

whether they have been forced into gangs or whether they dropped out of school. Secretary Becerra and President Biden don't know, and they don't care.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S BUDGET

Mr. President, on another matter, more than 5 months into the current fiscal year, the Senate has finally made some progress on government funding. Just so anybody listening understands where we are, we are actually doing the work that we were supposed to do last year before the end of the fiscal year, which is September 30. So we are actually dealing with spending bills from 2023 in 2024 because we didn't do the work then. So now, here we are stacked up, lurching from potential shutdown to shutdown with various fiscal cliffs. We avoided one of those cliffs last week when we passed 6 of the 12 annual appropriations bills for fiscal year 2024.

These bills, as well as the six unfinished bills, should have been signed into law before the end of September last year. Instead, the monumental task of funding the government has lingered in purgatory in the Senate as the majority leader has chosen to spend this Chamber's limited time voting on nominations. As a result, we had to pass one stopgap spending bill after another to prevent the government from shutting down. And now the next funding deadline is just over 1 week away.

Unless Congress passes six more funding bills by midnight next Friday, portions of the government will shut down and countless public servants will be left without a paycheck and the American people unnecessarily inconvenienced. Well, that includes American troops that will be left without a paycheck. It includes the Border Patrol. It includes Customs and Border Patrol officers and other law enforcement, many of whom will have to work without pay if that occurs.

I am deeply disappointed we find ourselves with this state of affairs nearly halfway through the current fiscal year. This is Washington dysfunction at its worst. This is the basic job of governing.

I do hope we will be able to make some serious progress in the next 2 weeks to fund the government and wrap up our work on fiscal year 2024 appropriations that we should have done last year so now we could work on next year's before the end of the fiscal year in September.

Earlier this week, President Biden submitted his budget request for fiscal year 2025, which begins in October. It is no secret that this massive document is on the train to nowhere, but that doesn't mean it is totally worthless. After all, a person's budget includes valuable information.

Dating back to his time as a Member of the Senate, President Biden has often repeated a favorite expression of his father's. His dad would tell him: Don't tell me what you value; show me

your budget, and I will tell you what you value.

Someone could tell you they care about supporting those who are less fortunate or saving for the future, but one will look at the budget and tell that you really have other priorities. The same is true for the Federal Government. It is easy for leaders to say they value a strong military, just like it is easy to say we stand with Israel while undercutting our ally.

I have worked here long enough to know you can't just listen to what people say; you have to watch what they do.

President Biden's budget provides an unvarnished view of what he values, and in countless ways—in countless ways—it contradicts what he has said to the American people. It is a mountain of reckless, burdensome tax hikes and far-left priorities with a \$7.3 trillion pricetag—trillion.

Just like President Biden, this budget request is completely detached from the needs of our country. There is no better example than the President's border budget.

Since he took office, our country has grappled with a completely unprecedented crisis at the border, part of which I spoke about a moment ago.

In 3 years, Customs and Border Protection has encountered more than 7.2 million migrants at the border. That is higher than the total for the entire 12 years of the Trump and Obama administrations.

When this many individuals cross the border every day, the entire system becomes overwhelmed. We don't have enough Border Patrol to respond to the overwhelming number of people coming across the border every day. We don't have the facilities to detain them for the amount of time needed to process their asylum claims. We certainly don't have enough resources to return individuals with no legitimate reason to remain in the United States back to their home country.

We need more personnel, facilities, and resources to address this crisis, as well as changes in policy, but the overarching issue that needs to be fixed is the recordbreaking pace of migration. Everybody knows that if a pipe breaks in your home, your top priority wouldn't be to buy more buckets; it would be to turn off the water. That is what we need to do here. We need to address the wave of humanity that keeps coming and coming and will keep coming and coming. Unfortunately, President Biden's budget wouldn't make any meaningful changes to that.

The only way to stop this unprecedented flow of migration is by discouraging people from coming in the first place. That is called deterrence. The Border Patrol calls it consequences.

When there are no consequences with coming here through illegal channels, then people are going to keep coming. President Biden needs to make it clear that anyone who does not have a legal basis to remain in the United States

will be detained and deported. Those are the operative words here, "detain and deport," or "repatriate," if you prefer.

The Biden administration needs to detain every person who crosses the border without legal authority and return every single person who doesn't have a legal basis to remain in the United States. The President's budget, which shows what he values, doesn't provide the resources to do that.

One example is a request for detention beds. That is part of the "detain" element that I mentioned. The administration has asked for 34,000 beds for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. That may sound like a lot, but with the volume of people coming across the border, those beds fill up quickly.

For example, during the first 4 months of the fiscal year, we averaged about 240,000—nearly a quarter of a million—migrants each month. That is about 8,000 crossings each day. If we are generous and assume that Immigration and Customs Enforcement actually acquires all 34,000 beds and that they are empty on day one, those beds would be filled in less than 5 days.

Migrants who are placed in expedited removal and who are seeking asylum are supposed to complete a credible fear screening—a process that typically took about 13 days last year. If the administration wanted to do things by the book—that means follow the law—we would need the capacity to hold every single person who crossed the border for 2 weeks just to figure out whether they are making a credible claim for asylum and then a longer period in which to evaluate those claims.

To reemphasize the point, that is just to figure out if an asylum claim is plausible on its face before an immigration judge determines whether it is supported by any evidence. At current levels, that means we would need more than 100,000 beds just to figure out whether migrants were making facially plausible claims, without even determining whether those claims are supported by real evidence.

As I said, the winning formula is detain-and-deport, not catch-and-release, which is the Biden border policy. The President's budget doesn't provide nearly enough resources for things like removal flights either.

Given the unprecedented pace of illegal border crossings during the Biden administration and the rate at which new migrants are arriving, certainly they see the welcome mat waiting for them—not a red light, not a blinking yellow light, but a green light. "Come on in"—that is the message that is being sent.

ICE needs a dramatic funding increase for air charter flights, for example, and it needs enough resources to return migrants to their home countries, but the administration has once again failed to give the Agency the resources it needs to carry out its mission.

Our Border Patrol and our Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers can't do the job we have asked them to do because the Biden administration has undercut them in endless ways. This is hardly a surprise. The administration has constantly treated Immigration and Customs Enforcement like a corrupt, criminal group instead of a vital law enforcement Agency, which is exactly what they are. Vice President HARRIS, the President's own border czar, once compared ICE to the Ku Klux Klan. How outrageous is that from a supposedly responsible public servant, the Vice President of the United States?

This administration has never been serious about the border, and its budget continues to prove that. Instead, the President's budget focuses on managing the crisis—not fixing it, not solving it, but managing it.

Rather than establish deterrence by eliminating catch-and-release and instituting detain-and-deport, the administration is just building up more resources to try to avoid the public relations disaster when we see people sleeping in the streets in places like Del Rio, El Paso, and Laredo, just to name a few places.

The Biden administration has asked for \$4.7 billion for a “contingency fund” that could kick in when conditions warrant extra capacity, but really, despite the efforts to try to gloss over what they are doing, this is really about facilitating the recordbreaking flow of migrants into our country.

Once again, President Biden has proven that he has no desire—zero—to stop the flow of people into the country. Instead, he wants to make that process more efficient, as if 7.2 million aren't enough. But with his poll numbers in the tank, President Biden keeps saying he wants to address the border crisis, but he has no one to blame but himself. Yes, this is a manmade crisis, and that man is Joe Biden.

This is not the plan of someone who is interested in making a real and an honest attempt to solve a problem. This isn't a good-faith attempt to achieve operational control at the border, enforce the law, and deter illegal immigration. Unfortunately, it is just more of the same—more of the same policies that created the mess we are in right now.

President Biden may say he values a secure border, but his budget reveals his true values, and that is that he does not.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, before I address recycling and composting, I just want to say something with respect and affection to my friend from Texas.

About a month ago, Democrats and Republicans joined together here on this floor to pass bipartisan legislation to provide for better—much better—security at the border and to make sure

that folks from other countries who have a desire to work, the ability to work, are not a threat to our safety or security—that they could be provided an opportunity to help make this a better country.

It was a bipartisan vote, Democrats and Republicans. So I just want to commend the Republicans who joined the Democrats in voting for it. The legislation has died in the House, at least for now, and my hope is that the House will see fit to join us in the Senate to pass commonsense, much needed border security legislation.

RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING

Mr. President, having said that, I came here today to talk about the passage in the Senate earlier this week of the Recycling and Composting Accountability Act and the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act of 2023—two pieces of bipartisan legislation that, if enacted, will improve our Nation's recycling and our Nation's composting systems.

As a number of our colleagues know, I care a lot about recycling, and I care a lot about composting. I have ever since I was a kid. In fact, I think in our home in Wilmington, DE, we have recycled everything in recent years, from a dehumidifier in our basement to a Ford Explorer out in our driveway. We recycle a whole lot more. We do it every week. I know a lot of other folks in our neighborhood and a lot of other folks in our State do as well. But in our country, we can always do everything better. We can always do things better when we need to.

Through my time in the U.S. Senate, I have looked for and I have found many opportunities for bipartisan support of policies that boost recycling and that boost composting. As my colleagues on this floor have heard me say many, many times, bipartisan solutions are lasting solutions. I believe that with every fiber of my being.

To that end, earlier this Congress, Senator CAPITO, ranking member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, along with Senator JOHN BOOZMAN from Arkansas and I, worked to advance bipartisan legislation through our committee, through the Committee on Environment and Public Works, that would strengthen our Nation's recycling, composting, and sustainability efforts.

Moreover, we know that recycling is a win-win. Why do I say that? It not only benefits our environment, but it also creates economic opportunity. It creates a lot of jobs, a whole lot of jobs, not just in Delaware but in every State across the country.

When enacted, the Recycling and Composting Accountability Act and the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act of 2023 will address several of the challenges that America's recycling efforts currently face, including the lack of good data, including limited access to recycling programs in many parts—too many parts—of our country.

To increase the amount of high-quality data available on recycling efforts across America, Senator BOOZMAN and I developed legislation called the Recycling and Composting Accountability Act. Our bill would improve the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to gather data on this Nation's recycling systems and explore opportunities for implementing a national composting strategy.

Some people might say: What is composting, and why is that important? Well, I am excited about the idea of a national composting strategy because implementing such a strategy will help us reduce food waste, which is responsible for over half—that is right—over half of our planet-warming methane emissions that emanate from landfills.

I will say that again. I am excited about the idea of national composting strategy. Why? Because implementing such a strategy will help us reduce food waste. Food waste is responsible for over half—that is right—over half of our planet-warming methane emissions that emanate from landfills. To increase access to recycling programs, Senator CAPITO, Senator BOOZMAN, and I introduced the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act of 2023. Why did we do that? To create a pilot program at EPA to help expand recycling services in underserved areas.

Many Americans in rural and underserved communities want to recycle and they want to compost, but they are unable to do so because they live in areas that lack the necessary recycling infrastructure, including curbside pickup or community collection centers.

In comparison to our neighbors, how are we doing? I have a friend, and I asked him how he is doing. He said: Compared to what?

Well, why don't we compare ourselves to Canada and maybe Germany? Well, compared to Canada, we have a lot of work to do. For example, British Columbia, our neighbors to the north, up there, they are currently recycling 86 percent of their residential waste—86 percent. Across the pond over in Germany, they are recycling almost half—48 percent, to be exact—of their waste. Yes, 48 percent. I wish I could say we are doing as well, but unfortunately, today in America, our national recycling rate is not even a third but just under that—32 percent. We can do better than that. We have to do better than that.

These two bills will help us to improve our recycling efforts to meet the goal set by the EPA to increase the U.S. recycling efforts—bring it up to 50 percent by the year 2030.

I think people, given a choice, would like to recycle. They would like to compost. We have to make it easy for them to do so.

Both of the bills that I have mentioned are the result of true collaboration and reflect a bipartisan commitment to exploring and addressing our Nation's recycling and composting challenges and opportunities.