

our vast Federal estate for energy development, grazing, recreation, tourism, and all of the multiple uses we enjoy.

I look forward to continuing our efforts together, and he will be in a tremendous position to help us roll back the harmful policies of the last 4 years and unlock our country's energy potential. That means making the best use of our Nation's abundant energy resources—including our vast oil, gas, and coal reserves—while advancing new innovations to produce more energy with better environmental stewardship. That is the right way to do it.

Like I said at the beginning, we are not just going to make our Nation energy independent; we are going to make our Nation energy dominant.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, after 4 years of Biden-Harris failures, our country is set to make an incredible comeback with Republican control of Congress and the White House starting next year. At the top of our agenda will be securing the southern border. Until then, though, the Biden-Harris open border remains a threat to our families, our communities, and our country. Congress should waste no time in taking action to protect this Nation.

Since taking office, the Biden-Harris administration has apprehended—get this number—nearly 400 suspected terrorists at the southern border. Now, that is a 3,000-percent increase compared with all 4 years of the Trump administration. They also released nearly 100 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist into the country.

Unfortunately, these are just the terror suspects that we know about. Under this administration, there have been more than 2 million known “got-aways,” illegal aliens who have entered this country. They evaded apprehension by law enforcement. We do not know who they are, we do not know where they have gone, but we know that they are here from the Border Patrol accounts.

Now, on top of all of this—400 suspected terrorists, a 3,000-percent increase over the Trump years, nearly 100 that are on the Terrorist Watchlist, and the 2 million “got-aways”—there are more than 1.7 million what are called special-interest aliens who have come from countries that pose a national security threat to our Nation, including Iran.

Of course, this is the same regime that helped plan the horrific October 7 terrorist attack on Israel that claimed the lives of more than 1,200 people, including 46 American citizens. Iran-backed Hamas terrorists also took more than 250 people hostage, including a dozen American citizens, 4 of whom remain in captivity. No one connected to these barbaric attacks should be allowed in this country. Yet, under

President Biden and Vice President HARRIS, that risk remains sky high.

Earlier this year, Canada began issuing visas to Gazans with little to no vetting, meaning aliens with potential ties to Hamas could enter our country not only from the southern border but also the northern border. Instead of addressing the threat, however, President Biden issued an Executive order earlier this year that prevents many illegal aliens from Hamas-controlled Gaza from being deported.

A growing terror threat would be bad enough, but under this administration, we have also seen tens of thousands of criminal illegal aliens reach our border. These are people who have committed crimes, some of the worst imaginable—homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, and more.

As a result of this influx, we are seeing a surge in violent gang activity across America, including in my State of Tennessee. Just last week, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation warned that the violent Venezuelan gang we are all hearing about, Tren de Aragua, is ramping up its human trafficking operations in Tennessee's largest cities. This is the same gang that has taken over entire apartment complexes from San Antonio to Colorado for drug dealing, sex trafficking, and other violent crimes.

Make no mistake, our country cannot afford 2 more months of this administration's broken immigration policy. By the way, that is why you are seeing all this influx, all the numbers we have talked about: the 400 suspected terrorists, the nearly 100 that have been released into this country, 55,000 criminal illegal aliens, people that are convicted of these crimes, 2,200 gang members. Why does it happen? Because this administration's border policy is an open border. That is their policy.

Last week, reports emerged that human traffickers and these human trafficking cartels in Mexico are telling everybody: You better be running to that border right now and get in before Biden leaves office.

(Ms. ROSEN assumed the Chair.)

Thankfully, the Senate can pass legislation today that would secure our border and protect our country from terrorists and criminals. Here are some pieces of legislation I have:

The PRINTS Act, which I introduced last year, would combat trafficking by giving Border Patrol the authority to fingerprint noncitizens under the age of 14 so we can protect them from being trafficked.

The CONTAINER Act, which I introduced in January, would empower border States like Texas to place temporary barriers on Federal land in order to protect their communities.

The CLEAR Act, which I introduced in March, would ensure that State and local law enforcement officials have the tools they need to help the Federal Government deport criminal illegal aliens.

The bipartisan No Immigration Benefits for Hamas Terrorists Act, which I recently introduced alongside Senator ROSEN, who is currently serving as the Presiding Officer, would ensure that no migrant tied to Hamas and the horrific terrorist attack on October 7 is ever allowed to set foot in this country.

The bipartisan Border Smuggling Crackdown Act, which I introduced last week alongside Senator OSSOFF, would ensure human smugglers are held accountable for every life they endanger.

With the growing threat of an illegal immigration surge ahead of Inauguration Day, the Senate should pass these bills immediately and send them to President Biden's desk.

FCC COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR

Madam President, over the last 2 weeks, President Trump has started to assemble an incredible team to help get our country back on track starting January 20. To be sure, President Trump's recent pick to lead the Federal Communications Commission, Brendan Carr, will be essential to that effort.

As the senior Republican on the Commission, Carr has led the FCC's work to ensure that every Tennessean and American has access to high-speed internet regardless of their ZIP code.

In fact, on just about every issue the FCC handles, Commissioner Carr has been a crucial advocate for freedom, internet access, and national security. His track record speaks for itself. Across his 7 years on the Commission, he has fought to stamp out internet censorship and to protect free speech, to end the disastrous net neutrality rules that give government bureaucrats needless control over internet carriers, reining in Big Tech, addressing communist China's threats to our digital infrastructure, and many more issues have been on his get-it-done list.

In the year ahead, I look forward to working with Commissioner Carr on each of these issues, especially on expanding rural broadband, building out a clear spectrum pipeline, and keeping children safe online.

On that last issue, I especially appreciate Commissioner Carr's efforts. With 32 State attorneys general urging—begging—Congress this week to pass the Kids Online Safety Act, we know there is strong momentum to finally establish safeguards for children online. On this issue and so many more, one thing is clear: Commissioner Brendan Carr is the right person for the job to lead the Federal Communications Commission.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, over the past few months, we heard from both sides of the aisle about how American families need more support. We have heard discussions about the child tax credit, childcare costs, and dozens more issues that affect parents and their children.

Earlier this year, Senator VANCE summed up nicely what could be a mission statement for Republicans to use on this issue. He said:

We want to provide more options so that people are raising families in a thriving and happy way in this country.

Madam President, my colleagues and I are here today to talk about Republican solutions. And I want to talk specifically about one solution to the family leave problem that has not just Republican but also bipartisan support.

Across America, only 27 percent of workers in the private sector have access to paid family leave. The other three-fourths have to choose between making ends meet and taking care of their families, whether that is welcoming a newborn or nursing an aging parent. That is not a choice that Americans should have to make.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have proposed a few ideas to solve this problem. Some of them advocate for a new nationwide government entitlement program, some advocate for a mandate that would force businesses to pay out of pocket for their employees' leave.

Neither of those options is practical or politically realistic. Our Nation is already trillions of dollars in debt and a mandate, well, that would squash small businesses that simply don't have the resources to survive while paying an employee who is not at work.

But there is a solution, a way to offer employees paid time off without creating a new mandatory program or forcing businesses to suffer huge losses. What I am talking about here are the mom-and-pop businesses especially, Main Street businesses that maybe they have one employee, two employees, maybe five.

And we have a solution. There is a way to offer employees paid time off without creating a new mandatory program or forcing those small businesses to suffer losses. We can provide tax benefits to businesses that offer employees paid leave, which will, in turn, free up resources that businesses can use to pay the salaries of their workers on leave. This is a tried-and-true method. It works. I know because I have done it before.

In 2017, Senator ANGUS KING and I created the first nationwide paid family leave policy in the history of the United States. We created a tax credit for employers who voluntarily offer up to 12 weeks of paid leave to their employees, and President Trump signed it into law. But that tax credit is going to expire, and it is going to expire at the end of 2025.

To ensure that businesses can keep offering paid leave, we need to make sure that we make that credit permanent as well as make it easier for businesses to qualify for it and to use it. So that is why Senator KING and I have, again, introduced the Paid Family Medical Leave Tax Credit Extension and Enhancement Act. Our bill makes

that credit permanent, and it also expands it. It supports additional options for financing paid leave, such as paid family leave insurance. It also allows employers to begin offering paid family medical leave to workers sooner after being hired.

Our bill also includes a strategy for educating businesses and employees about the option to receive this credit so that more people know about it. It requires the Small Business Administration and the IRS to conduct targeted outreach and technical assistance for those who need it, which will raise awareness of the credit and expand the number of Americans who have paid leave.

This is a Republican solution, and it is one that everyone can get on board with. It already has a track record of bipartisan support here in Congress, and we have the perfect opportunity to pass this tax credit yet again in the new year.

As my colleagues on the Finance Committee begin working on tax policy for 2025 and onward, I would urge them to remember America's families; remember how much they need access to paid family leave and remember what they voted for this past November—an administration who will look out for parents and for kids. We have a solution for America's paid leave problem. It is just a matter of expanding it and enacting it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, shortly, I will ask for unanimous consent to confirm Mark G. Eskenazi and Amanda Wood Laihow to serve as members on the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

Just a word about the Commission. The Commission is an independent Agency that plays a vital role in ensuring safe and healthy workplaces and working conditions for American workers.

What the Commission does is it provides fair and timely adjudication of workplace safety and health disputes between employers, employees, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. So this independent body adjudicates claims between the Federal OSHA employers and employees.

However, the three-member Commission has lacked a quorum since April 2023, which means that for 18 months, they have been unable to adjudicate these claims between employers and employees in OSHA.

Amanda Wood Laihow is a reappointment. She first served on the Commission from January 2020 until April of 2023, when her term expired. Mark Eskenazi was nominated a few months ago in June of 2024. They both received very strong bipartisan support in the HELP Committee, on which I sit, for their nominations, and I urge my colleagues to join me in confirming these

well-qualified candidates by enabling this important adjudicatory body to have a quorum so that they can take up claims by workers and employers.

For that reason, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 374 and 785; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Reserving the right to object. On November 5, the American people spoke and demanded change. They demanded a wholesale revamp from the top to bottom. I am committed to working tirelessly to enact these reforms in Congress and, just as important, to confirming new nominees to carry out the next administration's agenda.

President Trump is in the process of selecting his administration even today. It would be a colossal mistake to hamstring him now in the lameduck session before he even had a chance to review these nominations.

I will be objecting to this unanimous consent request today because we must preserve options for President-elect Trump and his administration to nominate his own choices for this Commission and others, not rubberstamp President Biden's and Leader SCHUMER's preferred candidates on their way out the door.

It is important to point out that should these nominees be confirmed, Democrats will hold a 2-to-1 majority over the Commission and its decisions, which is something that would only further constrain the next administration's commitment to dramatic and needed change.

I look forward to considering nominees to the Commission in January once President-elect Trump has had the opportunity to decide on his own nominees to serve in these roles.

For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, let me just say I do not believe it is President-elect Trump who is being hamstrung by stopping these nominations; it is workers and employers. Unless the President-elect has a current claim pending before the Committee, he is not being hamstrung by creating a quorum. The absence of a quorum is hurting American workers, and I regret that my colleague objects.

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