

and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:52 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJAN).

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—(Continued)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motions with respect to the Rodriguez, Goffman, Crews, and Mehalchick nominations ripen at 4 p.m. and that the Senate now resume consideration of the Rodriguez nomination.

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

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jose Javier Rodriguez, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

#### HONORING SERGEANT PHILIP DALE NIX

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the service and sacrifice of Greensboro Police Officer Sergeant Philip Dale Nix.

Before the start of the new year, Sergeant Nix was off duty at a local gas station when he witnessed three individuals stealing alcohol. Of course, we know there is really no such thing as being off duty for a brave law enforcement officer who took the oath to protect and serve. So Sergeant Nix's instincts kicked in immediately. He approached the suspects as the crime was taking place, and they responded by shooting him.

Another off-duty officer, a Guilford County paramedic, tried to render him aid. His wounds were fatal, though; and he passed away shortly thereafter at the hospital.

Sergeant Nix embodied the very best of law enforcement. He was a consummate professional, a good and decent person, and was beloved by the community of Greensboro.

It should come as no surprise that Sergeant Nix, like so many other officers, comes from a family with a long legacy of public service. In this case, it included public service at the Greensboro Fire Department, where his father was a captain, his uncle was an assistant chief, and his brother currently serves as a firefighter.

Sergeant Nix worked for the Greensboro Police Department for 22 years and had a distinguished record of serv-

ice. He worked as a criminal investigations division detective; a patrol corporal; a patrol sergeant; a police training officer; a financial crimes detective; and, most recently, as a supervisor of the family victims unit. As one detective of the Greensboro Police Department noted:

Sergeant Nix was the Family Victims Unit. The amount of work, and dedication that he put into his career and into the community to protect vulnerable communities, and protect innocent people [was] unmatched.

For as impressive as Sergeant Nix was for his exemplary work in uniform, it was his job as a family man—a loving husband, a father, and son—that made him the man he was.

As the Greensboro city council member Zack Matheny put it:

[Sergeant Nix] cared about this community . . . and he loved his family 10 times more than he [even] loved this community. So I hope that they can feel his arms wrapped around them.

Sergeant Nix upheld his oath to protect and serve even when he wasn't in uniform. He exemplified what it means to be an exceptional law enforcement officer, and he made the ultimate sacrifice.

My deepest condolences go out to Sergeant Nix's family for their tremendous loss, and my condolences go out to the community of Greensboro, which lost one of their finest and most decent public servants.

We should never—and I will never—forget his service.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr. President, as sad as another example of a senseless killing of a law enforcement officer is, I want to take a moment to discuss on this floor Congress's role in supporting law enforcement.

In 2023, 59 officers were killed by criminals, 379 officers were shot in the line of duty, which the National Fraternal Order of Police justly calls a stain on our society.

Unfortunately, this outcome should not be surprising. We have shamefully seen a rise in anti-law enforcement sentiment from fringe voices who espouse radical concepts like abolishing the police. If you go on an ActBlue website today, ladies and gentlemen, and you query "all cops are bastards; give now," you will go to a website where they are encouraging you to make a 13.12-mile run—"1-3-1-2" translates alphabetically to A-C-A-B, which translates to "all cops are bastards." There is a website out there where you can give money and run and support this effort today.

It is sickening to hear this kind of hatred toward law enforcement, not because it is wrong and unfair but because it is flatout dangerous. It has fueled distrust and disdain for our brave men and women in blue. This, in turn, has made their job to protect and serve even harder and more dangerous.

We must do better. We must protect law enforcement. That is the reason I

introduced the Protect and Serve Act last Congress. It makes it a Federal crime to knowingly or attempt to cause bodily injury to a law enforcement officer. I plan to reintroduce this bill this Congress, and I hope to do so with strong bipartisan support.

Congress must also enhance penalties for criminals who intentionally murder law enforcement. That is why I will soon be introducing legislation that would create a criminal penalty for the murder of a local, State, or Federal law enforcement officer, punishable with a death penalty or life imprisonment without parole.

I urge all Americans to call your Senators and Congressmen. Tell them that you want to protect law enforcement officers by enhancing the penalties for criminals who target them.

The men and women in blue are heroes. We have to have their backs. Like Officer Nix, I want every single officer to know I am going to do everything I can to protect them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this is a new year, and we are now halfway through the 118th Congress.

For those who are not familiar with the way Congress operates, we call a Congress, really, a 2-year period; and so far, we have completed the first half of that 118th Congress. But the sad news is we have embarrassingly little to show for what Congress has done so far in the 118th Congress.

Under Democratic leadership, we have drifted from one crisis to the next, doing just enough to avoid catastrophe without addressing the biggest problems that our country faces. Those failures are evidenced by the fact that the Senate is set to spend the first 4 months of this year working on the backlog of things we should have done last year.

First is funding the government, keeping the lights on, paying the Border Patrol, paying our military, making sure that government services are available to all citizens.

We are a quarter of the way through the current fiscal year, and Congress has not passed a single funding bill. Not one.

Now we have until January 19—that is our first deadline—to advance 4 of the 12 annual spending bills; otherwise, we will find ourselves in a partial government shutdown or, what is more likely, a continuing resolution of some uncertain duration. It seems inevitable, given the timing.

Then we will only have 2 weeks until the next funding bill deadline arrives on February 2, when the remaining Departments and Agencies will run out of money.

Several weeks later, the third deadline will arrive. The Federal Aviation Administration must be reauthorized by March 8. Failure to do so would result in complete chaos for air travelers.

The next deadline is April 19. That is when the authorities of our intelligence community under the Foreign

Intelligence Surveillance Act section 702 expire. This is what I have called the most important law that the American people have never heard of. This literally allows the intelligence community to identify and track threats to our national security. It doesn't involve the American citizens or anybody here on U.S. soil, but it will expire on April 19 unless we act.

Of course, these are just the most obvious tasks ahead in the weeks to come that have hard-and-fast deadlines.

There are countless other items we can and should be doing and that deserve the Senate's attention. Chief among those are the national security supplemental that has been requested by the Biden administration.

Around the world, conflicts are raging that have a major impact or will have a major impact on our own national security. There is a war in the Middle East; there is a war in Europe; and growing threats by the Chinese Communist Party in China against its neighbors, most notably Taiwan.

Despite the fact that these conflicts are thousands of miles away, the outcome of each of these is, in some measure or other, important to our national security.

For example, if Hamas, a designated terrorist organization, emerges from the war against Israel with nothing more than a black eye, it will send a message to Iran—its principal sponsor—as well as to its other terrorist proxies like Hezbollah, like the Houthis in Yemen, like the Shia militias in Iraq and Syria. It will send a message that their war has been successful, has been a resounding success, and they can not only continue but accelerate their attacks against Israel and the West, including American interests.

Then there is the Russian invasion of Ukraine. If Russia wins its war against Ukraine, President Putin will be emboldened to continue his quest to rebuild the Soviet Empire. He has called the failure of the Soviet empire back in the early 1990s as the single biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.

If Russia is successful in Ukraine, it will not stop there. It could well continue on into the rest of Europe, involving the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO. If that happens, then the United States and our allies will no longer be able to stand on the sidelines of this conflict; we will be on the field by virtue of our treaty obligations under article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization treaty.

In the Indo-Pacific, if China's aggression goes unchecked, it will threaten, intimidate, and, ultimately, invade its neighbors. It has threatened to do so; we just don't know what the timing is going to be. But the Chinese Communist Party will escalate its economic war against the United States by blackballing us from the biggest market in the world and starving our country of critical technology like ad-

vanced semiconductors that operate everything from your cell phone to the avionics on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Our adversaries are watching very closely. Our friends are watching very closely. They ask: Can we still rely on America's help? Can we still rely on America's leadership?

We might wish it were so, but there is no country in the world that can do what the United States of America can do because of our leadership, because of our values, because of our strength. We might wish somebody would take our place so we didn't have to do it, but that is just wishful thinking.

Our adversaries are seeing how far they can push the boundaries of international norms before members of the rules-based international order react. That is us and our fellow democracies that actually believe in a rules-based international order. Our adversaries do not. They believe in raw power and domination.

America cannot stand on the sidelines in the face of attacks on freedom-loving people, whether those attacks occur in Israel, in Ukraine, or the Indo-Pacific. And this is not just for them. We are not doing this as a favor for these countries; we are doing it for us because invariably the threat will continue to spread.

I know that for years before the tragedy of 9/11, we thought we were protected by the two oceans, the Pacific and the Atlantic, but we learned a sad lesson on September 11, 2001: The terrorist attacks occurring overseas came home to America, and 3,000 Americans were killed as a result of those attacks.

We might wish this did not involve us—this is their problem, not our problem—but it simply is not borne out by the facts or by our hard experience.

So the United States must continue to defend democracy against growing attempts to tear it down, and I hope we can do our duty through a security supplemental appropriation in the coming weeks.

Of course, our support for our friends and allies around the world can't come at the expense of the threats we are facing here at home. The southern border—the Presiding Officer represents a border State. I represent a border State. We have a 2,000-mile southern border, and 1,200 miles of it happens to be in Texas. It has been on fire for the last 3 years during the Biden administration.

The United States has logged more than 6.7 million illegal border encounters during the Biden administration. That doesn't count the 1.7 million “got-aways”—people who are evading law enforcement. And you can imagine why. It doesn't take much imagination. In 3 years, we have experienced more illegal migration than we did throughout the entire Obama and Trump administrations combined. In 3 years, we have seen more than we saw in 12 years.

Given the stress this places on our people and on our resources—the re-

fusal to simply enforce the law by the Biden administration has created this welcome mat or this green light—pick the metaphor you like—saying that if you come to the border, you are going to be released into the United States. That has been a magnet for more and more and more people to come.

According to the Washington Post, the Biden administration has released more than 2.3 million migrants into the country in the last 3 years—2.3 million. That is higher than the total number of border crossings at this point in the previous administration.

When the numbers are this high, it creates serious security and humanitarian risks. If law enforcement and detention facilities are overwhelmed, it creates an opening for dangerous people and drugs to slip through the cracks, and there are plenty of people out there who want to exploit these vulnerabilities, not the least of whom are the organized crime organizations. Sometimes they are called transnational criminal organizations. Sometimes they are called the cartels. But these are criminals who get rich and are getting richer by the day because of the open-border policies of the Biden administration. They care nothing about anything or anyone; all they care about is the money. They are getting richer by the day as a result of the Biden open-border policies.

It is dangerous to our national security. Last year, the Border Patrol encountered 169 people who matched entries on the Terror Watchlist. Nineteen people participated in a terrorist attack against Americans on September 11, 2001, killed 3,000 Americans. So far, 169 people on the Terror Watchlist were encountered just last year—169. That doesn't count the number of people on the watchlist whom we don't know about because they were part of the 1.7 million “got-aways.” That 169 people on the Terrorist Watchlist this last fiscal year is more than the previous 6 years combined.

On top of that, the Border Patrol has arrested 600 known gang members. Customs and Border Protection personnel have seized roughly 550,000 pounds of illegal drugs, including more than 27,000 pounds of fentanyl—one of the most potent and dangerous drugs on the planet.

Strangely enough, sometimes I hear people say: Well, good; they got it all.

They didn't get it all. We lost 108,000 Americans to drug overdoses last year, including 71,000 from fentanyl.

A father of a young woman at the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District gave me this rubber bracelet in the memory of his daughter, Sienna, who took what she thought was an innocuous drug, like Percocet—relatively innocuous—or Xanax, but it was actually a counterfeit pill made to look like a pharmaceutical, like something you would buy at a drugstore. In fact, it was a counterfeit pill laced with fentanyl, and it killed her. That happened 71,000 times

last year in America as a result of drugs coming across the southern border.

President Biden has simply opened the border for anyone and everyone, creating a massive security gap at our doorstep.

It is absolutely critical that the United States invest in our preferred outcome in each of these situations: the border; Israel, where Hamas and Iran want to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth; Ukraine against this invasion of this sovereign country by Russia, by Vladimir Putin; and the Indo-Pacific. All are vital to our security in one way or another.

In October, President Biden asked Congress to provide funding for each of these priorities, but it is up to us to go through this request and to prioritize the funding and make sure that the tax dollars we will be spending are spent efficiently and with a purpose.

In some places, the President's request was bloated; in others, it was wholly insufficient. Large portions of the bill—especially those related to the border—would actually make the problem worse. So the Senate cannot and will not rubberstamp the President's supplemental funding request. There is no chance. Instead, we need to be in the process of working through a bill that can deliver real, actionable results.

As we know, the biggest sticking point in the negotiations on the border bill is the biggest remaining challenge. Immigration and border security are among the thorniest issues that we face here on Capitol Hill. But it is absolutely essential that we get this piece of the bill done correctly so that it makes a difference.

I appreciate our colleague Senator LANKFORD, the Senator from Oklahoma, who is leading the charge on our side of the aisle in those negotiations. The good news is, he understands these policies in and out, and I appreciate his willingness to lead throughout this process. I hope that he and our Democratic colleagues and the White House are able to reach a deal that will actually have an impact on the flow of illegal immigration across our border and finally restore a sense of lawfulness on the southern border.

I believe that legal immigration has been one of the great strengths of our country during our country's history—legal immigration; safe, orderly, lawful immigration. We naturalize about a million people a year, who become American citizens, who want what we have by virtue of the fact we were lucky enough to be born here. But illegal immigration has been an unmitigated disaster, and President Biden's outsourcing our immigration policies to the cartels has been the main reason for that unmitigated disaster.

Well, as we know, there is a lot on the line here, which is why it is important that any security supplemental be done right. We can't pass something and simply check the box and move on.

I hope we can reach an agreement on a strong security supplemental that addresses the range of security issues we are facing both abroad and here at home on our border. I know that negotiations are ongoing, but at some point, you have to vote. I hope we get a chance to see what those negotiations produce, give the Members of the House and the Senate an opportunity to debate and hopefully improve those negotiated products by virtue of the amendment process on the floor but ultimately do what nobody else in the country can do—only the 435 Members of the House and the 100 Members of the Senate. Those 535 people are the only ones in the Nation who can actually change the law by passing a bill and sending it to the President for his signature. So there is no one else who is going to fill the gap, no one else we can turn to and say: This is too hard for us. Will you please do it for us?

There is no one else to do it. That is why we were elected. That is why we serve. That is why we take an oath to uphold and defend the laws of the United States.

So it is important that we do our job. Unfortunately, we are going to be bogged down by playing catchup and handling the backlog of last year. But the world continues to spin on its axis. We have challenges that emerge on a daily basis. And this is not going to get any easier. So we need to act and to act as expeditiously as we can to do our duty, as difficult as it is.

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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REMEMBERING ED SMITH

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, and also, I thank my colleague, the senior Senator from Illinois, for being here. I would like to just talk today about a dear, dear friend of ours, Ed Smith, who recently passed away. I am going to try not to say too much about what Ed and Dick's relationship was, but Ed is a stalwart for working families in Illinois.

You know, the Ed that I knew is one who was always there for working families. He was a man who embodied the word "solidarity," a man who paired passion with compassion, and who knew that no company, no community, no country would ever be as strong as it could be if any of its workers were treated without the dignity and decency that they deserved.

Born in Cairo, IL, Ed had one central gravitational force throughout his life: working hard on behalf of those who worked hard for others. He joined a union at only 13 years old and, from that moment on, stayed in the fight for labor rights for the rest of his life.

He held title after title throughout his career. He was a laborer when he was young, then a manager, and eventually a CEO. But through it all, the title that undoubtedly described him best was "champion," for no matter how busy Ed was, no matter how high he climbed, there was nothing more important to him than looking out for all of those who signed up for the tireless yet often thankless jobs that keep our Nation running, all those people who clock in day after day without complaint, all those people who deserve a good pay and steady benefits that should come with the sweat of a job well-done.

I know this firsthand. Ed never hesitated to call me to keep me up to date on any issue I should be following up on in the labor world. And I knew that I could always, always count on him to give me an honest opinion whenever I needed some advice.

Not only was he a mentor and a friend, but he held each of us fortunate enough to hold elected office accountable. He made sure that we were doing right by working families, doing right by rural Illinoisans, doing right for every worker—not just those who were in unions, but all workers—and making sure that in every inch of Illinois, folks who have earned dignified retirements after decades-long careers are able to enjoy that retirement.

One of my favorite stories about Ed is that every night before bed, he would ask himself: Who have I helped today? Now it is my turn to answer that question for him. Ed helped more people than he and I could ever meet in our lifetimes. He helped grandparents access the pensions they have earned. He helped green-on-the-job 20-somethings know and demand their worth. He set up the labor movement in Illinois to be the movement of the future, working toward that carbon-neutral future, toward that green economy. And he helped people like me remember that, in public service, we all have one true North Star, and that is to do what we can to bring about a tomorrow where every worker, every American, is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

Thank you, Ed, for all that you have done for the rest of us. You will be dearly missed. I hope to live my life in a way that ensures that when I get home from work at night, I can give a good answer when I follow your lead and ask myself: Who have I helped today? And I know Ed will be smiling down on me when I do so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am honored to join my colleague, Senator DUCKWORTH, to talk about Ed Smith. It is rare that Senators come to the floor and pay tribute to someone who passes away. It doesn't happen every day. And when we have two Senators from the same State here at the same time doing it, it speaks to the quality of the person that we are talking about.