

and as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I came away strongly supportive of many of the administration's foreign policy priorities.

To appreciate what this President has accomplished, we need to remember where he started. We need to remember the uncertainty and isolation of the COVID pandemic—a pandemic that experts estimate killed almost 30 million people worldwide.

We need to remember how the global economy was on the brink of collapse—supply chains failed; unemployment surged; there were fears that we were headed for a repeat of the Great Depression.

And we need to remember, from ASEAN to NATO, the disenchantment of our allies. One senior European diplomat said back in 2020:

The transatlantic relationship has never been this bad. The trust between the U.S. and Europe is not there anymore.

Now, I am not going to sugarcoat the world we face today. The Hamas attacks against Israel were one of the worst days in Jewish history, and it has led to a terrible humanitarian crisis for the Palestinians in Gaza. China's efforts to expand its authoritarian influence stretch from the smallest Pacific Island nation to the largest continent in the world—Africa. And Putin continues to wage a campaign to restore the former Soviet empire and annihilate the Ukrainian nation.

These are serious threats. To counter them, we need serious American leadership around the world, leadership that is rooted in values that promote human rights, that defend democracy, and that are driven by something I know Joe Biden has—basic decency.

Sitting and watching the State of the Union, I was struck by the strength of President Biden's moral compass. This is not a President who stands only for himself; he stands for all of us. This is not a President who stands idly by as our climate is destroyed; he has passed landmark legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act. This is not a President who seeks revenge against public servants for their personal views; he revitalizes our foreign policy and national security workforce. This is not a President who invites the Russians to do "whatever the hell they want" or threatens to pull out of NATO; he brings our allies together to stand up for Ukraine's independence. This is not a President who idolizes dictators and encourages autocrats; he prioritizes human rights and civil society movements around the world.

President Biden's foreign policy is focused on the future—a future for Europe, whole and free; a future for an Indo-Pacific that is thriving and at peace; a future with a two-state solution that gives security and dignity for Israelis and Palestinians for generations to come.

This will not be easy, but sitting at the State of the Union, I was encouraged by the bipartisan support I felt in the room when it came to foreign pol-

icy. Even Speaker JOHNSON seemed to be nodding his head as the President talked about Ukraine.

There have been many State of the Union speeches since George Washington spoke more than 200 years ago. They have been printed on paper, broadcasted over the radio and on television, and shared on clips across the internet; but throughout history, Presidents' speeches to Congress have given us hope.

In 1947, at the dawn of the Cold War, President Truman said in his State of the Union Address:

If we maintain and strengthen our cherished ideals, and if we share our great bounty with war-stricken people over the world, then the faith of our citizens in freedom and democracy will be spread over the whole earth.

This is still true today.

To the political prisoners in Putin's jails, do not give up hope on freedom.

To the human rights defenders uncovering violence and assassinations, do not give up hope for justice.

To the war-stricken people of the world who are hungry and forced to flee their homes, do not give up your hope for democracy.

To our allies and partners across the globe, know that the United States stands with you.

And remember that if we come together and stand up for each other, we can build a world that is safe and peaceful and prosperous.

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.

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

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, last month, an illegal alien from Venezuela was arrested for allegedly murdering Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student, while she went for a run on the University of Georgia campus. The suspected murderer, 26-year-old Jose Ibarra, should have never been allowed to set foot in our country. But the Biden administration paroled him into America after he illegally crossed the southern border, along with more than 2 million other migrants who are now eligible for work authorizations and benefits from the Federal Government.

That is the difference. When someone gets paroled, they get benefits. They get work permits. And while President Obama and President Trump each paroled only about 5,600 people a year, President Biden paroled 800,000 in 2022 and 1.2 million in 2023.

When you look at this, what you can say is that this administration failed Laken Riley. They failed her more than once.

Also, when you look at sanctuary city policies, what you know is this:

that New York City, with their sanctuary city policies, failed Laken Riley. Athens, GA, another sanctuary city, failed Laken Riley.

Last year, in New York City, Ibarra was arrested for reckless endangerment of a child. But instead of working with Federal law enforcement to get him deported for his heinous crime, city officials there, in New York City, released him before Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, could request his custody.

A month later, police in Athens, GA—whose city government passed a resolution in 2019 welcoming illegal immigrants "of all statuses"—released Ibarra after he shoplifted hundreds of dollars in goods.

It is no coincidence that both New York City and Athens, GA, are sanctuary cities. In sanctuary cities across the country, we have seen illegal aliens commit crimes with impunity, as local governments refuse to work with law enforcement to deport criminal illegal aliens.

Just last month, the New York Post reported that the violent Venezuelan gang is directing its members to come to our southern border, apply for asylum, and, once waved into the country, establish robbery rings in major U.S. cities. I couldn't believe this.

Then, as I talked to law enforcement in Tennessee, I found out that those gangs are there. They are moving in. And I was so surprised that we had gangs, in addition to MS-13, that have come in on parole status and also as asylum seekers.

Gang members are recruiting migrants in New York City shelters to join their operations in which they steal phones from innocent bystanders so they can resell those phones in Colombia.

In Chicago, another sanctuary city, authorities are tracking the gang's growing crime network, which includes human trafficking, drug smuggling, and sexual exploitation.

No city in America should be allowed to make illegal immigration legal and harbor criminal illegal aliens. They ought not be able to do it. It makes our communities less safe.

That is why, earlier this month, I reintroduced the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal Act, or CLEAR Act, which would ensure State and local law enforcement officials can work with Federal law enforcement to deport criminal illegal aliens who are in their communities.

Under the provisions in this legislation, it would require States and localities to provide the Department of Homeland Security with information about every alien apprehended in their State, including the name, address, physical description, and the reason for their arrest. At the same time, the bill would ensure their compliance by denying Federal funds to any jurisdiction that refuses to work with Federal immigration law enforcement.

It would also require the Department of Homeland Security to take illegal

aliens into custody within 48 hours after receiving a request from a State and local government, provide essential information about illegal immigrants to the Justice Department, and supply resources to help localities enforce immigration law, including grants and increased space for detention facilities.

Do you see what is happening with all of this? When you have got entities that say, “We are just not going to enforce the law; we are going to do something different, and we are going to ignore immigration law,” what happens is every town becomes a border town, and every State becomes a border State.

This is one of the reasons that crime and the border are two of the top issues that people talk about.

Any person who is in this country illegally and committing a crime that endangers our communities should be immediately removed and barred from coming back.

Unfortunately, our Nation’s crime issues go beyond the criminal illegal aliens. Across the country, from New York and Washington to L.A. and Chicago, we have seen far-left DAs and soft-on-crime judges push radical bail policies, including easing cash bail requirements or prohibiting cash bail altogether. Far from improving public safety, these so-called bail reforms put criminals back on the streets and place law-abiding citizens in danger.

After the Shelby County District Attorney’s Office spearheaded bail reform and made it easier for criminals to avoid pretrial detention, homicides in Memphis last year reached a record-breaking number—398 homicides in Memphis, TN. Many of these were committed by criminals who were out on bail.

Just last month, a violent criminal who was out on bail for attempted murder set off a city-wide manhunt after going on a horrific rampage through the city of Memphis. Across his 5-hour-long crime spree, the offender carjacked a woman in a church parking lot, shot two people after breaking into a hair salon, and killed an innocent teenager outside of a strip mall.

In May, a repeat criminal posted bail after shooting and injuring an off-duty Memphis Police Department officer while attempting to break into a parked vehicle.

One month later, a gunman—while out on bail for carjacking and employing a firearm with intent to commit a dangerous felony—shot and killed a man during an attempted carjacking.

In November, a Memphis judge released the suspected murderer of a 15-year-old boy who was shot and killed outside his grandmother’s house on Thanksgiving morning.

And just this month, a Memphis judge set just a \$175,000 bond for a man charged with attempted first-degree murder against a police officer.

These tragedies should never happen to anyone, but far-left bail policies

continue to prioritize criminals over law enforcement, families, and hard-working taxpayers. I can tell you, Tennesseans are tired of this. They are tired of seeing criminals being prioritized over hard-working taxpayers and families.

While addressing crime is the primary responsibility of local governments, there are important steps the Federal Government can take to ensure public safety. That is why I am introducing the Keep Violent Criminals Off Our Streets Act. It would deter States and localities from pushing pro-crime policies that make cities like Memphis less safe.

This legislation would block any State or local government from receiving Federal funds if they have a policy that prohibits the use of cash bail for offenders. It would also block Federal funds if they refuse to employ pretrial detention practices for every violent offender, including juvenile offenders.

With crimes spiking in Memphis and other cities across the country, it is essential that local governments protect their residents and put violent criminals behind bars where they belong.

I yield the floor.

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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL DEBT AS A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. BRAUN. Madam President, I come to the floor this evening to talk about our national debt, and I will be introducing a resolution here in a moment.

Our national debt, to put it in perspective, had never been much before the year 2000. Cumulatively, it was \$5 trillion. That is a lot of zeroes behind a 5. That is a lot. But that is what it took from the beginning of the country—most of it did occur from the 1960s to 1980. That is when we started doing deficits, but it really started to get to where they became entrenched in standard operating procedure in the year 2000.

We did put two wars on the credit card. In 2000 to 2008, we went up to \$10 trillion—all of a sudden, a lot more zeroes, with an extra zero and a 1. From 2008 to 2016, we went from \$10 trillion to \$16 trillion.

Now it gets to be a little more repetitive. I got here—elected—in 2018. By 2018, we are adding \$1 trillion a year. Stick with me here. That is \$16 trillion, 17, 18. So I get here as a Senator, alarmed by that when you come from a place like Indiana and you ran a business for 37 years, and if you even did

anything close to that, I guarantee you your line of credit wasn’t going to get renewed.

Since then—and we had a pandemic in there—it has gotten to where we have put a burden on future generations that I never imagined. I didn’t think we would see it in this short a period. Well, we did roughly put \$4 trillion more on the books through the worst pandemic we ever had. I think many of us question whether that was necessary or not. We probably could have done better. But we had already gotten into the routine of maybe erring on the side of doing more rather than less.

Well, since then, we have gone into enterprising through government. When we were borrowing just a few years ago \$1 trillion annually, now we are doing it every 6 months. If you are good at math out there, try taking interest rates, which now are around 5, 6, 7 percent, depending on how the government is borrowing it, start applying that to \$34 trillion or \$35 trillion, and the only blueprint we have for us would be from the Biden administration that puts us \$52 trillion in debt in 10 years.

That is a burden on our kids and grandkids. They will have to figure out how to pay it off. All of us here seem to be unconcerned about it. I think it would be a little different if we were knocking things out of the park.

So those numbers never go away. Sooner or later, interest is going to—well, it is going to be sooner. I think next year, we are going to spend as much on our entire defense industry and budget as we will on interest. It doesn’t take long to where that is going to amount to—in 3 to 4 years, 5—what we spend on all discretionary spending here, domestic and defense.

The government has grown from never being more than 20 percent of our GDP to now the new baseline is 25 percent of our GDP. Our economy has only grown maybe a couple percent a year. That is digging a hole deeper and deeper that—anyone who is in the category of being kids and grandkids out there, look out.

It is not going to be easy to get back to where you are actually paying your bills as you accumulate them. If we don’t, it will be the same thing Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain had to go through when they fell off the wagon as small economies. We are the largest economy in the world. There is no good ending to it.

It is no more difficult than just not spending more than we take in. Any good manager would figure out really quickly how to get back in line. Your banker would never allow you to renew a line of credit if you didn’t. Here, we have the printing press in the basement, and the credit card gets renewed each year. That is no excuse that you should keep performing poorly when you know what the end result is going to be.

It is even a threat to our national security. For instance, we spend \$850 billion, roughly, on defense. China, our