

That is what they did. Eleven million people illegally came into our country during the 4 years of Joe Biden.

And they also knew that the American people did not like those policies. I think that was clear in the 2024 election.

But here is the thing: The far left of the Democratic Party is still committed to these policies.

So, essentially, when you look at what is going on right now, it is back to the future. It is defund the police and open borders 2.0.

What am I talking about? Right now, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying they will not fund ICE. That is a law enforcement Agency that helps protect us. And they are also saying they will not fund Customs and Border Protection. That is the Agency that controls the border.

It is defund the police, defund law enforcement, and open borders. Once again, they are trying to do it kind of in a backdoor way, but the American people are noticing, and it is a frustration.

You know, the Democratic leader used to oppose shutdowns. As a matter of fact, when we were in the minority here, President Biden was in office, and Senator SCHUMER was the majority leader, we never had one shutdown. Now, the reason was, when we were negotiating things and we got close, but we weren't there yet, and we ran into the deadline of the government shutting down, we would pass what are called short-term continuing resolutions to keep the government open and keep negotiating.

Senator SCHUMER said, in 2019, that defunding DHS, which is what they are doing now, would: hurt TSA, hurt Border Patrol, hurt FBI agents, air traffic controllers, food safety inspectors, Coast Guard members. They deal with our security right now—right now—so if you believe in the security of America, vote yes to fund Homeland Security.

I am quoting Senator SCHUMER. Well, I would agree with his 2019 quote wholeheartedly. Vote yes to fund Homeland Security, keeping our country safe by all those Agencies that he just mentioned.

But now, again, given the far-left-wing tactics and energy in the Democratic Party, anytime—and we saw this in the fall, and we are seeing it right now—that if they don't get their way on an issue, they don't do what we have traditionally done, which is: All right, we are not there yet. Let's compromise. Let's put forward a short-term CR. Let's keep the government open.

They just say: Let's shut down the government.

So that is what we are dealing with. It is a real travesty. It is particularly a travesty for the TSA agents who aren't getting paid, for the Coast Guard agents who aren't getting paid and their families, and for FEMA.

We all have States, including especially mine, where disasters happen.

We are still recovering from a big typhoon last fall. The payments going to our State for disaster relief—FEMA is shut down.

And it just doesn't have to happen. It just doesn't have to happen.

We just voted again, in a bipartisan way, to do what the bipartisan agreement with the House and Senate was. Let's fund Homeland Security.

By the way, the reforms for FEMA are in that bill.

There is \$2 million of deescalation training that is really important. There is \$20 million for body cams for ICE. And yet, for whatever reason, they don't want to fund the government during this dangerous time.

I hope that there is a compromise coming forward. The rumor is that after, I think, 5 weeks, our Democrat colleagues are going to finally respond to the White House and Republicans with their ideas. But, again, it is hard to say you want compromise, you want reform on ICE when you haven't put forward anything in almost 2 months. That is not negotiating in good faith.

But I am hopeful. This is too darn important for the safety of our citizens during a dangerous time, for the men and women of the Coast Guard who do such heroic work and who are now not getting a paycheck.

My Democratic colleagues need to quit listening to the far left, come to the middle, and do what we have always done: compromise and vote to fund the government.

CHINA

Mr. President, there is a lot of focus, of course, right now, as there should be, on the Middle East and Iran, and that is important. But I also think it is important to stay focused on the Chinese Communist Party and this dictator who runs it, Xi Jinping, because they are the longest term threat—the biggest threat to our country. There is no doubt about that.

And we need to stay focused on the Chinese Communist Party threat, not just to the United States but to our allies. And this is something that I have been focused on since I came to the Senate.

As a matter of fact, when I came to the Senate, about 11 years ago, I would give speeches on China. And in my first couple of speeches, I was kind of surprised that there wasn't a lot of focus on the Chinese threat, the long-term threat to our Nation. And so I came down here a lot to speak about that.

The good news is that that is all changed. Many of my colleagues—this is actually a very bipartisan issue here in the Senate. I have worked with a number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle on how we can strengthen our national security, our economic security, as it relates to the biggest threat we have, and that is the Chinese Communist Party.

Now, most of my focus, especially being on the Armed Services Committee, spending 30 years on Active Duty and then the Reserves and the

U.S. Marine Corps—most of my focus has been on the military issues you see here. The President of China, Xi Jinping, is in his camis—kind of look a little ridiculous, in my view, but whatever. They are very focused on their military building.

So my focus has been on military issues, deterrence in the Taiwan Strait, and economic issues, to some degree. But as I have spent time here and I have delved into this challenge—and it is a huge challenge—it is important that we not just focus on those issues.

And the one thing that I think is happening in the Congress right now is a recognition of emerging new technologies that, someday, and maybe even today, might be considered more important than an aircraft carrier, a submarine, or an F-35, because these technologies, in which we are in a race with China in terms of their development, might determine who controls the entire 21st century between the United States and China.

Fortunately, we are starting to focus on these. I am starting to focus on these, and I would say there are three main areas: digital currency and blockchain technology, artificial intelligence, and biotech.

So if you are on the Hill on different committees—and I am on the Commerce Committee as well as Armed Services—we are doing hearings, and we are doing markups. We have established commissions. There is a lot of work, a lot of debate. And, I would say, a lot of it is bipartisan, which I think is good, to focus on these emerging technologies because, in some ways, they are just as important as our military competition with the Chinese Communist Party.

And, in my view, it is becoming increasingly clear that we are in a race with the Chinese Communist Party on who will control these critical technologies and the economic resilience and financial strength and productivity of our economy. And, yes, the national security of our citizens increasingly depends on who wins these races in these critical emerging technology areas.

There are a couple of things related to that that I just want to touch on, and I am going to come down on the floor and speak more and more about where we are on these and what we need to do. But make no mistake, as I dig into these issues deeper, as we get the briefings from the experts, it has become clear that we should not—should not—underestimate the Chinese Communist Party in these areas.

They can compete. They are competing. I think sometimes in the area of technology, we think, well, we are the United States; we are the top dog. But we need to take them very seriously.

And in some areas in these technologies, in subcomponents of these technologies—say, for example, like robotics—I think you can make a good case that the Chinese are already in the lead, and we have to take that very seriously.

Another thing is that a fundamental component of competing successfully against China in at least two of three of these technologies—blockchain technology and AI—is that we have to have abundant American energy to power in and advance in these technological areas.

Again, for the benefit of our own citizens and our own national security, it is critical that we unleash American energy—all forms of American energy. I am an “all of the above” energy proponent: oil, gas, coal, renewables, nuclear. We used to talk about the energy transition, but in terms of winning the race on these kinds of technologies, we really need to be talking about energy addition because we are going to need all forms of American energy—American energy dominance—when it comes to blockchain technologies, crypto, and AI.

In these areas, I believe that, for example, in blockchain technology, when developed properly, it cannot only help but ensure our economic resilience, our economic competitiveness, and, very importantly, as it relates to competing with China, the continued dominance of the U.S. dollar as the world’s reserve currency, which, as I mentioned, is a critical comparative advantage we have over the Chinese of which they are trying to erode both in terms of their own digital currencies but in other ways in terms of working with other countries that want to erode the dollar’s preeminence as the world’s reserve currency. Related blockchain technology can make sure that the United States is more resilient to economic warfare—again, only if we are the leaders related to China.

In these areas, I think we are off to a pretty good start by actually passing laws that are beginning to establish the rules of the road for these technologies, like stablecoin, when we recently passed the GENIUS Act.

Next up, as we are working on additional rules for the road to establish the strength of these technologies based in America, not China, is the market structure legislation that we are working on.

As some of you know, the CLARITY Act passed the House, and we are continuing to move that legislation forward here in the Senate. We are splitting some of it apart with legislation, such as the Digital Commodity Intermediaries Act, which recently passed out of the Agriculture Committee. This is also bipartisan legislation. Again, it is a good start, but we have a long way to go.

I think it is critical to keep in mind that one of the most important elements of this is to beat China, which is for our economic security and for our national security. That includes, of course, the areas of AI in biotech, as I have mentioned.

Again, the race against China here is critical. Who wins these technological races will almost certainly dominate key elements of the 21st century. We

need to optimize the full promise of AI while protecting our citizens against some of the related harms, particularly protecting our children when it comes to this new technology.

Smart regulation and legislation and well-thought-out legislative actions from Congress should focus on empowering our people and accelerating societal benefits that result from the use of AI, especially in healthcare and in education, where I believe the promise of artificial intelligence is immense and transformative in a very positive way for our country and our citizens.

When I talk to the experts, they believe that we are winning the AI race with China, but we can’t be complacent at all. As I mentioned, they can compete. Every day, we need to keep moving forward in recognizing that this is a critical competition that we cannot let the CCP dominate and control.

Finally, on biotech, the United States maintains leads here in critical areas but, again, not in every respect. The leads we do have cannot be taken for granted because biotech has been a priority for China for over 20 years. It appears in document after document that constitute China’s industrial policy strategies. It is a main priority again in the new draft 5-year plan that the CCP just released this week. We have to acknowledge that China is a powerhouse of research—bigger than the United States, bigger than Europe. It has the advantage of a large gene pool—data which, by the way, belongs not to the individual; it belongs to that guy and the party. Think about how scary that is.

Where we lead in market size and development trials, China is No. 2 in all of them in terms of biotech. And this is so important. Why? Because it involves our genes. They are the very things that physically make us who we are as human beings, and it will be increasingly central to our health. Again, there are dangers here because it can also be used in bioweapons. The Pentagon’s annual China power report, by the way, says, “Prominent PLA thinkers”—the People’s Liberation Army—that guy and his cohorts—“believe that biotechnology is poised to transform warfare.”

These are all the reasons we need to do everything we can, in a bipartisan way, with all the smart people we have in the United States, to win these technological and emerging technology challenges—especially as it relates to them.

This is a good example of the work we have done. Congress passed a law to establish the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology. They put out a report just a month ago. It is quite good. It is helping educate Members of the Senate and Members of the House, but we have got to keep doing the work on this.

TRIBUTE TO OLIVIA KLUPAR

Mr. President, it is Thursday here in the U.S. Senate, which means it is time for one of my favorite traditions on the

Senate floor—the “Alaskan of the Week.”

Now, the pages, I don’t think, have had the pleasure—this group of pages has had the pleasure—of seeing an “Alaskan of the Week” presentation.

I am sure, once you see it, our great pages, you will understand why every class of pages couldn’t wait until Thursday afternoon to get the “Alaskan of the Week” update. So, congratulations. I know you are literally sitting on the edges of your seats.

What I would like to do—and to our wonderful pages here, when I talk about the Alaskan of the Week, which is usually on Thursday—by the way, the press likes this, too, because they know the end of the week is here, and you know that all of the busyness of the Capitol slows down; but I would like to first talk about what is going on back home—what is going on in the great State of Alaska. Now, it is a really exciting time to be back home in Alaska. I try to get home pretty much every weekend, and last weekend when I was home, there were some fantastic things going on.

First and foremost, one of the most iconic traditions in our great State was the Iditarod, which is often called the Last Great Race. It started last Saturday, in Anchorage, and then officially out of Willow, AK. Each year, dozens of mushers and their teams of sled dogs set out on a grueling journey of nearly 1,000 miles across Alaska’s vast and unforgiving landscape, racing from Anchorage to Nome, through mountain ranges, frozen rivers, and the wide-open tundra.

I had the honor of kicking off that race last week by cutting the ribbon at the ceremonial start in Anchorage. It was a great event—a huge crowd, incredible energy. The dogs were just jumping in their harnesses, ready to run.

By the way, right before we kicked off the race, I was honored to swear in 33 new Marine Corps recruits right there at the starting line of the Iditarod. These are the kinds of events that bring the whole community together—families lining the streets, kids and grandparents cheering on the teams, and visitors from literally all over the world; some of the mushers are from all over the world—to get a glimpse of this uniquely Alaskan tradition.

To anyone who is watching in the Galleries, I invite you, next time, to come on up for the Iditarod—the Last Great Race. It was snowing. We had about a foot of snow. It was beautiful.

The Iditarod captures something essential about Alaska. It reflects the same resilience, determination, and spirit of self-reliance that define our communities from the smallest villages to the largest cities. That spirit is on display across Alaska right now.

From our athletes who are representing the United States on the world stage to the fishermen, small businesses, and families who help to