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Senate

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTER ELIGIBILITY ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message with respect to S. 1383, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 1383, a bill to establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill.

Thune motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill, with Thune (for Schmitt) amendment No. 4420 (to the House amendment to the bill), in the nature of a substitute.

Thune (for Tuberville/Blackburn) amendment No. 4421 (to amendment No. 4420), to protect women and girls in athletics.

Thune motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Rules and Administration, with instructions, Thune amendment No. 4422, to change the enactment date.

Thune amendment No. 4423 (to the instructions (amendment No. 4422), of a perfecting nature.

Thune amendment No. 4424 (to amendment No. 4423), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, March is Women's History Month. This is an opportunity to celebrate women who have shaped the Nation's history. Americans all across the country this month should share stories about women who have made an impact on their lives and how those same women have paved the way for future generations to pursue their dreams and contribute to American society.

My mother is one of those women. She raised me and my four siblings to treat people with respect and worked

very hard. She was one of the first to benefit from the women's suffrage movement.

The women's suffrage movement began in the mid-19th century. So it took 60 years—or maybe 70 years—for the 19th Amendment to finally be adopted, and that was adopted in 1920.

The 19th Amendment, we know, granted women the right to vote. My mother was one of the first women to cast a ballot just 29 hours after ratification of the 19th Amendment. There was already an election scheduled in that part of Iowa. I have spoken about her picture being in the Des Moines Register and the Waterloo Courier. My mother and three other women were pictured there voting.

Even though my mom never bragged about her milestone in U.S. history, she sparked my interest in politics with conversation around the kitchen table.

Since our Nation's founding, women have blazed trails and inspired future generations to break glass ceilings in business, in agriculture, in medicine, in government, in science, in technology and the arts and many others that should be named.

Stories like my mother's are what this month is all about, celebrating the gutsy, hard-won achievements of moms, daughters, sisters, aunts, and wives throughout our 250 years of American history.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the captain of our souls, You know every temptation and trial we face. Give our lawmakers today the wisdom to be good stewards of the bounties You have given and to trust You to deliver them from evil. Make them pure enough to use wisely the wealth You provide as they remember that to whom much is given, much will be required.

Lord, strengthen them to serve You each day with right choices, unswerving loyalty, and undaunted faith.

And, Lord, in a world where so many weep, send Your divine comfort. We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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S. 1383

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I don't think this is a hot take: Only American citizens should be voting in American elections. Let me repeat that: Only American citizens should be voting in American elections.

Of course, there is only one way to be sure that only Americans are voting in our elections: Voters have to prove they are citizens when they register to vote. That is just intuitively obvious. It is so obvious, in fact, that one poll shows that most Americans believe that proof of citizenship is already—already—a requirement to register to vote, but it is not.

And polls show that the majority of Americans believe that we should require proof of citizenship to vote. In one recent poll, 75 percent of voters said they support requiring proof of citizenship to vote. That includes 61 percent of Democrats and more than two-thirds of Hispanic and Black voters.

This is just common sense. And it is why requiring proof of citizenship to vote is one of the pillars of the SAVE America Act.

Confirming eligibility is not some new-fangled idea. The American people are used to proving they are eligible, especially when dealing with their State or the Federal Government. You want to join the military? You should be prepared to show you are old enough, fit enough, and have graduated from high school.

SNAP benefits? Same story. You need to hand over documents to prove need, residency, and eligibility.

Seniors who have paid into this system their entire lives still need to prove that they are eligible for Social Security and Medicare when they are old enough.

And every single job in this country requires new employees to fill out an I-9 and provide documents that prove they are eligible to work. Every job requires you to prove you are eligible to work in this country, whether you are working your first job scooping ice cream in the summer or joining a law firm as a senior partner.

So why—why—don't we require proof of eligibility that is, proof of citizenship to vote?

As I said, you need to prove you are eligible to work, to join the military, and to get any sort of government benefit. But under current law, you don't need to prove you are actually eligible to vote when you register.

And the lack of a Federal requirement on this point has stood in the way of States deciding for themselves to implement proof of citizenship requirements. On two separate occasions, the State of Arizona has attempted to require proof of citizenship when registering to vote. In 2004, Arizona voters approved a ballot referendum requiring proof of citizenship when registering to vote in the State. It passed with a clear majority: 55 percent of Arizona voters supported the ballot question. But the U.S. Supreme Court struck it down.

Fast forward to 2022, and the Arizona Legislature passed a law requiring proof of citizenship to register to vote. And, once again, the Supreme Court said that States cannot impose requirements that go beyond the standard Federal voter registration form to vote in Federal elections—the standard Federal form that does not require proof of citizenship.

And so here we are. The SAVE Act would put this commonsense proof of citizenship requirement in place. This commonsense requirement, that, as I said, polls show the majority of voters support. Passing this requirement should be a no-brainer.

But Democrats roundly oppose this commonsense policy, and this should surprise nobody. A number of blue States happily issue driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. Democrats uniformly opposed Republican's efforts to prevent noncitizens from getting Federal healthcare and nutrition benefits last year.

And while States like Arizona and my home State of South Dakota are passing legislation to ensure only American citizens vote in our elections, blue cities are passing laws to allow—allow—noncitizens to vote in local elections. That is right. In cities in Vermont, California, right here in Washington, DC, noncitizens are allowed to vote in local elections.

So it should be no surprise that Democrats seem not to care very much about ensuring that American citizens—and American citizens only—are voting in our national elections, but it is deeply concerning.

The vote of even one ineligible voter dilutes the vote of an American citizen, and that is unconscionable. It is unconscionable for Americans who faithfully cast their votes to nudge our country in the direction they believe is best for our future.

And I have to imagine it is especially galling for legal immigrants who have become American citizens who have often spent years waiting and working for their citizenship and their right to vote.

One individual in my State said this on getting his citizenship a few years ago:

It's a long time coming . . . I'm eager to vote, I'm eager to cast my voice and how I feel.

And that is no surprise. Voting is, in many ways, synonymous with being an American. It is one of our most sacred rights as Americans and a serious obligation we have to our fellow citizens and to the future of our country. Why shouldn't we make sure everyone who casts a ballot in this country is actually eligible to vote?

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

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.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, 10 million illegal immigrants flooded into this country when Joe Biden was President, when the Democrats were in the majority in this body—10 million illegal immigrants. Democrats now want to make those same illegal immigrants have an impact on the outcome of elections in our Nation. Democrats continue to be the party of open borders and illegal voters.

Mr. President, last week the Department of Homeland Security arrested an illegal immigrant who had voted in every Federal election since 2008. He voted in the State of Pennsylvania, which, of course, is a swing State where the outcomes are decided on razor-thin majorities.

Every single time he voted, he signed a Federal form. The form stated:

I am a citizen of the United States.

Every single time, he signed. Every single time, he lied. He is not a citizen, and he knew it was a crime for him to vote. He voted anyway because he could get away with it. That is fraud. It is a Federal crime, and it happens over and over and over again.

The Democrats enable it. The reason it happens over and over again is that Democrats fight every single effort that we have to stop it. They don't want it to end. They want it to continue, and they want more of it. That includes the bill that is before us today, the SAVE America Act.

Yesterday, Republicans put every single Democrat in this Chamber on the record. Now, all of America knows Republicans support voter photo identification; Democrats do not.

The SAVE America Act requires two things. One is to show a photo ID in order to vote. The second, of course, is to show proof of citizenship in order to register to vote. This is common sense.

I believe only citizens of our country should be allowed to vote in our elections. I also believe that you should have to show a photo ID in order to vote. Now, the great majority of Americans agree with me, and that is regardless of which party that person happens to be a member of. The American people overwhelmingly agree, agree that American elections should be decided by American citizens.

Do you know what the minority leader said here Monday afternoon, right here on this floor? He called that concept that I just outlined, he called it "fringe." Well, let me tell you what fringe is, and I will show you why.

Today, 19 States, as well as the District of Columbia, issue driver's licenses to illegal immigrants, and they do it without any proof of citizenship. You show up, you can get a license. In many of these same States, obtaining a driver's license automatically registers

someone to vote—no citizenship checks, no additional steps, no questions asked, no accountability—19 States.

And the minority leader on the floor the other day said that one of the things he didn't like about the SAVE America Act is that it would prevent automatic registration when people get their licenses in these places. Well, they are not supposed to get licenses if they are not citizens. Certainly, that is what I believe. And certainly, if they are not citizens, they shouldn't be registered to vote automatically. That is what the Democrats are fighting for: automatic enrollment on the voter rolls for people who are not citizens of the United States when they get a driver's license, in 19 States and the District, which allow illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. Now, by the way, these 20 jurisdictions represent 240 votes in the electoral college.

I just want to take a second to look to the State of Oregon. Oregon hands out driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. When people get a driver's license in Oregon, automatically registered to vote. As a result, from 2021 all the way through 2024, hundreds of illegal immigrants were added onto Oregon's voter rolls. Today, we are in 2026. Oregon is still scrambling to try to clean up the disaster that they created with automatic voter registration when they gave illegal immigrants a driver's license.

This is the chaos that the Democrats continue to defend and are defending on this floor today. This is the problem that will be prevented by the SAVE America Act.

As Democrats come to this floor and they fight to let illegal immigrants vote, they are simultaneously—and this is so sad—they are actively defunding American security. That is right; they are defunding American security. Democrats would rather stand with illegal immigrants and illegal immigrant criminals than to vote to protect law-abiding citizens. That is a shame. It is astonishing to many, and it is business as usual for the Democrats in this body.

There have been four terror attacks on American soil in just the past 2 weeks. People have died. What have Senate Democrats done about it? Last week, Senate Democrats came to this floor and refused once again to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security. Blood is on their hands. They don't seem to care. Fully funding the Department of Homeland Security is the best way to keep our Nation safe.

Yet, for more than a month, Democrats have practiced the politics of pain. Democrats have defunded bomb prevention training class. I mean, can you imagine that? People are making bombs to bomb areas of our country, to bomb individuals—bombs were thrown at the mayor's house in New York City, at the residence there—and Democrats have defunded bomb prevention training classes.

This includes one location after another; and yet, because of this shutdown by the Democrats of the Department of Homeland Security, only a third of the instructors in the bombing prevention training are on the job. Training classes are canceled.

Democrats are also withholding paychecks from TSA agents. Many TSA agents live paycheck to paycheck. In communities around the country and in my State and the Presiding Officer's, community groups and service clubs are taking up food drives to take food to the airports to give to the TSA agents because they are not getting paid because the Democrats have shut down the Department of Homeland Security.

Under these circumstances, many TSA agents aren't showing up for work. Others are just quitting and getting a job where they know they will get paid. And the problem was made worse by the Democrats' shutdown last October because these TSA agents said: Been there, done that, not going to do it again.

Travelers across the country are waiting in security lines for hours. That is happening today. And Democrats keep voting to make the wait times even longer because they refuse to fund the Department of Homeland Security. Some of them come to the floor and say: We are going to peel it apart.

The Department of Homeland Security was set up after 2001 and the terror bombings of 9/11. It is a comprehensive program to protect the homeland and the people who live here. Democrats want to peel it apart and say: Well, we will fund this little corner but not that portion and not this portion, and OK over here. We need this comprehensive Department of Homeland Security on the job, working, being paid, doing the training that needs to be done.

It is astonishing that, time and time again, whether it comes to the safety of our citizens, the security of our elections, Democrats once again put illegal immigrants first and American citizens last. Republicans and most Americans reject this far-left extremism of the Democratic Party. It offends so many.

Republicans are going to continue to put American citizens first—at the border, in communities, and at the ballot box.

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

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

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we recently passed a tragic milestone: the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. I remember the morning vividly, sitting with Sen-

ator COONS, the senior Senator from Delaware, on a dark, early morning at the airport in Vilnius, Lithuania, a country that knows all too well the threat posed by Russia throughout history.

The loss of life from Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine has been staggering, with nearly 2 million total casualties. Millions more Ukrainians have been displaced. Thousands of Ukrainian children have been abducted to Russia.

President Trump bragged more times than I can remember that he would end the Ukrainian war on day one if re-elected. To his credit, the United States has fostered a series of talks between Russia and Ukraine. While I strongly support American help to ensure that Ukraine can defend itself, and a diplomatic resolution is always preferable, it is devastatingly clear to everyone—except, it seems, the President—that Putin isn't serious about reaching a peace deal in Ukraine. Putin continues to play for time, calling and manipulating President Trump at key moments, including last week, to brazenly offer help in the Middle East while simultaneously, we know, Russia is giving intelligence to the Iranians to target American forces.

Time and again, President Trump has only pressed Ukraine to reach a deal—never pressed Putin. And last week, Trump defied common sense—defied common sense when he lifted sanctions on Russian oil because of what should have been foreseen chaos in the energy markets due to his invasion in Iran. And for reasons I simply cannot explain, this Chamber has refused to pass Russian sanctions legislation with more than 85 cosponsors.

Let me be clear, Putin only responds to strength. He is stringing along United States-led peace negotiations while relentlessly bombing Ukraine, while helping Iran target American servicemembers.

It is time for President Trump to finally learn this lesson and for the Senate to pass legislation increasing pressure on Putin to negotiate.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR EN BLOC

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that there are four bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4124) to prohibit funds made available to the Department of Justice from being used to make a personal payment to the President in connection with a claim that is subject to the Federal Tort Claims Act, whether in the form of a settlement or any other payment from the Judgment Fund for the personal benefit of the President.