

States, illegal aliens are not entitled to the same range of due process as U.S. citizens, especially when they neglect or refuse to show up in the first place when the notice to appear has been given, but they simply reject it.

The idea that someone could break our laws, enter our country illegally, and then be entitled to all the rights and privileges of an American citizen is awfully far-fetched, and it is not the law. Let me be clear about what the law actually says: Aliens who already have final orders of deportation, who are being detained for the purpose of removal, have already had their due process.

I would encourage my colleagues on the left to reflect on this before continuing to use the buzzwords “due process” to mislead the American people as they discuss cases that appear sympathetic but where the process these aliens were entitled to has simply been exhausted, and they lost or they refused to show up in the first place.

The American people know what Democrats fail to admit: Deterrence—deterrence—is a critical part of immigration enforcement and preventing the flow of aliens into the United States in the first place. In other words, if you know that it is likely that if you pay a coyote or a human smuggler \$10,000 to smuggle you into the United States but you are unlikely to be able to stay, then you are probably not going to make the decision to make that dangerous trip in the hands of a criminal organization to come to the United States. That is part of what we talk about when we are discussing deterrence—the likelihood you would be unsuccessful, so you don't try in the first place.

I have been impressed by the way the State of Florida has stepped up to the plate by helping the administration open a detention facility known in the press as Alligator Alcatraz—well, whatever is necessary to provide detention facilities for people who have no legal right to remain in the United States because they have exhausted all of their legal remedies.

We have just provided significant additional resources in the One Big Beautiful Bill to the Department of Homeland Security and ICE to build those detention facilities like the one in Florida, as needed, in order to detain people before they are repatriated or removed from the United States.

I am hopeful other States will step up in a similar way, and I am strongly supportive of creating those necessary detention facilities in places like Texas.

The American people voted overwhelmingly on November 5 for a President who promised to enforce our immigration laws, so it is only right that our States would work together with the Federal Government to facilitate the enforcement of those laws, that the American people voted for. I know they are thankful to President Trump for

keeping his promises, and I look forward to continuing to work with him and Governor Abbott to ensure that this work continues in my home State of Texas. Together, we are making our communities safer.

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

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

#### NOMINATION OF MATTHEW LOHMEIER

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to carefully consider their vote on the nomination of Mr. Matthew Lohmeier to be Under Secretary of the Air Force.

The Under Secretary is the second highest ranking official in the Air Force. This position is responsible for running the day-to-day operations of the Department and assisting the Secretary in leading the largest fleet of aircraft and space assets in the world. Most importantly, they are responsible for managing the hundreds of thousands of men and women who make up the Air Force and the Space Force.

I have deep concerns about Mr. Lohmeier's fitness to represent these men and women. While I appreciate his past military service, his record of troubling conduct in uniform, extreme partisanship, and animosity toward military members with whom he disagrees politically is, in my view, completely disqualifying to be Under Secretary.

His record of alarming behavior and statements is well-documented. In 2021, while serving as an Active-Duty Space Force officer in command of a large formation, he self-published a book titled: “Irresistible Revolution: Marxism's Goal of Conquest & the Unmaking of the American Military.” The book argued that Marxism is rampant within the ranks and leading to the collapse of our military and our society.

As he wrote:

To be perfectly clear, the path we are on as a country leads us to fratricidal and genocidal warfare.

While still on Active Duty and command, he went on a far-right podcast which was known for spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories to advertise his book. All this was done without the knowledge or approval of the Department of Defense. Mr. Lohmeier was immediately relieved of command when his book and podcast were discovered.

After leaving the Space Force, he has continued to write and speak about his extreme beliefs. Among his controversial statements, Mr. Lohmeier called the January 6 attack a government-led “false flag and hoax at the Capitol.”

I would ask all of my colleagues who were there that day and who were in

danger if it were a hoax and a false flag operation. I think, honestly, they would admit, no, it was an attack on the constitutional responsibilities of Congress to certify the election of the President of the United States. In that hoax, police officers were injured and killed, and many, many of us were terribly concerned about our safety and the safety of our staffs.

So, if you believe it was a hoax, then you agree with Mr. Lohmeier. If you think it was and is an attack on our Constitution and on ourselves, this is not the gentleman to be the Under Secretary of the U.S. Air Force.

He has appeared on dozens of podcasts and has made hundreds of social media posts about his distrust of American servicemembers, as he wrote in his book:

In one respect, U.S. military servicemembers are no different than members of the People's Liberation Army.

That is an interesting comparison—equating American soldiers with the members of the People's Liberation Army.

He went on to say:

Each is comprised of humans—

U.S. Army, PLA—

humans who share a common nature. Because we share the same nature, what Marxist ideology does to the Chinese military servicemember it will do to the American.

Now, that is absolutely absurd. I don't think anyone in the United States or in the U.S. military will believe that our military will be transformed into a Marxist fighting organization equivalent to the Chinese People's Liberation Army. Yet that is what he is talking about, and I have read a great deal of his writing.

I had the opportunity and the privilege not only to attend West Point but to teach at West Point. I would question his understanding of Marxism and his understanding, frankly, of the character of the American soldier, sailor, airman, marine, and guardian. It is profoundly not only deficient but insulting.

Let me make one point clear: I am concerned that he has a deeply misguided and biased opinion of American military servicemembers and their leaders. If confirmed, he would lead an organization that, like this country, represents a spectrum of individuals—Republicans, Democrats, Independents—of all races and creeds and sexualities. Yet his language suggests that he regards many of these men and women as adversaries to be rooted out and purged from the force. I am very skeptical that servicemembers and civilians who do not share his political opinions can trust that they will not be targeted under Mr. Lohmeier's tenure. This could be a revenge tour in the Department of the Air Force—to get even with those he feels did not treat him fairly. That is not the type of individual you want in the position of Under Secretary of the Air Force.

During his confirmation hearing before the Armed Services Committee,

my colleagues and I pressed him to explain his extreme positions. In particular, I urged him to pledge to not seek retribution against any military members or civilians whom he has publicly criticized in the past, especially as many of them would serve under him if he is confirmed. He refused. He refused to make such a commitment. That failure significantly increases my concerns that he will be out to purge, to seek revenge; not to serve the interests of the U.S. Air Force and the United States of America but to work his own personal animosities out against those he distrusts.

Ultimately, the Under Secretary of the Air Force is a position that demands wisdom, composure, and character. Our military personnel and, indeed, the American people deserve nothing less. I do not believe that Mr. Lohmeier is qualified for this position, and I urge my colleagues to vote against the nominee.

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

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

#### APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, as the Senate turns now to debate the bipartisan appropriations bill to resource military construction and the VA that Senator BOOZMAN and I have assembled, along with all of our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, I would like to highlight what is included in this legislation.

This bill represents bipartisan support for our military servicemembers and veterans and their families. It enhances our military readiness and the quality of life for servicemembers while funding the delivery of care and benefits for our Nation's veterans.

Military construction funds are included for infrastructure that supports our servicemembers' quality of life at home and abroad and for the construction of facilities vital to our national security.

In the State of Georgia, for example, this bill includes resources to build a brandnew elementary school at Fort Benning, where there is currently a wait-list of more than 200 families trying to get into school on the base; resources to construct a new barracks at Fort Stewart, where housing has desperately needed upgrades following alarming reports of mold and pest infestation; resources to bring the F-35A flight simulators to Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta and accelerate the arrival of those aircraft to South Georgia; resources to replace the control tower at Robins Air Force Base, where our servicemembers are currently working in a tower with a leaking roof,

no air-conditioning, and a broken elevator; resources for major upgrades at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, where they are continuing to prepare for the arrival of Columbia-class submarines.

Across the country, family housing for servicemembers operated by private companies has long been a disaster, as evidenced by my investigation of conditions for families living on post at Fort Gordon.

That is why this bill rejects the administration's proposed cuts to oversight of privatized family housing and provides additional resources for construction of new family housing. These are young men and women, as you well know through your service, Mr. President—many of them 19, 21, 23 years old—who signed up to serve not for money or for glory but out of their love for our country. Their entire families make sacrifices on behalf of our Nation, and they should not have to sacrifice safe, clean housing, and high-quality schools.

For years, the Department has neglected quality of life, health, and safety for enlisted servicemembers, and that neglect extends to those servicemembers' families. But this bill provides necessary and overdue investments in military quality of life.

Now to the VA. Let's be clear that these programs, services, and benefits are not a giveaway; they are the Nation's obligation to those who have put their lives and health on the line and made tremendous sacrifices and family sacrifices in defense of the United States.

For the VA, this bill provides resources to support healthcare for more than 9.2 million veterans and disability benefits to nearly 7 million veterans, survivors, and their families.

Instead of continuing senseless mass firings of VA personnel, this bill provides funding so that the VA can recruit and hire to fill long-term clinical vacancies that are contributing to long wait times for care in Georgia and across the country.

Asserting our constitutional power of the purse, this bill mandates specific funding levels for rural health, women's health, caregivers, research, and veteran homelessness prevention programs, in some cases, including required spending levels for those programs for the first time in legislative history.

It also provides funding for the VA to address the claims backlog related to toxic exposures and the implementation of the PACT Act, to continue providing education benefits to veterans, and to help secure VA home loans. All of these critical resources will better ensure that our Nation's veterans receive the care and benefits they have earned through their service.

This bill also provides necessary funding for the American Battle Monuments Commission, the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals, and the Armed Forces Retirement Homes, as well as Arlington National Cemetery.

As ranking member of the subcommittee, I was pleased to work closely with Chairman BOOZMAN to build a strong bipartisan bill that reflects input from colleagues on both sides of the aisle, not just on the Appropriations Committee but across the entire Senate. And I thank Senator BOOZMAN for his collaboration and for his bipartisan work in good faith, and I extend that gratitude to Senators Collins and Murray.

Every Senator, in both parties, has had the opportunity to advocate for their State's interests and priorities, and Chairman BOOZMAN and I have worked together to address, to the best of our ability, every Senator's needs and concerns.

Now, this bill earned bipartisan support in the Appropriations Committee because it equips the VA to make good on America's sacred promise that our servicemembers and veterans will have the resources and support they have earned through their service to our country. I encourage colleagues to come and speak with me directly about any questions or concerns with this legislation so that we can set up votes and get this bill passed in the Senate as swiftly as possible and ultimately enacted into law.

This is a bipartisan bill that was built through thoughtful deliberation, hard work, and compromise. That is how the appropriations process should work, not on the basis of party line but in the spirit of bipartisan collaboration and the national interest.

So let's deliver for the American people, the people of Georgia, our servicemembers, military families, and veterans, with the resources they need, on time, responsibly, and on a bipartisan basis.

I urge a "yes" vote to proceed to the bill.

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.

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

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

#### COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE FLORIDA PANTHERS ON WINNING THE 2025 STANLEY CUP FINAL

Mrs. MOODY. Mr. President, today I rise to announce a resolution commending and congratulating the Florida Panthers on winning the 2025 Stanley Cup Final.

Last month, our State—the great State of Florida—along with loyal fans nationwide, came together to cheer on the Florida Panthers as they fought hard to secure a victory and bring home the cup to Florida.

And they cemented their place as back-to-back champions. This incredible effort marks the second cup won