

DIRECTING THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL TO PROMINENTLY DISPLAY, IN A PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LOCATION IN THE SENATE WING OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL, A PLAQUE HONORING THE MEMBERS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONDING ON JANUARY 6, 2021, UNTIL THE PLAQUE CAN BE PLACED IN ITS PERMANENT LOCATION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, 5 years and 2 days ago, the Capitol Police protected us as a team stormed the Capitol. Many other forces came and defended the Capitol as well. It was more than just stopping folks headed toward the Capitol to try to interrupt the counting of votes; it was protecting the peaceful transfer of power, which goes to the heart of the Republic.

In 2022, we passed a law saying we would put up this plaque to recognize the valiant efforts of the police officers, but the plaque has not gone up yet; so I am here to team up with my colleague from North Carolina in order to have a strategy to make sure that we do get this plaque up until the House and Senate can reach an agreement.

Therefore, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 580.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 580) directing the Architect of the Capitol to prominently display, in a publicly accessible location in the Senate wing of the United States Capitol, a plaque honoring the members of law enforcement responding on January 6, 2021, until the plaque can be placed in its permanent location.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 580) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I yield to my colleague from North Carolina.

I will have some comments following his comments. We also have the Democratic lead on the Rules Committee here who would like to weigh in on the importance of this action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I came to the floor on January 6 to make sure that we conveyed our undying gratitude to everybody who played a role.

Senator MERKLEY and I were here in the Chamber, and what we saw there was a parliamentary staff being focused on the job, not worried about themselves but worried about getting the ballots that we were certifying into safekeeping. We saw the Sergeant at Arms' staff do an extraordinary job of marshaling people around and getting them out of the building. We saw the Capitol Police spirit us away from this Chamber, over to the Hart Building, and secure us—literally—with any risk of any of us being harmed.

Having said that, we walked by several Capitol Police officers who were injured. They had been hit. They had been crushed in doors. You know all of the reports. Yet they did their jobs that day. So, when I heard that, apparently, the law that we passed to recognize them and to place this plaque had a technical implementation problem, I went about seeing how we could clarify things, and I found out that my colleague from Oregon Senator MERKLEY had a similar concern. So we are two folks who came together to say: Let's provide some clarity here.

The one thing I will tell you is that this is the plaque, but according to the Capitol Architect, the technical problem that, apparently, the House identified, which I think they can cure fairly quickly if they think it is a concern, is that the plaque was to include a list of all of the individual law enforcement officers who came to the Capitol on that day. This plaque actually has the names of the various law enforcement agencies, but the reality is, there is a digital component to this, which I understand, once it is implemented, will have a list of each and every person who answered the call.

I think it is good that we actually have all of the agencies here because you will see how many people came here—again, I will close on this—to be a part of withstanding what I would consider to be one of the most significant stress tests for this institution since it was founded.

Just keep in mind that we came here. We heard thousands of people storm this Capitol. People died. Police officers were injured, hospitalized. One died shortly after January 6. A lot of people said that was a dark day for democracy. I would leave with you this: It was a great day for democracy because of the law enforcement officers—the people who kept us safe—because do you know what we did when we were confronted with thousands of thugs storming this building? We took a brief recess. We got ourselves together. The Capitol was secured. Then, before we left this compound, we came back and completed our constitutional duty to certify the election. If that is not a good example of parliamentary staff, cloakroom staff, the Sergeant at Arms, and Capitol Police being a part of helping us withstand the greatest threat to this great institution—we owe them our eternal gratitude, and this Nation is stronger because of it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, it was an extraordinary moment to be sitting here in this Chamber and seeing a member of the staff's team run down the aisle to the podium, speak quietly to the Vice President, have the Vice President immediately gavel down the session and depart through the side door; then to see police officers from the Capitol Police immediately engaged, working to lock the doors, protect this Chamber; and whole teams set up to ensure the safety of the Members of the Senate, with the same thing happening over on the House side.

Then, within a few hours, as my colleague from North Carolina has pointed out, the Capitol was secured, but in the process, 170 police officers in defending the Capitol were injured, and as a consequence of the attack on that day, 5 died.

So it was no small movement. It was not a peaceful protest outside but a storming of the Capitol, with some brutal assaults on folks within, on the police officers within. It is so important that we fulfill the vision of the 2022 law and get this plaque up to honor those police officers.

What this resolution is saying is that we in the Senate will put it up here, in a publicly available space, until a deal can be reached with the House of Representatives to display it. Both Chambers have to agree on that, but this is to put it up here in the Senate in a place where the public can see it. That we can do here on our own, and we intend to do it. That is the right thing to do.

It was a shocking thing to me this week because, simultaneous with discovering that this plaque had been stashed away in a room—out of sight somewhere—and that there wasn't an agreement to display it, I also saw the White House's posting, saying that it was a fiction that the Capitol was assaulted and that it was just a peaceful protest outside.

It is so important we be honest with the American people about what happened. It is so important that we recognize those who defended our democratic Republic on that day. It is so important that people know that we came back as Senators and House Members and finished our work that day for the peaceful transfer of power, which is essential to the future of our democratic Republic, and that we succeed in that every 4 years.

We have all taken an oath to the Constitution, and that is one of the most important functions to preserve in the Constitution—the integrity of the ballot box, which is the beating heart of a democratic republic—and the subsequent peaceful transfer of power.

Mr. TILLIS. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. MERKLEY. I will yield, yes.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, the one thing I would like to say to Senator MERKLEY—and that is why I should bring notes when I come down to the

floor—is that I also want to thank the Republican leader Senator THUNE because he has agreed that we will be able to display this until the final location is in place, and I appreciate his help in doing that.

Mr. MERKLEY. I am so glad my colleague mentioned that because, for us to take action here, we have to have bipartisan work, including the leadership on both sides of the aisle.

So while neither my colleague from North Carolina nor I are in the leadership of our—at least I am not, but we worked with our leadership to make this happen. So this is an example of bipartisan cooperation on a very important point.

So with that, unless my colleague from North Carolina has more to share, I am going to yield to my colleague from California and thank him and his leadership on the Rules Committee as we worked to get to this point, with a bipartisan partnership, to get this plaque honoring the police officers from many groups—most, of course, the Capitol Police, but several other groups—that came to defend the Capitol and make sure they know how much we appreciate what their sacrifice was to defend democracy on that day 5 years and 2 days ago.

I yield to my colleague from California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I want to thank Senators MERKLEY and TILLIS for their bipartisan cooperation in honoring the law enforcement officers who responded on January 6, 5 years ago. I also want to thank them both for their comments on Tuesday, 2 days ago, recognizing the fifth anniversary of the attack on the Capitol.

As Senator MERKLEY mentioned, I am the ranking member on the Rules Committee, which has jurisdiction on this issue, and I can attest, having been here for the votes on the original action, that there was bipartisan and bicameral agreement on this plaque and bipartisan, bicameral agreement on its intended location following the enactment of the law.

Now, for the last several years, many people have been confused by the delay in mounting it as planned and directed by Congress. Many even believe that the Speaker of the House never intended to follow the law and honor these law enforcement officers who bravely defended the Capitol and our democracy that day.

I know that sounds a little cynical, but as Senator MERKLEY mentioned, you have to understand that part of the context here is the White House's new website that says that the Capitol Police were the ones who deliberately escalated the situation on January 6, in their attempt to rewrite the history of that day. That dishonors the officers—not just the members of the Capitol Police but all the law enforcement agencies—that responded on that eventful day.

So I am more than just personally pleased to see this resolution move forward and that the Senate's bipartisan commitment to real history is strong.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from Alaska.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

OPERATION MIDWAY BLITZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on December 23, the Supreme Court issued an order in *Trump v. Illinois* that checks this President and his authoritarian tendencies.

The Court rejected the Trump administration's request to stay a temporary restraining order issued by U.S. District Judge April Perry, which had blocked Trump's unnecessary deployment of the National Guard in Chicago.

In that unsigned order, the majority of the Supreme Court wrote, "The Government has failed to identify a source of authority that would allow the military to execute the laws in Illinois."

This is good news, and we should recognize the significance of this moment: Even the Supreme Court's conservative supermajority refused to greenlight the President of the United States' blatantly unlawful overreach.

Our government is supposed to help Americans—not go to war with them. The administration's deployment of the National Guard was dangerous political theater intended to sow fear and escalate the President's mass deportation campaign, not to reduce crime.

The President's false rhetoric about Chicago being "overrun" with chaos was clearly a pretext to intimidate our city and normalize the deployment of soldiers on our streets.

To protect civil liberties and civilian rule—pillars of democracy—our country has long upheld the norm that the military does not police our cities.

The Supreme Court recognized that, in this country, the circumstances where the military may be used to execute the laws are exceptional and thankfully acted as a check on this President, at least at this preliminary stage.

The cost of this National Guard operation has already been enormous. The operations, maintenance, and personnel costs for federalizing the 500 National Guard soldiers for deployment in Illinois reached an estimated \$20 million in a 2-month span.

That comes out to more than \$300,000 per day.

That bears repeating: \$20 million and 500 Guard personnel away for weeks on end from their families, their jobs, their communities . . . not performing any missions, but simply used by the President to threaten a reign of terror in the city of Chicago. It is unconscionable.

As of today, these troops are finally, slowly demobilizing and getting ready to head home. But unfortunately, the presence of militarized immigration operations is likely to continue in Chicago and around the country, along with the egregious use of excessive force by these Federal immigration agents.

Just yesterday, an ICE agent shot and killed a woman in Minneapolis. The video of the shooting is horrific and contradicts the self-defense narrative that DHS has attempted to spin. Minnesota officials have rightfully promised a full, fair, and expeditious investigation. DHS Secretary Kristi Noem has dodged testifying under oath before the Senate Judiciary Committee for months. What happened in Minneapolis yesterday was an unacceptable tragedy. She must testify before the Judiciary Committee, immediately.

Meanwhile, across the country, camouflaged and masked Federal immigration agents continue to deploy Black Hawk helicopters, armored vehicles, and a variety of chemical agents, including near schools, playgrounds, apartment buildings, and churches.

And the Department of Homeland Security refuses to provide information about the costs of these dangerous operations in Illinois. The Chicago Tribune estimated that these militarized immigration operations cost at least \$40 million over a 10-week period.

In the wake of these operations, families are afraid to leave their homes, parents are scared to walk their children to school, and workers and vendors fear being pulled from the streets and detained simply for the way they look or the language they speak.

The Trump administration has repeatedly justified these militarized raids as necessary to target the "worst of the worst." But the facts tell a different story, one that I have laid out repeatedly on this floor.

In one instance, on a list of 614 detainees submitted to a Federal court, the administration identified criminal histories for just 16 of the detainees. That shakes out to less than 3 percent of arrestees.

And people with no prior criminal backgrounds, including legal residents and U.S. citizens, were swept up.

As the President flirts with future military deployments and continues his militarized immigration raids, we know his campaign of terror will not stop at Chicago.

And while he failed in his attempt to use Chicago as "training grounds" for military forces, the scale and tactics of Operation Midway Blitz have given him a blueprint for similar operations