

U.S. Capitol Building, joining the small and distinguished list of eminent Americans who have earned this honor. Later today, I will join Leader THUNE and other congressional leaders in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol to place a wreath on President Carter's casket on behalf of the U.S. Senate.

Today and tomorrow, Americans will brave the snow and cold temperatures to pay their respects to one of the most decent men ever to hold the Office of the President. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word—kind, honorable, intelligent, humble, and deeply patriotic. These are virtues he brought to the Oval Office in an era when trust in government was arguably at a low in the 20th century.

But just as admirable as the legacy President Carter built after holding the most powerful job in the world, after leaving office, he established the Carter Center to continue his work on human rights, on spreading democracy, on fighting disease; and we all know about his work with Habitat for Humanity where he could often be found outside, building houses for families in need, well into his nineties. That was President Carter at his core. He never stopped serving others until his final day. America was lucky to have him as a citizen, as a President, and as a moral compass of our time.

119TH CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now, on the 119th Congress, as the 119th Congress begins, our Nation faces an uncertain future. Americans still see high prices every time they go to the store, when they go to the pharmacy, when they refill their tanks, and pay their cable and internet bills. We have done a lot of work over the last few years to slow inflation down, but the new majority must continue the work we have begun.

Donald Trump and Republicans made a slew of very bold promises on the campaign trail to fix our country's big problems. In some of these promises, they say they will fight for working people despite decades of doing the opposite and proposing things that would hurt them. Democrats will hold Republicans' feet to the fire to ensure they are accountable to the American people. Promises to help working people sound nice, but they mean nothing without real results, and too many of Republicans' promises, like tax cuts for the very wealthy, will actually make things worse for working people.

In the coming weeks, there will be one early sign that shows whether or not Republicans intend to keep their promises to fight for working people, and that is who they support through the nomination process. These nominees are going to be the faces of the new administration. They will be responsible for applying its policies. They will, in effect, be the ones responsible for following through, day-to-day, on the promises made on the campaign trail.

So the American people want to know: Will the President-elect's nominees follow through on cutting costs for the American people, or will they return to cutting sweet deals for mega corporations and the wealthiest people in this country?

Will they help their corporate contractors cozy up to foreign entities and oligarchs, all while undermining our national security?

Will they spend time settling scores for President-elect Trump, or will they actually help keep America safer?

Will the President-elect's nominees keep their promises to serve America, or are they just going to serve the swamp?

We remember what happened during the first Trump administration. The swamp wasn't drained so much as doubled and tripled and more. Even during the last campaign, Donald Trump promised oil executives huge tax breaks if he won. That would be the opposite of the promises he made to the people.

These are the kinds of things we need to know from the President-elect's nominees. We need to be fair but thorough and give every nominee a chance to make their case while also subjecting them to some tough scrutiny. That is, after all, what any reasonable job application process demands, whether you are an average person applying for a job or somebody being nominated for a very important Cabinet position.

So that is what we Democrats intend to do. That is what we will do. It is no different than what we intend to do on the legislative side. I will repeat what I said last week: Democrats are ready to work with anyone, regardless of party, to make life better for working people.

Let me mention one example from last week. On January 1, because of what the Democratic Senate and President did, the \$2,000 out-of-pocket cap that Democrats passed in the Inflation Reduction Act went into effect. Thanks to that policy, millions of Americans with Medicare Part D will save thousands of dollars each year on prescription drugs. If Republicans want to strengthen policies like these and help Americans save millions more on healthcare spending, Democrats are open to working together.

But our promise to Republicans also comes with a warning. Democrats will not hesitate to fight back if Republicans use their new majorities to hurt working families of America.

If Donald Trump and Republicans use their new majorities to push the same old GOP policies of tax cuts for billionaires, cuts to healthcare, cuts to Medicare and Social Security, trickle-down economics, Democrats will fight back.

If Republicans use their new majority to push policies that make life even

more expensive for families, we will stand opposed.

If Republicans go after Social Security or Medicare or Medicaid in people's paychecks, they will have to go through us.

The choice is now in the hands of our Republican colleagues. They are now in the majority. They now have the responsibility. We and the American people will be watching.

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

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

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the threats to America's security and our Republican effort to fight back.

On New Year's Day, 14 Americans were killed in a heartbreaking, deadly act of terrorism. Dozens of our fellow Americans were seriously injured as well in the carnage. These are people who were just celebrating the new year.

Their attacker was a terrorist. He flew an ISIS flag. It was off the back of his truck. As a result of the terrorist attack, he destroyed families, destabilized a community, and broke the hearts of so many, many Americans.

The shock of this attack is matched only by the urgency of the message that it sends to our country. The message is this: It is time to restore America's security and America's strength. Lives depend upon it.

To keep America safe, we need to refocus our government on the priorities that matter to the people of this Nation. We have seen this in realtime in terms of the danger of the distorted priorities of the last administration. Their priorities were a wide open border, a woke Pentagon leader, a weaponized and distracted FBI, a feckless foreign policy, and, of course, a weak President.

The current President's absence of leadership has made America and the world less safe. In 4 short years, our enemies have been emboldened; they have grown stronger; they are more aggressive; and they are more dangerous.

America once worked to deny terrorists a safe haven. Now the terrorist strongholds are back. Today, terrorists control Afghanistan. They control parts of Syria. They attack American troops from bases in Yemen. And this is only part of it.

Today, we face a serious security situation right here inside the United States. The New Orleans terrorist appears to have been radicalized while here in America. Over the past 4 years, over 300 individuals on the Terror

Watchlist—our own Nation's Terror Watchlist—have crossed into our country boldly and illegally. Those 300, they are just the ones that we know about.

We also know that Iran—the world's No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism—is actively funding anti-Jewish protests on our college campuses. President Biden did nothing. Instead of showing strength, he kept our borders open and continued to ignore Iran's aggression.

Weakness in the White House put us here. Returning to strength will help lead us out. In 13 days, our weak and wavering President will be replaced by a President who is respected for strength and for boldness.

We have seen failure up close. Americans will now get a very good look at what strong leadership looks like once again.

President Trump and Senate Republicans will act for Americans' safety. The Senate is going to work to confirm President Trump's strong nominees through a fair and speedy process. It is important for the President to have his national security team in place as quickly as possible. Especially right now, personnel is policy, and President Trump's team is ready to act.

The President's nominees are not a return to business as usual. No, not at all. They are motivated. They are skilled. They are committed to the safety and security of every American. Our national security depends on confirming them. The New Orleans attack proves it.

To my colleagues, I would remind each and every one of them that the Senate's power of advice and consent is no excuse to delay and deny or to try to search and destroy.

Last month, a sleeping woman in New York City was set on fire in the subway. She died. Her killer was an illegal immigrant. He was deported under President Trump and snuck back into this country under President Biden. Since 2023, he has lived—this illegal immigrant criminal murderer—in taxpayer-funded shelters here in this country. That is what we have seen the last 4 years.

The current President's actions invited and allowed 10 million people to cross into our country illegally. Our cities are overrun and overwhelmed.

It was weak border policies that got us here, put us in this position, and it is strong border policies that are going to get us back to safety. That means funding a border wall, deporting illegal immigrant criminals, and restoring successful policies such as "Remain in Mexico."

Our goal is to empower President Trump to enforce the law.

Republicans are also going to work to restore deterrence through strength and then what we have seen as the politicization of our military. Without a military focused on lethality, we can't be strong.

If these actions are taken, peace and safety, security and strength are not just possible, they will be coming very soon.

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 (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

119TH CONGRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as you know, last Friday, the Senate swore in new leaders for the 119th Congress, and in 2 weeks, the new Commander in Chief will be sworn in for a second time.

We are 6 days into a new year, and people around the country are making resolutions for the new year—everything from health to fitness, books to read, financial goals to meet—and as Republicans, now is a good time for us to do the exact same thing. We have our work cut out for us to help clean up the mess that President Biden and Senate Democrats have left us from the last 4 years.

I believe our first and most urgent task is to confirm President Trump's nominees for his Cabinet. The President won the election, and he is entitled to his team, absent extraordinary circumstances. It is simply impossible for the new administration to tackle the mountain of work waiting for them without their team of advisers who will lead critical government Agencies.

Without the President's Cabinet in place, he cannot get the job done that he was elected to do on November 5. With his Cabinet in place, we can get to work to implement the agenda that Texans and Americans across the country elected a trifecta of Republican leaders to accomplish.

The top of our list of priorities is, of course, to secure the southern border. I represent a State with 1,200 miles of common border with Mexico, and, sadly and tragically, under the previous administration's open border policies, it has been an unmitigated disaster.

The crisis at the southern border is one that President Biden quite literally invited with his campaign rhetoric and with his administration's policies. He invited this crisis. This was perhaps the one campaign promise that he delivered on. The Biden administration set out to reverse many, if not all, of President Trump's policies from his first term, including the "Remain in Mexico" policy and title 42.

Under President Biden's watch, the Border Patrol was overwhelmed with record numbers of illegal migrants crossing the border. Border Patrol encountered more than 370 people on the Terror Watchlist crossing between ports of entry during the Biden administration. We know there were roughly a dozen people who were part of the

conspiracy that resulted in the death of 3,000 Americans on September 11, 2001, and now here we have 370 people on the Terror Watchlist that crossed between ports of entry during the Biden administration. Well, that compares with well under 10 per year under the Trump administration. But I think the point is pretty obvious: This is dangerous.

Those are only the aliens who the Border Patrol encountered or apprehended. Remember that President Biden also set records for "got-aways." That is what the Border Patrol calls the people who simply evaded law enforcement—aliens who fled because, frankly, they were up to no good.

As of May, more than 1.7 million "got-aways" had made their way into the United States under their watch. These are just people who triggered various cameras and sensors and were able to evade law enforcement. Surely there were more that were able to make their way into the interior of the United States. Again, under President Biden's border policies, all you have to do is turn yourself in and you would be released into the interior, but these are people that could not even risk that because of either their criminal records or their intention to do harm, including carry drugs into the United States.

Since the Biden administration established the word "asylum" as a magic word that resulted in their release into the interior, we can be pretty sure that many of those evading Border Patrol have something else to hide.

Human trafficking and drug trafficking by the cartels have caused enormous and often untold suffering for the people of my home State of Texas and Americans as a whole. Fentanyl, which is now the leading cause of death of young people in America 18 to 45, is manufactured—or the precursors are manufactured in China and trafficked through the U.S.-Mexico border.

Countless migrants released into the interior of our country have failed to show up for their day in court, showing others looking to make the dangerous journey to the United States that they might also be able to make it and suffer zero consequences.

All of these actions—or lack of actions—from the Biden administration have sent a clear signal that the laws of the United States will not be enforced.

You know, law enforcement depends on our great men and women in blue to investigate crimes and to deter other people from committing crimes, but deterrence is a very important element that has simply been lost by the Biden administration's open border policies.

Given the fact that most people who come to the United States know, under the Biden administration, that they will simply be released, there is no reason for them to believe that they will not be released as well, and so there is zero deterrence. That is getting ready to change under President Trump.