

for the annual March Madness bracket competition. She has been doing it for years. I asked her the other day, not knowing I was going to talk about her on the Senate floor, and she said it happened sometime—I don't know—20-plus years ago. She puts in the effort to collect brackets and organize the pool. This isn't really part of her official job, mind you, taxpayers watching this. She creates the opportunity for colleagues to connect. It is something we look forward to and appreciate.

While we are excited to see whose bracket wins—and I never do or even get close—the best part of the tournament is the emails Diana sends after each slate of games with a rundown of what happened, her observation and analysis, as if she is a 30-year veteran of calling NCAA basketball games. The enthusiasm is contagious. Her knowledge of the tournament and its history is also impressive.

More impressive to me is her baking, and it is legendary. You know it is going to be a good day when she arrives carrying a tray covered in tinfoil or a piece of big Tupperware. Office favorites include her lemon ricotta cookies, her strawberry shortcake, and her pumpkin whoopie pies. If you mention a recipe you are struggling to perfect, where do you go? You go to Diana Baron back in the middle of the office. She is ready with a genius tip.

If my colleague is going through a hard time, chances are Diana will come in with chocolate chip cookies, carrot cake, or a platter of their favorite treat. She just kind of knows what each person in the office likes.

She is our resident foodie. She has endless recommendations for restaurants. If people come from Ohio or elsewhere and ask “Where do I go?” she has good ideas. She is happy to share suggestions with her coworkers—something pretty much everybody in the office takes her up on. Staff visits her desk to ask where they should go to dinner almost as often as they have a scheduling request.

It is not just Ohio or DC; some of the times I have seen Diana most excited is when we are out of session and she has built up vacation time. She loves traveling to Europe. She could have been a world-class travel agent and travel planner. She loves to do that. She has ventured around the world. She always shares her exciting stories. And I run into people in Ohio who have seen her somewhere around the world.

If one of her colleagues has an upcoming trip, Diana knows the best neighborhoods to stay in, the best restaurants to eat at, the best places to explore. She generously shares her tips and tricks and wants to hear how it all went when they get back.

Something we hear again and again from staff—if you mention just once a baked good or a restaurant or a trip, a new hobby or a book you are reading, Diana listens, and, most amazingly considering the responsibilities and the complexities and all that, she actually

remembers. She will check back in to ask what you thought. She will send an article you might be interested in. She will pay attention and will get to know the people she works with.

She always finds a way to connect, whether you are a current colleague or a former one. It doesn't matter if it has been days or weeks since it has come up; if Diana sees something related to a colleague's interest, she will send it their way. She goes the extra mile to learn about coworkers and their interests and what is happening in their lives and in the lives of their families, especially their pets.

She loves her pet cat. I am more of a dog person, but that is really beside the point. It is clear how much that matters to the people she works alongside and what she means to this office. I might say I still like cats to anybody watching who owns cats in Ohio.

Some of her former colleagues wrote:

Diana is the kind of friend that, once she knows what your thing is, anything about it that she comes across, not only will she think of you, but she goes the extra step to share it with you.

Somebody wrote that when Maggie and Sarah and all were gathering stories.

Diana is always willing to help out and go above and beyond [the call of duty] for her colleagues and the people of [our State].

Another one:

Diana makes the office feel like family.

Another one:

Diana takes pride in her work and is deeply committed to serving Ohioans, and I am grateful to have learned from working alongside her.

Diana's thoughtfulness has touched countless members of our staff and office alum. For over 25 years, as our team has changed, as they inevitably do as people do and move on to other places and other jobs, her dedication to Ohio and her respect for this institution has remained steadfast.

One of my proudest parts of this job is how so many people in this office come and learn and stay and get better and stay and work and learn Ohio so well. Diana is at the top of that list—at the top of that mountain, if you will. She has been a constant presence. She has been a rock for her colleagues. She has held people together through tough times.

None of us—and I say none of us—could do our jobs without Diana. We couldn't get to meet with all the Ohioans we have the privilege of meeting with. We couldn't accomplish all we set out to do in a single week. We couldn't enjoy it like we do with Diana on our team, and that makes it a pleasure to come to work in the morning for so many of us. For that, we are grateful.

We are grateful for her service to our State and our country, her presence on our team, and her thoughtfulness to our colleagues.

On behalf of everyone in our office and everyone who has ever worked in our office—if you have worked in the Banking and Housing Committee, she

works with them every day too—and all those who have had the honor of working with her, we congratulate Diana Baron on 25 years serving Ohio, and we expect many, many more years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, last week on this very floor, the Democratic leader of the Chamber, Senator SCHUMER, delivered an unprecedented speech that clearly, in my mind, crossed a line, wading into the electoral process of a free and fair democracy and one of our greatest friends—not just any democracy but one of our most steadfast allies, Israel, who is currently in a war for their survival against a terrorist organization that wishes to remove their country from existence.

The remarks by Leader SCHUMER calling for a new election in Israel and the replacement of Prime Minister Netanyahu were many things—I thought irresponsible, ill-advised, and misguided—but above all else, it is hypocritical and sends the wrong message to the world and our allies during a vacuum of American leadership on the international stage.

My Republican colleagues were quick to draw contrast to these remarks and affirm our support for Israel and for the leadership they have duly elected in their democracy.

But don't just take my word for it. Michael Herzog, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, called these comments “counterproductive to our common goals.” Former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett noted that he is opposed to any “external political intervention in Israel's internal affairs.” Even political opponents to Prime Minister Netanyahu quickly condemned this rhetoric, saying that any interference in Israel's electoral process is “unacceptable.”

So not only are these remarks unacceptable, but they come at a time when we should be displaying our unwavering support of our friend Israel, not calling their leadership into question.

It is important that we identify this situation for exactly what it is: an attempt by the opposite party to appease the progressive wing of the left that wishes to vilify Israel and abandon them when they need us the most. I can assure you this is something that Senate Republicans will not stand for.

Can you imagine if the roles were reversed here, if the leaders of another country called for new elections in the United States and named our leader an “obstacle to peace” and claimed that our government was not serving the needs of our people? The calls claiming election interference from this Chamber would be deafening.

Just like those in the United States, where the American people decide who leads their country, the people of Israel are the only ones who can decide which leader meets their needs. Prime Minister Netanyahu said himself: “We're

not a banana republic.” They are not. They are a democracy.

My Democratic colleagues here in the Senate have said quite a bit about foreign election interference and attacks to democracy in recent years, with Senate leadership saying in 2019 that “foreign election interference cannot be ignored” and that our government “must make clear that the cost of trying to interfere with American elections will be dear” or, from another leader, calling it “reprehensible” . . . “that the American people would not have the last word, that there would be other factors and other people, other countries engaged in our election.”

That is exactly what was called for last week. The words of my colleagues ring as true then as they do now. No one but the American people should have a say in our democracy and how our country is run. But that same protection needs to be applied to our allies in free and fair democracies and the rights of their citizens to choose the leaders that guide their country and represent their interests. That is especially true when it comes to an ally at war such as Israel.

My Republican colleagues and I recognize this as hypocrisy, and it is shocking to me that our President, President Biden, would support these comments.

Unfortunately, this isn’t the first time we have seen this level of hypocrisy from the other side of the aisle. Let’s talk about energy policy debates. We saw the other party praise the EPA’s electric vehicle mandates just yesterday without recognizing that they are the ones who are forcing closures of powerplants through policies like Clean Power Plan 2.0, cutting off the very baseload power that these supposed electric vehicles are going to need to operate.

I mean, there is a bit of hypocrisy. We have not enough power, and we are telling people when and how to run their heat, yet we are going to tell them what types of cars they need to have by 2032. As a data point, 7.6 percent of cars sold in the United States last year were electric vehicles. The goal is to get almost 70 percent of those cars by 2032.

In the State of West Virginia, new vehicles, electric vehicles: 1.1 percent. They kind of don’t do so great on those hills in the middle of the cold. I am just saying.

On issues regarding the economy, we have seen the passage of trillions of dollars in reckless spending and increased taxes by the Democrats that lead to high inflation, only for the President to establish a Strike Force on Unfair and Illegal Pricing to blame others for the impacts of their policies. He is also worried about how many chips are in a bag. We got that at the State of the Union. Or even regarding the foundation of the rules that this body stands on. We have seen Senate Democrats wage war to remove the filibuster in recent years—the same rule

they fought tirelessly to protect while they were in the minority. Now many of them signed on to the letters.

Perhaps one of the greatest hypocrisies we have seen on display was when the President delivered his campaign rally disguised as a State of the Union Address a few weeks ago.

When he was sworn into office, one of the biggest promises he made was to unite this country. Instead, in that speech, he alienated us, disparaged us—anybody who disagrees with his policies.

This continued hypocrisy and these political games are not lost on the American people. They want election officials to stand for their interests and to deliver on what they are going to do. This is a central tenet to effective government and something that guides my work on behalf of West Virginians every single day.

I, along with my fellow Senate Republicans—and I see my colleague from Nebraska here—will continue our efforts to lead our country toward a stronger future and to call out these pretenses when we see them.

NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS WORKERS SAFETY AWARENESS DAY

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize Gabe White. His family is here at the Capitol today. He is a West Virginian who tragically lost his life a year ago, I believe, this week.

Gabe is a native of Gilmer County. He was 20 years old when he passed away. It was as a result of a barge accident in Follansbee, WV.

At the request of his family, Senator MANCHIN and I have introduced a resolution to declare March 22—the date of Gabe’s tragic passing—as National Inland Waterways Workers Safety Awareness Day. It is our hope to ensure that similar accidents such as this will never happen again.

The resolution is currently moving towards passage in the Senate, and I would encourage my colleagues to support this.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Tennessee.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. HAGERTY. Mr. President, I rise today as the Senate again finds itself facing a potential government shutdown due to the majority leader’s political games. And again, the Senate must consider what we will do in response to the grave national security crisis that is emanating from our southern border.

It is *deja vu* from 2 weeks ago, when I offered a simple amendment regarding just one corrosive, anti-Democratic effect of this crisis. My amendment would have stopped illegal aliens from being counted for allotting congressional seats and, therefore, electoral college votes.

It did so by requiring the census to determine basic population statistics—like the number of citizens, noncitizens, and illegal aliens who are living

in this country—and by requiring that only U.S. citizens be counted for the purposes of determining the number of House seats and the number of electoral college votes in America.

Currently, illegal aliens are counted when determining Americans’ representation in government and the worth of their vote. The more illegal aliens and noncitizens in your State or district, the greater your voting power in Congress and in Presidential elections.

This means that in a State like California—or a city like New York—millions of illegal aliens result in several more congressional seats and electoral votes for that jurisdiction.

That helps explain why the majority leader worked so fervently 2 weeks ago to avoid a vote on my amendment—until it was clear that such obstruction would lead to a government shutdown. It also explains why every single Democrat voting on my amendment opposed it. Because when it comes to the census, the majority leader believes that “every person must be counted.” Evidently, that means illegal aliens too.

And with respect to commonsense proposals like mine—to count citizens, not illegal aliens—for apportioning voting power in America, what does the majority leader have to say? Well, he calls it an attempt to weaponize the census.

Really? That is quite rich. Aren’t Democrats weaponizing the census by counting people living in our country illegally? Do we count diplomats? Do we count people who are here on vacation? Why would we count people who are here illegally? That is the essence of weaponizing the census.

Here is what is really going on. Several weeks ago, video emerged of a Democrat House Member from the majority leader’s home State in which she called for more illegal immigration to her district for redistricting purposes.

What she means is that Americans are fleeing blue cities and States en masse because of bad government, but congressional seats are allocated based on population. So if you are losing population, you either have to backfill it or lose congressional seats.

This Representative stated that, because of her population loss, she needed to fill her district with illegal aliens to keep from losing her seat. That is exactly what my amendment would have prevented.

The Representative who made these comments is not only from the same State as the majority leader but she represents the same district that the majority leader formerly represented when he served in the House of Representatives.

This is the same district which houses James Madison High School. You remember James Madison High School. That is the school that cleared out its own students to make room for illegal alien housing. It is even the high school that the majority leader