

Losing a child is a parent's worst nightmare. We can't possibly imagine what their families are going through, but we can work to prevent more deaths from occurring. We know what needs to be done. People in this body know what needs to be done. People on the other end of the building in the House know what needs to be done. People in the White House know what needs to be done to protect these lives.

President Biden can use the authorities given to him by Congress to secure the border. He can do that. He doesn't need more laws; he can use the laws that have already been written.

He can finish the border wall, which he stopped and now is selling all the materials that are at the border to build this wall, that the American taxpayers have paid for—they are selling it for 10 cents on the dollar. You can't make this up.

He can stop exploiting the Department of Homeland Security's parole authority by letting in millions of people without screening or processing.

President Biden can stop supporting sanctuary cities where law enforcement officers are blocked from working with Federal officers to get criminal aliens off the streets and out of our communities.

President Biden can bring back order to our country. We are losing it daily. He can do all these things right now. He doesn't need another law. The laws are there—just go for the laws.

He himself suspended the border wall. He authorized Homeland Security to continue paroling people without consequences. He and his blue State supporters set up shelters in the middle of cities and suburbs to house illegal aliens indefinitely, costing you, the American citizens and taxpayers, billions of dollars, when we have homeless and veterans on the streets not being taken care of.

Hospitals, schools, and other community resources have been depleted—depleted—by being forced to provide for both U.S. citizens and the millions of illegal aliens crossing the border. U.S. citizens are paying for all of this, not the Biden administration—the U.S. citizens. It is their right.

It is embarrassing. Our country's leadership must be reminded of their greatest responsibility: the safety and security of Americans. No. 1 responsibility. This administration could care less.

Let's look at a recent example of a country's prioritizing safety for its citizens. What has the Dominican Republic been doing in response to gang violence and unrest in Haiti because Haitians are coming to the Dominican Republic? What are they doing? They secured their border.

The Biden administration established a parole program specifically for Haitians. Our immigration policy priorities are completely misaligned and totally opposite of what they are doing in the Dominican Republic. With our duty to support and defend the Constitution

against all enemies, foreign and domestic, they are letting our guard down.

So States are taking matters into their own hands. Yesterday, the Supreme Court ruled that a new Texas law, which allows State and local law enforcement to arrest and detain and deport illegal aliens, could go into effect while under review at the lower court level, but late last night, the Fifth Circuit Court again blocked enforcement of the new Texas law ahead of oral arguments. This is a crime. The Supreme Court has spoken. While the Biden administration won't arrest, detain, or deport illegal aliens, Texas would have been doing so. It is shameful that a State had to take matters into their own hands like this.

It is embarrassing that President Biden's Department of Homeland Security sued Texas for implementing immigration laws which they should have been implementing themselves. But they have a different agenda. They want more people in this country to vote for this administration.

Americans are being killed by illegal aliens, and the President simply cannot be bothered. The blood of Laken Riley, Trooper Gadd, Travis Wolfe, Aiden Clark, and so many other Americans is on his hands—the blood of Laken Riley, Trooper Gadd, Travis Wolfe, and so many others. They won't be forgotten.

Democrats say their open border policies are motivated by compassion: We have compassion for people coming into this country.

Whose compassion? Democrats have plenty of compassion for illegals. What about American citizens? taxpayers? the young people in this country who are dying at the hands of these illegal aliens that should not be here but only are here because of this administration?

They don't seem to have compassion for victims of crime.

Joe Biden, last week, apologized that he called an illegal alien "illegal" in the State of the Union Address. That sets the scene for everything. They couldn't care less about the American citizen. They care more about people from other countries.

This is madness. This madness must end. We can't wait until an election. We can't let 4 or 5 million more people in. We can't let hundreds of people die at the hands of these illegal aliens. Our children's lives are at stake, and our country is at stake.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RUSSIA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the weekend, the Russian Federation held

a Presidential election. And surprise, surprise, officials declared a landslide victory for President Vladimir Putin. By their account, Putin won a fifth term in office with a whopping 87 percent of the vote—the highest level of support in any previous elections.

This reminded me of a story—I think maybe true, maybe apocryphal—of a reporter who was traveling with a driver in Iraq in the run-up to the Iraq war. And as was typically the case in dictatorships, the report was that Saddam Hussein won 100 percent of the vote. And the reporter asked the driver, he said: Well, you have been with me; clearly, you haven't been able to go and cast your ballot. To which the driver responded: Well, I guess Saddam knew what was in my heart.

As implausible as that result was and as implausible as this result is, it is entirely predictable. After all, elections in Russia are unlike elections here in the United States or any other democracy.

In Russia, elections are carefully orchestrated by the Kremlin. The candidates are hand-selected. The results are predetermined. And the opportunity for change is nonexistent.

In short: Russia's elections are a sham. They are neither free nor fair, and it is no surprise that Vladimir Putin will continue to lead the corrupt and morally bankrupt Kremlin.

The result of this election was always guaranteed. And the only real question is: What comes next? What, if anything, will change with the start of Putin's new term in office?

Well, there is widespread speculation this could signal the beginning of a new military mobilization into Ukraine. The Kremlin has made a habit out of rolling out unpopular policies in the period after a Presidential election.

Following 2018, for example, the Kremlin raised the retirement age—a move that was deeply unpopular among the Russian people.

Putin even alluded to this new strategy when speaking to reporters in Moscow. He said:

All the plans we have created to develop Russia will certainly be carried out and their goals achieved.

He added:

We have come up with grandiose plans and will do everything to carry them out.

Well, this should be an additional warning sign that cannot be ignored by the United States or our allies. We are at a critical juncture in Russia's war against Ukraine, and more support is desperately needed.

It is in America's national security interest to help Ukraine because Vladimir Putin will not stop in Ukraine, just as he did not stop with the invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014.

He will keep coming and coming and coming. And he doesn't have very far to go after Ukraine to encounter NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. And we have a treaty obligation with those countries under article 5 to come to the defense of any one

of those countries that are attacked. So this is very close and near and dear to the United States' national security interests.

Over the past few months, the United States has provided Ukraine with unprecedented defense aid: Javelins, Stingers, grenade launchers, small arms, ammunition, and more.

A few weeks ago, the Senate passed a security supplemental that, among other things, provided additional support for Ukraine as it battles Russian forces. That legislation passed the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support. But it awaits action in the House of Representatives.

The Senate, as we know, is not a rubberstamp for the House, and the House is not a rubberstamp for the Senate. Neither Chamber is under any obligation to take up bills that originated in the other Chamber and pass them as is. But we also have a duty to address the biggest threats that our country is facing—one posed by Russia's aggression in Ukraine and in Europe, generally.

I am glad that our friends in the House are working on their own security supplemental. I appreciate the comments being made by the Speaker that we will not leave Ukraine hanging out to dry.

We know that the House is working on ideas that include a number of policies that were not part of the Senate's legislation. One of them is called the REPO Act—REPO for Ukrainians Act—which would repurpose seized Russian assets to help finance aid for Ukraine. It would shift some of the financial burden of supporting Ukraine from U.S. taxpayers to Putin and the Russian oligarchs, whose assets have been seized.

This is a bipartisan bill introduced by Senator RISCH, the ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and it has been cosponsored by a quarter of all Senators, myself included.

Now, the House version of the bill was introduced by my friend and fellow Texan, Chairman MICHAEL McCaul, chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee. And it has more than 75 bipartisan cosponsors. This is a smart and effective way to continue supporting Ukraine without sticking American taxpayers with the bill.

I am disappointed that these measures weren't included in the Senate supplemental, but I hope our colleagues in the House will pass this bill—the REPO Act—as part of their security supplemental.

I am also encouraged to hear that the House is likely to include language to extend the lend-lease authority. This authority was created, as pertains to Ukraine, by legislation I introduced with Senator CARDIN, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act, which became the law nearly 2 years ago.

It was rooted in the same principle as President Roosevelt's Lend-Lease Act

in World War II, which allowed the United States to supply Great Britain and other allies with military resources.

President Roosevelt recognized how critical it was to support Great Britain, which lacked what it needed to protect its people and to fend off German aggression. He famously vowed to transform the United States into the arsenal of democracy and worked with Congress to get the Lend-Lease Act passed to achieve that goal.

The original Lend-Lease Act was signed into law in March of 1941 and allowed the United States to supply its allies with resources at a critical moment during World War II.

Later that year, Winston Churchill said the bill “must be regarded without question as the most unsordid act in the whole of recorded history.”

The circumstances we find ourselves in today are not the equal of March 1941, thank goodness. But they could be. In fact, the circumstances today look eerily similar to the circumstances in 1939 when Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia for many of the similar reasons that Putin claims he has a right to invade Ukraine.

If the world had stood up to Germany then, we may have avoided global calamity and prevented the loss of millions of innocent lives.

The lessons of the past must inform the present. And I believe we have a duty to exercise our role—America's unique role—as the arsenal of democracy to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and to prevent further spread of military aggression and Russian desires to restore the Soviet Union, which is what Vladimir Putin said: The failure of the Soviet Union in 1991 was the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the last 100 years.

You know, I have thought about that and contrasted that statement with the fact that Russia lost between 20 and 30 million people in World War II. Putin says the failure of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical tragedy in the last 100 years; and he must mean a greater tragedy than the loss of 20 to 30 million Russians.

That is how he thinks. And he wants to restore that golden age for the Soviet Union. And so he will not stop with Ukraine.

Given the aid provided by Congress over the past couple of years, the Biden administration hasn't relied on the lend-lease authority to aid Ukraine, but that doesn't mean it isn't needed now.

Ukraine is willing to fight. President Zelenskyy is willing to lead the Ukrainian people in that fight. But it needs additional assistance from the United States and our NATO allies to fend off this Russian invasion.

Ukraine's arsenal is shrinking by the day. It is rationing its artillery shells and its other ammunition, and it has asked the United States for additional help.

Now, there are different points of view, but there is broad bipartisan

agreement that America should continue to support Ukraine. But there is also a growing concern over the cost of that assistance. I understand that. That is a concern that I share, which is why I introduced the modern Lend-Lease Act in the first place. Because lend-lease is not a blank check, it gives the administration the option to lease or rent defense articles to Ukraine. It would allow us to answer Ukraine's call to provide more of what they need and ensure it is done in a more fiscally responsible way.

The weapons the United States and our allies have provided thus far have allowed Ukraine to punch above its weight against the Russian Army. But one thing the Russian Army is capable of doing is to engage in a war of attrition, simply to wear down the opposition, both militarily and politically.

But Ukraine has punched above its weight against the Russian Army, but it can't do so without ammunition and without defense articles. Additional American assistance is vital to Ukraine's success in this war, and we need to reauthorize the lend-lease authority as soon as possible.

This legislation was attempted to be added to our security supplemental, and, for some reason, it didn't make the cut. But I hope now that our colleagues in the House will pass a security bill that includes both the lend-lease extension and the REPO Act and send that bill back here to the Senate without further delay.

The future of Ukraine is at stake, but that is not all. The rest of the world is watching to see how the United States and our NATO allies respond to a power-hungry dictator. If the United States fails to support Ukraine in this pivotal moment, other authoritarian governments will take note. America's response to this war will likely affect Iran's calculations when it comes to Israel and its other proxies that it supports throughout the Middle East, being the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism. And it will also figure into China's calculations when it comes to Taiwan. If they see the United States respond with passivity, they can expect to be met with the same level of weakness when these other autocrats and dictators act.

We cannot allow America's global leadership to be diminished in this way because it is dangerous. This isn't a status symbol or something that we want to be able to brag about. This is about our own safety and our own national security, and that comes from strength. As Ronald Reagan said, peace comes through strength.

The tyrants and the madmen around the world must see the United States and our allies with strength, and a strong security supplemental is one key to demonstrating that strength and that commitment.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes, followed by Senator MENENDEZ for up to 5 minutes, prior to the scheduled vote.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, it is a familiar headline: "Congress announces a deal to avoid a shutdown."

It is currently midday on Wednesday, March 20, and, on Friday at midnight, just the day after tomorrow, the government will run out of funding for more than half of the 12 budget categories, and most of the government's funding is found within this section that will shut down, absent legislation by Congress.

We are told that the only way we can avoid a shutdown is to vote for what we expect to be a monstrous spending plan, a bill written in secret by a small handful of appropriators and ultimately given the blessing of the "Law Firm of Schumer, McConnell, Johnson & Jeffries."

It should be noted that not one Member of this body has had the opportunity to fully review the legislative text or, in the case of nearly all Members of Congress, to see any of it. We have not seen it. We can't see it. We are not allowed to see it.

We don't know much about the particular details of the bill, what will be in it and what won't be in it. But if history is any indicator, as it has been proven to be reliably in the past, there are a few things about the bill of which we can now be certain, even before laying eyes on it.

It will, among other things, be full of earmarks, these special-interest giveaways handed out as sweeteners, as if to make the medicine go down. It won't force President Biden to secure the border. It will perpetuate massive deficits, approaching or possibly even exceeding \$2 trillion. To add insult to injury, we can be sure that, when the text is finally released, there will be, alas, insufficient time to read, comprehend the text, air it with the public, debate the bill, and offer and consider amendments.

You see, these bills—massive legislative undertakings that, in many instances, bundle all Federal spending or, in this instance, most Federal spending into one single package—have become synonymous with legislative excess and manipulation.

You see, the firm's *modus operandi* involves drafting these omnibus bills behind closed doors, with only a select group of appropriators contributing to their formulation. By design, and not by any coincidence, these bills are un-

veiled to the public and most Members of Congress with barely any time to spare before a potential government shutdown.

This strategic timing, which often unfolds strategically right before a long, scheduled recess, ensures that the bill passes, with minimal scrutiny and little or no opportunity for debate—any meaningful debate, certainly—for amendments.

In other words, it becomes a "take it or leave it" package. It is a charade, occasionally softened by allowing a few votes on just a few amendments. But make no mistake, the firm wields its influence to make sure that no substantial changes are made—certainly, nothing that could threaten the supposed sanctity of their original draft.

Members are thus cornered into a false dichotomy in which their votes for the measure are extracted—extorted, if you will. We are told to pass the bill unread, not understood, undebated, or, alternatively, face the chaos and inevitable public vitriol associated with a government shutdown.

Thus, the individual voices of our elected representatives—our elected lawmakers here in Congress, in both Houses, of both political parties—and, by extension, the will of the American people are diluted in a process dominated by a few at the expense of the many.

It is not that these bills are bad in every circumstance. There are a lot of things that are within them that the government needs, that most—perhaps all—of this body, in some cases, would find unobjectionable. The problem is not that the bill is rotten from one end to the other. It is, instead, that it has been written by a select few, and the many are not allowed to have any say in it.

And when it is brought forward without any timely, meaningful, fulsome opportunity for debate, discussion, public airing, and amendment, Congress, as a whole, becomes a rubberstamp to the firm.

The will of the people is thwarted, and, ultimately, millions—hundreds of millions—of Americans are effectively disenfranchised from the entire process.

Tonight, with just a few days before the government runs out of funding in these areas covered by this bill, this body, once more, throws American taxpayers under the bus and forsakes fiscal responsibility, if, in fact, we pursue this course once again.

In so doing, they oppose measures that the vast majority of Americans would support—measures like stopping an invasion happening right now at our southern border, resulting in a wave of crime, death, and destruction that we haven't seen in the past.

This is, rather, entirely the result of the whole system of government funding being designed not to benefit the vast majority of Americans but, rather, to benefit the very architects of these bills: the appropriators, ear-

marks, lobbyists, and special interests—and, of course, all at the direction of the firm.

These entities thrive in the shadows of this process, influencing legislation in ways that serve the architects themselves, often at the expense of the general public.

Americans are bearing the cost of decisions made without their consent or their knowledge, manifesting in, among other things, skyrocketing costs of living and staggering national debt, now exceeding \$34 trillion.

It is time to dismantle this corrupt process and restore transparency and accountability to the way we fund our government. The process behind what we fully expect to be a wasteful, insulting, minibus bill is a disgrace. And let history show that a few of us stood up and said so.

This is not the way. Once we get this bill, we shouldn't be forced to rush to judgment on it without debate, discussion, or amendment. We should, instead, adopt a short-term continuing resolution that would take us to April 12, to give lawmakers adequate time to review and understand the bill, to air it to the public, to offer amendments to the bill to improve it, and, finally, vote on it. That is the order in which it should occur, not the opposite.

Instead, the firm would take us down yet another road of "fire, ready, aim."

Voting for this minibus is voting in favor of massive deficits, corrupting earmarks, and funding Joe Biden's border invasion. So I invite my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in fighting for fiscal responsibility, for the best interests of American families—the same families we are supposed to represent in Washington.

This proposal, this short-term continuing resolution, is neither Democratic nor Republican. It is neither liberal nor conservative. This is just common sense. Give people's elected lawmakers the chance to be involved in the lawmaking process because we are certainly not doing that now.

To that end, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of my bill, which is at the desk. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, we have a clear and straightforward path ahead of us. We have at long last a bicameral, bipartisan agreement on all of our full-year bills. It is time to get them passed and close out fiscal year 2024. After all, we are now 6 months into the fiscal year. We have to get a move on.

So let's stay focused on the deadline in front of us right now. We are working as fast as possible to release the bill, the text of the minibus, as soon as