

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today is day 32 of Democrats' shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security. On Thursday, Democrats, once again, blocked the Senate from proceeding to a DHS funding bill—a bill, I should note, that already includes a number of reforms to immigration enforcement: more money for body cameras, deescalation training, and additional oversight of immigration enforcement activities. And getting on this bill would not have precluded additional reforms from being added. But for the fourth time now, Democrats stopped the Senate from proceeding to consideration of this legislation.

For weeks, Democrats have spoken about the urgent need for reforms to immigration enforcement, but it has been Democrats who have been the biggest obstacle to getting those reforms enacted. The Trump administration took a number of steps on its own, I might add, to reform immigration enforcement, and on top of that, the White House made two substantial and serious offers to Democrats to legislate reforms, the most recent of which was sent more than 2 weeks ago.

But Democrats couldn't even be bothered to respond to the White House's latest offer until late last night, 18 days for Democrats to even bother replying. And that offer—Democrats' third—was basically the same as their first two offers: no compromise and still filled with a number of non-starters that would make it more dangerous for law enforcement officers to do their jobs. Meanwhile, on the Senate floor, the best Democrats have been able to offer is funding some DHS Agencies and leaving others unfunded. It is really pretty remarkable.

Last summer, Democrats threw a fit over Republicans' rescissions package that cut just \$9 billion in Federal spending, a fraction of a fraction of a percent of the entire Federal budget. Now, to hear Democrats talk, they seem to think that entire Agencies—especially the Agencies that secure our border and enforce immigration laws—are dispensable.

The Democrat leader had the audacity to call this a "moderate" plan last week. When did defunding law enforcement become a mainstream position in this country? Now, this might be considered moderate for Democrats, but I think the average American would view it as extreme.

We are now a month into Democrats' second shutdown since October. And like their record-long shutdown in the fall, the victims of this shutdown are beginning to pile up. TSA agents are working without pay. A significant number of agents are calling out sick, leading to long wait times and lines stretching into airport parking garages.

CBS reports that 300 TSA agents have quit since this shutdown began, and that is on top of the 1,100 agents who quit after Democrats' shutdown in

the fall. It is pretty darn understandable if you think about it. What do you do when, for 2 out of the last 6 months, you have to work without pay? Well, that is what Democrats have put these people through. So it is more than understandable that they might be thinking that there has got to be an easier way to earn a living.

I heard from one TSA agent in South Dakota who was at the end of her rope. She writes:

It is very hard to live without getting paid. . . . I do not know how long I can keep doing this.

Well, that is what happens in a shutdown: real people get hurt.

But if you ask the senior Senator from Hawaii, a Member of the Democratic leadership, he says:

We are very serene with what is going on. "Very serene." I suppose that is not a surprising statement considering the Democratic leader characterized Democrats' last shutdown in the fall by saying:

Every day gets better for us.

"Very serene." "Every day gets better for us." For Democrats, a government shutdown is just fine as long as it seems to be working for them politically, no matter whether it is hurting hard-working Americans, no matter if it is jeopardizing public safety and national security. Make no mistake, Democrats' shutdown is harming hard-working Americans and putting national security in jeopardy.

Our country is facing a heightened threat environment right now. There are a few examples of that. Stryker, a medical tech company, was the victim of an Iran-linked cyber attack last week. ISIS-inspired individuals attempted to detonate bombs targeting protesters outside of the home of the mayor of New York City last weekend. And on Thursday, we saw two tragic attacks take place. One of those, in Virginia, was perpetrated by an individual who was arrested in 2016 for attempting to provide materiel support to ISIS. The other, an attack on a Detroit-area synagogue, was perpetrated by an individual who was reported to have had connections to known or suspected Hezbollah terrorists.

This is no time for Democrats' political games. Republicans are at the table and ready to work whenever Democrats are done playing.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. President, today, we are kicking off an extended debate on the SAVE America Act, a package of commonsense measures united around two themes: protecting our elections and protecting our youth.

You are going to hear me use the adjective "commonsense" a lot in this debate because if there is any word that is suitable to describe the measures we are considering, it is that. If there is anything essential to the integrity of elections, it is ensuring that those who are registered to vote are eligible to vote and that those who show

up to vote at polling places are who they say they are.

And how do you do that? Well, by requiring that Americans show proof of citizenship when they register to vote and that they show photo ID at polling places. That is what the SAVE America Act would do. It is just common sense. And polls show that the American people overwhelmingly agree. But to hear Democrats talk, you would think that demonstrating citizenship or showing a photo ID is an intolerable burden.

And yet I haven't heard Democrats complaining about the thousand other circumstances in which we require photo ID in this country. Democrats are aware that Americans have to show photo ID to get on a plane—right?—and to start a new job and when they head to the doctor's office and to rent a car and to stay in a hotel. Heck, if you want to get a library card, you have to show a photo ID. Do Democrats remember their 2024 convention, when attendees had to show a photo ID to get in? The senior Democrat Senator from Georgia required photo ID to get into his recent rally.

Do Democrats hear themselves? Are they going to start boycotting libraries and airplanes and hotels for requiring a photo ID? Are they going to explain why they are perfectly justified in requiring photo ID for their political rallies while it is somehow an intolerable burden to ask people to show their photo ID when they go to vote?

I expect they won't. They will simply continue with their mindless partisan opposition to commonsense ID requirements for Federal elections.

But let's hit pause on that topic for a minute and go to another issue where common sense and the Democrat Party have parted ways, and that is on the subject of transgender ideology. In their haste to embrace medical transgender ideology, Democrats have put themselves in the absurd position of supporting the hijacking of women and girls' sports by biological males. Yep; that is right. The party that would portray itself as a defender of women has put itself on the record as willing to sacrifice women's athletic opportunities for the sake of biological males.

Now, no one should need an explanation of what the presence of biological males in women's sports costs women. At the most basic level, women are losing out on a slot on the team. Every roster place that goes to a male is a roster place that doesn't go to a female. And for women who are on the roster, well, the presence of a biological male can and frequently does rob them of opportunities to excel.

Biologically, men possess physical advantages when it comes to sports—things like greater muscle mass and greater aerobic power—which means that, by and large, men are likely to dominate in women's sports, taking wins and medal opportunities away from women.

In an August 2024 United Nations report on violence against women and girls, they had this to say about the results of men participating in women's sports:

According to information received, by 30 March 2024, over 600 female athletes in more than 400 competitions have lost more than 890 medals in 29 different sports.

Over 600 female athletes in more than 400 competitions have lost more than 800 medals in 29 different sports.

The SAVE America Act would ensure that men are not allowed to hijack women's sporting opportunities. Yet, once again, we expect my Democrat colleagues to oppose keeping women's sports for women.

The idea that a female high school athlete might lose out on a college scholarship because her achievements were overshadowed by those of a biological male on her team is bad enough, but an even more dangerous consequence of the embrace of transgender ideology is the children who have become victims of irreversible gender transition procedures. And when I say "children," I mean children: young men and women who are not old enough to vote, who are years away from being able to legally drink, who still need parental permission to take medicine at school.

The New York Times reports:

A review of hospital data from 2016 through 2020 identified about 3,600 patients aged 12 to 18 who had received gender-related surgery.

Aged 12 to 18. Can the Presiding Officer imagine that? Can the Presiding Officer imagine allowing a child not yet out of middle school to receive a medical procedure that will result in permanent mutilation of part of her body?

This madness has to end. Multiple European countries have acted to rein in gender transition procedures for minors and so have a number of U.S. States. The SAVE America Act would extend protection from these procedures to all children, whatever State they live in.

Commonsense measures: require proof of citizenship to register to vote, require a photo ID at the polls, protect women's sports from being hijacked by biological males, and protect teenagers from life-altering, irreversible gender transition procedures—measures, I might add again, supported by a majority of Americans and measures we expect my Democrat colleagues to oppose.

It is unfortunate that common sense is not very common anymore in the Democratic Party.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The majority whip.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the SAVE America Act. I support the SAVE America Act. I believe that anybody that votes in an American election needs to be an American citizen, and I believe that anyone who shows up to vote needs to present a photo ID to prove they are who they say they are.

Free and fair elections are the foundation of our Nation. It is the 250th anniversary this year of our founding. Voting here is about American citizens voting. And without strong protections, this foundation of 250 years will crumble.

The American people are clear. They believe American elections should be decided by American citizens, not by illegal immigrants.

Listen to the Democrats talk. They think it is fine, let any illegal immigrant vote. You heard from the minority leader yesterday in terms of what we want to do to protect the rights of American citizens to make sure the elections are free and fair. When illegal immigrants vote, the voice of American citizens is undermined.

The fact is, Joe Biden's open border policies undermined elections in this country. Under Joe Biden and the Democrats, over 10 million illegal immigrants flooded into our country, to communities all across the State. Now, Democrats want to make it possible for illegal immigrants to decide the outcome of elections in this Nation.

Democrats are once again prioritizing illegal immigrants and illegal immigrant criminals over American citizens, and that is what they have been doing. That is why we are in the situation we are in, with a shutdown at the Department of Homeland Security and why, specifically, today we are on the floor to talk about the SAVE America Act.

Many far-left sanctuary cities already make it easier for illegal immigrants to vote. They have set it up that way because in 19 States and in the District of Columbia, illegal immigrants can get a driver's license with no proof of citizenship whatsoever.

I am against it. I have opposed it from the beginning when the first State proposed it, and now, 19 States and the District do it. In California, in Maryland, Vermont, and Washington, DC, noncitizens are allowed to vote in local elections. I think that is wrong.

It is a felony for illegal immigrants to vote in Federal elections; yet we know it is happening.

Last week, the Department of Homeland Security arrested a criminal illegal immigrant from Africa. He entered the Nation illegally over 20 years ago. He was ordered to be deported in 2002. He first registered to vote in 2005, and he has been voting in Federal elections since 2008.

Most recently, this illegal immigrant voted in the 2024 election. He voted in the State of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania is a swing State. It was won by

tight margins in both the Presidential and the Senate races.

He should have never been allowed to vote in the United States, and this should never be allowed to happen.

Now, the SAVE America Act protects the vote of every single American citizen. What it says is simple: If you want to vote in the United States of America, you need to be a citizen of the United States of America, and you need to show a photo ID at the poll in order to vote. It is common sense.

Americans show ID every single day. You want to buy a beer? You need to show an ID. You want to get on a plane? You need to show a photo ID.

I have people here in the Gallery from Wyoming—students from Burlington and their teachers, optometrists from around the State of Wyoming. They are all flying back to Wyoming. Every one of them is going to have to show a photo ID to get on the plane.

If you want to cash a check, you need to show a photo ID. Voting should be equally important to show a photo ID.

It should be no different than all these other things. Photo IDs protect against voter fraud, and they prevent illegal immigrants from voting.

Most importantly, it tells each American citizen that their vote counts and their vote matters, and it is not going to be watered down by people who are not citizens of the United States.

American voters in 36 States, including Wyoming, already show an ID in order to vote in elections. We do have voter ID laws in Wyoming. And getting a voter ID is actually free, no cost involved.

So the SAVE America Act that we are going to be discussing and voting on today builds on current, commonsense laws that work in so many States. It makes it easy to vote, and it makes it harder to cheat in every State across the country.

Every Democrat ought to be supporting this, but none of them do. Why do Democrats in this Chamber oppose showing an ID to vote? I think the minority leader is opposed because—in his words—he says it "allows ICE to kick tens of millions of people off the voter rolls." That is who the Democrats are fighting for—illegal immigrant voting. Not for American citizens, not for the rights of the American people to govern our own Nation—no, he is talking about tens of millions of people off the voter rolls.

How did they get on the voter rolls in the first place if they are not citizens? Well, it is automatic voter drives and when people sign up for a motor vehicle license, a driver's license. A number of States have automatic voter registration connected to it. So you get a license, and even if you are illegal, you can be signed up to vote. Certain States are in the process of having to try to figure out how they went wrong and what they need to do to correct it for Federal offices. Oregon State is in the middle of it right now.