

TANF; and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. So not only did they come in unvetted and were allowed to stay here for 2 years, but they were given a work permit and given benefits that are paid for by you and me and the rest of the American taxpayers.

A video on the DHS website with information for Afghan nationals details that U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services will expedite asylum applications for those paroled under Operation Allies Welcome and that they may not even need to comply with the regular application filing deadline.

A cursory review of this program on the website—the Operation Allies Welcome website—exposes that the Biden administration was much more concerned with testing these immigrants for COVID-19 than ensuring they would not otherwise pose a threat to the American people.

The Department of Homeland Security inspector general reported that DHS paroled in at least two people who were known national security risks—known national security risks. And the Department of Defense inspector general wrote, in another report, that “Afghan refugees were not vetted by the National Counterterrorism Center using all DOD data prior to arriving in” the continental United States.

Now, when I have learned about this abuse of parole authority within Operation Allies Welcome, I raised the alarm bell. In October of 2024, I co-led a letter, along with my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, to DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, back in the Biden administration. In this letter, we pressed the administration for answers on how foreign extremists, such as one Afghan national, Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi, who was arrested for his connection to an ISIS plot to commit a violent attack within the United States on election day—how people like that were slipping through the cracks in our immigration system. I guess the answer is there weren’t cracks; there were yawning gaps that you could drive a truck through—that anybody and everybody who was determined to come here could abuse and commit acts of violence and harm against the American people.

The Biden administration had claimed that Tawhedi, who had ties to ISIS, had a special immigrant visa, but that was not true. He never had been vetted for a special immigrant visa and was allowed into the country on parole. Here we go again.

And throughout the criminal investigation, the Department of Homeland Security continued to say that “no red flags were raised” during the parole vetting process. Well, of course not—if the parole vetting process is virtually nonexistent, how do you expect red flags to be raised?

The fact that a foreign national, who would later collaborate with ISIS on a terrorist plot within the United States, raised no red flags during DHS’s parole vetting process tells us all we need to

know about what that vetting process consisted of. It was obviously not sufficient. At minimum, it was insufficient to ensure that those entering the country did not pose a threat.

The letter I referred to a moment ago also referenced the Office of Inspector General report that found that the Department of Homeland Security had no established process for monitoring the Afghan parolee population as their parole periods expired. In other words, they were allowed into the country, ostensibly, for a 2-year period of time, given a work permit, given social service benefits, and no followup to make sure that, after their parole period ended, they returned to their country of origin or pursued some other legitimate pathway to allow them to stay legally in the United States.

Now, we sent this letter back in 2024 because of our concern that another foreign extremist might make their way into our country via this parole process and commit some act of violence. And it became increasingly clear, during Thanksgiving week, that our concerns were not unwarranted.

A 29-year-old Afghan national entered our country through the Biden administration’s abuse of parole authority under Operation Allies Welcome and murdered one of our National Guardsmen on duty.

Last week, Attorney General Bondi, alongside Federal and State law enforcement, arrested another Afghan citizen residing in Fort Worth, TX, for threatening to build a bomb and carry out a suicide attack against Americans.

There are many lessons to be learned from this sad experience, this sad episode. We simply cannot ignore the importance of thoroughly vetting for each and every person who enters our country to make sure that we are keeping out radicals who may want to harm Americans or criminals or other people who have no business being in the United States in the first place.

These horrific incidents should be a reminder to all of us that the decisions that are made here in Washington have real life implications on the lives of the people that we represent. And, I must say, the Federal Government failed this young National Guardsman who lost her life during Thanksgiving week, and we don’t know how many more potential threats are still out there because 70,000 Afghan nationals were paroled under this bogus Operation Allies Welcome program by the Biden administration. We don’t know how many more potentially dangerous individuals are spread around the country.

Last week, an American service woman lost her life because of the Biden administration’s abuse of parole authority. President Biden is no longer in office, but the consequences of his reckless immigration policies are still with us. And I fear they will be with us not for days, not for weeks, not for months, but for years and possibly longer.

I commend President Trump for freezing the processing of asylum and visa applications from Afghan nationals while we figure out what happened and figure out how to fix it. We have to get to the bottom of this in order to make sure that such a tragedy never happens again.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from New Mexico.

S.J. RES. 91

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, nestled in the far northeast corner of Alaska is one of the wildest and most untouched places left in North America: The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

I have been blessed to see this refuge with my own eyes. I have seen its towering peaks; I have seen the critical habitat on the Coastal Plain where caribou drop their calves; and I have seen its polar bears.

Over the course of a year in the Arctic Refuge, you might also see one of the last great spectacles of migrating caribou, dueling musk ox straight out of the Pleistocene, or rare spectacled eiders nesting on the Coastal Plain.

In fact, the Arctic Refuge is home to hundreds of iconic wildlife species, including 200 species of birds that have called this landscape home since long before humans stepped on this continent.

Simply put, the Arctic Refuge is the crown jewel of the American National Wildlife Refuge System, and it has been ever since it was set aside in 1960 by President Eisenhower to protect its wildlife and habitat values.

But that is only part of its story.

The Arctic Refuge is also deeply connected to the traditions and daily life of the people who have lived there for thousands of years—longer than this building, this city, this country have existed—because the refuge is not just land.

For wildlife, it is essential habitat. For many people who live there and are sustained by its caribou, this place is literally their grocery store. It is not just a reminder of the past, it is hope for the future. But that future is at stake.

The Arctic Refuge is under threat from the Trump administration’s relentless attacks on public lands, attacks that put so-called energy dominance above every other use, every other value.

Today, the Senate will vote on a congressional resolution of disapproval to overturn the management plan for the Arctic Refuge. And instead of a targeted approach that emphasizes things like subsistence hunting, wildlife conservation, and a focus on Tribal consultation, a vote for this resolution will—redundantly—open up the entire Coastal Plain of the refuge to be leased for oil drilling without local input.

I say “redundantly” because the Trump administration has already overturned this management plan. The Republicans in Congress have already

passed legislation requiring this area—a national wildlife refuge—requiring it to be drilled for oil, despite a complete lack of interest by legitimate industry players.

Now, we could be discussing ways to lower electricity costs, which are spiraling out of control or doing something about the skyrocketing healthcare costs in this country right now. But instead, we are talking about industrial oil and gas development in the beating heart of our greatest wildlife refuge, literally developing the place where the porcupine caribou herd drops their calves every year.

Now, when Congress first debated whether to allow oil development in the Arctic, America's energy landscape looked very different. We were importing significant amounts of oil, much of it from our political adversaries. Oil prices were rising, and U.S. energy could not meet demand.

Yet, even in that context, in those challenging years, for decades and across both political parties, Congress recognized the irreplaceable, ecological, and cultural importance of the Arctic Refuge.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle understood that some places are sacred, some places are simply too unique and important to sacrifice, and together they kept these lands closed to industrial development.

In fact, it was not until 2017 that a Republican majority reversed that longstanding commitment and opened this refuge to exploitation. They turned their backs on the American people who own this refuge and embraced the development-anywhere-and-at-any-cost approach, doing so despite the fact that the United States was already experiencing record oil production and was on its way to being a net energy exporter.

And now they have done it again in their "Big Bad Bill." But this time they want more and more. To what end? We know this hasn't worked before. We know previous efforts to offer leases here have actually been a failure.

Now, they told us that development of the Arctic Refuge would bring in a billion—billion with a "b"—a billion dollars to the Treasury to pay off the tax cuts that were in the 2017 bill for billionaires. But as we all remember, that came up a little short. In fact, it came up \$993 million short to be exact. And it is because development in the refuge is so complicated and so expensive.

It is costly in time. Seasons are short. Days can be even shorter. There is not a lot of time to break new ground. There are no roads, no infrastructure even remotely close to this part of the Coastal Plain.

That is why it is estimated that oil prices would have to be at least \$75 a barrel just to break even on oil from the refuge. Compare that to today's average cost for a barrel, which is hovering around \$60. Legitimate investors knew these pitfalls.

In 2023, the six largest banks in the United States, the five largest banks in Canada, and 29 other international banks all issued policies against financing drilling in the Arctic Refuge. The banks, insurers, too, followed suit, which is why the second justification that they are using to do this just doesn't make sense—that producing oil in the refuge will make gas cheaper for everyday Americans.

You can see from the map that this is not remotely true. If construction and drilling costs are so high that a barrel of oil has to be almost \$20 more expensive just to break even, what do you think that does to the prices at the gas station when you fill up your car? It doesn't mean cheaper gas. The last thing that they will tell you is that we have to drill everywhere in America because we are "in an energy emergency." But the truth is, the only energy crisis in America is the one that President Trump has created himself.

It is the skyrocketing utility bills that Americans are facing because of the Republicans' relentless attacks on affordable American-made clean energy.

Opening precious wilderness to industrial development is not going to fix that, especially when it is to drill for oil that costs so much to produce. Drilling in the Arctic Refuge is not going to make energy more affordable, and it seems to me, as I stand up here to speak about yet another attack on our public lands, that no place is sacred from this extract-at-all-costs playbook—not even wildlife refuges.

So what is next? Are we going to develop geothermal energy in Yellowstone? Maybe more uranium mining in the Grand Canyon. I think Teddy Roosevelt must be tired from rolling over in his grave.

The bottom line is that the Arctic Refuge is too unique, too globally important to develop. It is a wildlife refuge for a reason.

Now, proponents love to hide the fact that this is, in fact, a national wildlife refuge. They call it all kinds of things so that they don't have to use the phrase "wildlife refuge." They will call it the 1002 area. They will call it ANWR. It sounds like someplace in the Middle East that you would expect oil and gas production.

They don't want us to pay attention to how crazy a prospect developing one of our last remaining untouched landscapes is.

The Arctic Refuge provides subsistence fish and game for people who live in the region. It serves as a seasonal home to species you might see in your own State, species like Arctic terns and all sorts of waterfowl. And it is a remarkable, vast, and breathtaking wilderness that should inspire us to be better stewards of our wildlife heritage.

The Arctic Refuge is the crown jewel of our National Wildlife Refuge System, and it belongs to every single American and deserves our protection.

So I would urge colleagues to vote no on the CRA today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

S.J. RES. 91

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I am coming down on the Senate floor, once again, to talk about another Congressional Review Act resolution that I am encouraging all of my colleagues, Democrats, Republicans—by the way, our last one on the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska, right here, was bipartisan. I want to thank Senator FETTERMAN for his support here.

This is a really big one, and some people are like: Geez, Senator SULLIVAN, Senator MURKOWSKI, you are down here a lot on these CRAs. We are down here a lot on these Congressional Review Act resolutions because of this. All right? I have trotted out this chart a lot, but it bears repeating. The Biden administration decided, because the far-left, radical environmental groups say: Hey, when Democrats get in power—that will mean the minority leader, if he ever became majority leader, that would include him—when they get into power, what do they do? They want to make sure they shut down the great State of Alaska. I won't go into all of the reasons, but they do it, and they are aggressive on it.

So, as I have said before, during the 4 years of the Biden administration, we had this last frontier lockup. Here is the actual list. It is shocking. I don't think, in the history of America, the Federal Government, the White House, ever used its powers so much to try to crush one State. They did it during the 4 years of the Biden administration with the support of my friends on the other side of the aisle—70 Executive orders and Executive actions, singularly and exclusively focused on the great State of Alaska—by the way, 10 on day one.

So when Joe Biden got inaugurated, man, he was raring to go to crush Alaska, kill thousands of jobs—by the way, great union jobs, by the way. Nobody ever talks about that. These are all great union jobs to develop resources for the great State of Alaska. So that was it. Seventy—can you imagine any other State in America having their own Federal Government crush them? We got sanctioned more than Joe Biden sanctioned Iran and Venezuela, and they are terrorist states. But that is what we dealt with.

So the reason I am down here so often on these CRA, Congressional Review Act, resolutions is, it is our chance—it is the Republican Senate, with a Republican President and a Republican House—to say: Now, wait a minute. We don't think the power of the Federal Government should be used to crush any State like this, especially one with all these great resources and great Native people.

I am going to get to all of this, but the Democrats do that.

So I am asking my colleagues on one of these—I can't remember which one;