common tale along the border. Migrants frequently drown crossing the Rio Grande. In the summer, they may die due to the intense heat and from lack of water across remote stretches of desert or ranch land. It is an inhospitable place in the heat of summer. Some are killed in car accidents in high-speed chases, while others are killed while being smuggled into the United States in the back of a semitractor trailer.

Given the skyrocketing number of border crossings on President Biden's watch, these sorts of tragedies now seem to happen routinely. According to the National Border Patrol Council, roughly 2,300 migrants have died at the southern border since President Biden was sworn into office. It is an average

of more than 2 deaths each day since his open border policies have been in place.

As I said, these deaths are tragic, and they are tragically common. But this pace is not. In fact, the pace of migrant deaths has more than doubled compared to previous administrations. More and more migrants are losing their lives because of the failed open border policies of the Biden administration. Yet the Biden administration refuses to take responsibility for the dangers their policies have actually created.

The day after the most recent tragedy in Eagle Pass, the Department of Homeland Security put out an outrageous, outrageously false statement pinning the blame on the State of Texas and its attempts to do what the Biden administration has refused to do, which is to secure the border. The statement actually claimed that “Border Patrol agents were physically barred by Texas officials from entering the area.” It went on to describe the efforts by State officials to help manage the chaos at the border. They called that “cruel, dangerous, and inhumane.” In other words, when the Federal Government does nothing and the State officials try to step in, the Biden administration calls that “cruel, dangerous, and inhumane.”

And the White House press machine has been quick to repeat the claims, saying:

Texas officials blocked U.S. Border Patrol from attempting to provide emergency assistance.

These statements were designed to paint a very specific picture. The White House and the Department of Homeland Security tried to portray Texas as heartless and cruel for refusing to let Border Patrol agents rescue these three migrants in distress.

The problem with this carefully crafted story line is it is absolutely false, but the story spread like wildfire. The Associated Press published a story with the headline saying: “US says Texas blocked border agents from entering park to save 3 migrants who drowned.” Countless other news outlets ran similar stories. Social media, pundits, and even Members of Congress spread the story and criticized the actions by Texas officials.

Again, the problem is this entire narrative is demonstrably false. It is a lie.

In a new Supreme Court filing, the Biden administration has now admitted that the three migrants died before Border Patrol even attempted to enter Shelby Park on Friday night. Sadly, they were part of the 2,300 migrants who died on President Biden's watch, but it didn't have anything to do with what Texas officials were doing. The Justice Department now admits that the woman and two children died around 8 p.m., and the Border Patrol didn't even request access to the area until roughly an hour later.

But by the time this correct and accurate information became public, the

damage had already been done. News stories had circulated far and wide blaming Texas officials for blocking potentially lifesaving care for a woman and two children who drowned.

Well, did the Biden administration apologize for its false accusation? Did it admit that it had perpetrated a false narrative? Absolutely not. Then, again, why would you really expect them to? This is just another example of the Biden administration that cannot be trusted to tell the truth, another example of spreading lies about what is happening at the southern border—no remorse, no shame, no accountability. The lies, dishonesty, and mischaracterizations have become commonplace, and the American people are fed up with them.

Leaders in the Biden administration have repeatedly intentionally misrepresented what is happening. They dissemble; they shift the facts; they deflect; they distort the truth; and then they try to pin their own failures on somebody else.

Well, as sad as it is now 3 years into the Biden administration, I am glad that the President has finally admitted that the border is not secure, and I am really shocked that, 3 years in, he is finally come around to admit it.

But the fact he won't accept the reality that it is his administration's policies that created the crisis is a serious problem because the status quo at the border is absolutely unsustainable and has been for a long time now, and something has got to change.

As we speak, several of our colleagues are trying to secure an agreement on legislation that will address the border crisis. I am sure it will fall short of what I would like to see happen, but Senator LANKFORD and Senator SINEMA, Senator MURPHY, and others are working to try to come up with some changes in the law that will force the Biden administration to put an end to some of the most egregious practices. And I, for one, am eager to see if they can come up with something that will force the administration to change its disastrous southern border policy, and I will be watching closely with interest as the negotiations progress.

I yield the floor.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 467.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jacquelyn D. Austin, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant 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. 467, Jacquelyn D. Austin, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Angus S. King, Jr., Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch, Mazie K. Hirono, Alex Padilla, Jeanne Shaheen, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Chris Van Hollen, Richard Blumenthal, Gary C. Peters, Raphael G. Warnock, Christopher A. Coons, Jeff Merkley, Christopher Murphy.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 474.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cristal C. Brisco, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Indiana.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant 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. 474, Cristal C. Brisco, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Indiana.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Angus S. King, Jr., Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch, Mazie K. Hirono, Alex Padilla, Jeanne Shaheen, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Chris Van Hollen, Richard Blumenthal, Gary C. Peters, Raphael G. Warnock, Christopher A. Coons, Jeff Merkley, Christopher Murphy.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 475.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Gretchen S. Lund, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Indiana.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant 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. 475, Gretchen S. Lund, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Indiana.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Angus S. King, Jr., Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch, Mazie K. Hirono, Alex Padilla, Jeanne Shaheen, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Chris Van Hollen, Richard Blumenthal, Gary C. Peters, Raphael G. Warnock, Christopher A. Coons, Jeff Merkley, Christopher Murphy.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, January 22, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. SINEMA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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